



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) of Recently Displaced Persons in the Kurdistan Region

**SULAYMANIYAH
GOVERNORATE
January 2007**

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I. Background¹

UNHCR² estimates that over 1.8 million people remained displaced within Iraq as of the end of December 2006, some 640,000 of whom were displaced in 2006 following the Samarra attacks in February 2006. These attacks resulted in an escalation of sectarian violence with large-scale revenge killings on both sides, alongside anti-state insurgency, counter-insurgency and crime. Overall, this led to widespread fatal violence and insecurity throughout most of Iraq. Mixed communities, particularly in Baghdad are bearing the brunt of the conflict between members of Iraq's principal religious groups, Shi'a and Sunni Muslims. Ethnic and religious minority groups in southern and central Iraq, including Christians and Kurds, are without strong protection networks and are particularly vulnerable to violence and intimidation.

Many IDPs are seeking refuge in the region of Kurdistan, on which this report focuses. In part due to its relative security, the region of Kurdistan has witnessed a steady movement of families into the area since 2003. In 2006, this flow increased dramatically as families continued to relocate due to threats and generalized violence. This population influx has placed additional pressure on the real estate market and public service sector in Kurdistan and has led to increased concerns about security and demographic shifts. At the same time the KRG has also benefited from the migration of professionals who have brought with them skills and disposable incomes that boost the local economy.

II. Summary of Monitoring Activities

Monitoring activities in Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah include regular visits by UNHCR's partners to IDP locations to assess conditions, regular consultation with KRG officials and other stakeholders (including IRCS) to monitor the overall IDP population, and conducting Rapid Needs Assessments and other specialized surveys.

¹ The Report was researched and drafted with its partner IRD.

² UNHCR Update on Newly-Displaced Populations in Iraq, 15 November 2006. See also *Cluster F Update on Newly Displaced Populations in Iraq* as of 31 December 2006.

The Rapid Needs Assessment gathers information about basic services and needs including access to food, health care and water, as well as cause of flight, property and future intentions, through standardized surveying across the three Northern Governorates. The assessments are overseen by a monitoring manager with the assistance of six monitoring teams (each team consisting of two persons) with two teams working in each Governorate, and two data input officers. Monitoring teams complete between 150-175 surveys per week depending on location visited and length of interview. The monitors consulted with other stakeholders to gather additional information.

From 10 October until 30 November 2006, IRD surveyed 996 families across the Governorates of Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, seeking to cover all the areas of IDP concentration in order to fully represent and provide information on the situation and needs of this group. 257 were surveyed in the Sulaymaniyah Governorate. In addition, information gathered directly from the authorities was included in the report.

III. Summary of Governorate

Administrative capital
districts surveyed

Sulaymaniyah City
Chamchamal, Dokan,
Halabjah and Sulaymaniyah
City

Size
Population

15,852 km²
1,800,000

Post 2003 IDP families
(cut-off-date - 30 Nov
2006)

Arab	Christian	Kurd
2,449	77	1,511
Total:³		4,037

No. IDP families surveyed

257 (6% of the total estimated
IDP population)

Source of data

Directorate of Security for Kurds and Arabs; religious
institutions for Christians.



The survey focused on the above four districts due to their high concentration of IDPs at the time of survey planning. Overall, 6% + of Sulaymaniyah's IDP population was surveyed.

Numbers and Ethnicity: Sulaymaniyah is home to the second highest number of IDPs, hosting 21% of the total IDP population. The number of IDPs from the south and center of Iraq seeking refuge in Sulaymaniyah Governorate has been steadily increasing. From October until early November 2006, the number of IDP families increased from 1,281 to nearly 5,000 by the end of December.⁴ 61% of IDPs in Sulaymaniyah are Arab, 37% are Kurd and the remaining 2% are Christian. The majority of these IDPs have fled sectarian violence in Baghdad.

Entry and Shelter: All IDPs entering Sulaymaniyah Governorate must register at entry checkpoints established by the authorities. However, Kurds from Kirkuk and Khanaqeen (Governorate of Diyala) are generally denied entry to the Governorate for political and

³ The majority of these IDP families arrived during the course of 2006.

