



Iraq Emergency Response Strategy

ADDRESSING A RAPIDLY UNFOLDING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS
FY 2017 - 2018





COVER: Moulaff, a lifelong civil servant, with his wife, Nazik, and daughters Nadmi (right) and Mariam, in a tent on the grounds of Saint Eliyah Church in Erbil, where they fled after conflict erupted in Qaraqosh. *Photo by Daniel Etter for CRS*

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faith. action. results.

OVERVIEW

The humanitarian crisis in Iraq has stretched the response capacity of humanitarian agencies, with the number of Iraqis now displaced at 3.5 million, and new waves of displacement from Fallujah, Hawija, and Mosul. Throughout last year, thousands of people's lives were at risk.

According to United Nations estimates, at least 10 million people need some form of humanitarian assistance as a result of the protracted and more recent conflicts. New displacement from military action around Mosul has the potential to overwhelm the country's existing capacities and resources.

The forced displacement is the direct result of violent armed conflict. Many displaced families are members of Iraq's minority religious groups, including Yazidis and Christians, who primarily fled to Dohuk, Anbar and Kirkuk in 2014. More recent displacements, mostly from the Arab Sunni community, include families that have lived under the control of ISIS for up to two years. These people often faced extreme human rights abuses and severe violence when attempting to flee.

Among the families displaced from their homes and towns, the poor, and religious and ethnic minorities—particularly those without relatives or friends in safer areas—have been hit hardest. While the humanitarian community and local government have struggled to build camps for uprooted families, more than 80 percent still live outside formal camps, many in informal settlements, abandoned buildings or makeshift shelters. Humanitarian assistance and local charity is critical for displaced families to survive Iraq's bitter winters and extremely hot summers.

Iraqi forces are actively retaking territories and cities previously under ISIS control. As these forces close in on Mosul—Iraq's second largest city—lifesaving shelter, water and sanitation, living supplies, and other emergency assistance are critical.

New displacement will further increase demands on government and host communities in both the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region and central Iraq, as well as all existing humanitarian capacities and resources in Iraq.

Families have been separated, children and adults alike have witnessed horrific brutality, and many displaced families and host community members have lost loved ones. Recovery from the distress of the recent past is crucial as uprooted families try to rebuild their lives. The safety and dignity of families returning to areas retaken from ISIS control will be a notable concern. Recovery efforts will require demining, as well as significant investments in infrastructure, and the rebuilding of education systems and local economies.

3.5 million

**IRAQIS ARE NOW DISPLACED
AS NEW WAVES OF PEOPLE
HAVE CONTINUED TO FLEE FROM
FALLUJAH, HAWIJA, AND MOSUL**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The needs of the millions of displaced people are high, yet resources are limited. The UN's 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan requests \$861 million to meet the needs of 10 million people. Iraq's central government and the government of the Kurdistan Region have provided relief in the form of cash grants, medical care, education, shelter and food. The combination of a slump in oil prices and the high costs of the ISIS counterinsurgency has constrained the governments' capacity to respond to the vast needs.

CRS and Caritas Iraq have focused largely on the needs of uprooted Iraqi families living outside of formal camps. To better understand the most pressing needs, CRS informed its emergency response strategy with a series of thorough assessments conducted in the Anbar, Baghdad, Dohuk, Nineveh and Kirkuk governorates.

Critical living supplies and food

Immediate priorities are basic living supplies and food. Recently displaced families need essential household items such as kitchen sets and bedding. Given the manner in which families fled—some on foot, some sharing vehicles with neighbors or friends—the belongings and supplies that each family brought varies widely. Women have different needs from men, such as extra food for those who are pregnant or nursing, or items to care for children. As displaced families see their scarce resources diminish, some have had to sell their few possessions or eat fewer meals per day. Meanwhile, among those newly displaced and those whose lives have been uprooted since 2014, supplies such as blankets,

warm clothing, heaters and kerosene are needed to help them survive the harsh winter months.

