

OVERVIEW

# IRAQ 2014-2016 / CONFLICT

CRISIS

**Conflicts in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq** provoking protracted cross-border and internal displacement, **2012-onwards**.

PEOPLE AFFECTED<sup>1</sup>

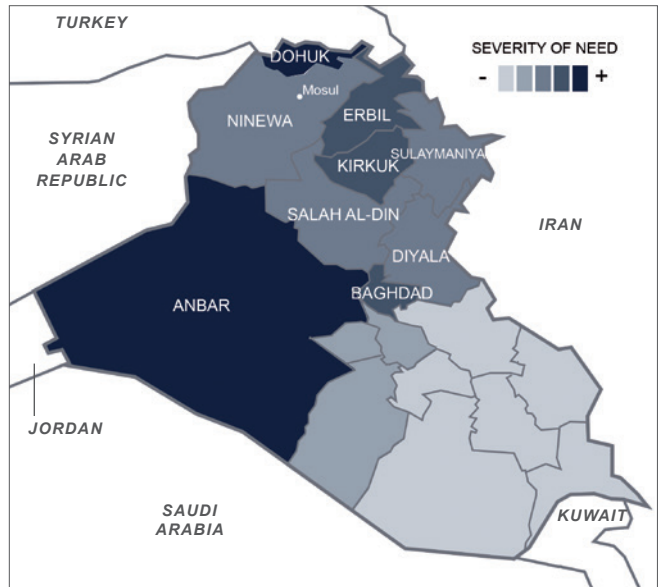
**4.4 million** in need<sup>1</sup>  
**3.1 million** IDPs<sup>2</sup>  
**1.3 million** returnees<sup>2</sup>  
**228,894** Syrian refugees in Iraq (74,984 families)<sup>3</sup>

PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE RESPONSE<sup>4</sup> (2014-2016)

**597,841** households (NFIs).  
**201,682** households (Shelter assistance).

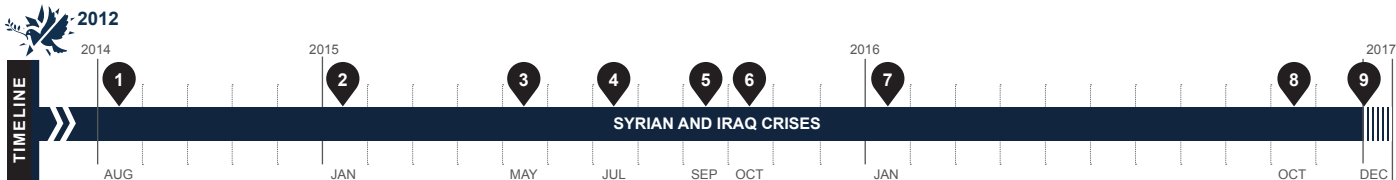
SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSE

The situation in Iraq has been unstable for several years for both the internal conflict and the impacts of the Syrian crisis. The shelter response has taken a range of approaches, from mobile assistance for populations on the move, to a variety of interventions for displaced, host communities, refugee and returnee caseloads in multiple settlement situations, including camps, which have been the preferred form of assistance from the government. Integrated programming, protection and accessibility considerations have become essential in responding to such protracted crisis.



Map based on Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview 2016. Severity of needs has been calculated on: proportion of displaced people compared to the population of Iraq; proportion of displaced people to host governorate population; percentage of displaced people living in critical shelter arrangements.

<sup>1</sup> SHNO / HRP 2017.  
<sup>2</sup> 2017 HRP Advanced Executive Summary, <http://bit.ly/2iCMO24>.  
<sup>3</sup> UNHCR (30 November 2016).  
<sup>4</sup> Data reported to the Shelter Cluster, as of December 2016.  
<sup>5</sup> Displacement Tracking Matrix factsheet # 10.



- 1 Aug 2014: The UN declares a Level 3 Emergency in Iraq.
- 2 Jan 2015: 2.2 million Iraqis have been displaced from their homes since the start of 2014.
- 3 May 2015: Military operations in Tikrit create some displacement, but also allow returns to commence.
- 4 Jul 2015: The Anbar offensive commences, with 100,000 people displaced over the following six months.
- 5 Sep 2015: Cholera outbreak lasts until November 2015.
- 6 Oct 2015: Heavy rain and flooding creates additional displacement.
- 7 Jan 2016: 3.2 million Iraqis have been displaced since January 2014, 50% in Anbar, Baghdad and Dohuk governorates. 400,000 people have been able to return home. Procurement, planning and prepositioning begin, as plans for the Mosul offensive are shared with the Humanitarian Sector.
- 8 Oct 2016: The Mosul offensive starts; mass displacement prompts humanitarian actors to scale up emergency preparedness and response plans.
- 9 Dec 2016: 121,158 people displaced due to the Mosul crisis by the end of the year, and increasing<sup>5</sup>.

**For projects in Iraq or similar approaches see:**

*Shelter Projects 2011-2012, A.16 and A.17: Lebanon, on shelter repairs/upgrades and sealing off.*

*Shelter Projects 2013-2014, A.13 and A.14: Lebanon, on sealing off kits; and on multisector, mixed modality interventions.*

*Shelter Projects 2013-2014, A.9: Iraq, on cash/voucher programmes for shelter maintenance.*

*Shelter Projects 2015-2016, A.34, A.35 and A.36: Iraq, on repairs of damaged homes and religious buildings; on accessibility upgrades in camps; and on resettlement of IDPs to a planned site.*



Camps have been established in Iraq since 2013 to host Syrian refugees.



Sealing-off kits were distributed as one of the shelter response options. IDPs live in a variety of conditions, including in rented accommodation, collective centres (such as schools) and spontaneous, self-settled, sites. Most of the displaced population (both refugees and IDPs) lives outside of camps.

### BACKGROUND TO THE CRISIS

Against the background of the ongoing Syrian crisis as it entered its fifth year, Iraq's internal conflict against armed opposition groups has resulted in a protracted crisis that has left almost 3.2 million people displaced. The economic crisis has seen a 40% drop in oil revenues, resulting in the collapse of the social protection floor across the country and seriously compromising the ability of communities to access basic services, maintain incomes and meet everyday needs. Overcrowding, dwindling resources, perceptions of disproportionate assistance, lack of (or competition for) employment opportunities, and continued insecurity threatened to exacerbate already fragile ethnic and sectarian tensions across the country, particularly as sections of the non-displaced population are already in a situation of destitution. By the end of 2016, **it was estimated that over 10 million people in Iraq required some form of humanitarian assistance**, of whom a large proportion were host communities. More broadly, informal settlements increased significantly after 2003, due to a shortage of land allocated for housing, lack of services and infrastructural investment, corruption and poor governance, compounded by significant waves of displacement in 2003 and 2007-2008<sup>6</sup>.

### SHELTER STRATEGIES AND RESPONSES

The Shelter and Non-Food Items (Shelter-NFI) Cluster in Iraq was activated in January 2014 to address the IDP crisis, with a

<sup>6</sup> Over one million people were already displaced during these years, according to the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration.

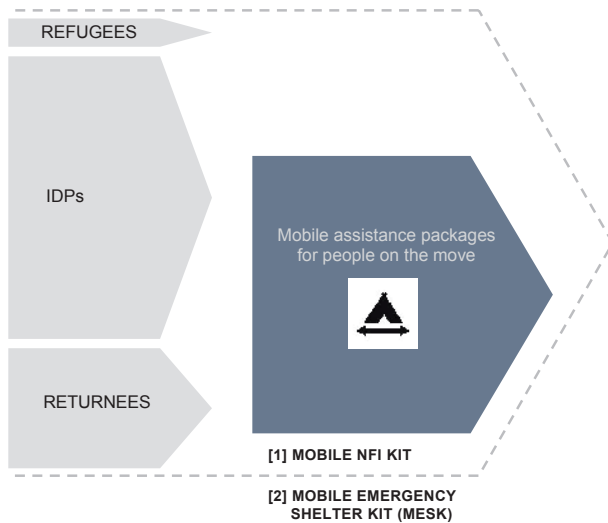
Shelter Sector Working Group already established to focus on the Syrian refugee response. Given that many host communities (particularly in northern Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq) were composed of a mix of vulnerable non-displaced, refugee and IDP families living in similarly substandard shelter and settlement conditions within proximity of each other, the **Shelter-NFI Cluster merged to consider both IDP and refugee responses in this mixed crisis**.

In parallel to allowing longer-term displaced families achieve and maintain adequate shelter, agencies in Iraq have also had to prepare for **regular waves of new displacement across the country**, as the active conflict continued. This required a **phased and incremental approach**, covering emergency, post-emergency and early recovery activities, often in the same locations during the same timeframe. Building on the national strategy set out by the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, the Shelter-NFI Cluster in Iraq set out the response strategy in the following three packages: **1) first-line response** to address the emergency shelter needs of the newly displaced; **2) second-line response** to upgrade shelter for existing IDPs in critical need; and **3) full-cluster response** to maintain shelter for the most vulnerable and support rapid return. However, due to the scale of emergency needs, funding for first-line, and sometimes second-line responses, has had to be prioritized over the longer-term responses. For 2017, the strategic objectives also included: replenish core households items (second-line) and expand shelter and housing options for vulnerable households, according to standards (full-cluster).

