

## **HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)**

### **IRAQ**

**The activities proposed hereafter are still subject to the adoption of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/ BUD/2022/01000**

**AMOUNT: EUR 24 000 000**

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2021/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annexes<sup>1</sup> is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO<sup>2</sup>'s partners and to assist in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

#### **0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE THE LAST VERSION OF THE HIP**

Iraq is going through a period of serious political instability that adds up to the lack of provision of basic services to the most vulnerable layers of the population. Half of the country food supplies is imported (especially wheat); in 2022, prices of some food stuff have increased by 30%. The inflation trend started in 2021, spurred by drought and has aggravated with the start of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The increasing prices of essential food items are significantly eroding the purchasing power of vulnerable families. The impact of climate change adds a compounding factor to the deterioration of the food security levels and the erosion of the purchasing power amongst the sections of the marginalised most vulnerable households.

The currently one million vulnerable displaced and returnees residing in informal sites have been disproportionally affected by the increase in prices of essential food commodities, directly impacting their food security conditions and further hindering their ability to achieve durable solutions to displacement or reintegration.

The Ukrainian crisis, besides having contributed to an average increase of food basket prices is also affecting the work of our partners (deliveries, food availability, logistics) increasing their general costs for aid delivery.

The additional budget (EUR 4 million) is intended to support the most vulnerable population groups, and particularly undocumented individuals excluded from government social protections schemes, no longer able to meet their essential needs. By contextually supporting the integration of IDP and returnee vulnerable households into government programmes (PDS - Public Distribution System), conditions for a sustainable solution to address their food needs will also be created.

#### **1. CONTEXT**

By 2021, more than three years after the end of major military operations against Da'esh, Iraq remains vulnerable to political instability and conflict (internal and external). The unstable political context has limited the government's ability to plan, budget and

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<sup>1</sup> Technical annex and thematic policies annex

<sup>2</sup> Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)  
ECHO/IRQ/BUD/2022/91000

implement the post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation phases of this middle income country.

The humanitarian context is characterised by a post-conflict environment with protracted displacement and enduring protection risks linked to documentation and security profile. The 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview depicts a stagnating humanitarian situation in Iraq, with 1.2 million displaced people (compared to 1.5 million in 2020). The overall humanitarian response is steadily decreasing, with a gradual transition towards more long-term development and reconstruction investments enshrined in the UN-led durable solutions agenda. The government camp closure process (2019-2021) has resulted in forced returns or secondary/tertiary displacement, sometimes into informal settlements<sup>3</sup>. Displaced populations in informal settlements experience limited access to services, legal protection and potential for further displacement. COVID-19 control and preventive measures were largely lifted mid-2021 after the slowing down of the second wave and a slow start of the vaccination campaign. By end of September 2021, the health authorities had recorded over 2 million cases, with 22 420 deaths and an estimated 9.7% of the population vaccinated.

The pandemic has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, notably in fragile displacement situations for people who depend on assistance, and particularly for those who face challenges accessing health services.

The humanitarian situation continued to be stable in 2021. There are 286 000 refugees and 1.2 million Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in the country, of whom 184 470 live in 27 camps (mostly in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq - KRI) and rely on humanitarian assistance. Between May 2020 and May 2021 there was an overall 33% decrease of the population in formal IDP camps countrywide. Some 4.8 million former IDPs have returned to their areas of origin or settled in informal sites. Eighty-five percent of returns took place before 2018. In 2019 and 2020, return movements were triggered by IDPs camp closures and have largely plateaued in 2021. There are currently 547 recognised informal settlements with over 107 000 people in secondary or tertiary displacement. Half of them live in areas with severe or moderately severe living conditions.

Camp closures have affected over 100 000 IDPs in 2020 and 2021. Within the secondary displaced population, people in vulnerable situations, notably women, children and the elderly keep facing protection threats and have limited access to quality health care, education and welfare services. The reasons range from perceived status, social stigma, lack of civil documentation and the trauma and violence experienced during the war and continuous displacements. The uncertainty over the camp closure process has the potential to trigger localised crises and raise serious protection concerns.

DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2021 identified moderate humanitarian needs in Iraq. Pockets of acute needs, however, remain in certain areas of the country. The vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis is assessed to be high, an element of further inequality in a middle income country.

