

HIGHLIGHTS

- Large-scale fighting is over for now, but civilians face diversifying risks.
- Returnees face insecurity, community distrust and low employment.
- Donors pledge an additional \$200 million in Washington, but more funds are still urgently needed to keep the response on track.
- Massive destruction in West Mosul leaves 200,000 homeless.

FIGURES

# of people in need	11m
# of people targeted for assistance	6.2m
# of internally displaced people (IDPs)	3.3m
# of IDPs who live outside camps	2.5m
# of affected people within host communities	3.2m
# of returnees	2m
# of Syrian refugees	0.23m

Source: 2017 Iraq HRP/HNO/IOM DTM

Humanitarian Response Plan

FUNDING

985 million

requested for 2017 (US\$)

46% (\$454 million)

(reflects funding on FTS as of 28 July 2017)

Source: <http://fts.unocha.org>



Credit: OCHA/Kate Pond

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Protection problems shift

Diversifying risks compromise safety for civilians across Iraq

Large-scale fighting in Mosul is over, but the life-threatening risks faced by Iraqi civilians continue and become more diversified. There is widespread contamination through sophisticated explosive devices, pockets of volatility and reports of violence countrywide. The fear of retributive acts amongst displaced people hinders the communities' capacity to return home and restart their lives.



Destruction and IED contamination are widespread in conflict-affected cities. Hamad neighbourhood, West Mosul.
Credit: OCHA/Themba Linden

Clearance of explosive hazards will take years

After decades of war, the sheer volume of explosive devices renders Iraq one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world. Explosive hazards pose life-threatening risks to civilians fleeing their homes, and returning to their areas of origin. Cities like Mosul that experienced intense fighting are littered with unexploded artillery, pressure plates and complex booby traps. In urban areas improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are buried in the rubble, slowing clearance and preventing people from returning. In rural areas, contamination of farmers' fields poses lethal risks to labourers and children in particular. The complexity and diversity of IEDs requires specialist mine clearance operators, which is costly and time consuming.

The management of explosive hazards is a critical step in creating the conditions for sustainable return, but explosive hazards must be destroyed one-by-one. The sophistication of devices and extent of contamination make this a lengthy process. For food production to regain the level required to feed the people of Iraq, clearance operations in agricultural areas could take years. In Mosul alone, early estimates indicate that the clearance of explosive hazards may take over a decade.

Insecurity and asymmetric attacks continue

In addition to larger areas, pockets of volatility persist across the country as asymmetric attacks by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) members continue to put civilians at risk from targeted body-borne and vehicle-borne IED attacks. There is also concern that

people are in danger of being caught in outbreaks of fighting. Imam Gharbi, a town south of Mosul along the Tigris river, was attacked and overrun by ISIL in early July, displacing more than 1,800 people in the first half of the month. Iraqi Security Forces regained control of the town at the end of July, but pockets of fighting continue, putting civilians remaining in their homes at ongoing risk from indirect fire and artillery bombardment.

People displaced from Imam Gharbi fled to the town of Qayyarah, others to Jhallale village, near the power plant in Qayyarah. Some went to Al Alam and other to Tikrit, Salah al-Din governorate. Many sheltered in derelict or unfinished buildings in Shirqat town. ISIL maintains a presence in Salah al-Din governorate and towns like Shirqat are subject to repeated outbreaks of insecurity. Civilians regularly face risks from small arms fire and targeted IED attacks by ISIL operatives, as well as danger to their lives if caught in the crossfire or by aerial bombardment during clashes between ISIL and security forces.

Under ISIL, millions endure displacement, loss, oppression, violence and conflict. Grievances are deeply felt and the need for justice is widespread. Reports of retributive acts are increasing.

Among IDPs, fear of retributive acts hinders returns

While areas of the country are still under the control of ISIL, areas now assessible will continue to suffer the aftermath. Their legacy will cast a long shadow over Iraq for generations to come.

During more than three years of occupation, millions of Iraqis endured and continue to endure displacement, the loss of family members, property and livelihoods as well as an oppressive regime with omnipresent punishment and conflict. Grievances are deeply felt and the need for justice is widespread. In Salah al-Din, Anbar and Ninewa governorates people suspected of affiliation with ISIL, faced eviction from their homes throughout July. In



IDPs shelter from the scorching sun in Fallujah. Credit: UNICEF

Ramadi city, Anbar, returnee families were transported from their homes to Kilo 18 camp following serious concerns over their safety. Similar threats to people in Shirqat, Salah al-Din led to the same outcome.

Reports of retributive acts and collective punishment against these families are increasingly reaching protection partners. Advocacy is underway at every level to protect civilians and promote recourse to justice under the rule of law. Reports of extrajudicial actions against selected returnees are also reaching displaced people in camps, and the fear of being subjected to these acts is a factor in the choice to remain in displacement. One of the key obstacles to return amongst displaced people is feeling that their areas of origin are insecure, according to new research from IOM. Feelings of insecurity include the fear of retributive acts, as well as the risk of attack and the presence of explosive hazards.