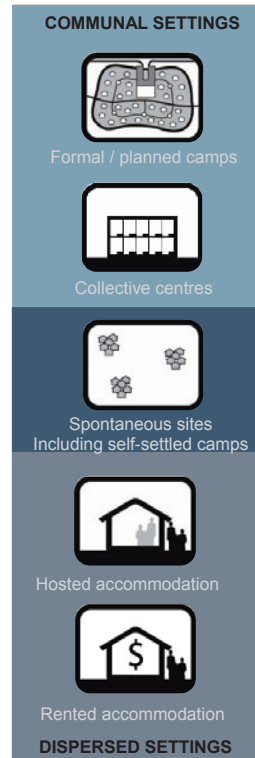


"Transit camps" with tents as a temporary measure were initially established for temporary accommodation of the influx of Syrian refugees. These grew in number and size over time, and structures were partially upgraded. The number of refugees was only a fraction of the total number of people displaced (IDPs and returnees).

POPULATIONS IN NEED



SETTLEMENT OPTIONS



TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

- [A] TEMPORARY CAMPS / TRANSIT SITES
- [B] CONSTRUCTION OF TENT - FREE CAMPS
- [C] UPGRADING OF TRANSIT SITES TO TENT - FREE CAMPS
- [D] CAMP INFRASTRUCTURE
  
- [3] BASIC NFI KIT
- [4] BASIC EMERGENCY SHELTER KIT (BESK)
- [5] EMERGENCY SEALING OFF KIT (ESOK)
- [6] FULL SEALING OFF
- [7] REHABILITATION AND DURABLE UPGRADE

Diagram summarizing the main types of assistance by settlement typology

MAIN TYPES OF SHELTER ASSISTANCE IN IRAQ	
[1] MOBILE NFI KIT USD 100-120 per kit	Non-shelter-grade plastic sheeting, blankets, Mylar blankets, spoons, forks, cups, bowls, deep plates, basic First Aid Kit, solar lantern, hand-crank torch, collapsible jerry can, duct tape, rope, wet wipes, bag
[2] MOBILE EMERGENCY SHELTER KIT (MESK) USD 60-80 per kit	One woven bag containing: 2 x tarpaulin (shelter-grade); 1 x rope (30m); 1 x wire (5m); 0.5kg x roofing nails; 0.5kg x wire nails; 1 x claw hammer; 1 x shovel; 10 x tent pegs
[3] BASIC NFI KIT USD 220-260 per kit (including supplemental seasonal support)	Shelter-grade tarpaulin, blankets (possible to replace with sheets in summer), mattresses, hygiene kit (30 day), kerosene or gas cooker, kitchen set, solar lantern, water jerry can
[4] BASIC EMERGENCY SHELTER KIT (BESK) USD 80-100 per kit	One woven bag containing: 2 x tarpaulin (shelter-grade); 4 x timber lengths or poles (2.3m); 1 x rope (30m); 1 x wire (5m); 0.5kg x roofing nails; 0.5kg x wire nails; 1 x claw hammer; 1 x shovel; 10 x tent pegs
[5] EMERGENCY SEALING OFF KIT (ESOK) USD 250-300 per kit	Select items and quantities to form a kit within cost envelope in response to needs assessment at each location: (1) Construction materials: tarpaulin and plastic sheeting, square cut timbers, other framing material, plywood sheeting, fixings and rope, sealants and adhesives, metal straps and angles, insulation materials (2) Personal and site safety equipment (3) Tools
[6] FULL SEALING OFF	BoQs and technical design led by agency, implemented by beneficiary families with supervision or by hired contractors. Includes more durable sealing off measures such as insulation, PVC windows and doors, and roof repair
[7] REHABILITATION AND DURABLE UPGRADE	Repair of existing shelters (e.g. unfinished and abandoned buildings) and/or installation of good quality shelter or settlement level interventions that address priority issues identified through technical assessments of shelter safety and adequacy. Security of tenure and scope of works confirmed through signed agreements with legal owner. The Shelter Cluster works very closely with the HLP Sub-Cluster to develop robust guidelines on how to ensure that HLP issues are addressed and do not become barriers for the upgrades. All partners follow the same process.

OUT-OF-CAMP

While the preferred response option for the authorities in Iraq has been the establishment of formal, planned, camps for both refugees and IDPs, 62% of the Syrian refugee population<sup>6</sup> and 86% of the IDP population<sup>7</sup> across the country have been living outside of camps within the host community, though there has been insufficient focus on their needs and conditions. As the crisis in Iraq continued, **greater efforts towards supporting self-reliance, sustainability and building resilience has become increasingly urgent.** This had to be addressed within affected populations, as well as at the administrative level through local authorities.

As of December 2016, **45% of the displaced population were in rented accommodation** (including hotels), facing increasing financial pressure, as a result of saturation in the rental market and high rental costs, leading to greater vulnerability – and particularly a risk of eviction – as resources were depleted and families fell into debt. In addition, the ability to rent private accommodation did not necessarily correlate with achieving adequate shelter, with **17% of families living in what was considered “critical shelter” types** – unfinished or abandoned buildings, schools or religious buildings and informal settlements<sup>8</sup>. A main approach of cluster partners working outside of the camp context has been to **improve shelter alongside securing tenure**, while coordinating closely with WASH, CCCM and Cash and Livelihoods actors, to ensure displaced families do not fall into deteriorating shelter and settlement situations over time. Therefore, the shelter response had to adopt a holistic and cross-sector approach towards meeting complex, multi-faceted, needs outside of camp settings, over a longer duration.

Approaches have included combinations of the following:

- Standardized and complementary **Mobile or Basic Emergency Shelter Kits (ESK)** and **Mobile or Basic NFI Kits**, to respond to anticipated new and large-scale

<sup>6</sup> 3RP, 2016-2017.

<sup>7</sup> Shelter-NFI Cluster Factsheet, September 2016.

<sup>8</sup> See case study A.34 for an example of a repairs project in these shelter types.



Unfinished buildings were occupied by some people. Where agreements were possible with landowners, repairs, light or durable upgrades were made. In some cases, frame tents or sealing-off kits were provided.

displacement, aiming to address emergency, life-saving, needs in a variety of potential transit, non-camp and camp-like settings.

- **Sealing-off shelters** through distribution of sealing-off kits or implemented sealing-off activities. Inter-agency joint methodologies and mobile site monitoring by CCCM teams have been developed to ensure site, shelter & settlement, WASH and protection (including HLP/tenure security) issues are addressed.
- Development of **Emergency Sealing-Off Kits (ESOK)** for rapid distribution in the case of a large influx, returns, or for climatization measures.
- **Repair, rehabilitation and “durable upgrades”** of collective centres and unfinished / abandoned buildings, including the installation of appropriate shelter-level water and sanitation facilities, as part of shelter actors’ responsibility.
- **Phased and incremental approaches** towards collective centres, unfinished and abandoned buildings and spontaneous sites transitioning to more formally managed settlements. These include sealing-off (often non-structural, for climatization purposes), followed by rehabilitation and durable upgrades to ensure protection against climate in the short term, while longer-term shelter needs are addressed comprehensively.
- **Tenure security and incentives** have been integrated through negotiated bi- or tri-partite agreements between beneficiary, land or building owner, and sometimes with local authorities and/or the agency. For example, in exchange for allowing a displaced family to remain in a house with set rent levels and duration, durable upgrading works to the property (such as installing windows and doors, or bathrooms) would be undertaken. Cash-for-Rent and other cash-based programming have also been piloted.
- **Community construction activities**, such as Quick Impact Projects, to support over-stretched public services in host communities with large populations of refugees and IDPs, often engaging Cash-for-Work or skills-building modalities.

### WITHIN CAMPS

In some locations, shelters have been established from the start in so-called **“permanent” (or “tent-free”) camps** with concrete slabs, kitchens and bathrooms, or planned as transitional settlements with prefabricated composite panel caravans forming single-family dwelling units. In other areas, where **“transit camps”** were initially established for temporary accommodation of the influx of Syrian refugees, a process of transformation and shelter upgrading has been underway since 2014. Tents as temporary, emergency shelter solutions have been phased out and replaced with more durable shelters.

