

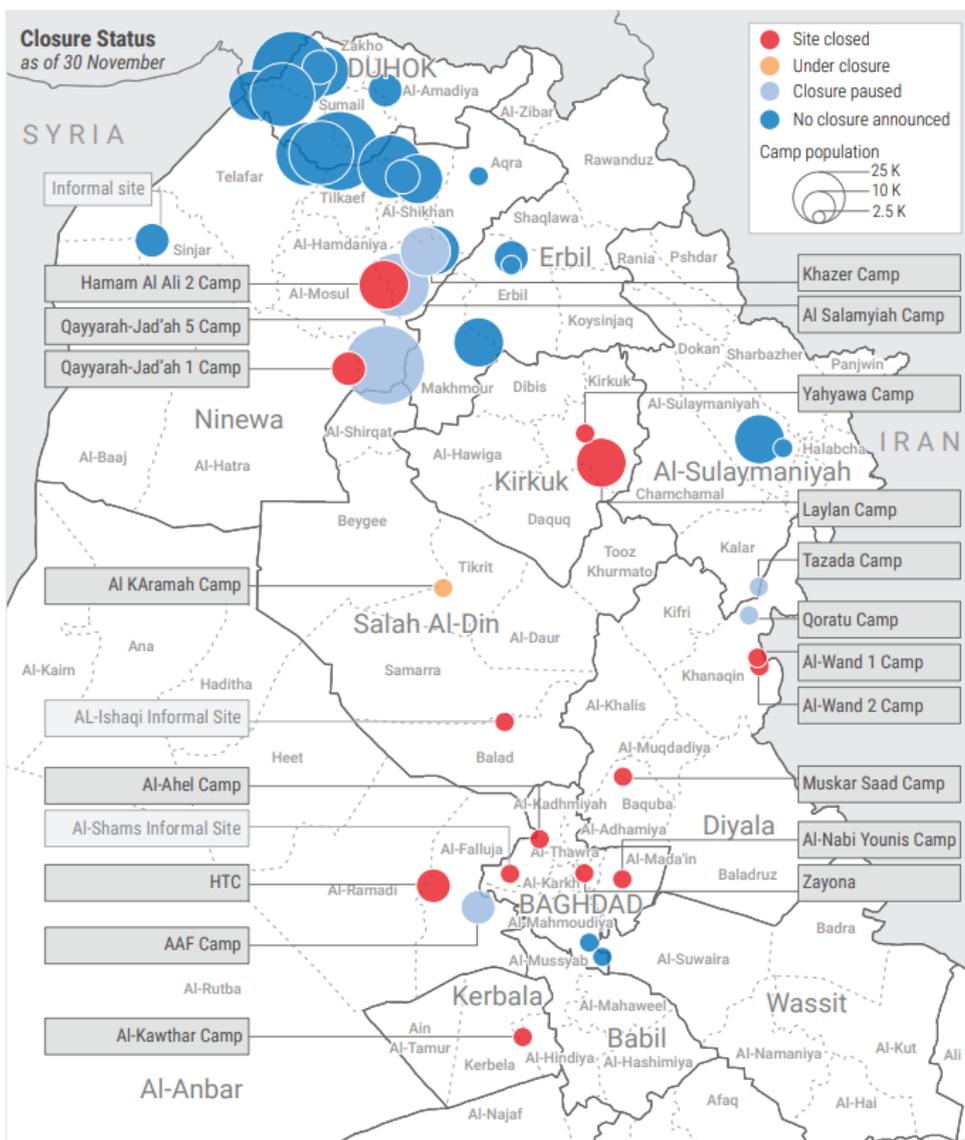
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Families in Essian IDP Camp, northern Ninewa
[Photo Credit: OCHA]

