

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)

IRAQ

The activities proposed hereafter are still subject to the adoption of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/ BUD/2023/01000

AMOUNT: € 17.000.000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2023/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annexes¹ is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO²'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.

1. CONTEXT

Five years since the end of the conflict against the Islamic State (IS), the humanitarian situation in Iraq remains fragile. Today approximately 2.5 million people (HNO 2022) are in need of humanitarian assistance and 1.1 million remain internally displaced. The conflict has uprooted millions of people, eroded social cohesion, disrupted access to basic services, destroyed livelihoods and led to increased protection risks. Various protracted needs remain for highly vulnerable Iraqis as large-scale recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation programming focuses largely on populations in areas of high return. The government's decision to close the IDPs camps also accelerated the need to support vulnerable households both in their areas of return and in secondary displacement.

The country is going through a long period of high political instability, with an unprecedented level of tensions between the Shia communities, which may pose a series of threats to peace and ethnic cohabitation and make the country slide back into a civil strife. The security conditions remain volatile, with a mix of street demonstrations, political tensions, government vacuum and challenging regional geopolitical context not conducive to de-escalation. The national political vacuum is triggering a renewed level of violent activity from armed opposition groups such as PMFs (paramilitary forces), tribal militias, terrorists and radical groups.

The impact of climate change on agricultural production and livelihoods of vulnerable populations in many regions of the country risks to trigger climate induced internal migration. Poor cross border cooperation (with Turkey and Iran) exacerbated the impact of climate crisis on water management, resulting in recurrent droughts.

The transition from emergency assistance to long-term structural solutions is progressing gradually within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. While no Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is envisaged for 2023 and the humanitarian cluster system will be discontinued at the end of 2022,

¹ Technical annex and thematic policies annex

² Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

important humanitarian and protection gaps remain. DG ECHO's strategy in Iraq has been reviewed to address existing protection needs within a transition context which remains extremely volatile and does not allow the enforcement of any exit strategy over the medium term. Focusing on protection and documentation, DG ECHO will support the integration of some of the most vulnerable groups into Government-led programmes, ultimately contributing to more inclusive durable solutions.

DG ECHO's needs assessment (HNO 2022) for 2021-2022 identified high humanitarian needs with 2.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance of which approximately 1 million in acute need. The vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis is assessed to be high.

	Country
INFORM Risk Index³	6.6
Vulnerability Index	5.8
Hazard and Exposure	7.7
Lack of Coping Capacity	6.5
Global Crisis Severity Index⁴	3.9
Projected conflict risk	9.9
Uprooted People Index	8.9
Humanitarian Conditions	3.6
Natural Disaster Index	5.6
HDI Rankings⁵ (Value)	0.674
Total Population⁶	41

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

1) People in need of humanitarian assistance:

Out of the 6.1 million people displaced between 2014 and 2017, some 5 million have returned while 1.1 million remain displaced, the vast majority outside formal camps. According to the 2022 HNO, assessed humanitarian needs show approximately 2.5 million vulnerable IDPs and returnees, of which approximately 1 million face acute humanitarian needs.

IRAQ (source: HNO 2022)	PIN	Acute PIN
IDPs in camps	180 000	144 000
IDPs out of camps	550 000	238 000
Returnees	1 700 000	579 000

³ INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters

⁴ <http://www.inform-index.org/Global-Crisis-Severity-Index-beta>

⁵ Humanitarian Development Index (HDI) developed by UNDP

⁶ World Bank data, year

Persons deprived of their freedom of movement:

The number of detainees as a consequence of the IS conflict remains high and they continue to face numerous protection issues. Transfers of detained IS fighters from Syria to Iraq are increasing and require, when feasible, specialised and adapted preparation and follow up protection services.

Although the number of children detained (including a small number of foreign children) continues to reduce over the years, it remains 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 IS face legal barriers to movement as well as indiscriminate use of irregular legal processes to obtain security clearance and civil documentation. DG ECHOs' focus on this sector will aim at securing documentation to the most vulnerable and favour their reinsertion in the national welfare schemes.

2) Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

Despite accelerated efforts toward durable solutions, the evolving humanitarian needs still require a considerable humanitarian response. The international humanitarian system in Iraq has engaged in a transition towards durable solutions and system building-oriented actions, while offering targeted support to people who continue to face life-threatening consequences as a result of the IS conflict. However, major gaps remain in the provision of government essential services, especially for specific groups of the population.

Supply disruptions generated by the Russian war against Ukraine triggered a significant increase in prices of basic food commodities. The survival minimum expenditure basket increased by 30% in the first quarter of 2022, reducing households' purchasing power with a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable groups of the populations. Poor water systems along with the ongoing COVID-19 challenges have exacerbated health issues. The impact of the climate crisis has the potential to be profound, with water scarcity and environmental degradation.