A key aspect of camp activities has been **installing, upgrading and maintaining camp infrastructure**, from public service facilities, educational buildings and recreation areas, to roads, electrical connections and drainage. Close working relationships with WASH and CCCM actors have been required, in order to coordinate both hardware and software components, with increasing coordination and engagement with local authority counterparts, as management of camps and their associated infrastructure and service provision was handed over to primary duty-bearers. Although rules vary between camps, single-storey construction (masonry or using mixed materials) has been permitted, resulting in the stabilization of the areas as settlements.

### SYRIAN REFUGEE RESPONSE

Refugees and IDPs comprised 25% of the total population of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) in 2016. A spike in arrivals of Syrian refugees came in August 2013, with a subsequent influx in late 2014. The majority of Syrian refugees entered the KRI. As of December 2016, around 39% resided in one of ten camps established from 2013, with the remaining 61% of refugees living outside of camps, in host communities. The refugee population remained largely stable, with movement into and out of camps characterizing population movements in some areas, alongside migration to Europe and other countries.



IDP and refugee camps, in some cases, initially consisted of emergency shelter solutions (e.g. tents), which have been gradually replaced by more durable shelters.

Throughout 2015 and 2016, the refugee camps have moved into a period of significantly reduced involvement of humanitarian actors, accompanied by an increased role for the government authorities, through mentorship, capacity development and partnership programmes. For this, a Joint Crisis Centre was established by the Kurdistan Regional Government in 2015, to continue coordination of responses. Enhancement of livelihoods remained a key focus of resilience-building amongst the refugee population and within host communities, which have struggled to cope with the influx of both refugees and IDPs since 2014.

### INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING

The needs encountered by the newly displaced, those experiencing multiple and/or prolonged displacement, returnees, host and non-displaced communities have been of large scale and complexity. This has made **necessary to trial ways to effectively integrate sectors**, for reasons of stimulating longer-term impacts, cost-effectiveness and sometimes due to changing security and access situations. Examples include:

- Encouraging the use of **conditional and multipurpose cash-based modalities** for shelter and NFI activities.
- Shelter activities include installation or repair of household-level and shared **water and sanitation facilities**; WASH cluster partners could then more effectively focus on addressing the high needs of community-level networks and municipal systems.
- Development of **referral databases** and staff sensitization across the sectors (particularly between Shelter, WASH, CCCM and Protection), to refer potential issues rapidly to relevant counterparts.
- **Mobile site monitoring** (or CCCM) teams roving between settlements to monitor conditions, identify issues and engage or follow up with responsible agencies.
- **Combining NFI distributions with sealing-off kit distributions**, assessments and information dissemination.
- **Training beneficiary and host community** households in basic safety and construction, using emergency shelter kits and sealing-off kits, complemented by training in fire prevention and fire-fighting by CCCM actors.
- **Hiring local labour and residents** to install shelter and WASH facilities, with training in operation and maintenance to ensure shelters and settlements remain in serviceable condition and to strengthen a sense of ownership.

### PROTECTION, ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

The crisis in Iraq has been called “a protection crisis” and required to address the challenges faced by persons with special needs, supporting the security of women and girls within the household and settlement (often in very overcrowded conditions), and ensuring that health and safety considerations are woven through physical interventions, as well as in use and behaviour of beneficiaries. Shelter actors have been active in attempting to mainstream protection through:

- Using sealing-off and upgrading activities for **partitioning, segregation or fire compartmentalization**, to provide more culturally acceptable, safe and secure shelter and settlements.
- Participating in **gender-based violence and safety audits**, to identify critical areas at shelter and site level.
- Awareness-raising campaigns with displaced communities on **electrical and fire safety**, fire prevention and fire fighting.
- **Adapting shelter improvements** to meet both physical and cultural needs, and facilitating the role of carers<sup>9</sup>.
- Developing “**Quality of Life**” indicators, in addition to technical assessments, and furthering **consideration of accessibility** through multiple sectors.
- Designing **mobile, agile and rapid response packages**, to deliver assistance on the move, in temporary situations, scattered across dispersed host communities or wide geographical areas, and in insecure or inaccessible areas.

### LOOKING FORWARD

Prior to the start of the Mosul offensive by the Iraqi government on 17 October 2016, partners prepared for the expected displacement by pre-positioning standardized NFI and shelter kits and building camps. Once the offensive started and villages and districts of Mosul became accessible, partners moved in to provide first-line critical shelter and NFI assistance. During this period, temperatures dropped to below freezing, with heavy rain and snow.

As of early 2017, the East of Mosul was largely taken back from the so-called Islamic State, and the focus was shifting to the West, which prompted Shelter partners to pre-position items and prepare camps again, as well as facilitating safe and voluntary return to the regained areas. The Cluster and its partners were also working very closely with the authorities, to ensure gaps were filled and to avoid duplication.

<sup>9</sup> See case study A.35, on accessibility upgrades in camps

CASE STUDY

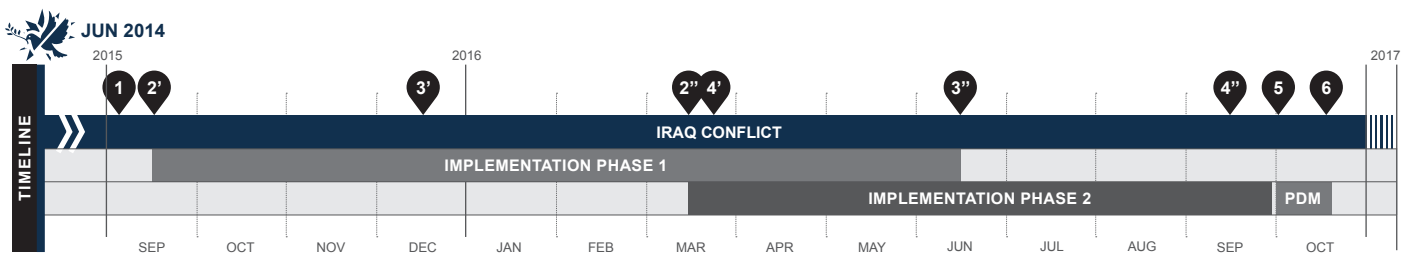
# IRAQ 2015-2016 / CONFLICT

**KEYWORDS:** Housing repair / retrofitting, Religious buildings upgrade, Training, Guidelines

<b>CRISIS</b>	<b>Armed conflict in Iraq since January 2014</b>	
<b>TOTAL HOUSES DAMAGED</b>	<b>Approx. 70-80%</b> of the private houses owned by returnee families were <b>majorly or partially damaged</b> due to the conflict in the region (Source: OCHA).	
<b>TOTAL PEOPLE AFFECTED</b>	<b>3.1 million</b> IDPs in Iraq (Source: 2017 HRP Advanced Executive Summary). <b>1.3 million</b> returnees (Ibid.).	
<b>PROJECT LOCATIONS</b>	Salah al-Din, Baghdad, Najaf, Kerbala, Wassit, Qadissiya, Babylon and Diyala governorates	
<b>BENEFICIARIES</b>	<b>2,278</b> households (13,028 individuals).	
<b>PROJECT OUTPUTS</b>	<b>300</b> religious buildings upgraded. <b>400</b> returnees damaged homes rehabilitated.	
<b>SHELTER SIZE</b>	<b>21m<sup>2</sup></b> floor space for each family (3.5m <sup>2</sup> per person for 6 people per family).	
<b>MATERIALS COST PER HOUSEHOLD</b>	Religious buildings rehabilitation: <b>USD 840</b> per household (USD 4,200 per building). Damaged house rehabilitation: <b>USD 1,540</b> .	
<b>PROJECT COST PER HOUSEHOLD</b>	Religious buildings rehabilitation: <b>USD 1,200</b> per household (Total: <b>USD 6,000</b> per building). Damaged house rehabilitation: <b>USD 2,200</b> .	

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The project assisted 2,278 displaced and returnee families to rehabilitate and/or reconstruct damaged and deteriorating shelter structures. Rehabilitation prioritized infrastructure upgrades of religious buildings (Husseinyas) and other critical shelter arrangements, including the damaged houses of returnees. The interventions included the construction of internal wall partitioning, WASH and electrical upgrades, replacing damaged roofing and minor structural repairs.



- 1** Sep 2015: **3.19 million** internally displaced persons and **370,000** returnees in Iraq.
- 2** Mid-Sep 2015 and Mid-Mar 2016: **On-the-job training** conducted for host community and IDPs on rehabilitation works, by the organization's engineers and contractor's skilled workers.
- 3** Mid-Dec 2015 and Mid-Jun 2016: **Upgrade and repair** of damaged water and sewer pipes and septic tanks completed.
- 4** Mid-Mar 2016 and Mid-Sep 2016: **Construction of internal partitions, plastering, roof leaks repair, electrical rewiring, repair of damaged concrete floor, installation of protection perimeter fencing** completed.
- 5** End-Sep 2016: **Awareness sessions** on hygiene promotion, electrical safety and fire protection. Handover to host communities / beneficiaries.
- 6** Mid-Oct 2016: **Post Distribution Monitoring, Quality Control and M&E Assessment** completed. Project close.

