

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

IRAQ: HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY

14 June 2006

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In Brief

Appeal No. 05EA026; Operations Update no. 2; Period covered: 1 March 2006 to 30 May 2006. Appeal coverage: 31.6 per cent. *Please click here to go directly to the Contributions List available on the Federation's website.*

Appeal History:

- Appeal was launched on 10 November 2005 for CHF 16,750,000 (USD 12,000,000 or EUR 10,000,000) to assist 60,000 families or 350,000 beneficiaries for twelve months.

Some of the activities from the previous appeal (Iraq: Humanitarian Crisis – Post War Rehabilitation; Appeal no. 08/03) are further extended to the end of June 2006 because of disruptions caused by sectarian violence, intensified armed insurgency and overall insecurity in Iraq.

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals:

Iraq: Floods (supplementary) Emergency Appeal No MDRIQ 001 was launched 8 February 2006 seeking CHF 1,802,000 in cash, kind and services to assist 5,000 families or 25,000 people. For details, please go to the website at: http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?06/MDRIQ001.pdf

Iraq and Neighbouring Countries: Humanitarian Crisis Revised Emergency Appeal. (Appeal no.08/03) For details, please go to the website at: http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?03/0803revised.pdf

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Background

Iraq has been in a continuously high state of alert as a result of the ongoing security problems. Besides the frequent suicide, road-side and car bombings, kidnapping and arbitrary killings, sectarian violence has rocked most parts of the country following the recent bombing of the Holy Shrine in February 2006. According to government sources - Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) - some 100,000 people are internally displaced as a direct result of sectarian violence. In the midst of all these socio-political and security events, the Iraqi Red Crescent (IRCS) has remained committed to serving the most vulnerable people in the country.

The major drawbacks noted during this reporting period can be summarized as consequences of the following events that took place in the country:

- Continued fighting between armed insurgents and the allied forces that has remained unabated for over two years.
- Flash floods that hit some localities in seven governorates in early February and displaced over 7,000 families and caused economic and structural damage.
- The bombing of the Holy Shrine in Samara in late February that triggered a new wave of sectarian violence and led to the displacement of some 100,000 people to date.
- The lengthy process and associated difficulties in forming the new government cabinet undermined the rule of law and order and security in the country.
- Socio-economic deterioration as a combined consequence of the above factors. In addition, the very slow national rehabilitation and development programmes marred by the heightened security situation in the country.

The WFP and Iraq government household survey report released on 12 May 2006 - **Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis in Iraq** - reveals that 69 per cent of the food rated as insecure is found in rural areas. The survey was conducted between July and August 2005, exactly two years after the first survey conducted in 2003. It further states that "over 4 million people (15 per cent) of the surveyed population in the 16 governorates are affected by food insecurity. A further 8.3 million people (31 per cent) would be rendered food insecure." It warns that, "if the Public Distribution System (PDS) is discontinued, an estimated 47 per cent of the 28 million population will face real difficulties."

Thousands of Iraqis have been kidnapped and killed. According to statistics by Iraq's morgues institute, 6,002 corpses were handled in the past five months: 1,068 in January, 1,110 in February, 1,294 in March, 1,155 in April and 1,375 in May. Last month, 1,398 bodies were brought to the central morgue, according to Ministry of Health statistics, 220 more than April. The count does not include soldiers or civilian victims of explosions, on whom autopsies are not usually conducted. Morgue institute officials said that since the establishment of the institute in 1927, it had never received such a huge number of corpses - the average standing at 35 to 50 per day. A lot more of the killing is unreported because it is too dangerous for the local police or journalists, foreign or Iraqi, to go to the scene of the murder to find out what happened. Iraqis are desperate for peace, but Baghdad is paralyzed by terror and in Basra one person is being murdered every hour according to an adviser to the Defence Ministry.

Large numbers of youth are unemployed, with the rate reaching 70 per cent. Years of conflict, mismanagement and sanctions have affected the Iraqi community. Inflation has increased to 107 per cent according to reports by the Ministry of Trade further affecting poverty while at the same time hindering development opportunities. According to Mohamed Taha al-Mousawi, an adviser at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the national unemployment rate surpassed 60 percent last year, "and the rate rose further in the first quarter of this year, as many policemen and army members quit their jobs due to threats by militants groups." High unemployment levels made disaffected youths easy targets for recruitment by extremists.

