

Quarterly Report
July - September 2010

Iraq Programme

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Description of conflict

Seven years after regime change, Iraq is still facing serious challenges that could reverse the desired direction of development. Over the last three decades, Iraq 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 would take years, even under normal circumstances, to reach the prosperity and stability it enjoyed 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 security deteriorated. A serious blow to the already fragile situation was caused by the Samarra Shrine bombing on 22 February 2006. The outburst of sectarian violence that subsequently escalated resulted in the movement of hundreds of thousands of people along sectarian lines.

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

Displacement situation

Iraq continues to be faced with one of the largest displacement and humanitarian crises in the world. It is estimated that there are 1.5 million post-2006 IDPs¹, in addition to an estimated 1.1 million IDPs pre-February 2006² and more than 1 million Iraqis who fled to neighbouring countries (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Iran).

One major challenge for the displaced populations, particularly those living in public buildings is the threat of eviction. DRC is addressing this threat through its Protection and Assistance Centres (PAC) and Governorate Emergency Cells (GEC).

Following the improvements in security during late 2008 and 2009, a number of families decided to return to their areas of origin. UNHCR reported in January 2010 that more than 200,000 individuals returned in 2009. Not all areas, however, are suitable for a safe and dignified return. The ongoing conflict (characterised by sectarianism) affected the movement of returnees. Many families who come from mixed areas returned to the same governorate where they resided but not to the same location. They preferred to return to more "homogenous" areas.

As for the IDPs, returnees are facing harsh living conditions due to the poor state of infrastructure (e.g. limited access to electricity and access to potable water) and the insufficient delivery of basic social services. During the past quarter the number of returnees has dropped significantly

especially in governorates like Diyala due to instability in the political climate as the new government is yet to be formed. This, along with the release of many prisoners and the return of militias such as that of Al Qaeda has led to a significant drop in the number of returnees by almost half.

DRC'S PRESENCE

DRC history

DRC has been working in Diyala governorate (north-central) since April 2003 and in Lower South (Basrah) since March 2004. DRC was one of the first agencies to begin operations in Iraq after the invasion and ensured 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 south of Diyala governorate. As the security situation deteriorated, DRC expatriate staff left Diyala in April 2004 and continued Programme implementation through 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.

DRC opened its office in Basrah 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.

In September 2007 DRC took over activities in three south central governorates; Kerbala, Wassit and Missan from Ockenden International. Management of Iraq operations was remotely controlled from Amman - Jordan. In 2008 activities started in the Kurdish area, Babylon, and Thi-Qar. In 2009, DRC started GEC capacity building in Kirkuk. The Iraq programme is managed from offices in Erbil, Diyala, Basrah, Missan and Jordan.

Brief narrative description of current DRC programme

DRC is presently implementing projects across 12 of the 18 Governorates in Iraq, namely: Basrah, Diyala, Missan, Wassit, Kerbala, Babylon, Thi-Qar, Kirkuk, Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. The DRC Iraq national team consists of over 150 professionals.

All DRC projects are implemented in cooperation with local stakeholders such as the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM), Governorate officials, local councils and committees.

Activities currently implemented by DRC are:

- **Emergency distribution** of non food items as the need dictates. Emergency distributions are implemented in Diyala Governorate which continues to suffer from ongoing conflict.
- **Self-Resilience/Livelihoods** activities are implemented in Basrah and Diyala governorates in the form of small in kind grants (IKG) and vocational trainings to vulnerable households.
- **Shelter Rehabilitation** is provided through house rehabilitations in Basrah, Qadissiya, Missan, Wassit, Diyala and Kerbala. DRC also undertakes minor house repairs in Missan, Basrah, 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 being

	<p>implemented in Diyala, Basrah, Missan, Kerbala, Wassit and Sulaymaniyah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Protection activities are implemented in Missan, Kerbala, Diyala and Wassit governorates through three Protection and Assistance Centres (PACs) manned by lawyers, monitors, social workers, and database officers. – Capacity building is a priority for DRC and therefore constitutes a cross-cutting activity in all projects implemented by DRC. This is through Two projects; sub-grants to National NGOs in Diyala and support to the Governorate Emergency Cell (GEC) in 11 governorates with a focus on building the capacities of local actors. – Community Development and individual assistance to FHHs (IDPs, returnees and vulnerable host community members) through information, counselling and referral services. This is done through a Community Centre in Baaquba that serves as a hub for all the community development activities
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. – Contribute to creating a protective environment for the displaced across target areas
Target group(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Internally displaced persons – Returnees - of IDPs and refugees. – Refugees – Vulnerable host communities and households
Main sector(s) /type(s) of intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Protection – Shelter Rehabilitation – Self-resilience/Livelihoods – Capacity Building – Emergency distributions – Infrastructure rehabilitation
List of donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – DANIDA – SIDA – UNHCR – IOM

MAIN DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE PAST QUARTER

Main external developments and challenges faced during the past quarter - in terms of politics, displacement	<p><i>Security and Political issues</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security situation in KRG witnessed renewed shelling on the border areas with Iran and Turkey. The bombing led to outbreak of fire in the upland forests of Zakho district in the province of Dahuk, as well as a temporary displacement. However, most of the damage is on land and properties. In addition, a number of incidents occurred
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situation and security

during the reporting period. Several small-scale explosions were reported in Erbil. Towards the end of September, PKK declared the extension of the cease-fire agreement with Turkey till further notice.