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<sup>3</sup> IDP informal site definition: an IDP informal site is a site hosting a minimum of 5 IDP families – displaced after 2014 – living together collectively in a site which is not suitable to accommodate people and with sub-standard living conditions. Such kind of shelters include tents, makeshift shelters, unfinished or abandoned buildings, or buildings not meant for living (CCCM cluster).

	Iraq
<b>INFORM Risk Index<sup>4</sup></b>	6.5
Vulnerability Index	5.5
Hazard and Exposure	7.7
Lack of Coping Capacity	6.5
<b>Global Crisis Severity Index<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>4.2</b>
Projected conflict risk	9.80
Uprooted People Index	5
Humanitarian Conditions	
Natural Disaster Index	5.3
<b>HDI Ranking<sup>6</sup> (Value)</b>	0.674
<b>Total Population<sup>7</sup> 2019</b>	<b>39.3</b>

## 2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

### 2.1. People in need of humanitarian assistance

#### 2.1.1. Displaced populations: internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees

According to the 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), out of the 6 million people displaced during the *Da'esh* conflict, more than 4.8 million returned and 1.2 million remain internally displaced. Of those, almost 185 000 are still living in camps (mostly in KRI) and 107 000 are living in 547 informal sites. Overall, it is estimated that 4.1 million people, including both returnees and IDPs, are still in need and 2.4 million in acute humanitarian need. The 2021 HRP is targeting 1.5 million people in acute humanitarian need. Camp closure have often triggered non-voluntary departures and premature unprepared returns, creating shocks at departure and arrival. Returns slowed down in 2021 as the government suspended its camp consolidation/closure process. In the meantime, many self-organised return attempts are unsuccessful, as people experience additional barriers to accessing their original property or finding more durable solutions. As a result, IDPs have moved to informal settlements outside camps or returned to camps. Many returnees and out-of-camp IDPs are dependent on external assistance to meet basic needs.

#### 2.1.2. Persons deprived of their freedom of movement

The number of people deprived of their freedom as a consequence of the *Da'esh* conflict remains high. Populations in detention are facing numerous protection and judiciary issues. The detention of children, including foreign children is a matter of high concern, especially for minors who can be held in pre-trial detention, in adult facilities or informal detention facilities. Iraqi women and children with family members accused of links with *Da'esh* face legal barriers to movement as well as indiscriminate use of denunciation within families to obtain security clearance, favourable judgements and civil documentation.

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<sup>4</sup> INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.inform-index.org/Global-Crisis-Severity-Index-beta>

<sup>6</sup> Humanitarian Development Index (HDI) developed by UNDP

<sup>7</sup> World Bank data, year

	Iraq
People in acute humanitarian needs	2 400 000
IDPS in camps	185 000
IDPs out of camps Category of beneficiary (such as IDPs, refugees, food insecure people etc.)	1 075 000

## 2.2. Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

Iraq has been in a protracted post-conflict context for almost three years, with no significant improvement or deterioration in 2021. The scale of damages caused by the war against *Da'esh*, combined with poor socio-economic conditions and limited government budgeting for recovery, has slowed down the path to recovery. During the first half of 2021, there were no major shocks that significantly impacted the scale or scope of humanitarian needs in the country. As of early 2021, an estimated 1.2 million people remain displaced. The need for camp services has been reduced significantly, with 25 remaining camps in KRI and the closure or consolidation of all but two camps in the rest of Iraq between October 2020 and January 2021. People from camps ended up either in informal settlements or in areas of return, with limited preparations and sustainable living conditions. Humanitarian needs have shifted notably to informal settlements out of camps, with increased IDPs' exposure to protection risks (lack of core civil documentation), difficulty accessing public services (including health care) as well as critical shelter/Non-Food Items (NFI) needs.

