
**Quarterly Report
October – December 2009**

Iraq Programme

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Description of conflict

Six years after the regime change, Iraq is still facing serious challenges that could reverse the desired direction of development. Over the last three decades, Iraq has suffered from successive conflicts and a repressive regime, which consequently forced hundreds of thousands to leave their places of origin and caused the destruction of social and human capital to the point that it will take years, even under normal circumstances, before it can reach the prosperity and stability it had in the late 1970s. After the regime change in 2003, there were high expectations for creating a stable and democratic Iraq, establishing a strong market economy and favourable environment for return. Unfortunately, events took a different direction - the governing system and delivery of services collapsed and were followed by a severe security deterioration. A serious blow to the already fragile situation was caused by the Samarra shrine bombing on February 22nd 2006. The outburst of sectarian violence that subsequently escalated resulted in the movement of hundreds of thousands of people along sectarian lines.

Security improvements during mid-2008 revived hopes that reconstruction and reconciliation could be re-started. Unfortunately, not much progress has been achieved as the national political scene remains focused on short-term political gains rather than on the implementation of reforms, rule of law and most importantly, the delivery of basic services.

At the start of 2009, a very prolonged post local election negotiation took place, focussing more on different agendas than the improvement of living conditions for the population. In mid-2009, following the withdrawal of American troops from urban areas, security took a downturn, with a steady increase in the number of incidents, initially in Baghdad and Mosul, but with a domino effect spreading insecurity to other governorates. The last quarter of 2009 witnessed several massive bombings in Baghdad and Anbar, mainly targeting governmental buildings and public institutions causing hundreds of civilian casualties. These incidents have triggered tensions inside Iraq as serious breaches in the State security system were revealed. In addition, many politicians expressed the view that some of the neighboring countries could have been involved. On another level, crime rates have also increased across Iraq. One of the main concerns currently expressed by the average Iraqi is kidnapping and robberies.

<p>Displacement situation</p>	<p>Iraq continues to be faced with one of the largest displacement and humanitarian crises in the world. It is estimated that there are 1.6 million post-2006 IDPs¹, in addition to an estimated 1.2 million IDPs pre-2006² and more than 1 million Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iran).</p> <p>The IDPs are still facing harsh living conditions due to the poor state of infrastructure (e.g. available hours of electricity, access to potable water) and the insufficient delivery of basic social services. One major challenge for the displaced populations, particularly those living in the public buildings is the threat of eviction. DRC tries to address this issue both through the Protection and Assistance Centres (PACs) and through the Governorate Emergency Cells (GECs).</p> <p>Due to deteriorated security and poor infrastructure, the return movement of IDPs and Iraqi refugees from abroad has further slowed down during the last quarter³. The authorities in KRG have reported an increase in the number of asylum seekers (from Syria and Turkey), mainly in Sulaimanyah.</p>
<p>DRC'S PRESENCE</p>	
<p>DRC history</p>	<p>DRC has been working in Diyala governorate (north-central) since April 2003 and in Lower South (Basra) since March 2004. DRC was one of the first agencies to begin operations in Iraq after the invasion and ensured a rapid-start-up to respond to the humanitarian needs of 60 000 secondary-displaced Arab IDPs, who mainly fled the Kurdish north to the Arab Diyala governorate in the south. As the security situation deteriorated, DRC expatriate staff left Diyala in April 2004 and continued implementation by remote management. During late 2005, the security situation further deteriorated and resulted in a downscaling of activities in Diyala which has continued during 2006 and 2007.</p> <p>In Lower South, DRC opened its office in Basra in March 2004 but was soon after forced to relocate expatriate staff to Kuwait due to security concerns. The operation start-up was consequently delayed, but picked up during 2005 and has further improved since.</p> <p>In September 2007 DRC took over activities in three south central governorates, Kerbala, Wassit and Missan, from Ockenden International and all management for Iraq operations were centralised to Amman. In 2008 activities were started in the Kurdish area, Babylon and Thi Qar. During the last quarter of 2008, DRC started the process of GEC capacity building in Kirkuk.</p> <p>In 2009 DRC remained operational in the same governorates as in 2008. The main offices responsible for the Iraq programme management are located in Erbil, Diyala, Basra, Missan and Amman, Jordan.</p>
<p>Brief narrative description of current DRC programme</p>	<p>DRC is presently implementing programs across 12 of the 18 Governorates in Iraq, namely, Basra, Diyala, Missan, Wassit, Kerbala, Qadissiya, Babylon, Thi-Qar, Kirkuk, Dohuk, Erbil and Sulamanyah. The DRC Iraq national team consists of roughly 100 staff.</p> <p>All DRC projects are implemented in co-operation with local stakeholders such</p>