**STRENGTHS**

- + Protection measures for the most vulnerable.
- + Provided work opportunities to IDPs and host community.
- + Effective communication with local government and partners.
- + Completion of works ahead of schedule and high beneficiary satisfaction.
- + Publication of a step-by-step guidelines booklet.

**WEAKNESSES**

- Procurement from outside target areas delayed the project.
- Inaccuracies in cost estimations due to price fluctuations.
- Issues in contractor pre-qualification exercise and evaluation process.
- Insufficient capacity-building for staff, in the supervision of shelter-related projects.
- Project management approach was not always consistent with other programmes.



## CONTEXT

For more background on the Iraq crisis and shelter responses, see overview A.33.

As of September 2015, the organization identified a total of 91,440 displaced families (an estimated 548,640 individuals) who lived in critical shelter arrangements, such as schools, religious buildings, informal settlements and unfinished or abandoned buildings. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in critical shelter arrangements were extremely vulnerable, with little protection from the harsh weather conditions (below 0°C during the coldest months and above 50°C during the summer). Furthermore, IDPs in these shelters generally suffered from inadequate WASH conditions, health services, as well as educational and employment opportunities. Multiple displacements were common, causing long-term instability and vulnerability for IDP families. Furthermore, IDPs were increasingly difficult to access, caught behind front lines, or held at security screening centres.

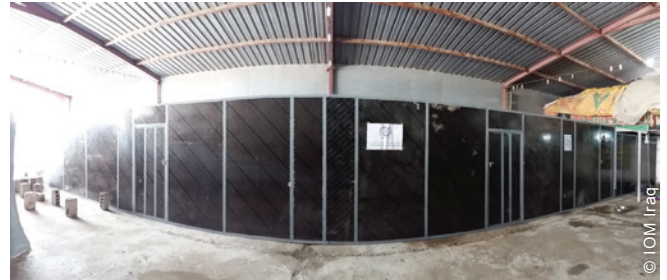
## SITUATION DURING THE CRISIS / NEEDS ANALYSIS

Since 2015, IDP families from the districts of Iraq that were recently liberated by Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and/or Kurdish Peshmerga, have slowly returned to their area of origin (12,784 families as of September 2016). However, many of these returnee families have found their homes damaged and in need of urgent rehabilitation or repair. Therefore, the organization targeted these families in the Central Belt of Iraq with shelter assistance, to aid in the rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of partially damaged private homes. According to the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), more than 16,000 families were living in religious buildings called "Husseinyas", or Shiite prayer halls, primarily within the central governorates of Kerbala, Najaf, Qadisiya and Wassit<sup>2</sup>. Religious buildings were classified as a critical shelter arrangement, as they failed to provide safe living conditions, and were not sustainable in the long-term. Furthermore, as the prayer halls are open, the majority of Husseinyas lacked adequate partitions, sanitation facilities, household items and other infrastructure to meet the specific shelter needs of a growing number of IDP families. Consequently, during the Ashura holiday, when thousands of Shiite Pilgrims travel to these areas, IDPs were temporarily evicted from the Husseinyas.

## SHELTER CLUSTER STRATEGY

In 2016, the Shelter-NFI Cluster delivered assistance to IDPs in varying geographic locations and across all shelter types and phases of displacement. The minimum assistance consisted of two components: 1) ensuring sufficient, covered living space, which provides thermal comfort, fresh air and protection from the climate; and 2) providing critical household and shelter support items. Thus, it supported the upgrade of substandard housing using durable materials, as well as rental support, small scale repairs, and phased assistance to host families,

<sup>2</sup> DTM assessments started in mid-2016.



The project conducted upgrades in religious buildings hosting IDPs, including the addition of partitions between units (here in Kerbala).

especially for those in critical shelter arrangements. Persons returning to partially damaged homes were to be provided with shelter and NFI materials, as well as housing, land and property rights support. Cash-based, occupant-driven, or owner-driven, approaches were encouraged. Sites in the greatest need of WASH support were also identified and in general responses had to be coordinated with relevant clusters.

This project was initiated after field assessment reports depicted the worsening conditions in critical shelter conditions of the Central, Northern and Southern regions of Iraq. In cooperation with the government and the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM), this project provided shelter rehabilitation and basic repairs and upgrades to waste water, electrical, structural and ground upkeep, as well as infrastructure maintenance, in line with Cluster objectives. Additionally, the project fell under the second line of the humanitarian response strategy<sup>3</sup>.

## SITES SELECTION

Firstly, DTM surveys prioritized three categories: governorate of origin, period of displacement and governorate of displacement, within each shelter type. The surveys further categorized shelters into districts, family units and sex and age disaggregated data for the individuals. DTM reports (inclusive of safety audits) and assessment reports from REACH captured the unsuitable living conditions of IDPs in informal settlements and returnees' damaged houses. **Follow-up focus groups** by shelter technical field staff with vulnerable IDPs were also conducted for two rehabilitation work sites. Finally, safety and living environment **assessment audits** were carried out with rapid shelter assessment forms. A total of 300 critical shelters (Husseinyas) and 400 damaged houses were assessed and recorded. The criteria used regarding the rehabilitation needs included WASH plumbing repair and upgrades, electrical repairs and upgrades and roof leakage repair.

Before starting the project, the **findings were shared with local authorities** and MoDM for endorsement. **Focus group discussions** were held with district representatives, community and religious leaders, **and formal Memoranda of Understanding** – specifying the type of rehabilitation works allowed – were signed with the owners of the Husseinyas. Work plans, quality control,

<sup>3</sup> Iraq 2016 HRP, <http://bit.ly/1U3LFAI>.



The project repaired damaged homes of returnee families through a variety of works. Here in Salah Al-Din, before (left) and after the upgrades (right).

monitoring and evaluation (M&E) reports were also prepared, to ensure the project's quality and mitigate delays.

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Project implementation began with a **selection exercise** of residential construction contractors, through an open tender advertised in local newspapers and through social media. The organization's technical staff in each governorate were then provided **basic training** in supervising rehabilitation works; the shelter team was involved in direct management and quality control supervision of the project. IDPs and returnees were selected to take ownership of the project through a **participatory approach**, by engaging in the repairs of the Husseinyas and damaged houses. Their involvement contributed to increase their skills and provided livelihood opportunities.

The 300 Husseinyas and 400 damaged houses were then randomly inspected once again (after project completion) by senior shelter engineers, to check the technical quality of the interventions, as well as beneficiaries' satisfaction. Post-distribution and assistance monitoring was performed by the M&E unit.

### COORDINATION

The organization worked in close coordination with the MoDM, the Iraqi Government and the Shelter-NFI Cluster, prioritizing governorates based on the influx of IDP arrivals to informal and unfinished settlements and buildings. Following the completion of the generalized surveys, CCCM Cluster partners conducted site focused "Red flag" assessments, which captured "prioritized needs" in rehabilitation, in regards to WASH, presence of mines, electrical security, lack of food and NFI, as well as other critical needs. In addition to the above mentioned tools, shelter partners conducted caseload assessment and focus group discussions in each governorate, using the shelter assessment form developed by the organization for this project.

Finally, the organization worked closely with all stakeholders and humanitarian partners, in referencing each partner's site assessment caseload, in order to avoid duplication. Assessments were shared with Shelter-NFI and WASH partners in coordination meetings, as well as with contractors.

### ENGAGEMENT OF AFFECTED PEOPLE

Shelter staff conducted initial focus group discussions with displaced persons, as recommended by representatives from re-

ligious leaders, heads of households and adolescent groups. Selected IDPs were provided with on-the-job skills training in shelter rehabilitation, such as: WASH plumbing, roofing, concrete work, wall plastering, painting and basic electrical wiring. In addition, community groups were briefed on the planned rehabilitation scope for each family unit, specifically on dignity, privacy and protection. Post implementation monitoring indicated more than 95% beneficiary satisfaction.

### RISK MITIGATION COMPONENTS

Protection measures were included in the rehabilitation of Husseinyas, through partitions for privacy and adequate lighting along open corridors and water and sanitation facilities. Separate toilets and bathroom facilities were installed for women and men, with adequate lighting along corridors, as well as open washing areas. Health and hygiene promotion campaigns were conducted to mitigate the risks of vector-borne diseases. Finally, awareness-raising campaigns on electrical and fire safety and prevention were also delivered.

### MAIN CHALLENGES





In addition to infrastructural challenges, several logistical issues were encountered, such as the **lack of access** through military controlled check points into post-conflict liberated regions, controlled by separatist Militias. As such, material deliveries were frequently disrupted or put on hold for long periods. Further, there was a **lack of qualified contractors** with proven track records in building construction, especially across Central Iraq. To rectify this, focus group discussions were initiated with the local district mayor, religious leaders, and militia leaders. This resulted in the organization's **staff receiving special access permits** (contractors and suppliers) for humanitarian projects. Further, the organization's site engineers provided pre-selected contractors with trainings on good construction practices for rehabilitation works.