⁴ By the end of December 2006, there were 4,939 IDP families in Sulaymaniyah Governorate.

demographic reasons, unless they are visiting only. Sponsorship⁵ is not required for entry but is required in order to reside and remain in Sulaymaniyah. IDPs with residence are allowed to remain in Sulaymaniyah and integrate into the community;⁶ there are no official barriers to employment. After registering with the local authorities and obtaining a residency permit, IDPs may rent homes or live with relatives, while non-Kurds are not allowed to purchase immovable property. At the time of the survey, the government did not provide shelter for IDPs in public buildings or tents, although one family surveyed did report living in a public building.

Assistance: The KRG in Sulaymaniyah does not provide official financial support to IDPs. The IRCS distributes assistance to new arrivals including flour, blankets and household items.

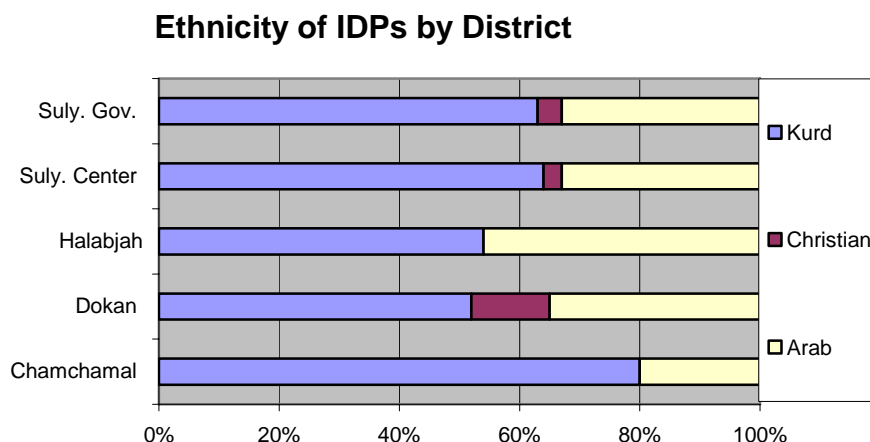
Food and Basic Services: While food may be readily purchased in Sulaymaniyah's markets, few IDP families have been able to transfer their Public Distribution System (PDS) food rations to their new location. Generally, IDP families once they have legalized their stay have access to basic services such as water, health services and schools on par with local residents. All the children surveyed were vaccinated in their current location.

IV. Analysis of Rapid Needs Assessment Survey Findings

1. Location, Ethnicity, Religion, Gender and Vulnerabilities

Location: The majority of IDP families are living in Sulaymaniyah City. Families are also located in the districts of Halabjah, Dokan and Chamchamal.

Ethnicity: 61% of the IDP families surveyed are Arab, 37% are Kurd and 2% are Christian. In all surveyed districts, the majority of the IDP families were Arab.



Religion: 74% of families surveyed are Sunni Muslim, 21% are Shi'a Muslim, 4% are Christian and 1% is Sabeen or Yazidi.

Gender: In total, the survey group comprised 1,258 individuals, of whom 51% were female and 49% male. 45% were below 18 years of age and the average family size was five persons.

Vulnerabilities: 20% of families surveyed reported vulnerability. 58% referred to a seriously ill

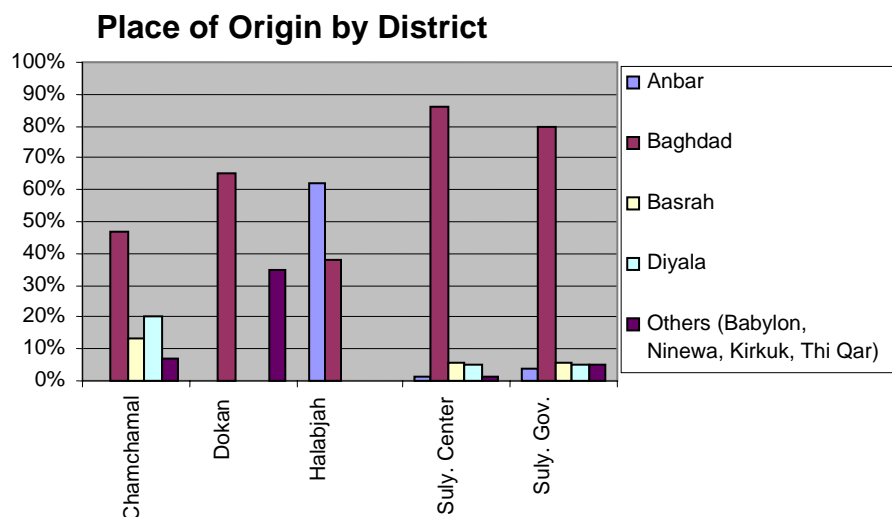
⁵ Doctors, owners of companies/restaurants and university teachers are currently exempt from needing sponsorship.

