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Humanitarian Action for Children

Iraq

Nearly 9 million people in Iraq require humanitarian assistance, including 5 million people who are in critical need of safe water.² Although 2 million people have returned to their homes,³ 3 million people remain displaced, including 1.4 million children.⁴ In 2018, the humanitarian community anticipates a reduction in armed violence, though new displacements may continue to occur in complex patterns⁵ and the trend of increasing returns to retaken areas is expected to continue. Maintaining camp services such as water supply, sanitation facilities, schools and protective spaces for displaced children and their families is essential but costly, as is ensuring critical services for returnees. Children remain highly vulnerable and protection concerns are significant. Nearly half of the population of internally displaced school-aged children—some 335,000 children—are out of school.⁶ Children who have lived in areas formerly held by the armed group Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant are in need of psychosocial support, vaccinations, support to re-enter school, and safe spaces to play. Outside of camps, Iraq's public services remain overstretched, with water and sanitation networks damaged by war or neglect and overburdened health systems struggling to serve displaced children and families.

Humanitarian strategy

The UNICEF strategy in Iraq is aligned with the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). UNICEF leads the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and education clusters, the child protection sub-cluster and the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and is an active member of the health cluster. UNICEF will take a flexible approach to reaching people in need in Iraq, regardless of location. Families on the move will be reached through the RRM, and people in retaken communities will be reached with a multi-sectoral response during conflict or after it subsides. Access to safe water, gender-sensitive sanitation facilities and hygiene awareness will be supported in camps, host communities and retaken areas where people remain or return. Children under 5 years will receive immunization and nutrition services, especially in areas recently affected by conflict. UNICEF will expand access to safe and quality education, particularly in retaken areas, and facilitate sustained psychosocial support and protection services for children in need and their caregivers. UNICEF will work with United Nations and government partners to carry out cash-based interventions, and with non-governmental organizations and government emergency bodies to support capacity building for longer-term recovery.

Results from 2017

As of 31 October 2017, UNICEF had US\$125.9 million available against the US\$161.4 million appeal (75 per cent funded).⁷ Complementary resources were used to fund technical support needs not covered by emergency funding. The significant number of new displacements and the adoption of low-cost, high-impact interventions resulted in achievements beyond planned targets for RRM, water, education and child protection. First-line response through the RRM reached 2.3 million displaced and vulnerable people as violence intensified across Iraq. More than 1.8 million people in conflict-affected governorates accessed safe water, primarily through water trucking. Child protection teams provided psychosocial support to 332,000 children, and the use of community-based interventions helped to reduce operational costs. Grave child rights violations were monitored, verified and documented through the strengthened Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, which informed evidence-based advocacy.⁸ Some 274,000 children, including malnourished children leaving occupied areas, benefitted from expanded rapid nutrition screening. Although lack of learning spaces, crowded classrooms and the displacement of education staff impacted education progress, accelerated e-Learning strategies helped out-of-school children return to learning. UNICEF cash assistance, designed based on joint United Nations vulnerability assessments, reached 7,400 children and expanded into new governorates using a mobile money partnership⁹ that significantly reduced overhead costs.

Total people in need:

8.7 million¹

Total children (<18) in need:

4.1 million

Total people to be reached:

2.24 million

Total children to be reached:

1.2 million

2018 programme targets:

Rapid Response Mechanism and winterization response

- 1.03 million vulnerable people displaced by conflict receiving RRM kits within 72 hours of trigger for response
- 200,000 children with warm winter clothing

WASH

- 1.3 million emergency-affected people, including 611,000 children, provided with sufficient safe water as per agreed standards
- 300,000 people accessing appropriate sanitation facilities

Education

- 450,000 school-aged children accessing quality education, including through temporary structures

Child protection

- 186,300 children and caregivers reached with psychosocial support
- 18,630 girls and boys accessing specialized protection services

Nutrition

- 50,000 children under 5 accessing nutrition services

Health

- 1.2 million children under 5 vaccinated against polio¹⁰
- 18,000 children under 1 vaccinated against measles

Cash assistance

- 15,000 children from vulnerable families receiving child-focused cash transfers¹¹

	Cluster 2017 targets	Cluster total results	UNICEF 2017 target	UNICEF total results
RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISM AND WINTERIZATION				
Vulnerable people newly displaced by conflict receiving RRM kits within 72 hours of the trigger for response			1,300,000	2,376,984 ⁱ
Most vulnerable children better protected from risks of winter with appropriate clothing			200,000	136,681 ⁱⁱ
WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE				
Emergency-affected populations with access to a sufficient safe water supply ⁱ	2,025,873	2,754,427	1,000,000	1,808,911
Emergency-affected populations with access to appropriate sanitation facilities	495,213	337,483	300,000	255,429
Internally displaced persons receiving hygiene kits or other hygiene supplies	2,025,873	758,358	900,000	575,956
EDUCATION				
Boys and girls receiving educational supplies ⁱⁱⁱ	550,000	931,950	690,000	843,449
School-aged children reached through temporary learning spaces (pre-fabricated)			50,000	44,437
Out-of-school children aged 6 to 17 years accessing education ⁱⁱⁱ	100,000	260,443	100,000	252,560
CHILD PROTECTION^{iv}				
Children participating in structured, sustained resilience or psychosocial support programmes	351,270	571,484	161,567	332,335
Children receiving specialized child protection services (reunification, alternative or specialized care and services)	47,082	38,912	14,065	29,688
Females receiving individual or group psychosocial support			9,000	10,611
HEALTH				
Newborn babies of conflict-affected families benefitting from newborn home services			8,000	6,522
Children under 1 vaccinated against measles through routine immunization			50,000	12,480
Children aged 0 to 59 months vaccinated against polio in crises-affected areas through campaigns			5,700,000	5,578,948
NUTRITION^v				
Children under 5 have access to nutrition services (screening, referral and treatment services)			50,000	274,214
Targeted mothers of children aged 0 to 23 months with access to infant and young child feeding counselling for appropriate feeding			20,000	33,205
SOCIAL PROTECTION				
Most vulnerable children receiving cash assistance			9,000	7,459