### 2.2.1. Protection:

Protection risks for IDPs and returnees remain acute and have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. According to HNO 2021, over 590 000 IDPs need specialised protection services. Female headed households in camps and informal settlements remain the most vulnerable to protection threats such as gender-based violence, with more limited livelihood opportunities and freedom of movement. Lack or loss of civil documentation is one of the main protection issues: it prevents access to basic services and socio-economic opportunities. It is calculated that almost half a million children have no identification documents and up to 5.5 million adults are missing some form of civil documentation. Access to civil documentation remains one of the major needs for IDPs particularly for those with perceived affiliation to extremist groups. Without proper identification, displaced populations face challenges and discrimination to access health services, face barriers to entering the government's social welfare schemes and travelling freely throughout the country and children have limited access to schools. The priority is to create the conditions to access core civil documents, to allow full benefit from essential basic services such as education, health and social protection and increasing possibilities for a secure return or integration. Support to displaced persons' access to civil documentation was severely impacted by the closure of the court system, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Persons - including children - with perceived affiliation with *Da'esh* face higher risks when subject to legal proceedings, with opaque legal processes at the moment of being released and reintegrated. Missing people remain a key family separation issue.

There are limited specialised and culturally appropriate services for people in need of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) or affected by sexual violence. The

humanitarian community needs to strengthen efforts to utilise a multi-sector approach to mitigate against negative coping mechanisms.

#### *2.2.2. Multi-sector approach in displacement context*

In 2021, the government intends to close all camps. The unclear timeframe adds unpredictability to the overall situation. The camp population in Iraq has decreased considerably between 2019 and 2021 as a consequence of government camp closures. The short notice given to leave a camp before closure does not allow people to properly prepare for their transfer. Barriers including lack of necessary civil documentation, discrimination, damaged or destroyed homes, uncertain access to basic services, local security environment and fear of reprisals based on perceived affiliation with extremist groups, undermine successful returns. These conditions have prompted many families to prefer settling in informal sites, often located in urban and peri-urban areas and including notably railway stations, unfinished buildings, and warehouses while others have brought their tents from camps and pitched them as the only option. The characteristics and population of informal settlements vary considerably, although access to services and critical shelter conditions are common issues. WASH needs are high in informal settlements, which also exacerbate health conditions particularly in the context of COVID-19.

#### *2.2.3. Education in emergencies*

Education in camps has been significantly disrupted over the last years, with notable gaps in formal education access for people in displacement (including in camps). More recently, the camps closure process and schools closure as restrictive preventive measures related to COVID-19 has disrupted the already limited access to quality education. Schools remained closed in the first half of 2021 and alternative modalities - despite some initiatives such as digital learning - remain limited in scope. In many cases children, particularly adolescents and youth, may have limited or no interaction with a formal education environment and have no pathways into a formal system.

#### *2.2.4. Disaster Risk Reduction/Disaster Prevention (DRR/DP)*

Large and devastating floods are a recurrent risk in Iraq affecting both shelters and agriculture, particularly the riverine communities along the Tigris and the Euphrates and causing flash displacement, damaging infrastructures and disrupting livelihoods. It requires the deployment of an effective and timely Early Warning System (EWS) as well as the establishment of proper preparedness and response protocols. DRR/DP capacities remain relatively weak as institutional arrangements within the post-2003 federal system of governance did not translate into adequately resourced and regularly reviewed plans. As a result, first-line responders and national actors active in the disaster management framework still require international support to fulfil their duties. Similarly, the current social protection system is not equipped with the tools and capacity to assess the needs of the poorest to cover climate change disasters, let alone effectively respond to those needs.

### **3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND COORDINATION**

#### **3.1 National/local response and involvement**

The government has a limited direct involvement in addressing the acute humanitarian needs throughout the country; this role is played by the international community, the government rather adopting a position of control. The government is in the lead of the current camp consolidation/camp closure campaign initially aimed at closing most of the camps in 2021. The Iraqi government announced the adoption of its National Plan for the IDPs return in May 2021 but the unpredictable political and financial situation in country is unlikely to lead to any meaningful implementation.

#### **3.2 International Humanitarian Response**

The UN coordination and cluster systems are in place in 2021. By late October, the 2021 HRP of USD 607 million was funded at 47%. Another HRP is expected for 2022 and should focus on efforts to transition from emergency assistance to stabilisation and development investments in the framework of the UN-led durable solutions agenda. For this purpose, in 2021 the government of Iraq decided to include a Durable Solutions Plan for Return in the 5 years UN Cooperation Framework.