Closure of IDP Camps Continues



Camps hosting 251,000 of Iraq's internally displaced persons (IDPs) continued to close during November 2020, as mandated by the Government of Iraq (GOI). As of 30 November, 32,000 people had been affected by the recent camp closures, ongoing since 14 October: 12 camps and two informal sites had closed; one camp (Al-Karama, in Salah al-Din) was in the process of closing; and three formal camps—AAF (Anbar), Al-Salamiyah (Ninewa), and Jad'ah 5 (Ninewa)—remained open. An additional 25 IDP camps under the administration of the Kurdistan Regional Government remain open; conflicting indications regarding the future of the camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq have been made by various government authorities, however, the camps are expected to remain open during the immediate future. Many departing IDPs indicated to protection partners that they cannot return to areas of origin and do not have other options for safe, voluntary, and dignified resettlement. There are significant concerns regarding the welfare and risks faced by many households departing camps, including those who face acute vulnerability in return areas.

According to [departure follow-up surveys of IDPs affected by sudden camp closures](#), the top three needs cited by those who had to leave camps at short notice include shelter, livelihoods, and food. Approximately one-third of respondents report that they lack access to sufficient drinking water supplies, and over half report they lack adequate access to hygiene items. Respondents report that their primary source of income since leaving a camp is borrowing money, selling household items, or daily labour. Forty per cent of respondents report that they have at least one family member in need of medical assistance. Women and children make up 78 per cent of those affected by camp closures. Of the population continuing to reside in the three formal camps under federal Iraq administration that remained open at the end of November, 40 per cent were female-headed households, 57 per cent were children, and 3 per cent were elderly. Such families are likely to have specific support and protection needs.

The camp closures attracted the attention of [international media](#) and were the subject of high profile press releases by [international NGOs](#). The [spokesperson of the UN Refugee agency](#), who shares responsibility for management of IDP camps in Iraq, noted at a press briefing in Geneva that “Government information about camp closures and timelines [had] changed rapidly, creating uncertainty for many IDP families.” UNHCR stated that it had “raised concerns with the Government, stressing that some of the closures have been conducted without adequate notice and consultations with IDP representatives and aid agencies working in the camps.” The Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Irena Vojackova-Sollorano, released [two statements](#) on the issue of [camp closures](#), noting that decisions about whether and when to close IDP camps are the purview of the Government of Iraq and taken independently of the United Nations. Ms. Vojackova-Sollorano also expressed concern about families who had to leave camps at short notice and did not have immediate alternative options for safe and dignified returns. She noted that social tensions, the presence of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war, and the lack of civil documentation, housing, and services all represented challenges to sustainable returns. According to the [IOM DTM Return Index](#), nine out of 10 of the primary arrival districts of former camp residents were categorized as medium-to-high severity, indicating a lack of livelihoods, services, social cohesion and security.

Assessing Informal Displacement Sites in Kirkuk



IDPs in an informal site in Kirkuk describe their needs
[Photo Credit: OCHA]

More than 275,000 acutely vulnerable Iraqis continue to be displaced outside IDP camps in approximately 950 self-settled and informal sites, often in widely dispersed locations that may be difficult to reach or have little access to services.¹ On 18 November, the OCHA Kirkuk field office travelled to Daquq to meet with the IDPs to gain a greater insight into the humanitarian situation in the district and reasons for protracted displacement in Daquq’s 26 informal sites, home to 13,694 displaced people. Daquq is considered to be a part of the “Disputed Internal Boundaries” of Iraq, with competing claims to land by Arab, Kurdish and Turkmen inhabitants dating back to the 1970s.

Daquq’s out-of-camp IDPs predominantly hail from nearby locations within the governorate; they noted the ongoing insecurity in the district as a primary barrier to their return. Some ISIL cells continue to be

active in the area, and villagers report incidences of intimidation and extortion, as well as disturbances caused by Iraqi Security Forces who are also stationed nearby. The IDPs stated that their concerns about returning to their areas of origin include a lack of habitable housing, lack of basic services (including water, electricity, health care and schools), and missing civil documentation. IDPs were reluctant to return to rural villages without reconstruction, compensation and increased security. Women in particular reported that under current conditions, their preference was to remain in urban centres.