In response, Iraqis are closing their shops, drawing their blinds and staying home, turning once-vibrant neighbourhoods into ghost towns. Residents in some areas fear death squads. In other parts of town, they worry about religious extremists who have threatened to kill men who wear shorts and women who drive or leave their hair uncovered.

The RCRC Movement continued to support the IRCS to alleviate the suffering of the affected and the socially vulnerable population. An emergency appeal (no.05EA026) was launched on 10 November 2005 to assist 60,000 socially vulnerable families (350,000 people) during 2006.

Operational developments (March - May 2006)

In spite of the continually deteriorating security situation, with more and more regions being drawn into the deadly circle of chain killing of innocent people, the IRCS continued to provide the most essential humanitarian services to wide groups of the population. These groups included poor families deprived of any sources of social support, the unemployed, growing numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) and victims of the floods which caused substantial devastation in the northern and central parts of the country.

In doing its humanitarian work, the IRCS continued to rely upon the support of the International Federation, sister National Societies, and, increasingly, on the support of its own government. ICRC, apart from its regular mandate was instrumental in helping the Iraqi RCS to cope with the consequences of the floods, especially in the northern governorates, and meeting the needs of the socially vulnerable families.

The main activities which were implemented with the direct support of the International Federation and in line with the appeal objectives during the reporting period concentrated on the completion of the winter assistance programme. During the winter months, almost 25,000 socially vulnerable families received family sets of non-food items. March was devoted to monitoring, evaluating distribution and preparing reports from the branches.

The International Federation supported the IRCS in the floods relief operation. A separate appeal was launched by the International Federation on behalf of the National Society to assist up to 5,000 families affected by the floods.

In spite of the extreme workload resulting from the society's extended involvement in a number of ongoing relief operations, there were certain achievements in disaster preparedness, rehabilitation and health and care.

Disaster Management

The International Federation supported IRCS disaster preparedness, disaster relief and rehabilitation/reconstruction activities. In this report, however, disaster management refers to disaster preparedness & response while rehabilitation is treated as a separate subject and on its own merit.

Disaster Response

Overall goal: To assist the IRCS to address vulnerability of the deprived groups of the population severely affected by political instability, economic decline and collapse of the social security structures.

Objective: To assist 50,000 families identified as "socially vulnerable," through distributing winter non-food kits containing the most essential relief goods; and the pre-positioning of preparedness stocks enough for 10,000 families so as to make timely response in case of disaster events.

Winter assistance programme to 25,000 vulnerable families:



Distribution of non-food relief items in Erbil.

The total collapse of the socio-economic infrastructure in the country brought essential humanitarian assistance to a growing number of the socially vulnerable population high on the agenda. The IRCS considered assistance to socially vulnerable families as one of its highest priorities. As a result of the ongoing conflict there was recently an increase in the prices of fuel and heating oil. This in turn increased the prices of essential and basic commodities - far beyond the purchasing power or means of most low income/vulnerable families.

The first round of distribution of the sets of non-food relief items for 25,000 socially vulnerable families was

carried out by the IRCS between December 2005 and February 2006. Due to limited available resources the number of the beneficiary families was to be limited to 25,000. However, it is planned that the same number of beneficiary families can be supported towards the end of 2006.

Factors that influenced the increase in susceptibility of vulnerable families included, among other things, high unemployment rates, insecurity from ongoing fighting between allied forces and armed insurgents, ethnic and sectarian tension and the very low level performance of the social services sectors - electrical power and water supply systems

Programme Activities:

Establishment of selection criteria (vulnerable families):

The selection criteria were established by the IRCS, in cooperation with the relevant authorities which were responsible for social welfare programmes. The IRCS branches, in cooperation with local authorities, were directly responsible for the selection of the beneficiaries in the respective governorates.

Procurement of non-food relief items:

Procurement of non-food emergency kits was made in Iraq according to the standard Federation procedures. It was organised and monitored by the procurement committee consisting of the Federation staff in the Baghdad office and the IRCS representatives.

The items and quantities procured and distributed to the 25,000 socially vulnerable families is given below :

| Items | Quantity | Distribution size / family |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Blankets | 100,000 | 4 units per family |
| Stoves/oil | 25,000 | 1 unit per family |
| Lamps/oil | 25,000 | 1 unit per family |
| Jerry cans for water | 25,000 | 1 unit per family |
| Jerry cans for fuel | 25,000 | 1 unit per family |
| Kitchen sets | 25,000 | 1 unit per family |
| Heaters | 25,000 | 1 unit per family |

Monitoring:

Monitoring of the winter assistance programme for 25,000 families in Iraq consisted of two major tasks. Firstly, the performance of suppliers, with Federation staff monitoring the delivery of the items to the branches, and secondly the distribution to the beneficiaries, with special attention to compliance of the selected beneficiary families to the defined criteria of vulnerability.