Shelter

Makeshift or inadequate tents are common in informal settlements, with family members crowding into limited space. Others live in unfinished concrete buildings of four to six rooms, with no windows or doors, unfinished floors, and no plumbing or electricity. Most unfinished buildings provide shelter to multiple families, with sometimes up to 35 people in 1 house. Women in particular have expressed concerns about the lack of privacy for their families and the lack of protection from adverse weather, snakes, rodents and insects. Children have limited areas to play and face dangers from stairways without handrails and the sharp edges of unfinished construction.

Water and sanitation

Displaced families often lack sufficient sanitation facilities and clean water, increasing their risk of water-borne disease. Appropriate sanitation is particularly limited in informal settlements where too few temporary latrines are the only option, even as displacement extends past 6 months. Water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene remains scarce in informal settlements in areas without pre-established water infrastructure. Open defecation is frequent, especially in the early stages of displacement. Women and girls have raised concerns about privacy and safe access to water and sanitation. Among displaced families living in unfinished buildings, there continues to be a lack of household-level water and sanitation.



A newly installed double-glazed window keeps out cold winter air in the house that Raybas Dorbo, 4, a displaced Yazidi from Sinjar, shares with his family. The partially constructed house near Dohuk was renovated by CRS partner Caritas. Photo courtesy of Sam Tarling/Caritas

CRS and Caritas Iraq have focused largely on the needs of uprooted Iraqi families living outside of formal camps

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY



When this boy's family fled fighting, they sought shelter in the grounds of a church in Erbil. Photo by Daniel Etter for CRS

Psychosocial support and education

Children are struggling with the negative effects of displacement as they have lost the support and safety of their communities, schools and neighborhoods. Many displaced children have witnessed family members being killed or kidnapped, seen their homes destroyed, or were forced to flee at a moment's notice. Many children missed months—sometimes years—of formal schooling. In displacement, children often have no organized activities or safe places to play, and are missing the crucial intellectual, academic and social development that comes from access to education. They need emotional support to begin to regain a sense of normalcy and resume their childhood.

Productive livelihoods

Conflict has limited the capacity of families across Iraq to support themselves. Employment opportunities are scarce, especially among displaced families, and low oil prices continue to impact the wider economy. Without access to income, displaced people may be forced to barter, borrow or sell their assets—or may turn to more exploitative coping mechanisms that are particularly problematic for women, children and vulnerable community members. In places that have been under ISIS control, productive local economies will need to be re-established. As conditions and safety allow, the successful return and reintegration of displaced families will necessitate a focus on livelihoods, helping families to rebuild their lives.

CRS AND CARITAS IRAQ

CRS is working in close partnership with Caritas Iraq to support more than 22,000 families—150,000 people—in key areas. CRS has hired 50 Iraqi staff and a large team of fieldworkers, and has offices in Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk and Baghdad. CRS and Caritas Iraq's support has focused on a comprehensive package of services to provide shelter, water and sanitation, critical living supplies, education, and psychosocial support to those most in need. CRS has helped displaced families meet their most pressing needs through a combination of cash, vouchers, and direct distribution, based on market conditions. CRS and Caritas Iraq take a community-based approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable people, with a constant eye on the dynamic between displaced and host communities, and between those of differing religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Since 2014, CRS and Caritas have served more than 200,000 people with food and critical living supplies. More than 2,500 households have received shelter upgrades, of which 1,500 families also received upgraded water and sanitation facilities. CRS provided psychosocial support to—and continues to support the primary education of—4,500 children. The successes of these programs and the context-specific learnings are being fed into CRS and Caritas' revised program strategy and objectives for displaced families.

200,000

PEOPLE ARE BEING SUPPORTED
BY CRS AND CARITAS IRAQ

PROGRAM STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

Building on CRS and Caritas experience in Iraq, while remaining flexible in the face of changing dynamics on the ground, CRS has developed a program strategy that includes an expansion of current relief and recovery activities, including food, living supplies, shelter, water and sanitation, education, and psychosocial and livelihoods support. This strategy aims to provide continued help to displaced families through the winter and summer months, while preparing for anticipated new displacement or return.