⁶ There are special regulations for IDPs wishing to settle in the Kalar District.

family member and 15% referred to being a female-headed household. 85% of all vulnerabilities were reported by IDPs in Sulaymaniyah City.

2. Place of Origin, Flight and Intentions

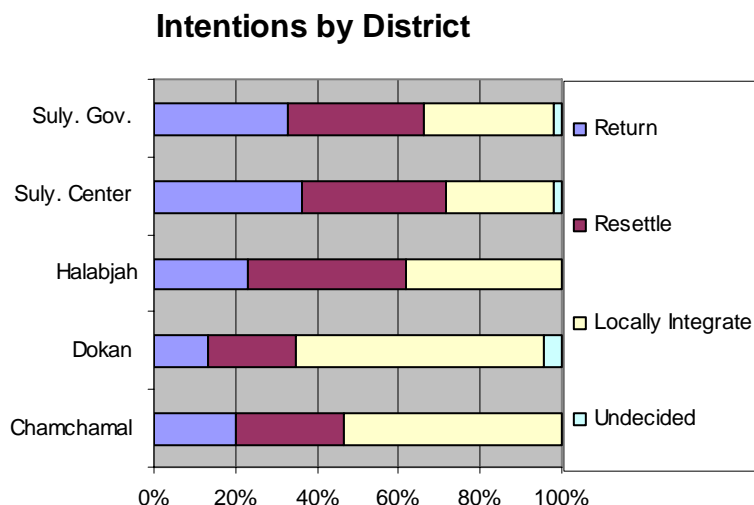
Place of Origin: 80% of the IDP families surveyed in Sulaymaniyah are from Baghdad, 6% are from Basrah, 5% are from Diyala and 9% are from Anbar, Babylon, Ninewa and Tameem Governorates. The majority of surveyed families from Baghdad are currently residing in Sulaymaniyah City.



Flight/Resources:

Generalized violence was sighted as the main cause of flight by 96% of families surveyed, 38% also cited direct threats to life as a cause of flight. 97% of families brought winter clothes with them and 52% brought tools. 38% of families brought their own transportation, starting at a low of 13% in Chamchamal. Most families that did not drive to Sulaymaniyah in their own vehicle arrived by taxi; others may have flown. The number of IDP arrivals increased after the Samarra attacks, with peaks in July, August and September 2006, and then again in December 2006.

Intentions: Of the surveyed population, 33% of IDPs plan to return, 33% to relocate, 32% to locally integrate, and 2% are undecided. Over 61% of IDP families surveyed in Dokan and 53% of IDP families surveyed in Chamchamal plan to integrate locally, compared to 27% in Sulaymaniyah City and 38% in Halabjah.



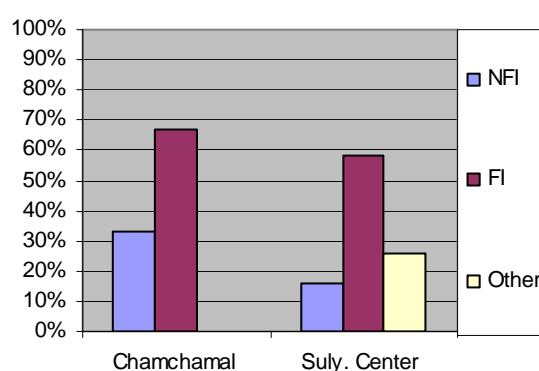
3. Security Situation in Current Location

Security: 99-100% surveyed families throughout the Governorate reported feeling safe and well-received by the host community. No family members were reportedly detained throughout the Governorate. All of the families reported having some form of ID with them, most commonly general ID cards or nationality certificates (85- 98%). Only 18% of IDP families surveyed held their passports.