The reduction of overall humanitarian funding is a continuous trend that started two years ago. However, in addition to the EU a small group of humanitarian donors (US, Japan, Canada) remain active and present in country, prioritising the displaced populations in camps and informal settlements, the support of camps consolidation/closure and return process. As in 2020, multi sector support, protection activities and the COVID-19 response remain the main humanitarian response areas in Iraq in 2021. There is limited rapid response capacity and in 2020/2021, the humanitarian community has faced challenges in ensuring contingency planning for humanitarian shocks.

#### **3.3 Operational constraints:**

##### *3.3.1. Access/humanitarian space*

In 2021, access to people in need remains challenging and sometimes unpredictable, particularly due to a cumbersome and heavy system of delivering access permissions in Iraq. This includes a requirement by the Iraqi Department of NGOs directed at NGOs to submit copies of contracts to the authorities. In July 2021, the EU Delegation sent a letter to the relevant Iraqi authorities recalling that neither the EU nor its NGO contractors may share contracts with the government because of confidentiality rules. The letter also contains projects and the names of the contracted NGOs, as a waiver of the requirement placed by the Iraqi authorities on EU partner NGOs to submit copies of EU contracts. A government online platform was activated in 2021 for NGOs, initially to facilitate the process, but the speed gains and benefits have still to materialise. This is hampering the efficiency of aid delivery to vulnerable people. The UN has faced its own access issues for its own staff, as well as for the movement of goods and equipment in Iraq.

##### *3.3.2. Partners (presence, capacity), including absorption capacity on the ground*

The security conditions remain volatile in 2021, with a mix of street demonstrations, tensions between the US and Iran, as well as Turkish military activity resulting in

indirect kinetic military actions. In 2021, international and national staff of humanitarian agencies have resumed their presence to a pre-COVID-19 period level. The National Red Crescent Society and Kurdish Red Crescent are present in country. As the COVID-19 restriction's measures were lifted in 2021, partners regained most of their response and monitoring capacities, although some issues related to movement authorisation and working visas issuance came back again randomly hindering movements and access.

#### **4. HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS**

The post conflict recovery and stabilisation phase has been slowly progressing and remains patchy. However, efforts to transition from emergency assistance to stabilisation and development response are ongoing. Development funding institutions, donors and UN agencies are supporting the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) to gradually absorb the humanitarian needs-based assistance into the Iraqi social welfare system.

As of 2020, development actors, including the EU through DG INTPA, are making efforts in creating operational durable solutions frameworks and coordination bodies for a gradual transfer of responsibility from humanitarian actors. In 2021, the UN put in place a Durable Solutions for Returns agenda incorporated in its UN Cooperation Framework with the government of Iraq. Improved inclusive integration and operational planning structures that do not solely rely on the government coordination and planning capacity are needed. In such transition context, while short term humanitarian assistance will provide lifesaving assistance and alleviate the immediate suffering, larger scale early recovery initiatives focused on provision of safety and security, delivery of basic services, access to income and livelihoods, social-political reform will be needed to address resilience and stabilisation.

Iraq is one of the EU six pilot countries for the operationalisation of the humanitarian-development nexus and an example of how strengthened coordination can have long-term impact on concrete key sectors. The transfer of the Cash Consortium Initiative and mental health programme to the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syria Crisis are clear examples in this regard. In 2020, DG ECHO and DG INTPA cooperation in an active nexus approach resulted in a EUR10 million transfer from DG INTPA to increase DG ECHO's immediate response to the COVID-19 outbreak. As a result of close coordination and the sustained dialogue between DG ECHO and DG INTPA, the 2021-2027 Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Iraq under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), currently under inter-service consultation, identifies concrete areas for nexus operationalisation with a focus on internally displaced populations. Priority area 2 (*Human development and social contract*), which foresees the reform of national education and social protection systems, will create opportunities for the (re-) integration of vulnerable groups such as Iraqi returnees, and IDPs. Priority area 3 (*Digital participatory governance and democracy*) supports capacities for durable solutions for displaced populations. Education and social protection, with a civil documentation component, are the sectoral entry points to further operationalise the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in Iraq, with a potential to contribute to the successful implementation of the durable solutions agenda.