The Federation random monitoring was accomplished during the first phase of distribution, covering 50 per cent of the target beneficiary families. The second phase of monitoring visits was to cover 80 per cent of the beneficiaries. Since some of the potentially dangerous regions in Iraq (for instance Anbar Governorate) have been impossible to reach without high personal security risks, it was arranged with the IRCS that its volunteers in these governorates would do the monitoring and forward the written and visual information to the Federation.

Distribution:

- The distribution to 25,000 families was carried out by the IRCS headquarters and its branches in the respective governorates.
- The International Federation was responsible for the mobilisation of assistance from the donor communities, procurement of supplies, monitoring of the supplies' delivery and stocks movements; and providing feed-back report to the donors.
- By end of February 100 per cent of the targeted beneficiaries received their share.
- The delay in the distribution in some of the governorates was directly related to security problems (troubled areas) and/or the flash floods disaster of early February that destroyed highways and bridges in the five governorates.

Floods disaster response operation - to 5,000 families:



Floods disaster affected areas /governorates.

Early February 2006 large parts of Iraq, mainly its northern governorates, were affected by severe floods which led to the dislocation of dozens of thousands of people. According to the United Nations, almost 8,500 families were directly affected by the force of nature.

On the request of the IRCS, the International Federation launched an emergency appeal requesting support to 5,000 families. The response to the Federation appeal was quite low and was not sufficient to meet all the needs of the target beneficiaries. At the same time, the ongoing programme and the availability of some relief supplies in the country allowed a relatively quick response to cover the needs of the dislocated population.

More detailed information on the IRCS activities in support of the population affected by floods can be found in the final report on the Iraq Floods Emergency (will be available at the Federation's web-site on 20.06.2006)

An Overview of the Iraqi RCS support to the Internally Displaced Families – Sectarian Violence:

As sectarian violence in Iraq has been on the increase, so has displacement. Nearly 180,000 Iraqis have now been displaced due to ongoing sectarian violence, an increase of about 80,000 from previous figures, according to the Iraqi government officials.



Assistance to Fleeing families – sectarian violence

According to the spokesman for the Ministry of Displacement and Migration, more than 17,000 families are now registered as homeless by the ministry. An additional 5,000 found refuge with relatives in less effected areas.

The largest number of displaced families is from Baghdad, at about 3,718. Of these, an estimated 1,500 have relocated to Samawa; 1,091 to al-Amara; 966 to al-Qut; 713 to Basra; 765 to Nassiriya; and 300 to Ramadi. According to ministry figures, a further 2,113 families have relocated from Falluja and Samarra to Kerbala. Baqouba, a mixed city some 60 km northeast of Baghdad, has received the largest influx of displaced families from various locations, at

12,528. Tikrit has also received 117 displaced families, Kirkuk 190 and Mosul 44.

Sectarian hostility erupted in earnest following the February attack in Samarra, some 120 km north of Baghdad. The attack triggered a spate of sectarian reprisals between the country's major Muslim sects and has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians. The numbers of displaced continue to rise all over the country. Now people are fleeing their hometown of Basra, some 600km south of Baghdad, to a camp supported by IRCS in the Zaobaa district of the capital.

In the meantime, the IRCS has appealed to the government to provide essential materials, especially potable water. Similar problems have been observed in recent months by the Kirkuk branch of the IRCS, officials of which also complain of a shortage of essential materials.

According to the IRCS branch in Kirkuk local organisations can only afford to help about 1,500 people a month, while food parcels and medicines are required to meet the needs of 10,000 displaced people in the area.

Also in late May, UNHCR said that a fresh spate of killings and kidnappings of Palestinians in Baghdad had led to mounting anger, panic and fear among the community. "Hundreds of Palestinians have fled the capital in recent weeks and made their way to the Iraq-Syria border in hope of finding sanctuary across the border," the refugee agency noted in a statement. "A total of 212 Palestinians, including children and pregnant women, have fled Baghdad since 10 May and are now stranded at the border."

Iraqi RCS, supported by the government and international agencies, including the ICRC, has continued to play an important role in meeting the most essential humanitarian needs of the displaced population. More detailed reports of the Iraqi RCS activities in this area are available on request.