Results are through 31 October 2017 unless otherwise noted. The 2017 cluster targets are as per the 2017 Iraq HRP. The 2017 UNICEF targets are higher in some cases because UNICEF planned to reach more children than those targeted under the HRP.

ⁱ New displacements in 2017 were higher than anticipated, allowing for higher achievement against the targets.

ⁱⁱ Winter results are from 2016-2017. The winter response for 2017-2018 will begin in November 2017.

ⁱⁱⁱ The cost of school installation and rehabilitation has declined by an estimated 40 per cent as access to affected locations has improved and market prices have decreased. This has made it possible to open temporary (pre-fabricated) learning spaces for more children than expected. In 2017, UNICEF was planning to be the only cluster partner working on the out-of-school children intervention. However, during the year, partner capacity in non-formal education interventions improved, and complementary projects in this area were initiated through the cluster.

^{iv} Increased achievement against the targets can be attributed to the use of mobile child protection teams, the strengthening of community-based child protection structures, the high number of displacements and improved partner reporting.

^v In April 2017, the nutrition screening strategy was adapted using a 'rapid' approach in response to increased displacement and reports of malnourishment among children leaving occupied areas.

Funding requirements

UNICEF is requesting US \$101,151,160 to meet the humanitarian needs of children in Iraq in 2018.¹² Without adequate and timely funding, UNICEF will be unable to support the national response to the country's continuing protection crisis. This includes the provision of critical WASH services for internally displaced persons and returning populations facing the spread of cholera, and health services to ensure children are immunized against childhood diseases. Basic supplies and classroom space are also urgently needed to uphold children's right to education. Child-focused cash assistance will support parents and caregivers to feed, clothe and educate their children.

Sector	2018 requirements (US\$)
Rapid Response Mechanism	4,870,000
Winterization	6,000,000
Water, sanitation and hygiene	37,000,000
Education	15,950,000
Child protection	21,767,000
Health and nutrition	10,000,000
Social protection (cash assistance)	5,564,160
Total	101,151,160

¹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, '2018 Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview', OCHA, 2017. Children make up 47 per cent of the population.

² Ibid.

³ International Organization for Migration Displacement Tracking Matrix, 15 October 2017.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Patterns of displacement may occur such that individuals are affected by multiple displacements and many internally displaced persons may return to their areas of origin.

⁶ United Nations Children's Fund, *The Costs and Benefit of Education in Iraq: An analysis of the education sector and strategies to maximize the benefits of education*, UNICEF, 2017.

⁷ Available funds include US\$84.3 million raised against the current appeal and US\$41.6 million carried forward from the previous year. In addition, US\$274,159 of regular resources and US\$2.8 other resources-regular were used to meet critical humanitarian needs during the appeal year.

⁸ Monitoring of children in conflict verified 11 reports of grave violations against child rights in October 2017 alone that affected 41 children (15 boys and 26 girls). The verified incidents included killing of four children and injuring of 31. Other incidents involved sexual violence against girls. Sources: United Nations Children's Fund, *Nowhere To Go: Children in Iraq trapped in cycles of violence*, UNICEF, 2017; and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Iraq Humanitarian Situation Report', UNICEF, October 2017.

⁹ In 2017 UNICEF entered into a new partnership with a national mobile network provider who facilitates UNICEF-supported cash transfer via mobile phones. This has increased accessibility for people in need, improved the reliability, timeliness and security for cash assistance delivery, and contributed to reducing UNICEF operational costs.

¹⁰ The overall target for the 2017 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal was established based on the polio immunization target of all children under 5 years old in Iraq (5.7 million), of which UNICEF supported the immunization of 5.6 million children. For 2018, the polio immunization target has been reduced to 1.2 million because UNICEF will focus on the most recently conflict-affected governorates of Anbar, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al Din.

¹¹ UNICEF cash assistance targets vulnerable families with children who are identified as at risk of dropping out of school, or who have already dropped out. The child-focused cash assistance is a monthly payment intended to support the removal of financial barriers to children's education or child-focused spending.

¹² The UNICEF requirement in Iraq is higher than its portion of the Iraq HRP as UNICEF interventions will target larger populations than the HRP.

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