	<p>as the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM), Governorate officials, local councils and committees.</p> <p>Activities currently implemented by DRC are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Emergency distribution of non-food items as the need dictates. To date, emergency distributions have been implemented in Diyala governorate which has been impacted extensively by the ongoing conflict. – Income generation activities are implemented in Basra and Diyala governorates in the form of in-kind grants (IKG) and vocational training to vulnerable households and individuals. – Shelter assistance is provided through rehabilitation of existing housing units in Basra, Qadissiya, Missan, Wassit, Kerbala and Diyala and construction of new units in Missan. DRC also undertakes minor house repairs in Missan, Basra and Diyala. – Infrastructures are rehabilitated by implementing Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) focusing on improving water and sanitation conditions for selected communities and households. QIPs are implemented in Diyala, Wassit, Kerbala, Qadissiya, Missan and Basra. – Protection activities are implemented in Missan, Kerbala, Wassit and Diyala governorates through four Protection and Assistance Centres (PACs) manned by lawyers, and community workers. – Capacity building is a priority for DRC and therefore constitutes a cross-cutting issue in all projects being implemented. Three specific capacity building projects are implemented: technical assistance and sub-grants to National NGOs in Diyala, support to the Governorate Emergency Cell (GEC) in 10 governorates with a focus on building the capacities of local actors on disaster preparedness and management, and to the Bureau of Displacement and Migration (BDM) in the Kurdish region (KRG) to improve their capacities in strategic planning and external communication.
Strategic objective of programme	Improved protection and promotion of durable solutions to vulnerable and displacement affected populations across Iraq.
Immediate objectives of programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Alleviate the immediate subsistence needs of the displacement affected populations and other groups affected by emergency situations. – Provide appropriate livelihood assistance which addresses the needs of displacement affected groups with a focus on supporting returnees in attaining durable solutions – Strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders to address the protection needs of the displacement affected population.
Target group(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Internally displaced persons – Returnees – Refugees – Vulnerable host communities and households
Main sector(s) /type(s) of intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Protection – Shelter – Livelihoods

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Capacity Building – Emergency distributions
List of donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Danida – UNHCR – SIDA
MAIN DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE PAST QUARTER	
Main external developments and challenges faced during the past quarter – in terms of politics, displacement situation and security	<p><i>Political issues</i> The last quarter witnessed a very intense debate on the legislative election law. The conflicting agendas of the various religious and political groups contributed to a protracted discussion on the election law that was finally adopted on 7 December 2009. The late adoption of the law caused re-scheduling of the elections from January (the constitutional deadline was 31 January 2010) to the 7th of March 2010. Many groups started their electoral negotiations in this context of acute political tension and security deterioration.</p> <p><i>Economic issues</i> On the 11th and 12th of December, the tendering on oil fields in the South and Central regions took place. Different companies and groupings of companies (from Russia, China, Malaysia, Japan, etc.) won large contracts to develop oil fields in the southern parts of the country.</p> <p><i>Security issues</i> The fourth quarter of 2009 continued to witness many incidents that attest of the general volatile security situation in the country. Indicators show that the overall level of violence in Iraq has decreased and is now comparable to the lowest levels since 2003 both in terms of number of security incidents and number of casualties. However, since the second half of 2009, there is a trend of mass-casualty bombings that result in the death of hundreds of people. During the reported period, two massive bombings occurred in Baghdad respectively on October 25 and December 8, 2009. As for the previous ones, they targeted governmental institutions and caused not least than 300 killed and hundreds of wounded civilians.</p> <p>In Diyala, the security has been deteriorating since the first quarter of 2009. The number of attacks against civilians and military remained high during the reporting period and affects the accessibility of DRC staff to some areas. In the Southern provinces, the number of security related incidents is on steady rise (SAF, IED, mortars, magnetic bombs) with tactics and equipments getting more sophisticated.</p> <p>In addition, the level of criminality remains high (robberies, kidnappings, looting).</p>
Main internal achievements and challenges during the past quarter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implementation of the planned activities (UNHCR, DANIDA, IOM) without major problems
Main funding	DRC has submitted proposals to UNHCR and IOM for 2010.

**developments
during the past
quarter**

DRC signed 2 years agreements with DANIDA and SIDA.