Disaster Preparedness

Objective: Enhance the disaster management capacity and technical skills of the staff and volunteers; develop response plan and the mechanisms for emergency information, communication and resource mobilisation

Activities: The following activities were undertaken during the reporting period:

Revision of Action Plan for 2006:

The new action plan and priorities included additional training and emphasis on:

- Rapid Damage Assessment (RDA) in three governorates and
- Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) training in five governorates.
- Provide training in logistics/procurement; warehouse automation; camp management; water and sanitation; emergency communication and use of equipment.
- In addition, the main activities include the provision of equipment and furniture for the branch offices to facilitate implementation of the disaster preparedness activities at branch levels.

Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (Report compilation and preparation for field level implementation)

- As indicated in the revised action plan for 2006, the final VCA report has been completed.
- A case study, lessons learnt from VCA programme implementation in conflict affected communities, has been submitted to the Federation regional and country delegations.

DM training:

- Logistics and procurement training was organised in Amman for 28 IRCS staff /volunteers and Federation delegation staff in early April 2006. As a direct follow-up three local training workshops will be conducted (Baghdad for central, Basra for southern branches, and in Erbil for the northern branches) between May and October 2006 and /or as the security situation permits.

Rehabilitation and Reconstruction

The ongoing activities have been funded from the previous emergency appeal, which was extended to the end of June 2006. In spite of the formal affiliation of the rehabilitation and reconstruction activities to the emergency appeal 03EA008, it is thought worthwhile to provide a brief reflection in this report so the complete operational picture is provided. Substantial delays in the implementation of this set of projects can be explained mainly by the new wave of sectarian violence. The Federation contractors were not left untouched and equally suffered from the general economic chaos, skyrocketing prices, daily deadly dangers in Baghdad and other places.

Projects which continued to be implemented during March – May 2006:

- Salahed din warehouse construction completed in May 2006.
- Kut maternity hospital extension and rehabilitation completed in May.
- Baghdad surgical hospital rehabilitation/renovation in progress, expected to be completed in June.
- Baghdad maternity hospital extension and rehabilitation completed in March 2006.
- Baghdad IRCS branch office extension completed beginning of May.
- The furnishing /equipping of Kut hospital was planned to be completed by end June. However, it is not feasible that it will be done earlier than within the next 2-3 months.

Project under appeal 05/026:

- Procurement of medical equipment for the Surgical & Maternity hospital to be completed before December 2006, provided the required funds are available.

For details please check for final report of 08/03 on Federation web site: www.ifrc.org

Health and Care

Extending and raising the quality of the health services is amongst the National Society's major priorities. Activities in this sector include: considerable expansion in the Community Based First Aid training; continued involvement in health education on common diseases; active participation in the immunization campaigns, HIV/AIDS and psychosocial support programmes (PSP).

Overall Goal: Reduce the impact of endemic health problems in the 18 governorates through the development of community organizations; and enhance the active participation of IRCS volunteers in the health intervention /promotion; and the psychosocial support activities.

CBFA and HIV/AIDS

Objective: The IRCS has increased its capacity in planning, organizing and implementing regular First Aid and Health Promotion (HIV/Aids) courses; a prerequisite to increased participation of its volunteers in the national health intervention programmes.

Activities /achievements:

- The CBFA action plan for 2006 is revised, and the branch level activities are reactivated.
- The IRCS conducted ten training workshops for 200 participants. Baghdad and Anbar branches conducted two courses each, other six training workshops took place in Wasit, Missan, Basra, Diyala, Saladin and Mousul branches.
- Two Training of Trainers courses were organised at Dahock branch for a total of 40 participants. Twenty participants were from the 18 branches, and the other 20 participants were from the 70 sub-offices or sub-branches of Baghdad branch.

HIV /AIDS:

Objective: Increase awareness on the means of transmission of the HIV/AIDS, preventive measures and related Stigma issues among volunteers, students in schools and out-patient attendants at the health facilities.

Activities /achievements: During this reporting period, the IRCS has conducted 36 courses - two courses in each of the 18 governorates. Twenty volunteers were enrolled in each course, that is, a total of 720 volunteers have been trained. These volunteers are already active in awareness and health promotion work in schools and health facilities.

Immunization campaign

Objective: Increase the capacity of the IRCS in planning, organizing and mobilizing its volunteers to effectively contribute to the National the Immunization Campaigns (NICs), carried out by the Ministry of Health and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Activities /achievements:

The IRCS is the designated agency for monitoring the mass immunisation campaigns in the country. During this reporting period, it has monitored two polio mass vaccination campaigns carried out in early April 2006 for the targeted 90,720 children and in May for a target of 90,720 children.