Targeting

CRS and Caritas Iraq will prioritize emergency assistance to newly displaced families, with an emphasis on governorates—such as Anbar, Baghdad, and Kirkuk—that host significant numbers of uprooted families and face gaps in humanitarian assistance. We will be ready to respond to new displacement across the country. CRS will continue to target Kirkuk governorate, despite its particularly challenging security situation and complex ethnic, religious and language dynamics.

For those who were displaced in 2014 and 2015, CRS and Caritas will target the most vulnerable families living outside camps in Dohuk, Nineveh, and Kirkuk, with a focus on those living in unfinished buildings and children aged 6 to 12 years. When access and security allow, CRS and Caritas will respond to recovery needs in locations formerly under ISIS control and, as conditions allow, support displaced families who choose to return and reintegrate, as they start to rebuild their lives.



CRS provides immediate relief supplies for some of the 85,000 people displaced by the battle for Fallujah. Photo by CRS staff

PROGRAM STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

Strategic objectives for those affected by the conflict	Intermediate results
Conflict-affected families meet their household's essential living needs	IDPs and conflict-affected families use context-appropriate market-based solutions to procure essential critical living supplies
	Recently displaced IDPs with limited accessibility to markets access essential in-kind living supplies
Conflict-affected families live in shelter that meets Sphere standards	IDPs, host communities and other local stakeholders collaborate to install context-appropriate emergency or transitional shelters
	IDPs, host communities and other local stakeholders collaborate to upgrade unfinished buildings
Conflict-affected families have improved access to water and sanitation	IDPs, host communities, and other local stakeholders collaborate to install and maintain context-appropriate emergency or transitional sanitation facilities
	IDPs, host communities, and other local stakeholders collaborate to upgrade household water and sanitation facilities
Conflict-affected children have an increased capacity to cope with displacement	IDP children participate in age- and context-appropriate psychosocial activities
	IDP children resume their education in context-appropriate quality learning environments
Conflict-affected families sustain their livelihoods in areas of displacement or return	IDPs access context-appropriate livelihoods opportunities in their areas of displacement
	Conflict-affected families resume productive livelihoods in areas of return



A woman from a displaced Christian family from the city of Bartyla comforts a baby in an unfinished construction site in Erbil where the family now lives.
 Photo by Daniel Etter for CRS

PROGRAM STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

Critical living supplies

CRS and Caritas will provide displaced families with critical living supplies, with a priority of support for new arrivals. CRS and Caritas Iraq will also assist vulnerable families displaced since 2014–2015 with winter supplies, such as heaters, fuel, bedding and carpets. While critical food needs are being addressed by other actors, CRS will resume its provision of food—should it re-emerge as a gap in coverage—as part of its provision of essential living supplies for displaced families.

CRS takes a market-based approach to the provision of living supplies: When displaced families have freedom of movement and access to functioning local markets, the distribution of cash or vouchers for use among local vendors—instead of in-kind distributions of items—has multiple benefits. It offers families the dignity and flexibility of choice to buy what they need most. It also injects cash into the local economy, and keeps local vendors in business. The cash also helps families to prioritize needs and to be flexible to changing circumstances.

Shelter

CRS and Caritas Iraq will provide emergency shelter kits to families in the initial stages of displacement. The materials included will be selected in coordination with other humanitarian actors, and aim to promote reuse by displaced families as they find more durable forms of shelter. As the situation stabilizes, CRS will work with displaced families and other stakeholders, such as building owners and local construction workers, to install both standalone transitional shelters—designed for those who live in informal

Market-based approach

A key priority within CRS' emergency responses is to ensure local markets are central to the recovery. Cash grants and vouchers reinforce this by offering:

- The dignity of choice for individuals and families, who can prioritize what items to buy according to their own needs and wants
- Recognition of the rapidly changing context, and of families' need to be flexible to change
- Support to the local economy with opportunities for people to buy locally and inject cash into the economy

In cases of restricted mobility, in locations where markets have not yet been re-established, or in cases of very large-scale displacement, CRS and Caritas will provide in-kind items to displaced families. CRS will buy locally from vendors, in order to stimulate the local economy.

settlements—and sealing-off kits for those who find shelter in unfinished buildings. These shelter responses are based on proven, cost-effective models that use local materials and labor.