- On another hand, KRG rejected to receive aircrafts carrying Iraqi asylum seekers who were forcibly deported from UK and other EU countries. Henceforward, there was a dispute between the Interior Ministry in the Kurdistan Region and UK officials on the issue of deportation of Iraqi refugees from UK. Officials from the British Home Office say they should repatriate asylum seekers whose requests for asylum were refused and were subsequently illegally staying in Britain. Around 60 Iraqi refugees are still in an asylum seeker reception centre near Heathrow airport awaiting deportation. The Human Rights Committee in the Kurdistan Parliament deplored actions taken by some European countries, notably Britain, against the Kurdish asylum seekers and their forced deployment back to Iraq through Baghdad International Airport.
- In Diyala, security was still bad. An escalation in violence was reported towards the end of July and during August, creating new security challenges across the province. Families were murdered, car bombings, IEDs of various kinds, attacks on the centres of awakening groups and police checkpoints, the blowing of some houses of civilians. All these incidents caused the displacement of families and individuals within the cities of the province or even to Kurdistan region. This security deterioration almost stopped IDPs from returning (no figures are available currently). A widespread of threat letters and leaflets, writings on the walls inside the cities' centres alluded to the return of Al-Qaida and other militias. Members of those militias were indeed observed in their previous locations. The most notable form of murder is assassinations by weapons with silencers. All the explosions targeted civilians. Such violence has affected the general security situation negatively which hindered movement all over the province due to the widespread of security forces in the streets, the blocking of many roads especially inside the cities and the strict precautionary measures at the checkpoints. In general the governorate witnessed medium sized offensive acts by the government against insurgents' strongholds in the governorate.
- The security situation in the south generally deteriorated during the reporting period. While in a governorate like Kerbala where religious occasions occur, attacks such as those that took place on the 27th of July were expected to happen during a pilgrimage. The attack did not constitute a new trend or a surprising incident. Other attacks, however, in what were considered relatively calm areas, did. The 25th of August bombings in Basra were a good example as the city had not witnessed any major security incidents since 2008. Basra was not the only governorate that witnessed security deterioration between the southern governorates, attacks against civilians and governmental bodies (the police as an example) also occurred in Wassit and Kerbala. Many factors chipped into this deterioration as most of which could be linked to the political situation, namely the deadlock in forming a new government since March parliamentary elections.
- An increase was also noted in the number of rocket and mortar attacks against American bases such as the one happened in the governorate of Missan. This came in line with the withdrawal of

American troops and the intention of some militant groups to capitalise and claim some credit for the withdrawal.

- At the end of the reporting period Muqtada Al-Sadr declared his support for a second term in premiership for Nuri Al-Maliki. The decision was surprising for many followers as the Sadrist trend was one of those in the forefront of opposition to a second term for Al-Maliki. Almost instantly, and according to some inhabitants of the southern governorates, a number of detainees affiliated with the trend were released. Residents of major cities feared increased insurgency as many of the released were said to have been involved in criminal activities openly. Also reported, was the return of militia members who went into hiding since 2008 (after the military campaign was organized against militias in Baghdad and some of the southern governorates). Reportedly many of them returned from Iran and were moving freely in their old neighbourhoods (at this point not openly carrying weapons though).
- Sporadic protests against the lack of services (e.g. electricity) occurred during the reporting period. However, not at the same intensity level as those occurred in June 2010. Criminality was still at high levels in most governorates and was difficult to measure if they had increased or not.

Main internal achievements and challenges during the past quarter

- All 2009 programmes (DANIDA, UNHCR, IOM) were successfully completed despite constrains of an unstable political and security situations. As for the 2010 programmes, below the table shows the level of achievement according to the various committed outcomes by region and donors. So far all project are on track according to time line.

A- North			
Region	Donor	Project	% of achievement
KRG	SIDA	Capacity Building to Bureau of Displacement and Migration	69%
		Capacity Building to GEC (11 Governorates)	59%
	IOM	8 QIPs	93%
Dyala	IOM	10 QIPs	100%
		Community Centre for Female Headed Households	94%
	DANIDA	In Kind Grant	50%
		Capacity Building for Local NGOs	77%
		QIPs	10%
UNHCR	PAC	100%	
Total Average			73%

B- South			
Region	Donor	Project	% of achievement
Basra	UNHCR	QIPs	100%
		IDP Complexes	100%
		Shelter	5%

	IOM	QIPs	100%
	DANIDA	In Kind Grant	100%
		Vocational Training	97%
Diwaniyah	UNHCR	Shelter	5%
Missan	IOM	QIPs	100%
	UNHCR	IDP Complexes	55%
		Protection Assistance Centres	111%
Wassit	IOM	QIPs	83%
	UNHCR	Protection Assistance Centres	81%
Babylon	IOM	QIPs	100%
Kerbala	UNHCR	Protection Assistance Centres	112%
Total Average			82%

Main funding developments during the past quarter

DRC has signed agreements with UNHCR and IOM for a number of projects.