## **5. ENVISAGED DG ECHO RESPONSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF HUMANITARIAN AID INTERVENTIONS**

General considerations for all interventions: The humanitarian response shall be compliant with EU thematic policies and guidelines that are described in the HIP policy annex.

### **5.1 Envisaged DG ECHO response**

In line with its mandate, DG ECHO will address urgent needs linked to protection and displacement, while other longer-term needs including stabilisation and development will be referred to other types of donors. Protection and displacement will be the entry point for all programmes to ensure that DG ECHO supports the highest impact for those that are most vulnerable to shocks.

#### *5.1.1. Protection*

DG ECHO will continue to support integrated and stand-alone protection actions targeting people that are particularly vulnerable within the Iraqi legal system. In informal settlements and remaining camps setting, assisting IDPs to obtain basic set of civil documentation remains one of the key priorities, ensuring that target groups have the minimum documentation required to move freely and access key social and legal services. Protection actions need to provide a full package of protection services, including protection monitoring and analysis, case management/individual protection assistance and referrals. DG ECHO strategy will also include a strong advocacy effort with the Iraqi authorities to facilitate partners' actions in the provision of civil documentation. Non protection actions should operate with established referral pathways.

Prevalence of mental health issues and gender based violence (GBV) is high, especially for women, persons with disabilities and girls and boys. DG ECHO will support timely, culturally-appropriate and gender-sensitive medical and psychosocial services to affected HHs, including identification of cases in need of immediate assistance.

#### *5.1.2. Multi-sector assistance to persons affected by displacement*

DG ECHO will support the continuation of multi-sector assistance to most vulnerable households living in IDP camps and informal settlements. For informal settlements, priority will be given to locations that have limited/no access to services and persons/communities who are unable to return to their area of origin (particularly those affected by camp closures). All interventions should be in line with the relevant cluster's priorities and technical guidelines. DG ECHO encourages multi-sector actors to ensure a time-bound, fully harmonised package of assistance to affected populations. Within a framework of gradual disengagement, DG ECHO will require all partners to ensure transition/phase out strategies which can include high impact interventions and/or linking communities/responses to longer term actors.

#### *5.1.3. COVID-19 support*

Should the COVID-19 pandemic situation remain stable, DG ECHO will support activities providing vaccination to most vulnerable people, especially for IDPs in and



outside camps; surveillance and prevention measures may be prioritised (aligned with the health cluster and Ministry of Health). For COVID-19 related health support, DG ECHO will prioritise actors that can operate at a national level and be flexible to change response locations, if needed.

#### *5.1.4. Education in Emergencies (EiE)*

DG ECHO will continue prioritising education in emergency for children affected by displacement. Where the authorities are unwilling or unable to provide education services, EiE can include provision of non-formal education, with consideration of pathways to formal education. DG ECHO will continue to support formal education services in camps. In out of camp settings, DG ECHO will only consider support to formal education in areas that experienced high levels of return in 2019-2020 and have chronic gaps in services. All EiE interventions will need to be aligned with Conflict Sensitive Education principles and contain a strong child protection component.

#### *5.1.5. DRR/DP*

DG ECHO will pursue the DP strategy in place since 2020. Funded actions should contribute at revitalise the existing Disaster Risk Management (DRM) system capacities at national/federal level. Key intervention areas should include the review and improvement of response plans (including the development of an adequate EWS), the reinforcement of operational capacities (specifically targeting the Iraqi Red Crescent Society) and ensuring operational coordination between Baghdad and governorate-level civil protection cells. The main objectives are to; 1) strengthen national/sub-national disaster preparedness systems by working on the development of specific competencies, coordination and a systematic early response mechanism that can meet urgent needs in natural crises, and 2) enhance the operational readiness to respond to future disasters, focusing on the most likely emergency response scenarios (floods, earthquake) supporting first responders` capacity (national government, local civil protection services, and the IRCS).

## **5.2 Other DG ECHO interventions**

The Emergency Toolbox HIP may be drawn upon for the prevention of, and response to, outbreaks of Epidemics. Under the Emergency Toolbox HIP, the Small-Scale Response, Acute Large Emergency Response Tool (ALERT) and Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) instruments may also provide funding options.