The campaign has in total involved 772 field workers/ volunteers which also included the IRCS 122 volunteers, 18 health coordinators and ten supervisors in the 18 governorates of the country.

The campaign has been a success and its report included sections highlighting challenges and constraints observed during implementation. From the first campaign, 8.2 per cent and from the second round 9.5 per cent of targeted

children have not been vaccinated – main reasons identified (for failure) included: children have not shown up, teams have not made visit to homes, and /or stated the various reasons behind the non-compliance and /or failures to meet targets.

Psychological Support :

Objective: The IRCS psychosocial support facilities in Basra and Suleymania governorates and in the Baghdad city are made fully operational; and its psychological support to children, widows, the elderly and deprived families is strengthened further.

Activities /achievements:

- The collection of traditional stories, through the youth and community members, continued to enhance the traditional coping mechanisms side by side with today's scientific approach.
- The pertinent and timely stories are in the selection process for printing, and wider circulation within the youth and the active community members in particular.
- A revised action plan has been developed and is being implemented in two pilot branches - Basra and Baghdad.
- Meetings and discussions with stakeholders were conducted in Basra followed by two workshops on basic psychology and psychological support, which included field visits to the IDP centres. In total, 40 volunteers have been trained.
- The planned programme for Baghdad (second pilot branch) is in good progress – meeting and discussions with the branches, volunteers and other stake holders has been done. Preparation for two Training Workshops is underway and will soon be implemented after the end of year school exams.

Organisational Development

To improve its overall performance, the IRCS recognized the need to work on some basic organisational development (OD) issues, and in the last year has addressed the following: strengthening the society's legal base, rationalization of management and operational structures, increased human and financial resources, branch development, and recruitment and retention of youth and volunteers to ensure effective service delivery.

Programme Goal: The IRCS has provided effective and efficient services to vulnerable groups on the basis of its clear legal identity, in full compliance with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and its own constitution, and through a well-developed organizational and management infrastructure.

Procedures & Branch /Sub-branch office development:

- The Iraqi Red Crescent has developed and issued a “code of conduct” for its staff and employees. The delegation oversees the printing, distribution and implementation of the procedures.
- To respond better to the growing humanitarian challenges, some branches have established sub-offices or sub-branches in their respective governorates. The Baghdad branch has established over 80 sub-offices /sub-branches. This action has built the capacity to respond and to guarantee timely response to victims affected by sectarian violence. Baghdad city has remained the centre of scene for most of the sectarians/insurgent violence.

Youth and volunteer development:

Objective: The IRCS has developed and implemented an effective youth & volunteer management system.

The IRCS has more than 2,500 volunteers who have been regularly involved in various services and programmes. Special attention has been given to strengthening its organisational structure, human resources, system and procedures.

Activities:

The Youth volunteer participated in numerous activities at branch (local) levels during this reporting period:

- Participated in the establishment of camps for the internally displaced and floods disaster victims in Thi Qar, AlFayer, Al-Batha for 270 families
- Participated in the distribution of relief items for IDPs in Kirkuk, Musel, Wasit and Babylon.
- Participated in the supervision of Polio vaccination campaigns
- Participated in simulation exercise, in event of flood disaster, organised by the Civil Defence
- In each branch, Youth volunteers organised a festival for IDP children
- Assisted in preparation of camp sites during religious events and blood donation campaigns

Federation Management and Cooperation

During the reporting period, the Federation delegation has continued to operate from the Regional Delegation office in Amman/Jordan. Local level (Iraq) coordination is mainly carried out by the IRCS with support from the Federation delegation's Baghdad office.

Cooperation between the International Federation, the Iraqi Red Crescent and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been maintained on the basis of the Memorandum of understanding (MoU). The MoU has provided a clear basis for the management and coordination of the Movement's response activities in Iraq. It provided operational information, including priorities and an overview of the humanitarian needs; review of the security issues; brief information on Partner National Societies (bilateral or multilateral) initiatives in Iraq; and strengthens efforts of the Movement's actions in Iraq.

The Federation delegation in Amman is also a member of the Iraqi Emergency Working Group (EWG). It is a forum that is facilitated by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for exchange of current operational information, situational analysis on developments in Iraq; and the coordination of pledges or support/assistance needed to the affected populations in the war torn country.

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