### WIDER IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

This was the first emergency shelter project focusing on rehabilitation in the region, after the start of the conflict. Ongoing lessons learned from this project, particularly in light of the increasing displacement of communities, were utilized in the fast-track procurement and contractor selection processes, to expedite responses in these emergency environments. A booklet on rehabilitation works was also produced, as an outcome of this project.



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Step one:	Step two:	Step three:	Step four:
<p>•Start floor layout with string adjustment for wall framing.                      •Tools and materials required : measuring tape, string, chalking and straight edge (long wood pole)                      •Use plumb rule/ plumb bob to ensure that corners are plumb and square.</p> 	<p>•Install Metal Framing along marked floor line.                      •Secure metal frames in floor with cross bracing support.                      •Secure bottom plate by rivet into floor.                      •Secure each vertical frame wall.                      •Align metal frame with plumb rule and string.</p> 	<p>•Install and secure 75 mm plywood along the metal frames                      •Use rivets in each plywood sheet ( 4' x 8' / 10.1 cm x 20.3 cm ) in between metal studs and secure the plywood wall to each corner of wall.                      •Provide door and ventilation openings in each partition family room.</p> 	<p>•Align plywood wall in line with straight edge along wall corners.                      •Install plywood door in each family bedroom with privacy lock for protection.                      •Plywood wall partitionis ready for occupancy.                      •Install doors with hinges, align and test.</p> 

The organization produced a step-by-step booklet for rehabilitations and upgrades, as an outcome of this project.

STRENGTHS

- + **Emphasis on protection measures** for the most vulnerable (women, girls, sick and disabled persons).
- + IDP heads of households, as well as adolescent male and female members of the family, were provided **work opportunities** through: basic skills training in masonry, electrical wiring, concreting, plastering and roof repairs.
- + The programme developed **effective communication with the local government** and partner agencies.
- + **Field staff received training** in project planning and budgeting, timeline management and quality controls, before undertaking programme responsibilities.
- + Rehabilitation projects were **completed ahead of schedule** and with high beneficiary satisfaction.
- + **Publication of a booklet with step by step guidelines** on Rehabilitating, Repairing and Upgrading of Critical Shelter and Damaged Houses (see snippet above).

WEAKNESSES

- **Lack of local building materials and sourcing of items outside conflict zones delayed the project**, also due to inconsistencies at military checkpoints on import regulations.
- **The organization’s estimates did not match contracted projects costs**, due to an escalation in building materials and transportation costs across different regions in Iraq. Consideration of this cost variations would have expedited the project.
- **Issues in contractor pre-qualification exercises and evaluation processes** resulted in the hiring of contractors who were not familiar with international humanitarian standards.
- **Insufficient capacity-building for shelter staff in project management**, specifically in the supervision of shelter-related projects. Due to the lack of experienced local contractors, staff was recruited from other regions. This also caused some tensions with local municipalities and residents.
- **The technical project management approach was not always consistent** with other programmes, including other shelter and livelihoods initiatives of the organization.

LEARNINGS

- **Repair of broken and dysfunctional plumbing was mostly missing in the scope of works** (sanitation piping, septic tanks, waste water drainages and water supply pipes). The lessons learned workshop revealed major gaps and WASH repair and upgrades were included in subsequent rehabilitation works.
- **A database of pre-qualified contractors was developed** to expedite hiring of competent contractors for various projects (including civil infrastructure, building and electrical works).
- **Extra capacity-building was needed.** A project-management training and a lessons learned workshop were conducted on planning, quality control and construction management, during a retreat with shelter staff.

CASE STUDY

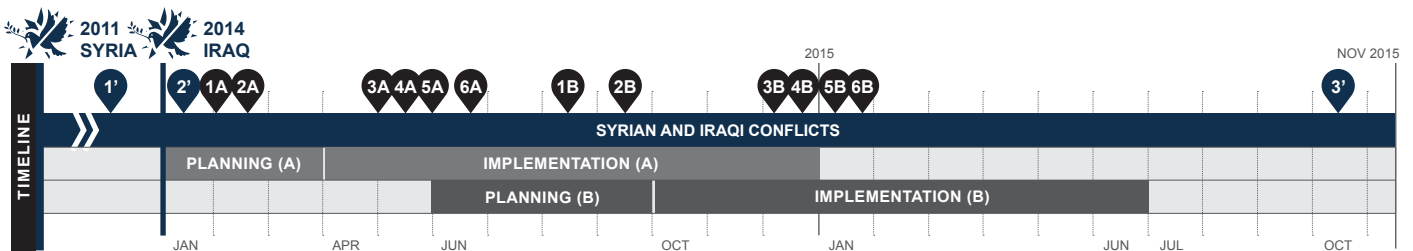
# IRAQ 2014-2015 / REFUGEE CRISIS

**KEYWORDS:** Accessibility, Disabilities, Planned and managed camps, Materials distribution

<b>CRISIS</b>	<b>Syrian conflict, Refugees in Iraq. 2011-ongoing</b>	
<b>TOTAL PEOPLE AFFECTED</b>	<b>239,000</b> Syrian refugees in Iraq (as of 2016) <b>3.1 million</b> IDPs in Iraq (as of 2016) <b>213,000</b> Syrian refugees (January 2014) <b>85,000</b> IDPs in Iraq (January 2014)	
<b>PROJECT LOCATIONS</b>	<b>Domiz refugee camp</b> , Dohuk Governorate (Project A). <b>Kawergosk, Qushtapa, Darashakran, and Basirma refugee camps</b> , Erbil Governorate (Project B)	
<b>PROJECT BENEFICIARIES</b>	<b>901 households</b> (including 1,047 individuals with disabilities). 362 HH in Domiz camp, 157 HH in Darashakran camp, 112 HH in Basirma camp, 147 HH in Kawergosk camp, and 123 HH in Qushtapa camp	
<b>PROJECT OUTPUTS</b>	<b>901 shelters upgraded</b>	
<b>MATERIALS COST PER HOUSEHOLD</b>	<b>USD 350</b> (average for Project A), <b>USD 500</b> (average for Project B).	
<b>PROJECT COST PER HOUSEHOLD</b>	<b>USD 640</b> (Project A), <b>USD 900</b> (Project B). Estimated.	

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The programme was carried out in five refugee camps in Iraq in two separate projects, focusing on shelter-related issues specific to persons with disabilities. The projects upgraded existing shelters and plots and adapted global accessibility standards to the camp context and cultural norms of the Middle East. The programme sought to adopt a holistic approach, through focusing not only on the individuals with disabilities, but also on the needs of the caregivers.



- 1 Project **A**: Feb 2014, Project **B**: Aug 2014: **Development of social and technical assessments and prioritization scoring.**
- 2 **A**: Winter 2014, **B**: Sep 2014: **Initial household level technical assessments completed, allowing the creation of a materials database.**
- 3 **A**: Early May 2014, **B**: Dec 2014: **Framework Agreements established.**
- 4 **A**: May 2014, **B**: Dec 2014: **Recruitment of skilled and unskilled labour.**

- 5 **A**: Late May 2014, **B**: Jan 2015: **Works initiated in camps.**
- 6 **A**: Jun 2014, **B**: Jan 2015: **Rolling handover of shelters.**
- 1' Mar 2013: **First refugee camp established in KRI for Syrian refugees.**
- 2' Jan 2014: **213,223 Syrian refugees in Iraq. 95,587 individuals (26,924 households) live in camps. Conflict begins between the Iraqi forces and the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant. 85,000 people displaced.**
- 3' Oct 2015: **245,585 Syrian refugees in Iraq. 94,628 live in camps. 3.21 million IDPs in Iraq.**

**STRENGTHS**

- + Tailored interventions for persons with disabilities.
- + Addressed a gap in accessibility and quality of life in camps.
- + Provided income to assisted households.
- + Challenged teams to think “outside the box”.
- + Pushed the issue of accessibility and upgrades to the forefront of discussions.

**WEAKNESSES**

- Tendency for staff to adopt standardized approaches.
- Fencing off household plots further isolated some households.
- Quality of work carried out by paid labourers varied greatly.
- Difficulty in finding balance between the specific needs and the more general household needs.
- Poor communication about targeting and project objectives.