In one informal site, IDPs described their shelters as being self-built on government-owned lands, making tenure highly precarious. The site is connected to the national electricity grid but the connections were haphazardly made and could present a safety risk. Humanitarian partners have constructed two boreholes which provide water to the neighborhood, but the water is brackish and IDPs have requested a desalination plant. Some IDPs work as day labourers for limited income generation.

¹ According to the [Informal Sites Mapping Dashboard](#) maintained by the CCCM and Shelter Clusters, self-settled sites are those with between 5-30 households, and informal sites are those with more than 30 households.

On 8 November, UN-Habitat [noted in a press release](#) that they would be expanding their collaboration with the Government of Iraq to address challenges in informal settlements. In 2017, UN-Habitat and the Ministry of Planning used geographic information system mapping to define the boundaries of informal settlements in 15 governorates based on analysis of satellite images, thus giving the relevant authorities basic information on informal settlements, including location, size and population. As the next step, the Ministry of Planning and UN-Habitat plan a comprehensive survey on informal settlements, which will give relevant partners an updated and detailed understanding of the current conditions, critical challenges faced, and possible solutions in each site. Collaboration with the private sector will also be sought to improve housing and living conditions in informal settlements.

Increased Support Needed in Return Areas in Al-Anbar

In late November, OCHA and other members of the Al-Anbar Governorate Returns Committee visited the sub-district of al-Khairat, in the north-east of Al-Anbar governorate, near the border with Salah al-Din and Baghdad governorates. Several households returned to the area in the context of recent camp closures, and now find themselves in secondary displacement, either due to the destruction of their houses or because of lack of acceptance by community members due to perceived affiliations with ISIL. The lack of shelter is the immediate need for returnees, in tandem with explosive ordinance assessment activities, followed by rehabilitation of the water treatment plants and health care facilities. The school buildings are severely damaged, and over 1,000 students are due to return to school in early December in classrooms that pose safety and security hazards. The area is one of the most fertile agricultural lands in the region, however, farmers struggle to sell at market price against competition from imported goods. Many young people, including children, commute to Baghdad to seek daily labour. OCHA has recently collaborated with the Anbar authorities to solve access problems at checkpoints in the region, and it is hoped that with improved access, health, education and WASH partners will expand their projects in al-Khairat.



A destroyed home in al-Khairat sub-district, in Al-Anbar governorate. [Photo Credit: OCHA]

The region could also potentially benefit from the recently announced [extension of the United Nations Development Programme's \(UNDP\) Funding Facility for Stabilization \(FFS\)](#). In early November 2020, the Government of Iraq and the FFS Steering Committee announced a three year extension of the UNDP program, which will target the remaining priority needs of areas liberated from ISIL, including Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah Al-Din. The FFS will expand its focus to areas that have experienced difficulty with returns, and provide support to Iraq's displaced populations through the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure and services damaged during the conflict against ISIL, and address the creation livelihoods, local capacity development and social cohesion.



Children pushing wheelbarrows in Sheikhhan IDP Camp [Photo Credit: OCHA]

Winterization Gaps in Northern Ninewa

On 24 November, the OCHA Duhok field office visited Sheikhhan and Essian IDP camps in northern Ninewa. The camps host predominantly Yazidi families from Sinjar; there are approximately 3750 IDPs in Sheikhhan camp and 14,400 IDPs in Essian camp.² Both sites are under the administration of the Kurdistan Regional Government and there are currently no announced plans for closure.

In both camps, camp management highlighted that the primary needs and service gaps are related to winterization, in particular kerosene, children's

² Data taken from the [OCHA-CCCM Camp Closure Status](#) infographic (16 November 2020)

clothes and portable heaters. The provision of kerosene for cooking and heating during the winter months is a perennial problem in Iraq, and has been [addressed in a position paper](#) from the Shelter/NFI Cluster, which notes that families' requirements for kerosene more than doubles during the colder months between November and February.