4. Humanitarian Assistance

Humanitarian Assistance: Only 9% of surveyed families received humanitarian assistance following their arrival in Sulaymaniyah. Families in Dokan and Halabjah did not report receiving assistance, while 20% in Chamchamal and 9% in Sulaymaniyah did. IRCS was the main provider across Sulaymaniyah, providing 77% of overall humanitarian assistance. 100% of the humanitarian assistance received in Chamchamal came from IRCS. Other sources of assistance in Sulaymaniyah City included religious groups (18%) and MoDM/other official bodies (10%).⁷

Type of Assistance by District

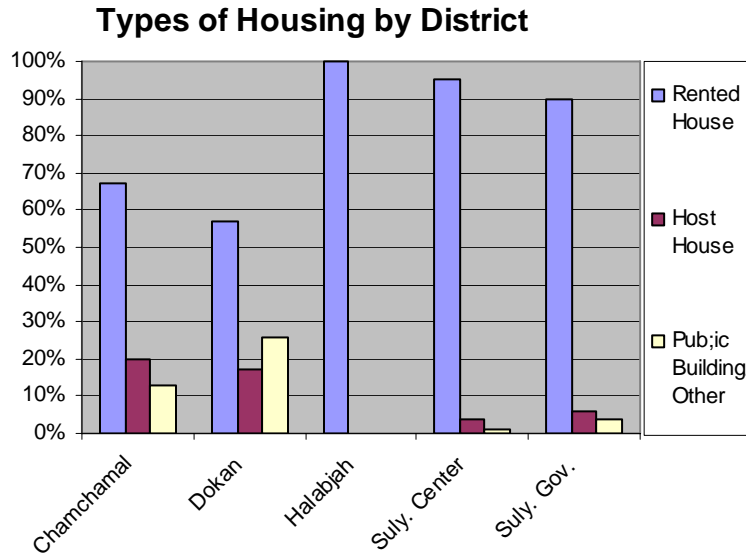


The authorities do not officially provide financial support, but individual mayor's offices have given limited assistance in some areas. The most common form of assistance received was distribution of food items.

5. Access to Basic Services and Shelter

Housing: 90% of families reported living in a rented house, 6% reported living with host families and 4% reported living in a public building/other. No families reported living in tents or former military camps. 100% of families in Halabjah reported living in rented houses; in Chamchamal and Dokan between 17-20% of families were living with host families. No families surveyed reported facing pressure to leave. Though there is no current housing crisis, most of these families are having difficulties finding jobs and are therefore living off savings. The lack of regular income combined with the steady rise in rents due to the constant influx of IDPs, means that the rent-paying families will find it difficult to continue meeting their own needs as the length of their displacement extends.

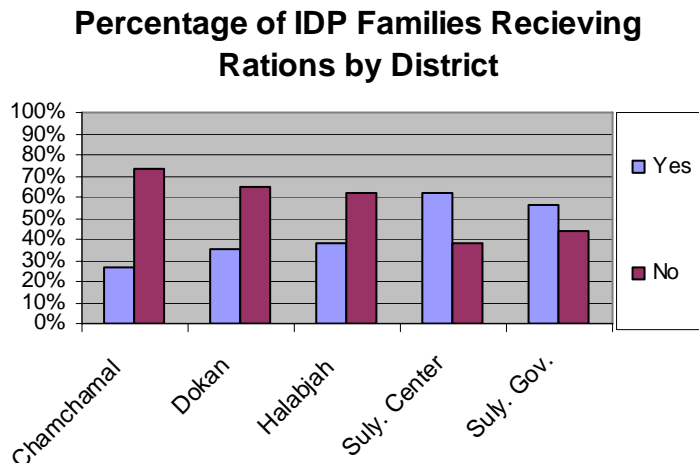
⁷ During December 2006, UNHCR released NFIs to the authorities for distribution to some 200 IDP families.



Food: Access to public food rations is a main concern of IDPs. All Iraqi citizens and refugees within Iraq are entitled to receive public rations, tied to their official residence; many poor families rely heavily on Iraq's Public Distribution System. Transfer of food ration cards is a time-consuming process requiring the completion of paperwork at both place of original registration and the new location. Since many IDPs left their homes at short notice, few were able to initiate procedures at their place of origin and some are unable to return for security reasons. At the beginning of December 2006, a practical solution was found by the relevant authorities: the Ministry of Statistics will deliver a list of IDPs in Sulaymaniyah that wish to receive their rations, to the Ministry of Trade. With completion of this process, all IDPs (with the exception of Kurds originating from Kirkuk and Khanaqeen) on this list will be able to collect their rations in Sulaymaniyah even though their ration cards will remain registered at their place of origin.