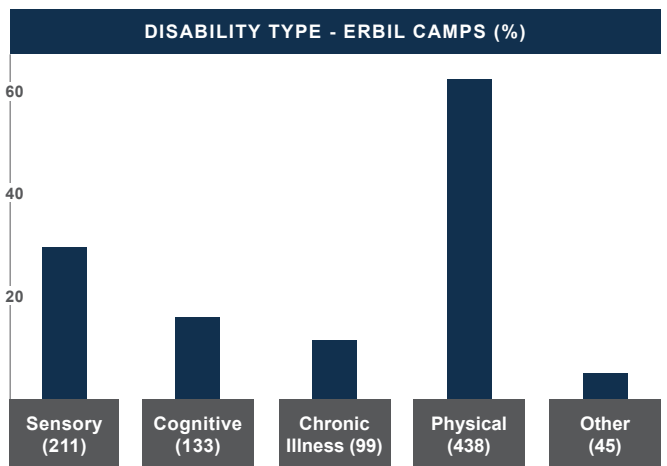
Camps were established to accommodate Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Over time, residents and organizations upgraded the shelters in the camps. However, many gaps remained in terms of accessibility and mobility throughout the sites. This project tried to address some of these issues.

### SITUATION IN THE CAMPS

The first camp constructed to host Syrian refugees in the Kurdish Region of Iraq was established in March 2013 in Dohuk Governorate, with a camp population of approximately 55,000. In 2014, four additional camps for refugees were established in neighbouring Erbil Governorate, with a total population of 27,700. In the winter of 2014-2015, 13 camps were established for IDPs escaping conflict in Southern and Central Iraq.

In early phases, households were principally provided with tents as an emergency shelter solution, along with the required basic camp infrastructure. In the later-established camps, there was a greater variety of shelter types, ranging from pre-fab shelters to tents on concrete platforms. Concurrently, an increasing number of camp residents engaged in incremental upgrades, using construction materials from local markets. Local authorities initially restricted the use of “permanent” construction materials (e.g., concrete and blocks), though later opened up to their utilization in a controlled manner. In early 2015, the vast majority of shelter coverings in the camps were still constructed with soft materials. This was even more prevalent amongst households with individuals with disabilities, as they were less likely to have access to resources to improve their shelters.

Prior to implementation, the organization worked with UN agencies, local authorities and the refugee community representatives, to assess the number of households in need, the most common types of disabilities, and the current levels of support from other humanitarian actors. Many of the families with persons with disabilities reported that **the organization’s field staff were the first humanitarians to engage with them directly**, or that they had received no prior assistance addressing their specific needs. When the organization was funded for the Erbil project, two other organizations also received funding to provide assistance to persons with disabilities. **All three organizations worked together in the identification and provision of assistance.** Approximately 9% of households in the camps of Erbil were found to have at least one individual with disabilities. Although the types of disability were varied, the most prevalent were physical, sensory and cognitive and, in 30% of the cases, multiple conditions.



### SHELTER SECTOR STRATEGY

In camp settings, the shelter strategy principally focused on four points: land allocation for new camps; expansion of existing camps; provision of emergency shelter for new arrivals; and shelter improvements for refugees in camps prior to the influx. The strategy highlighted the general needs of different vulnerable groups, but there was no specific technical guidance on shelter construction or upgrading for persons with disabilities.

### PROJECT GOALS

This project aimed at improving accessibility in shelters, shelter plots and surroundings in camps, as well as the quality of life for individuals with disabilities, through different types of upgrades, such as floors, walls, openings and coverings, and including access to nearby water and sanitation facilities. It also intended to provide a starting point for incrementally improving accessibility across the camps.

### BENEFICIARY SELECTION

The organization targeted refugee populations in camps in Dohuk and Erbil governorates. Domiz camp was initially selected, following a multisectoral needs assessment carried out by another organization, which identified gaps in specific service provision for households with persons with disabilities. The camps in Erbil were later identified as having similar gaps. IDP camps were not targeted under these projects, though the organization had other projects and funding streams which targeted the shelter needs of IDPs.



The project worked on a variety of upgrades focused on improving the accessibility and Quality of Life of individuals with disabilities. From left to right: Shaded area and fencing around prefab shelter. Concrete slab improving wheelchair access. Fold out support railing. Shaded entrance and support posts for better access.

Potential individual beneficiaries and households were identified in close coordination with protection agencies, camp management and other actors providing services within the camps. Following the initial pre-identification process, social and technical assessments were carried out at the household level and were scored based on weighted vulnerability (both socio-economic and technical, as well as severity of disability and mobility or quality of life issues). This scoring phase determined which households were to be assisted, in which order, and played a role in defining the unit costs.

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Both **skilled and unskilled workers from the camp population** were employed to implement the projects. The aim was to include one unskilled labourer from each beneficiary household as a means to provide a source of income. Each project was implemented by a separate team of six to ten individuals, supervised by a project coordinator. Area based teams worked in pairs, with **technical staff** focusing on technical assessments, design solutions and construction monitoring, while household assessments, outreach and monitoring were covered by **non-technical shelter officers or assistants**. Materials were delivered to each household and works were carried out by labourers at household plots.

Though the construction time was generally brief, the overall implementation required multiple visits: an initial social and technical assessment, the development of a bill of quantities (sometimes this was carried out more than once due to the movement or modification of the household structure), regular supervision of works and follow-up monitoring visits.

### SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Detailed social and technical assessments were carried out at the household level, focusing on the needs and capacities of the household member(s) with disabilities and technical shelter conditions, as well as general household information. **Social and technical field staff worked closely with the individual with disabilities and their primary caregivers, to identify and prioritize specific upgrades** to improve mobility and quality of life. The teams continued to engage the households to ensure that upgrades would be used as intended and met the needs of both the individuals and their caregivers. Visits were done jointly with a partner organization carrying out WASH upgrades, in order to ensure complementarity of the interventions.

**Commonly experienced engagement challenges** included:

- Eliciting the priorities of the individual beneficiaries when their disability prevented them from communicating effectively;
- Balancing the expectations and wishes of the families with the issues related specifically to the persons with disabilities;
- Observing the shelter and plot to recognize usage patterns, in addition to listening to expressed needs;

- Time required to elicit information from persons with special needs and their caregivers;
- Dealing with requests to replace mobility items that were outside the project scope and expertise of field staff;
- In Erbil, targeted assistance led to significant pressure from households who did not meet the selection criteria.

### COORDINATION

The organization closely coordinated with other actors implementing shelter and WASH activities in the targeted camps, to ensure complementarity and higher impact. At the household level, the organization focused its efforts on the plot and the shelter itself, while another organization aimed to address the WASH specific needs. **Assessment forms were harmonized, initial planning was done collaboratively, and project managers met regularly** to discuss project implementation. Technical teams jointly carried out the technical assessments during implementation, to ensure that all inputs were considered when designing the interventions for each plot. Additionally, **a multisectoral Technical Working Group was formed** to develop guidelines for accessibility and quality of life upgrades in the camp settings of Iraq. Though the final product was never completed, the working group served as a coordination and communication forum, to address some of the challenges encountered during implementation.

### MAIN CHALLENGES

There are a number of guidelines at the global level for the construction of shelter in emergencies for people with disabilities<sup>2</sup>. Although the guidance highlights the need to tailor interventions to each individual's needs, it includes little regarding how this tailoring can be done practically, and at the same time how such projects can be scaled up, or streamlined, given the time and budget constraints often faced by humanitarian organizations in the field.

Commonly found challenges included:

- Attaching handles to soft tent or plastic sheeting walls and working with non-standard self-built shelters, expansions and plots;
- Support for people (or their caregivers) sitting down and standing up from the floor;
- Extending supports to the outdoor of the shelters;
- Improving accessibility to latrines on public pathways, in between tents in close proximity;
- Improving access points (particularly for tents) for persons with disabilities and their carers;
- Customization versus standardization;
- Redesigning solutions to adapt to new locations, when households moved;

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, All Under One Roof, IFRC 2015 (<http://bit.ly/2iDTTCT>), and Guidelines for Creating Barrier-free Emergency Shelters, Handicap International 2009 (<http://bit.ly/2iuB30o>).



Works also included mobility upgrades within plots or across the camps. From left to right: Concrete pathway and railing leading from shelter to shared/communal latrine. Concrete slab improving wheelchair access. Handrails, concrete stairway and pathway around or between shelter plots.

- Rapid evolution of camps and varying and inconsistent rules for shelter upgrading;
- Households uninstalling materials and repurposing them for things other than accessibility.

### MATERIALS

Materials were sourced from local vendors, through flexible framework agreements that allowed the organization to procure most items based on need. Materials were then distributed to each household according to site-specific BoQs, developed by the technical staff. While this approach allowed for rapid delivery, it also had the unintended consequence of pushing the team to work within existing material resources. This, at times, hampered creativity in identifying unique solutions to the specific needs of the individuals with disabilities.

### REMARKS AND WIDER IMPACTS

In their geographical areas of implementation, **the projects were unique**, as they targeted the specific shelter-related needs for individuals with disabilities and their caregivers, through tailored upgrades. Although these interventions reached a relatively small number of households, niche projects such as this enable to fill gaps created when carrying out larger scale standardized interventions (such as the construction of plots/shelter/WASH facilities). Of course, there were other vulnerabilities, within the camps, that fell outside the scope of this project and have been addressed in following projects, by the same and other organizations.