In cases of longer-term displacement, CRS will continue to upgrade unfinished buildings where families have taken refuge, so as to increase protection from harsh winter cold and summer heat, as well as to improve privacy.

In this model, upgrades are negotiated with local authorities, the displaced families, and the house or building's owners so that, in exchange for the upgrades, the owner allows the families to stay rent-free for at least two years. CRS' shelter improvements include the installation of double-glazed doors and windows, the sealing off of other openings, and the installation of internal partitions and doors so that each family has a private living space. CRS will monitor the relationship between the owners of the unfinished buildings and displaced families, in an effort to increase the likelihood that displaced families will be allowed to remain in those buildings after the initial rent-free period.

Water and sanitation

CRS and Caritas Iraq will work with contractors, families and local labor to customize and improve water supply and sanitation. In cases of new displacement, this will include the installation of temporary latrines and, when necessary, water storage tanks and basins. In contexts where displaced families are likely to remain for some time, CRS will implement a transitional sanitation model, which is an integrated latrine, bathing and washing unit designed to address the needs of women and men in safety and dignity. When displacement patterns allow, CRS will support household-level water and sanitation in unfinished buildings, utilizing an individualized approach that ensures water and sanitation solutions are locally appropriate and sufficient to meet the needs of displaced families. CRS and Caritas will complement these installations with tailored hygiene messaging, with an emphasis on newly displaced communities.

PROGRAM STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

Psychosocial support and education

The Child Friendly Spaces that CRS established in Iraq in 2014-2015 have all now successfully transitioned into formal primary schools, which are administered by the relevant government officials and continue to benefit from key transitional support by CRS.

CRS also expanded its support to other formal schools to integrate displaced children into the existing education system through teacher training, parental engagement activities, provision of learning and teaching materials, and physical space upgrades. CRS will continue to expand formal education access and quality for displaced and conflict-affected children, while ensuring that teaching is child-centered and provides opportunities for self-expression and healthy socialization.

CRS will build on its experience with providing psychosocial support in Iraq, enabling children to regain a sense of normalcy, have a safe place to play, and experience positive social interactions and age-appropriate learning.

Productive livelihoods

All of CRS and Caritas Iraq's programs aim to create income-earning opportunities for displaced families through cash-for-work and other labor-intensive approaches and through market-based intervention modalities. For example, displaced people are trained to participate in work crews implementing shelter improvement activities. They earn income and strengthen their skills as they contribute to CRS' water and sanitation projects or CRS-supported schools. To date, more than 1,000 workers have benefited from these livelihoods activities.

As additional areas are retaken by government forces and people return to their homes, CRS will support returnees and conflict-affected families to resume productive livelihoods, prioritizing local procurement and market-based approaches that revive and strengthen the local economy.

Psychosocial support enables children to regain a sense of normalcy, have a safe place to play, and experience positive social interactions



CRS ensures that teaching is child-centered and provides opportunities for self-expression and healthy socialization.
Photo by Kim Pozniak/CRS

SCALE AND BUDGET PROJECTIONS

Resource needs within the outlined program areas of focus will fluctuate as the context in Iraq changes. CRS Iraq has secured US\$13 million in initial commitments from public and private donors for 2017 to support immediate relief, shelter upgrades, and psychosocial support and education.

An additional US\$20 million is needed to support 300,000 displaced people with the critical emergency support outlined in this strategy. Significant additional resources will be needed to respond to the needs of those newly displaced during fiscal years 2017-18 and, when appropriate, to support return and recovery in areas retaken from ISIS control.