

حكومة إقليم كردستان- العراق
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حكومهتی هه‌ریمی كوردستان-عێراق
ئه‌نجومه‌نی وه‌زیران
وه‌زاره‌تی ناوخوا
ناوه‌ندی هاوبه‌شی هه‌ماهه‌نگی قه‌یرانه‌كان

Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq
Council of Ministers
Ministry of Interior
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Common Situational Picture IDPs and Syrian Refugees in Kurdistan Region of Iraq Report No 1, December 13, 2014

Since the beginning of the Syria crisis in March 2011, thousands of people have fled Syria from violence and unrest, becoming refugees in neighbouring countries. A considerable number of Syrian refugees have taken refuge in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Furthermore, since 10th June when ISIS began its action in Iraq many thousands more from Mosul and other northern areas have fled their homes; the majority of which have come to the Kurdistan Region.

There are no any accurate statistics of the total number of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan Region. The speed at which the crisis developed, its scale and the continuing mobility of people makes it very difficult to maintain an accurate assessment; there is no process of census or registration. According to a recent joint press statement by the KRG Ministry of Planning and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) issued on 10th December, 47% of the more than two million displaced are in the Kurdistan Region, having fled from violence and unrest in Anbar, Ninewa, Diyala and Salahaddin provinces.

The latest United Nations estimate shows that 946,266 internally displaced Iraqis (157,711 families) have come to Kurdistan Region since the outbreak of violence at the beginning of 2014.

In addition, the total number of Syrian Refugees in the Kurdistan Region, from past years as well as this year, is estimated at 280,000 individuals. Some 240,000 came to the Kurdistan Region in previous years and of those, 210,000 are registered and living in camps in the three provinces of Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniah

And additional batch of Syrian Kurdish refugees arrived in Kurdistan from the city of Kobane. Around 20,000 individuals had come to the Kurdistan Region, transiting via Turkey, since the ISIS offences on Kobane and other Kurdish areas in Syria. According to IOM, since September 25th, the number of daily arrivals from Kobane had increased, beginning with 60 or 70 people a day, rising to over 100 per day. After the liberation of Kobane by local Kurdish

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forces (YPG) in cooperation with Peshmerga and coalition airstrikes around 4000 individuals have been reported travelling back to their villages. Despite 85% of the city's infrastructure being destroyed .

Once the offensive to retake Mosul and other northern areas is launched, it is expected that the number of the IDPs will increase even more. Civilians will continue to flee from war zones and seek shelter in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

As if the situation for IDPs and refugees in the Kurdistan Region was not bad enough, having fled the violence of ISIS many, especially women, children and the elderly, now face another life threatening challenge, winter. Some 34% of IDPs are currently living in inadequate shelters and in under-equipped shelters including informal settlements, unfinished buildings, malls, churches, and public parks as well as shared spaces.

Furthermore, there are around 8000 people on the Shingal Mountain, (933 families, 8000 individuals of which 3000 are men and the rest are women, children and elderly). They are staying at a holey Yezidi site on the Mountain. They are in dire needs. The children are dying of cold and hunger. They desperately need medical supplies, milk/formula for children, water and food. And also need food, medicine, winter resistant tents and blankets. The KRG Ministry of Peshmerga has air dropped assistance using Iraqi Helicopters; however, due to the winter and bad weather, their capability is limited and they are unable to provide assistance continuously. Therefore, they need heavy-lift helicopters such as chinook helicopters to continue air drop assistance or to evacuate the people on the mountain.

The impact on host communities:

There have been a significant economic, infrastructure, social and security impacts on host communities. Immediately after their arrival, refugees and IDPs start to compete with locals for resources such as accommodation, water, housing, food, medical services and jobs. As resources are scarce, such competition creates challenges for local administrations to meet the increasing demands of both local residents and refugees or IDPs.

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The situation has had an adverse impact on local people and there is increasing concern that as jobs, the availability of accommodation, health care and other services become even more stretched, it might change the attitudes of local residents towards refugees and IDPs. While relations between refugees and host communities have been easy-going for the most part, it has come to the attention of the KRG that there have been some disturbing reports of friction or tension among the locals and the IDPs and refugees. There has been a sharp increase in antisocial behaviour and petty crime (e.g. prostitution and 'kerb-crawling', licentiousness, larceny and begging), which is at least partly attributable to IDPs and refugees being in an unfamiliar environment with strained economic resources. Finally, there is the potential security threat, where terrorists could exploit the presence of refugees and/or IDPs through intimidation. All in all, there is some fear that the Kurdistan Region's well-deserved reputation for hospitality will switch to hostility. These challenges are significant and long-term. They need international attention and intervention, and most importantly, they need a joint and combined comprehensive strategy to address them.

In summary, the challenges include:

1. Security; an existential threat from ISIL
2. IDPs and Refugees; 1.6 million refugees and IDPs in the Kurdistan Region
3. Financial challenge; the withholding of the KRG's constitutionally approved budget has created huge financial problems for the KRG, not least of which has been an inability to pay government employee salaries, which are now three months in arrears.

Immediate Needs

IDPs and Refugees:

1. Health:

- Mobile health clinics and health centres need to be established
- Provision of equipment such as (medicine, medical supplies, vaccines)
- Mental health and psychological centres
- Fumigation for shelters and camps
- Provision of mobile health teams

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2. WASH:

- Water for camp and non-camp IDPs and refugees
- Sanitation facilities
- Hygiene supplies
- Waste equipment and management skills
- Improving sewage drainage systems and garbage collection and disposal.

3. Winterization:

- Building camps
- Water resistant tents, blankets and cooking equipment
- Kerosene stoves and heaters
- Distribution of kerosene for the winter
- Improving roads inside camps and shelters
- Camp administration costs

4. Education:

- Operation of existing schools (teachers' salaries, stationeries, curriculum etc.)
- Building tents and prefabricated classrooms and education spaces.
- Provision of administrative costs of schools for camp and non-camp IDPs and refugees.

Host communities:

There is immediate need to upgrade and improve the infrastructure of the local host provinces including:

- Rehabilitation and renovation of the local schools and hospitals, which were occupied by IDPs.
- Upgrading the capacity of the hospitals
- Increasing and upgrading the clean water supply and distribution infrastructure
- Upgrading sewage drainage systems including sanitary sewage and treatment.

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- Upgrading and increasing the capacity of waste management and recycling solutions, or at least garbage collection and disposal.
- Improving and upgrading the current electricity production and distribution infrastructure.
- Improving the transportation infrastructure

Finally, the IDPs and refugees need developmental projects inside the camps to provide them with jobs and opportunities to become master of their own in the future. They should run the camps, schools, health centres, municipality services, youth and recreational centres as well as training centres such as vocational training. These development projects need resources to be allocated and long term planning.

In addition, greater resources need to be allocated to the areas that are reclaimed or will be reclaimed from the ISIL to clear IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) and to rebuild the infrastructure in these areas as existing infrastructure has been destroyed due to the fighting.