Finally, these camp-based projects served as a basis for additional programming, which addressed these same issues for households residing out of camps.

## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### STRENGTHS

- + **Tailored interventions were implemented**, based on comprehensive consultations, to address specific and self-identified needs of persons with disabilities and their caregivers.
- + **The project addressed a significant gap in accessibility** and quality of life at the household level, existing since the establishment of the camps.
- + **Short-term income was provided to assisted households**, and additional short-term employment opportunities to camp residents.
- + **Teams were challenged to think “outside the box”** and develop innovative solutions to address the specific needs of the individuals assisted.
- + **The issue of Accessibility and Quality of Life upgrades was pushed to the forefront** of discussions within coordination meetings and amongst shelter partners.

### WEAKNESSES

- **Tendency for staff to adopt standardized (rather than tailored) approaches** led to inconsistent outcomes, principally due to time constraints and the feeling to be bound to the originally developed material lists.
- **Fencing off household plots** was a frequent request, to keep children with cognitive disabilities from wandering off and potentially endangering themselves and others, but it also potentially further isolated such persons from the community.
- **The quality of work carried out by paid labourers varied greatly**; supervising a large number of sites spread over numerous camps posed significant challenges for the team.
- **The difficulty in finding a balance** between the specific needs of individuals with disabilities and the more general needs of the household as a whole.
- **Poor communication about targeting and project objectives** with the camp community at large. As the project was the first in camps using targeted coverage, the communication could have been improved, in order to reduce requests for assistance by households that were not within selected groups.

### LEARNINGS

- **Keep the needs of persons with special needs at the forefront** of shelter interventions, from the onset of an emergency.
- **Standardized items and materials**, available through framework agreements, **can impair the development of customized solutions** to address specific needs, which could instead use items procured outside these agreements.
- **The lack of consistent leadership in the Technical Working Group** focusing on Shelter and WASH Accessibility, led to the final intended product not coming to fruition.
- **Foster and encourage the lateral thinking and observation skills** of team members, in order to identify creative solutions for individual needs.
- **Provide additional support to staff** that are consistently interacting with individuals and households in dire conditions, including early **training on engagement with persons with special needs**.

CASE STUDY

# IRAQ 2015-2016 / CONFLICT

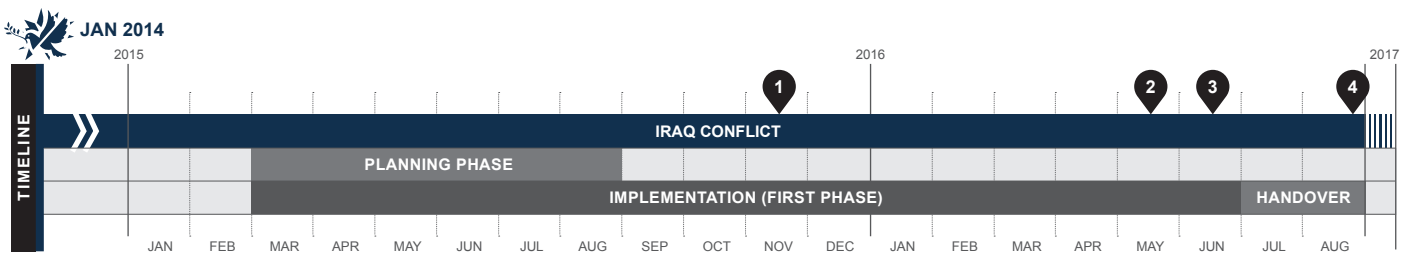
**KEYWORDS:** Prefab shelters, Site planning, Infrastructure, Capacity-building, Protection, Gender, Advocacy

<b>CRISIS</b>	<b>Conflict, January 2014-ongoing.</b>	
<b>TOTAL PEOPLE AFFECTED</b>	<b>11 million</b> people in need. <b>3.1 million</b> IDPs. <b>1.2 million</b> returnees <sup>1</sup> .	
<b>PROJECT LOCATIONS</b>	Baghdad, Dohuk, Kerbala, and Missan Governorates.	
<b>PROJECT BENEFICIARIES</b>	<b>1,252 IDP families</b> (8,231 individuals, 4,506 female and 3,725 male), including 145 female-headed households and 488 physically or mentally impaired individuals. <b>512 students.</b>	
<b>PROJECT OUTPUTS</b>	<b>Four planned sites</b> with infrastructure and services. <b>1,406 prefabricated shelter units.</b> <b>25 university classrooms</b> and <b>128 student residential units.</b>	
<b>SHELTER SIZE</b>	22.5m <sup>2</sup> per shelter unit.	<b>SHELTER DENSITY</b> 3.75 m <sup>2</sup> per person (Average household size is 6 persons).
<b>MATERIALS COST PER HOUSEHOLD</b>	<b>USD 5,500</b> (average) Dohuk: <b>USD 4,255</b> ; Baghdad: <b>USD 6,505</b> ; Missan: <b>USD 5,987</b> . All including labour.	<b>PROJECT COST PER HOUSEHOLD</b> <b>USD 9,621</b> (including site preparation and infrastructure).



**PROJECT SUMMARY**

This project established four durable sites for vulnerable IDPs, equipped with 1,406 prefabricated shelter units accompanied by basic infrastructure and public facilities. It also developed institutional capacity of the targeted governorates and introduced guidelines and plans to develop and manage these sites. Additionally, the project provided temporary premises (classrooms and accommodation) for 512 students of Fallujah University.



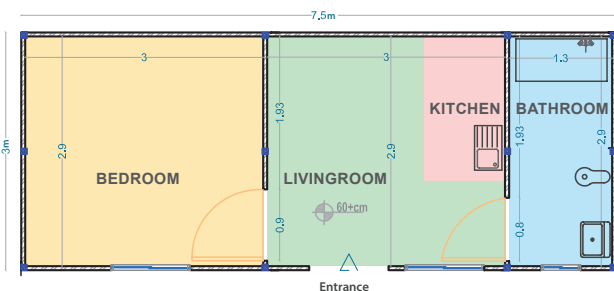
- 1 Nov 2015: Approval and handover of land by the targeted governorates.
- 2 May 2016: Completion of construction and infrastructure projects.
- 3 Jun 2016: Handover of the IDP sites to the targeted governorates.
- 4 End Aug 2016: Relocation of IDPs to the sites completed for first phase.

**STRENGTHS**

- + Close coordination with all actors.
- + Organizational expertise in site planning and construction.
- + Collaboration with other agencies to enhance basic services.
- + Contribution to reduce the emergence of informal settlements and mitigate tensions with host communities.

**WEAKNESSES**

- Initial costs for establishing the sites were high.
- Small percentage of the total needs in the country were covered.
- Uniformly designed prefabricated units reduced costs, but flexible designs/sizes could have better addressed households' needs.



Shelter layout. The prefab units included a living space with kitchen separated by the sleeping area, as well as a bathroom.

<sup>1</sup> Humanitarian Response Plan 2017, Advanced Executive Summary, <http://bit.ly/2iCMO24>.



The project planned and built four sites equipped with durable, prefabricated, shelter units for vulnerable IDPs across the country (here, the Darkar Ajam site).

## BACKGROUND

For more information on the background and shelter response in Iraq, see overview A.33.

The conflict in Iraq has had profound humanitarian consequences, with more than three million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), who in some cities have now exceeded their original population, putting host communities under severe pressure.

**In protracted displacement situations, temporary shelter interventions can lead to the formation of informal settlements** and are inadequate to protect vulnerable groups, including women and girls, from harsh weather conditions and safety concerns. These settlements increased significantly after 2003 and some became “self-ruled zones”, potential incubators for extremism and radicalism.

The humanitarian crisis has deteriorated rapidly since June 2014, generating further displacement, exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities throughout the country, and putting existing infrastructure and services under increased pressure. More than 90% of IDPs were living outside of camps.

The Government of Iraq through its Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoMD) has the overall objective to “create an enabling environment in Iraq to achieve longer-term shelter solutions for people affected by displacement”. To achieve this objective, the national strategy focuses on addressing the following key issues: land for housing, dispute resolution, basic services, housing options, housing finance, host communities, livelihoods and governance strategy.

## CORE ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE PROJECT

Within this framework, the project aimed at offering more durable solutions to protracted displacement, enhancing protection and livelihoods opportunities, as well as considering ways to alleviate tensions with host communities and prevent further conflict. It did so by establishing four sites with prefabricated shelter units and infrastructure.

Firstly, the project considered **social and economic vulnerabilities**, as well as cultural differences. In terms of **protection**

**aspects**, the prefabricated shelters have one living space and a bedroom, with a partition to ensure privacy for women and girls. Furthermore, all units are equipped with a lockable door, to ensure security of the residents. Each site has facilities for local police or security guards to be regularly stationed. The project also provided trainings for site managers to enhance their managerial capacity, as well as to increase awareness on gender and gender-based violence risks.

