

IRAQ

SITUATION REPORT



UNITED NATIONS

19-26 July 2004

OVERVIEW ►

In addition to its on-going operations, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is closely monitoring and addressing two issues seriously impacting majority of the Iraqi population: insufficient supply of electricity and water, particularly in the south of the country, as well as deteriorating availability of medicines. The UN is also continuing its involvement in improving the capacity of Iraqi central and local authorities, among others by facilitating training and study visits. In order to maximize its operational efficiency, the UNCT is undertaking a thorough review of its operations in Iraq in the first half of 2004 and effectiveness of the innovative Cluster Approach, employed by the UN since the end of 2003, to address the most pressing of Iraq's humanitarian, reconstruction and development needs.

HUMANITARIAN ►

Areas of humanitarian concern During the reporting period, confrontation between MNF and the Iraqi fighters continued in Samarra and Ramadi, while general insecurity prevailed in Ba'aqubah and Al-Kut. Fighting in Samarra involved use of airpower by the MNF. According to IRIN, the Iraqi Red Crescent and some of the NGOs, thousands of the Samarra's residents reportedly left the city towards Baghdad anticipating a major combat operation by the MNF against the fighters controlling the city. High level of criminality and violence persisted in Ba'aqubah and Al-Kut. According to the NGO sources, the security situation in Ba'aqubah is very violate and has put almost all activities of the humanitarian organisations to a halt. Both in Ba'aqubah and in Al-Kut, where clashes between armed gangs were reported this week, local police appeared unable to deal with the high level of criminality.

Continued water shortages in Basra Continuous shortages of piped water in Basra, a city of 1.9 million, and other areas of Southern Iraq, coupled increased use of contaminated water in the summer season, result in a high number of cases of Cholera, Hepatitis, watery diarrhea, bloody diarrhea, Typhoid Fever and viral Hepatitis and other water born diseases. In Basra, the very difficult water supply situation has left some 40% of city's population unable to access the piped water. This situation is further exacerbated by electricity shortages, accounting between 12 and 19 hours a day. Both the UN and the Programme Coordination Office (PCO) are developing contingency plans to address the eventual collapse of the Sweet Water Canal, being the main source of sweet water for the city. The UN Water and Sanitation Cluster continues to provide up to 800,000 liters a day to the vulnerable groups and inhabitants of the rural areas.

CLUSTER COORDINATION FOR IRAQ ►

Education and Culture (Cluster 1)



Coordination with the Iraqi authorities The UN Education and Culture Cluster met with the Iraqi Minister of Education on 19 July 2004. UN underlined its support in implementation of the priority activities set out by the Iraqi Ministry of Education (MOE), including establishment of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and strengthening of the vocational education in the country.

Capacity building During the week the Cluster facilitated two study tours for the civil servants of the MOE. A capacity building visit to Morocco allowed participants to build upon local experiences in curriculum reform, development of new textbooks and partial decentralisation of the curriculum at regional and school-level. A study tour to Thailand provided the Iraqi officials with an opportunity to learn about integration of non-formal approaches into the education system, as well as development of new curriculum and new school textbooks.

Culture With the aim of preventing further dilapidation of Iraqi artefacts, UNESCO is proceeding with rehabilitation of the Conservation Labs at the Iraqi Museum in Baghdad and equipping the National Heritage Institute (NHI) with specialized equipment, including of coolers to protect ancient relicts from further damage.

Health (Cluster 2)

Responding to acute shortages of drugs High level of violence in many areas of Iraq, resulting in a rapid increase in the number of emergency cases (injuries, fractures, burns), in tandem with an increase in the number of cases of water borne diseases during the summer season, has put a serious strain on Iraq's drug distribution system. Stocks in many of

IRAQ

SITUATION REPORT



UNITED NATIONS

19-26 July 2004

UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR IRAQ

the health care facilities are being exhausted before they are replenished, on a regular basis, by the state distribution company Kimadia.