The Shelter cluster notes that since 1996, the Government of Iraq has provided subsidized kerosene through coupons issued by the Ministry of Oil and linked to the Public Distribution System (PDS). Each coupon allows families to collect 50L per month of kerosene at a discounted rate. Since 2014, the Government has committed to providing kerosene to people in need (including IDPs), but the distribution system has become strained, especially during winter, resulting in interruptions in delivery. Between 2014-2018, the UN and NGO partners identified and filled gaps in kerosene distribution, however, responsibility was then transferred back to the Government, after consultation within the humanitarian community.

Disparities between kerosene needs and deliveries remain, especially within IDP camps. The Shelter Cluster continues to advocate for equitable distribution through the data analysis, forecasting of need, creation of distribution plans, identification of barriers and gaps, and assurances that even families who lack the required documentation (such as PDS cards) are still able to access kerosene distributions.

Iraq Humanitarian Fund Bi-Monthly Dashboard

In mid-November, the Iraq Humanitarian Fund (IHF) released [its most recent bi-monthly dashboard](#). From 1 January 2020 to date, the IHF received US\$23 million in donor contributions. Combined with a carryforward from 2019 contributions, less the funding being allocated under the 2020 allocations and management costs, as of 1 November 2020, the IHF has a programmable balance of approximately \$13.6 million.

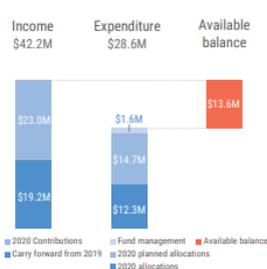
In May 2020, the IHF launched 2020's first Standard Allocation of \$12.3 million, which supported prioritized 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) activities in eight sectors that also contributed to the rapidly scaled-up COVID-19 prevention and response in Iraq, mainly in out-of-camp and other underserved locations. With an emphasis on enhancing the participation and response capacity of national partners; a net funding of \$3.6 million (30 per cent of the total allocation) was disbursed to national NGOs.

In October 2020, the Humanitarian Coordinator approved a Cost Extension Strategy to top up cluster-recommended projects funded through the 2020 first Standard Allocation and 2019 second Standard Allocation, which will allow for the quick disbursement of funds with minimal processing time for ongoing projects. In view of increasing COVID-19 cases in Iraq and the need to scale up support to the Government in managing a larger number of cases in displacement camps, the IHF launched a Reserve Allocation on 10 November to support COVID-19 quarantine and isolation (Q/I) areas established in IDP camps. The \$2.4 million allocation will support Q/I area installation and running costs in prioritized camps that are least likely to close immediately, through shelter/NFI, health and WASH interventions.

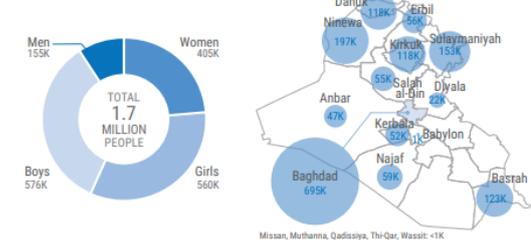
CONTRIBUTIONS BY DONORS (US\$ MILLION)



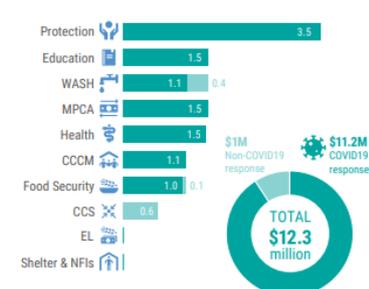
FUNDING OVERVIEW



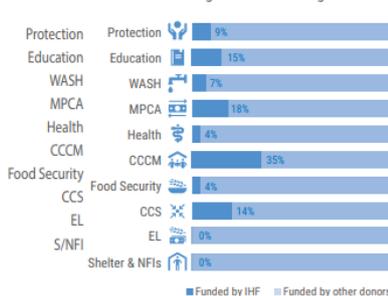
TARGETED BENEFICIARIES BY GENDER, AGE AND GOVERNORATE



ALLOCATIONS BY CLUSTER (US\$ MILLION)



HRP FUNDING COVERAGE BY CLUSTER



TARGETED BENEFICIARIES BY CLUSTER