Secondly, the sites included **social facilities that are open to the host communities**, enhancing their access to basic public services – which is lacking especially in areas with a high IDP presence – and contributing to increase acceptance and mitigate tensions with IDP residents.

Finally, the project aimed at **providing livelihoods opportunities to the residents**, as well as temporary **educational facilities** and accommodation for students.

## LOCATIONS AND BENEFICIARY SELECTION

Locations were selected through **extensive consultations with the governorate counterparts**. The organization identified a number of sites that could be allocated, which were away from the conflict zones and at the same time close enough to the major cities (so that basic services could be extended), and conducted technical surveys to assess the geophysical conditions of the sites.

The organization then provided technical support to the targeted governorates to **develop beneficiary selection criteria**, taking into consideration the vulnerability, socio-economic background and gender sensitivity – for example prioritizing female-headed households and individuals with physical or mental impairments. **Special consideration was also given to displaced families living in unfinished buildings, public buildings** such as schools and mosques, **in tents** out-of-camp and **in rental accommodation** (at risk of eviction). These were considered to be in worse living conditions, with less access to social and public services, and the local authorities needed to make public buildings (particularly schools) available to serve local populations, including newly arrived IDPs.

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The organization first consulted with the targeted governorates and the MoDM to identify their needs and plan the responses appropriately. **Steering Committees and working groups** consisting of governorate officials, the organization's staff and implementing partners, were then established to consult key stakeholders, monitor the progress of activities, identify risks and highlight learnings and good practices. The organization developed the site plans, which included basic infrastructure such as roads and electricity networks, as well as public facilities such as health clinics, women's centres and open spaces. **Official agreements** were made with the governorates and Fallujah University that they would be responsible for operating and maintaining the sites, to secure local ownership and sustainability. Based on the site plans and on research of local market prices, **the organization developed BoQs and provided overall coordination, as well as technical supervision**, of the activities carried out by the implementing partners (NGOs and contractors), for quality assurance.

## INVOLVEMENT OF AFFECTED PEOPLE

IDPs and host community members were actively engaged in the project, as labourers for the construction activities. This contributed both to improve their livelihoods and gain support and understanding from the local communities. Local committees composed of representatives from the IDP families were then created in the established sites, to assist with management duties.

## COORDINATION

The steering committees were key in identifying challenges and discussing preventive or corrective measures. One committee, for instance, foresaw the risk of delay in the construction, due to snow and wet ground conditions in winter. The committee recommended to increase the work force to make maximum use of the limited time, and increased the frequency of monitoring. These measures enabled the project team to catch up on the progress despite the difficult weather conditions, and resulted in the timely delivery of the project. Secondly, coordination with relevant cluster members allowed the joint development of beneficiary selection criteria, prioritizing the most vulnerable. Finally, collaboration with specific agencies was essential, on one hand, to operate and maintain the reproductive health clinics and women's centres and, on the other, to establish a primary school in one of the sites.

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION COMPONENTS

In order to minimize the risks posed by hazards such as flooding, land-sinking and fire, **extensive technical surveys** were conducted to assess geo-physical conditions of the proposed sites. For instance, one of the surveys identified that one site had been used as agricultural land and, therefore, the soil was soft and muddy, which could result in cracks in the dry season and land-sinking in the rainy season. To address this hazard, the top layer was removed and the ground was compacted.

## MATERIALS

After a competitive bidding and selection process, the **materials for the prefabricated units were procured from the local markets** (though originally imported from neighbouring countries). Once the site preparation and basic infrastructure were ready, the implementing partners transported the materials to the site, where small workshops were established to

assemble the units. This partially avoided the potentially negative impacts of using imported prefabricated solutions.

## MAIN CHALLENGES AND COUNTERMEASURES

**Security concerns** have been the major challenge faced during implementation. For example, security concerns were raised after one site had been assessed and approved, after lengthy discussions. The project team tried to negotiate with the local authority, but at the end had to identify another site and delay the project. Furthermore, there were several occasions where **construction materials were confiscated** by the militias, and the organization had to liaise with local authorities and the Iraqi Security Force to have the materials released. This caused slight delays, although they were covered by speeding up the construction works.

The project was also able to adapt in its second implementation phase (ongoing at the time of writing), thanks to lessons learned from its first phase. Although the design was agreed within the Cluster and with the local authorities (based on the average household size of six), **due to cultural reasons some families complained about the size of the shelter units**. This led the organization to adopt a different design (with larger space) in the most recent site, where the family size is even higher. Secondly, the use of **buried electrical cables was changed to hanging cables** – which are easier and quicker to maintain – based on reactions from the local authorities. Finally, the **floors of the living space were initially damaged** due to washing inside the units, and floors were not waterproof, except in the bathrooms. In the following phase, this challenge was addressed by producing clear instructions that were printed and distributed to the families.

## WIDER IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

The overall project approach was **praised by the governorates and became a model** to address complex and prolonged challenges faced by IDPs in Iraq. Moreover, the construction of temporary educational premises contributed to support displaced youth who bear enormous human, social and economic costs, by enabling them to proceed with their education. While not envisaged in the original project plan, the university facilities were later added, due to the request from the Governor of Anbar. Lack of access to education, basic social services, economic opportunities, grievance over injustices, and a generalized distrust in the capacity of the state to account for its citizens, fuel a cycle of poverty, hopelessness and frustration that can lead to radicalization. While there is no evidence that this is the case, **it is hoped that the facilities will help the affected youth to resume their education** and maintain their positive attitude.

Finally, global trends show that, with protracted displacement, unplanned sites can turn into urban slums, further exacerbating social and environmental challenges that already exist within the host community (in conflict-affected areas). Establishing planned sites that can function as a neighbourhood, equipped with basic social and public infrastructure, services and durable shelter, **contributed to prevent the irregular expansion of informal settlements**. Additionally, while in some cases planned IDP sites are poorly located and do not consider livelihood opportunities, this project prioritized the **proximity to the existing urban areas, and encouraged livelihood interventions** carried out by specialized actors.



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED



The new sites and the shelters represented a significant improvement in terms of security, privacy and dignity for the selected households. However, the project targeted a very small fraction of the affected population in Iraq.



IDP families before (bottom) and after (top) the shelter intervention.

STRENGTHS

- + **Close coordination** with governorate counterparts and implementing partners, and creation of steering committees to discuss challenges and mitigation measures.
- + **Organizational expertise** in site planning and construction.
- + **Collaboration with other agencies** to enhance basic services, such as health and education, strengthening the sustainability of the project.
- + Contribution to **reduce the emergence of informal settlements** and also to **mitigate tensions** between IDPs and host communities, reducing risks of future conflicts.

WEAKNESSES

While more economical in the mid- and long-term, **initial costs for establishing these sites with prefabricated shelter units were higher** than providing other emergency shelter solutions, making the number of beneficiaries relatively small compared to the scale of the crisis in Iraq.

The project had to **find the right balance between scale and quality** in the mid-term. To achieve this balance, it applied minimum standards of living for the units, to minimize the cost, thereby maximizing the number of beneficiaries. Ultimately, the project directly benefitted approximately 8,200 vulnerable IDPs, which is a **very small percentage of the needs** (with over 3 million IDPs in the country).

MATERIALS LIST FOR ONE SHELTER UNIT	
Component	Items
Main steel structure	Base frame (10cm x 10cm 3mm), Hollow steel tube columns, Roof frame, Rectangular hollow tubes, Steel plate, Steel angle
Walls and Partitions	External and internal wall coverings: PU insulated sandwich panel upper layer
Flooring	Floor covering, Plywood sheets, Fibre-glass sheet for bathroom floor
Roof and ceiling	PU insulated sandwich panel upper layer Canopy top: galvanized steel sheet
Windows (3 pcs)	Frame, Wing, Handle
Doors (3 pcs)	Frame, Wing, Handle and lock
Sanitary works	Toilet with water outlet, Shower base and mixer, Hand wash basin and mixer, Stainless steel kitchen sink, Mirror
Electrical installation	Distribution board, cables, wires, lighting and water heaters

LEARNINGS

- **Consultation and agreement** with governorate counterparts and other humanitarian actors **are crucial to ensure the sustainability of the project**. This is true especially on roles and responsibilities for operating and maintaining the IDP sites, after the completion and handover to the governorates, including camp management and delivery of basic services.
- While uniformly designed, prefabricated, shelter units contributed to reduce the project cost, **adaptable, culture- and context-sensitive designs may have helped to better address the needs** of the IDPs.
- In two sites, the organization faced difficulties due to security issues, as well as some grievances of farmers in the area, after the site selection and official handover from the government. **Additional and rigorous verification efforts** through different concerned departments should be carried out **to confirm the suitability of the assigned land**.