In the wake of continuous reports on widespread shortages of drugs in many parts of Iraq, UN Health Cluster engaged Kimadia in a series of consultations aimed at strengthening the drug management and emergency response systems. The Cluster is supporting the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MOH) with both expertise and financial assistance in initiating emergency procurement and other measures to address deficiency of most vital drugs and medical supplies. In relation to the Ministry's appeal, WHO procured and delivered into Iraq some of the urgently needed medicines, including Rabies vaccines, anti-scorpion serum, Insulin and antihistaminic drugs. WHO provided also logistic support to the delivery to Iraq of 17 tonnes of drugs and medical supplies donated by Morocco, which included considerable amounts of Insulin, antibiotics, dressing materials and I.V. administration sets.

Disease prevention and monitoring Extensive disease prevention measures are being applied by the UN Health and Water and Sanitation Clusters to prevent spread of water-borne diseases in the South of Iraq, particularly in Basra city, through increasing the chlorine dose in municipal water supply, distributing chlorine tablets to households for household treatment of drinking water and strengthening water quality surveillance and monitoring. Thanks to these measures, less cases of Vibrio Cholera were reported until 15 July 2004 (42 cases) then during the same period of 2003 (64 cases), despite of large-scale water shortages in the South of Iraq. In the North of the country, fogging activities of the malaria and leishmaniasis control programme are ongoing in most of the Ninawa Governorate. An Expanded Programme of Immunisation for Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) is being finalized in Erbil and Tameem Governorates.

Capacity building The UN Health Cluster is seeking to strengthen disease prevention through provision of specialized training to the Iraqi specialists abroad. WHO facilitated participation of a senior representative from the Iraqi National Polio Laboratory in a specialized conference in Morocco, while IOM successfully completed training four Iraqi cardio surgeons in Interventional Cardiology in the Czech Republic.

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (Cluster 8)

Draft IDP Strategy for Iraq The UN Refugee and IDP Cluster spearheaded development of the Inter-Agency UN Strategy at the Heads of Agency meeting. During the reporting week, the draft Strategy was presented to the Meeting of the Heads of UN Agencies for Iraq as well as received substantial input from the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MODM).

Capacity Building UNHCR and IOM continue to support the capacity of the MODM by providing an intensive training to its staff. UNHCR conducted a three day workshop on International Legal Instruments and Protection on 26-28 July in Amman, while IOM completed a one-week training course on the IDP Monitoring Database and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for the MODM civil servants. IOM and UNHCR are also conducting comprehensive training for the staff of their NGO implementing partners in monitoring of IDP movements and populations in the Center-South and in the North of Iraq respectively.

Community-based projects In order to support integration of newly displaced populations, especially the Sunni Arabs originating from southern Iraq, with the hosting communities in Al-Anbar Governorate, IOM has provided some 500 IDPs and vulnerable host community women with vocational skills and assisted the local communities by rehabilitating sports facilities in local schools. In Babil Governorate, IOM has launched a water trucking and hygiene awareness project targeting some 4,000 IDPs and other vulnerable persons.

Assistance to the refugees in Iraq Following an sub-agreement with UNHCR, MODM started to pay rental subsidies to 400 evicted Palestinian refugee families in Baghdad, while UNHCR assists in return of Palestinian refugees from the no-man's land between Iraq and Jordan to Baghdad. An UNHCR's NGO implementing partner continues to provide assistance to over 500 Syrian refugees in Baghdad and Al Anbar Governorates.

Governance and Civil Society (Cluster 9)

IRAQ

SITUATION REPORT



UNITED NATIONS

19-26 July 2004

UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR IRAQ

High-level Ministerial meetings Over the past two weeks, the UN Governance and Civil Society Cluster has held a series of meetings with senior officials from various Iraqi ministries with a view to identify how best the UN can assist the ministries and develop a list of prioritized activities for ministerial approval. The **Ministry of Displacement and Migration** (MODM) indicated its interest in UN assistance in areas of public policy advice and administrative reform, such as establishing an office of the Inspector General and strengthening evaluation and internal audit functions. Capacity of the **Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works** (MMPW) will be strengthened by a on-the-job training focusing on modern management tools. In its consultations with the **Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation** (MOPDC), the UN offered its assistance in the development of a social strategy for the Government of Iraq, capacity building, development of integrated 'social safety nets' for the vulnerable groups of the Iraqi society and creation of an Iraqi National Forum to respond to UNDP's Arab Human Development Report. At the request of the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs** (MOLSA), IOM is assisting the Iraqi authorities in identifying approximately 2,000 potential candidates for vacancies recently announced by the **Ministry of Justice**.