Conditions for sustainable return not yet in place

Outside of insecurity, return communities face multiple obstacles

Despite growing risks and concerns, people continue to return home in their thousands. Over 2 million people returned home countrywide since the beginning of conflict and the resulting displacement which began in 2014, although the numbers returning in July were approximately 25 per cent lower than in recent months, according to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix.

Fears of retributive acts and other challenges to coexistence between returnees and people who stayed in their homes are not the only obstacles currently hindering returns. The trauma experienced by communities who continue to face grave challenges cannot be

underestimated, whether they are still under ISIL control or in more recently retaken areas. High levels of infrastructural damage in urban areas and gaps in the provision of basic services mean communities are slow in getting back onto their feet, and sporadic pockets of insecurity and the presence of IEDs exacerbate these challenges. The security of land tenure, as well as personal security, is another source of distress for returnees, while the lack of employment opportunities are a barrier to people trying to restart their lives.

Income-generating opportunities in return areas were severely affected by the disruption of the local labour economies during years of conflict and ISIL occupation. Government employment is the most stable, although people in conflict-affected areas report delays in salary payments, sometimes for months. The other main source of employment is daily labour, largely in rural areas. Barriers to agricultural production - war-damaged farmland, a shortage of agricultural resources like seeds and equipment, and the presence of explosive hazards - further compromises the labour market.

Preferential treatment is given to host communities by employers in some governorates, like Anbar and Diyala, according to emergency livelihoods partners. This creates competition between displaced, return and host communities, exacerbating tensions.

A nuanced approach to a complex issue

Patterns of return across Iraq are complex. People return to different conditions for different reasons, not all of them durable or sustainable. In the short term, spontaneous returns are assisted with humanitarian support while people kick-start their lives. As a stand alone, this is not sustainable. Fragile, reforming communities will take a long time to rebuild, and additional medium- to long-term recovery assistance is needed.

The Multi-Sector Response is a tool devised by humanitarian partners to respond during the initial stages of returns, and pave the way for longer-term assistance. The Response prioritizes geographical areas rather than specific target groups as a measure to promote social cohesion and minimize the risks of sectarian or ethnic schisms within the parameters of humanitarian assistance. The Response is to be rolled out in a localized context, tailored to the needs of each community and based on evidence gathered on the ground. Key components of the Response include measures to boost livelihoods and encourage employment options.

Projects and programmes to advance income generation and self-sufficiency are heavily under-funded. Over half of the projects listed in the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for the Multi-Purpose Cash and Emergency Livelihoods Clusters cannot open or were forced to close due to underfunding. As a basis for durable return options, increased resources to ongoing humanitarian assistance in vulnerable return communities is vital.

Donors pledge generously, but services still cut

Additional funding still needed to maintain levels of assistance in Iraq

In recognition of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Iraq, the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Commission announced additional humanitarian funding following the high-level conference in Washington D.C. on 12 July. Donor states acknowledged that the humanitarian situation in Mosul exceeded expectations in terms of the length of time, number of people displaced and the extent of needs, and were receptive to the need to maintain the emergency response at its current level. Collective pledges are over US\$200 million, helping humanitarians to maintain the high level of emergency assistance that will be needed by conflict-affected civilians in Iraq for some time to come, but more funds are required to keep the response on track.

The highly-prioritized 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan is less than half funded as of the end of July, with only \$454 million of a requested \$985 million received. Due to the shortfall in funding, over half of the projects and programmes under the Plan have not yet started

Patterns of return across Iraq are complex. People return to different conditions for different reasons.

or were forced to close. Additional funding needs to be urgently mobilized to avoid further cutbacks in response.

Damage to homes in West Mosul is extreme

Massive destruction will leave thousands displaced for some time to come

An estimated 32,000 West Mosul homes are destroyed, leaving 200,000 people homeless. While East Mosul slowly gets back on its feet, the people of West Mosul will need comprehensive humanitarian assistance for some time.

Following the end of hostilities in Mosul the extent of damage to homes and infrastructure has come to light. Of the 54 neighbourhoods in western Mosul, 15 neighbourhoods are completely destroyed, and half of the homes and public buildings in another 23 neighbourhoods are flattened. At current estimates, 32,000 homes are totally destroyed in western neighbourhoods,



Foraging for scrap metal among the rubble at Mosul University.
Credit: OCHA/Themba Linden

leaving 200,000 people homeless. Stabilization partners estimate rebuilding costs at \$1 billion, and with the extent of contamination by explosive hazards, reconstruction projects will take considerable time in badly-damaged areas, leaving thousands of Iraqis in displacement for some time to come.

The situation in Mosul is very much a tale of two cities. East Mosul saw comparatively less damage, allowing civilians to return home quickly. To date, close to 166,000 people returned to their homes in eastern neighbourhoods, amounting to over 94 per cent of those who fled since hostilities began in October. Markets and schools are open, and although humanitarian partners are still filling gaps in basic services – most notably water provision - some semblance of normalcy has resumed. In West Mosul, pockets of insecurity still flare up in and around the Old City, and people continue to flee the Old City for camps and host communities, often dehydrated, under-nourished and deeply traumatized. While East Mosul slowly gets back on its feet, the people of West Mosul will need comprehensive humanitarian assistance for some time to come.

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