Return rates in 2022 largely plateaued, with a corresponding stagnation in the basic needs of IDPs and returnees. The most vulnerable IDPs and returnees are those who remain uprooted and face severe barriers to resume their lives and reintegrate into the Iraqi social fabric. They experienced repeated displacement, living in isolated informal settlements, informal camps or attempting to return to camps. This includes IDPs in camps dependent on WASH, health, protection and food assistance, notably acutely vulnerable camps such as the east Mosul camps with movement restrictions that affect access to services and livelihoods, as well as people out of camps, and returnees who continue to live in critical shelters.

An estimated one million IDPs and returnees miss at least one key identity or civil document, including 450 000 children. 500 000 lack at least two core documents and 250 000 at least three core documents (MSNA, 2021). Proportionally, IDPs both in and out-of-camp were reportedly more impacted than returnees. One of the most affected groups struggling to obtain civil documentation are IS affiliated families. Among those, women and children are facing an even bigger challenge, particularly those who are missing male head of household. This resulted in practices, such as DNA testing, which

have no ground in the national legal framework. The lack of civil documents restricts freedom of movement, access to public services such as healthcare and education while increasing risk of arbitrary arrest and detention. It also represents a major barrier to achieve sustainable durable solutions.

These groups require life sustaining humanitarian assistance to live in safety and dignity.

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). Access to public education system remained challenging. 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. In 2022, also as a result of EU advocacy efforts, the Government of Iraq allowed undocumented children to attend school. This represents a major achievement and a first step towards a full integration of undocumented children into the national education system, once they will be allowed to undertake exams and graduate.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND COORDINATION

1) National/local response and involvement

In October 2020, the Government of Iraq (GoI) introduced “The White Paper for Economic Reform” outlining the government’s goals. The document establishes the policy framework for the country’s economic recovery. The years 2021 and 2022 have shown more favourable socioeconomic conditions, mainly linked to a gradual increase in oil prices. In 2022, the GoI adopted the Emergency Food Security and Development Law allocating USD 1.1 billion to social security, health, education, war compensation and support to IDPs, and USD 4 billion to the Public Distribution System, food security, agriculture, water, and grain imports. While this law represents a tangible step towards the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups into national welfare schemes, its implementation will have to be carefully followed to assess IDPs’ inclusion.

The GoI, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and local authorities have engaged into the transition phase. Notably, the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs established a committee to provide civil documentation to all children living in IDP camps, orphanages, and out-of-camp areas. The Ministry of Education has launched the National Strategy on Early Childhood Development, which will have special provisions to ensure the development of vulnerable children, including IDP children. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), the Ministry of the Interior requested that the Directorate of Water and the Directorate of Municipalities and Tourism start planning to assume responsibility for the provision of WASH services in the camps in KRI. Authorities in Duhok (KRI) agreed to allow IDPs in camps to undertake shelter upgrades to improve their living conditions with the construction of semi-permanent structures.

Overall, the transfer of basic services provision to the GoI progressed during 2022. There have been positive indications in relation to services in camps (as well as shelter upgrades), removing documentation restrictions to access schools, improvements in the documentation process and commitments to enable IDPs access to social safety nets. These are potentially transformative changes that can improve the capacity of the GoI to respond to ongoing and future shocks. However, given the current political and

institutional instability, it is early to assess whether these steps will evolve in the right direction.

2) International Humanitarian Response

In line with the transition context and the efforts to move towards durable solutions, including the introduction of the Durable Solutions Framework establishing an area-based coordination mechanism (ABCs) and the launching of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), there will be no HRP in 2023 and the full-fledged humanitarian cluster system will be discontinued as of December 2022. Humanitarian organisations and donors will continue engaging within the working groups to be set up in the framework of the new UNSDCF architecture.

A roadmap to guide the transition has been developed and is currently under finalisation by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and donors. Key advocacy messages have been developed and shared widely with partners for use in engagement with the government. However, the needs of the most vulnerable groups remain largely unaddressed.

In mid-2015, at the request of the Government of Iraq and with the support of the Global Coalition Against Daesh, UNDP Iraq established the Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFS) to carry out stabilisation activities in areas affected by the ISIL conflict. The USD 1.45 billion FFS will enter its last implementation year in 2023, having supported GoI to address the immediate stabilization needs in accessible areas which allows for the return of IDPs.

3) Operational constraints *in terms of:*

i.) access/humanitarian space:

Despite unstable security, the international and national staff of humanitarian agencies have been able to move and maintain operational presence without major constraints. The National Red Crescent Society and Kurdish Red Crescent are present in country. In 2022, partners implement their activities and conduct monitoring with full capacities, although some issues related to movement authorisation and working visas issuance re-emerge from time to time. In parallel, the country has since March 2021 made visas on arrival possible for 37 countries.

ii) partners (presence, capacity), including absorption capacity on the ground:

With the improvement of humanitarian access conditions over the last 12 months, the presence of partners at field level consolidated and the possibilities of movements increased. The number of operating INGOs and NGOs remained stable, despite a decreasing trend in humanitarian funding. Efforts on localisation within the humanitarian space need to feed into the current discussions on transition and localisation. National organisations (mostly implementing partners for the INGOs) are involved in the UN led transition, although concerns remain in relation to their operational space if left alone before state security actors.

4. HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS

Efforts to transition from emergency assistance to stabilisation and development are ongoing and have increased. The UN reenergised its Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) with the GoI and the Durable Solutions agenda has become the main action plan for the transition and stabilisation phase. UN Development funding institutions, donors and UN agencies support 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. Since 2020, development actors, including DG INTPA, have engaged in operational durable solutions frameworks and acted for a gradual transfer of responsibility from humanitarian actors to government and development actors. Close cooperation between DG ECHO and DG INTPA has led to a good alignment between DG INTPA programming priorities and DG ECHO's strategy. As a result, the 2021-2027 Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Iraq identified concrete areas for nexus operationalisation with a focus on internally displaced populations. In particular, social protection, education and urban development, with a strong displacement angle, are the priority areas of intervention identified for the nexus. 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.

DG ECHO, DG INTPA, DG NEAR and the EEAS consult regularly to ensure joint positions and messaging towards the GoI, the UN and other international partners (such as on forced displacement and IDP camp closures), as well as close coordination with EU Member States and likeminded donors.

While the implementation of this transitional strategy progresses, there are still important humanitarian needs to be addressed, particularly among the most vulnerable groups that are not yet receiving Government-led social assistance, such as the Public Distribution System (PDS) food support or health and education. For this purpose, tailor-made conflict sensitive transitional programmes focusing on protection with a time-bound additional cash could be an opportunity to accelerate the integration of some of the most vulnerable IDPs into the Government-led programmes, coupled with joint evidence based and human rights informed advocacy efforts. A pre-condition to operationalise this component of the nexus is a close coordination between humanitarian, development and peace stakeholders.

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

5.1 Envisaged DG ECHO response

The 2023 HIP focuses on humanitarian protection, including advocacy, and Education in Emergencies, as the key response priorities of DG ECHO in Iraq. DG ECHO acknowledges that the complexity of humanitarian needs is often created and/or exacerbated by protection risks. DG ECHO will also continue to support vulnerable and at risk IDPs and returnees to regain sustainable access to essential services.

This approach, coupled with strategic and coordinated advocacy efforts, has the potential to enhance the integration of some of the most vulnerable groups of the population into the Government-led programmes ultimately contributing to more inclusive durable solutions. While the HIP focuses on these sectors, DG ECHO recognises the wider spectrum of needs present in Iraq. Partners are requested to consider measures to reduce

the environmental footprint of operations within the sectors of focus, in line with the minimum environmental requirements, and coordinate also on environmental issues and green reconstruction efforts with development actors.

Protection

Specialised protection assistance will be provided to the people most at risk of rights violations, neglect, violence and abuse, and other serious protection risks for marginalised and vulnerable communities. This includes people who lack identity and civil documentation and are therefore exposed and/or at high risk of rights violations. The ultimate objective of legal protection interventions is to enhance the physical, legal and material safety of targeted populations as well as increase access to basic needs.

Access to Basic Needs

In 2022/2023 humanitarian and development actors are supporting pathways to social safety nets (PDS/SSN). This assistance is twofold, to strengthen the GoI's ability to implement shock responsive social protection programmes, reducing the need for international aid, and to promote the inclusion of vulnerable segment of the community (such as those that continue to be displaced) transitioning from humanitarian cash assistance to Government-led social assistance programmes.

Conflict sensitive time-bound multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) will contribute to ensuring access to basic needs for the most vulnerable groups of the population, especially those currently excluded from social protection systems. MPCA will also support vulnerable households disproportionately affected by increased prices of basic food commodities to meet their basic food needs, thus addressing food insecurity both in camps and outside camps. This assistance will be targeted with a temporary duration to the most vulnerable groups during the process of obtaining identity and civil documentation to support their transition to Government-led programmes.

MPCA intervention should be implemented in close coordination and collaboration with protection actions (i.e., integrated actions will be prioritised).

Still today many IDPs do not benefit from government social services, because of their profile and/or lack of civil documentation. In the meantime, the humanitarian community is drastically reducing support across many sectors and locations. In the current transition phase the most vulnerable, especially the ones who face barriers to access identity and civil documents, may require further targeted support to overcome barriers. For example, case management support and multi-purpose cash assistance can be used to facilitate access to services and improved physical, legal and material safety as well as access to basic needs.

Education in Emergencies

DG ECHO will continue prioritising education in emergencies 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 where there are high rates of exclusion due to status such as perceived affiliation. All EiE interventions will need to be aligned with Conflict Sensitive Education principles and contain a strong child protection component.

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.

In view of the importance of logistics for humanitarian operations, DG ECHO remains also committed to contribute to logistics operations, via funding or any other tool, such as the European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC), at its disposal.

The European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC) is a global initiative, aiming at supporting the delivery of humanitarian assistance with a gap-filling approach. Under the EHRC the Commission has at its disposal several tools that can be activated in case of sudden onset disasters, e.g., a series of Common Logistics Services (including air operations, warehousing services, last-mile ground transportation, etc.), and a stockpile of emergency WASH and shelter items to be pre-positioned in regional warehouses worldwide.