The Cluster is also providing support, as a pilot programme, to the **Basra Governorate**, including capacity building, strengthening of delivery of public utilities and assistance to the vulnerable communities. If successful, the approach could be replicated in other governorates of Iraq. Unfortunately, the former deputy governor of Basra, who had been the UN's interlocutor on this project, was assassinated in Basra in the week of 11 July.

Capacity building A Democracy and Governance Strategy Workshop organised in Amman on 26-27 July 2004 by UNDP, OHCHR and UNAMI on behalf of the UN Governance and Civil Society Cluster, was attended by a high-level representatives of the Iraqi ministries of Justice and Human Rights, led by their respective ministers. The meeting was opened by the SRSG a.i.

Poverty Reduction And Human Development (Cluster 10)

Iraq Reconstruction and Employment Programme (IREP) is continuing in the Lower South Region, despite the tense security situation there. There were currently 35 projects ongoing in the region, involving 4,535 workers. Sixty two projects, providing short-term employment to over 7,700 Iraqis, have been implemented to-date in the south of Iraq to the value of over USD 1.5 million. Among other results, the IREP labour-intensive projects provided much needed rehabilitation works in many hospitals and Primary Health Centers (PHCs) in the region.

UNDG IRAQ TRUST FUND ►

The UNDG Iraq Trust Fund (ITF) Steering Committee, chaired by the SRSG a.i., approved four more projects for the UNDG ITF financing on 22 July 2004. The approved projects total USD 58,468,000 and include activities in the field of Internet education (Cluster 1), rehabilitation of Iraq's power plants (Cluster 4) and rehabilitation of Iraq's Marshlands (Cluster 5). The total value of all 29 projects approved by the Steering Committee for financing under the UNDG ITF has risen to USD 349 million. It is expected that most of this amount will be committed or disbursed before end of the year.

SRSG a.i. ►

Policy meetings The SRSG a.i. chaired weekly meetings of the Heads of the UN Agencies, Security Management Team (SMT), as well as the meeting of the UNDG ITF Steering Committee. He also participated by a teleconference link from Amman in meetings of the Secretary-General's Strategy Group and the Policy Group for Iraq to discuss arrangements for the deployment of the new SRSG, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi.

The SRSG a.i. met the Heads of IOM and UNIDO missions in Iraq, as well as the Head of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Task Force for Iraq. With the latter he discussed the involvement of UNEP in Iraq, particularly in the program of remediation of environmental hotspots and sustainable management of Mesopotamian Marshlands. The SRSG a.i. conferred also with a UNDP adviser, Mr. Nasser Saidi, former Minister of Economy and Trade of Lebanon, on access by Iraqi authorities to Lebanese experience in post-conflict reconstruction.

Follow-up to the high-level mission The SRSG a.i. led the efforts of the UN Country Team to operationalise guidelines received from the members of the high-level mission visiting Amman on 10-11 July 2004, lead by the

IRAQ

SITUATION REPORT



UNITED NATIONS

19-26 July 2004

UNDP Administrator, Mr. Mark Malloch-Brown. The UN Country Team reviewed the Cluster structure prior to a Programme Implementation Workshop held on 27-28 July 2004 and identified modalities for ensuring national and international personnel support to support the work of the ministries in Baghdad.

Governance and Democracy On 26 July 2004, the SRSG a.i. opened the Democracy and Governance Strategy Workshop organized in Amman by the UN Governance and Civil Society Cluster. In the course of the workshop, the Head of UNAMI met with the Iraqi Ministers of Human Rights and Justice to discuss possible UN's support to these ministries and their respective portfolios.

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