

SITUATION REPORT #24
Update: 19 August to 5 September



Beneficiaries receiving non-food item kits in Daquq, Kirkuk governorate | 3 September

As fighting continues across Iraq, internally displaced Iraqis face challenges in seeking access to safe areas. Displaced Iraqis wait at checkpoints for sponsors to ensure their passage into safer governorates. There are reports of forcible evictions as local institutions become increasingly strained in both capacity and financial ability to respond to the crisis.

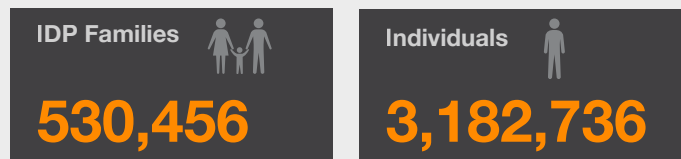
The vast majority of the displaced plan to return to their homes after the fighting has ceased, but do not yet feel safe to do so. The shortage of humanitarian assistance, destruction of houses and lack of basic services also deter return. IOM is reaching IDPs across Iraq, and is committed to delivering life-saving humanitarian aid where access and security allow.

Over the period IOM distributed 2,815 NFI kits to newly displaced persons in Salah al Din, Kirkuk, Kerbala, Anbar, and Ninewa.

In joint effort with UNICEF, IOM delivered non-food item aid to 350 vulnerable, newly-displaced families in Kirkuk. These kits contained essential items to survive the hot weather, including light blankets, fans, mats, cool boxes and rechargeable lights. Items in the hygiene kit included toothbrushes and soap, as those fleeing for their lives rarely have time to bring more than the clothes on their back and identity papers.

Displacement

According to Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data collected by IOM Rapid Assessment and Response Team (RART) from January 2014 to 27 August 2015



To access the IOM Iraq DTM, please visit:
<http://iomiraq.net/dtm-page>

Emergency Relief Distribution



The updated Displacement Tracking Matrix now counts 3,176,946 Iraqis internally displaced; accordingly, the United Nations Humanitarian Country Team holds their response planning estimates to 3.2 million displaced.

Sabreen's Story

“ I don't think things will ever be normal for us again in Iraq. ”



Sabreen speaking with IOM Iraq staff in Sulaymaniyah | 23 August 2015

When 23 year old Sabreen tells IOM staff that her family was displaced from Fallujah to Sulaymaniyah two years ago, it is surprising. Most of the mass displacement in Iraq began in January 2014. Sabreen smiles and clarifies “Some people say ISIL originated from my neighborhood. In al-Askari; the fighting started long before the mass displacement across the country began.

“We realized that the situation was difficult, but it was not until they destroyed the medical center across the street from our house that we knew we had to escape. Nobody slept that night. We gathered our things and waited for the moment when the bombardment would stop and we could leave. We carried just a few changes of clothes and our identification documents.”

“My cousin departed for Sulaymaniyah two years before and was always describing it as a peaceful place with nice people. We chose to join him because we liked knowing something about where we were moving.”

Sabreen shares her story with IOM staff while sitting on a couch in Sheikh Abbas community school, where she participates in an IOM Iraq joint Psychosocial and Livelihoods programme. She shares her basic knowledge of the Kurdish language with Arabic speaking people who fled violence from Fallujah and Ramadi.

When asked about the challenges of being displaced in Sulaymaniyah, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, she mentions a lack of income generating opportunities. “Lots of my neighbors are suffering from unemployment,

I think that learning Kurdish will help them find jobs. Knowing both Arabic and Kurdish will be an asset.”

Sabreen is a volunteer within the Kurdish language course, where she enjoys learning with the dozens who crowd the classroom, most of whom originally came from Anbar and Salah al Din governorates. The Kurdish lessons run for eight weeks, with students meeting three days per week at Sheikh Abbas community school. “I was studying psychology in university before we had to leave; I chose psychology so I could help other people. Sometimes I help the teacher explain what something in Kurdish means in more common Arabic.”

Sabreen now lives in a small cinderblock house on the edge of town with her parents and four siblings. She hopes to integrate with the community there. “My father still receives his pension, but no one in the family is working. I hope to find work soon, so I can afford to attend in university here in Sulaymaniyah to complete my degree in psychology. Learning Kurdish will help my future seem bright again.

“It's good for us to be able to speak to our neighbors in Kurdish. I don't think things will ever be normal for us again in Iraq, and I'm not sure when we can return to Fallujah. Before 2003, we could get in a car and drive to Baghdad. Now, I would not be safe even going home to Fallujah. While I wait to see how the future of my country unfolds, I want to become fluent in Kurdish so I can more comfortably become part of the community in Sulaymaniyah.”

IOM is responding to life-threatening needs in a rapidly changing environment, in addition to monitoring movements on the ground.