However, there are legitimate concerns that this process may take several months to complete and it is not clear how readily the list will be updated with the newly displaced. In short, most IDP families may remain without their rations for some time.

Only 56% of families were able to collect their public food rations throughout the Governorate. In Sulaymaniyah City, 62% of families have access to their food rations, compared to 38% or less in the remaining districts surveyed. All families receiving rations in all locations said their rations were incomplete. No family reported receiving regular food assistance from any other source.



Healthcare: All families surveyed reported having access to healthcare and services. No families reported contracting any communicable diseases in 45 days prior to surveying. Only 7% of families were visited by a health worker throughout the Governorate; families in Halabjah reported the most visits at 38%. All visits were for the purpose of vaccination. Only 8% of families throughout Sulaymaniyah reported involvement in a vaccination campaign; 54% in Halabjah reported involvement.

Water and Sanitation:

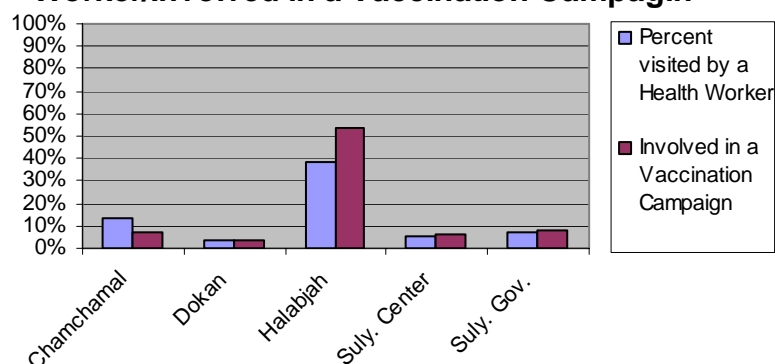
100% of families reported regular access to water. 99% reported municipal water networks as their main source of water. 100% of the families also have access to toilets.

Electricity and Fuel:

97-100% of families in Halabjah, Chamchamal and Sulaymaniyah City

reported having access to electricity for up to three hours per day. Only 0-3% reported having electricity for more than four hours per day. In contrast, in Dokan 52% of families surveyed reported having more than four hours of electricity per day and the remaining 48% have access for up to three hours per day. 100% of the families surveyed have access to fuel including benzene and kerosene.

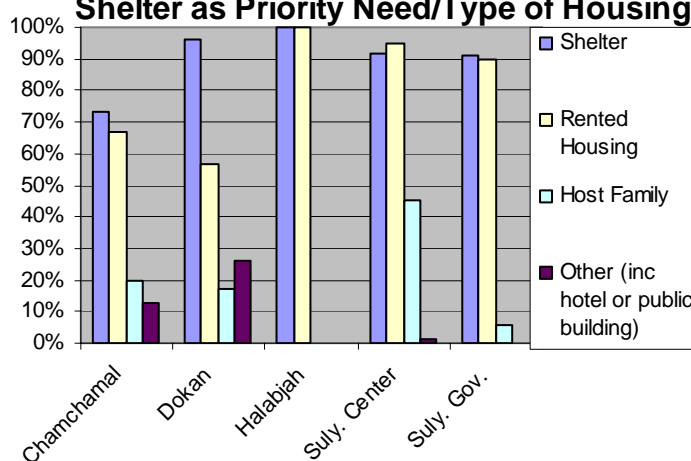
Percentage of Families Visited by a Health Worker/Involved in a Vaccination Campaign



6. Priority Needs and Suggested Interventions

Shelter was overwhelmingly identified as the main priority need across all districts; 73-100% of families selected housing as their principal need despite IDPs immediate housing needs having been met. 90% of families live in rented housing, 6% with a host family, less than 1% in public buildings and none in tents. Families may be concerned about the sustainability of their current shelter solutions as the cause of their displacement shows little sign of abating and the length of their displacement extends. Continuing rent payments as savings are depleted and work opportunities remaining scarce is likely to be a major challenge, particularly in the face of price increases caused by the steady influx of IDPs. Those staying with host families may also be concerned about over-stay. After shelter, the next priority needs were work, health and food. The second priority need was overwhelmingly employment. Only families in

Shelter as Priority Need/Type of Housing



families may also be concerned about over-stay. After shelter, the next priority needs were work, health and food. The second priority need was overwhelmingly employment. Only families in

Sulaymaniyah City selected a third choice, evenly split between healthcare and access to food.

