



UN-HABITAT IN IRAQ

Humanitarian and Recovery Programme

2013-2016



OVERVIEW

UN-Habitat has been active in Iraq since 1996 under the Oil for Food Programme. After 2003, UN-Habitat was largely engaged in early recovery efforts, particularly supporting internally displaced persons (IDPs) through the provision of shelter and reconstruction solutions. Since then, the portfolio of UN-Habitat Iraq has expanded beyond emergency responses to include both humanitarian programmes, such as providing IDPs with shelter and water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure, and promoting urban recovery of areas affected by conflict, and developmental programmes that provide technical support to address durable solutions for IDPs and informal settlers and essential capacity building for relevant government institutions.

UN-Habitat follows a multi-dimensional and coherent approach in tackling diverse urban issues. These range from emergency response such as providing safe and basic shelter for IDPs, to projects that aim to build and develop the capacities of local and national governments in planning and managing urbanization, to more theoretical endeavors including research and analysis on the dynamics of urbanization and the impacts of armed conflict.

KEY FACTS

- Working sites: 15 (in 9 governorates of Anbar, Baghdad, Basra, Karbala, Missan, Ninewa, Erbil, Dohuk and Suleimaniyah)
- Number of staff: 36 full-time in 5 offices in Baghdad, Erbil, Dohuk, Basrah, Amman
- Emergency cluster membership: UN-Habitat is a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) at global level, and at country level the agency is member of the Shelter, WASH and Protection clusters (chairing sub-cluster on housing, land and property rights)

ROLE OF UN-HABITAT IN SUPPORTING REFUGEES AND IDPS

UN-Habitat is aligned to a global approach and commits itself to mobilizing the Iraqi Government towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goal 11: “Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. UN-Habitat follows an Action Agenda with three core areas of work around which partnerships are being formed: recognizing the nature, scale and complexity of urban crisis; working with systems that shape cities; and managing urban displacement.

KEY PROGRAMME AREAS IN IRAQ

■ PROVIDING DIGNIFIED LIVING CONDITIONS TO IDPS

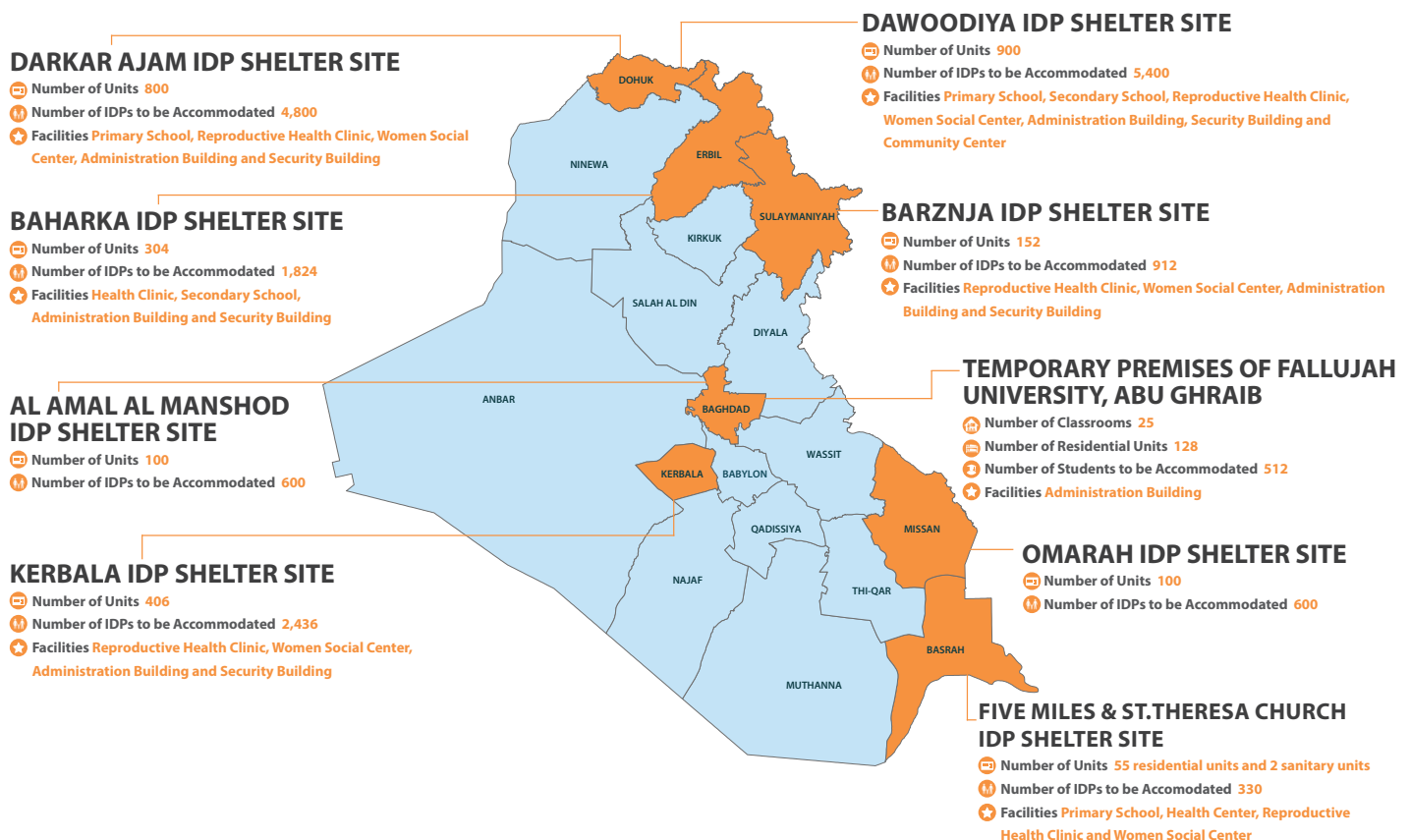
While emergency camps and temporary housings meet the immediate needs of those fleeing the crisis, global trends show that informal shelter sites tend to turn into urban slums. In Iraq, UN-Habitat has been providing durable IDP shelter sites in governorates receiving large numbers of IDPs. In doing so, UN-Habitat has been bridging the gap between rapid responses and more sustainable solutions. Through the provision of prefabricated shelter units accompanied by basic infrastructure and public facilities, UN-Habitat not only provides more dignified and durable shelters, but also prevents the emergence of urban slums which pose additional challenges to the country.

UN-Habitat has constructed ten IDP shelter sites in the seven governorates of Baghdad, Basrah, Kerbala, Missan, Erbil, Dohuk and Suleimaniyah between 2014 and 2016, accommodating approximately 18,000 vulnerable IDPs. These sites are equipped with prefabricated shelter units accompanied by basic infrastructure (i.e. water and sanitation systems, electricity and internal roads) as well as public facilities such as primary schools, health clinics and women’s centers, all of which are constructed and operated in collaboration with other UN agencies and NGOs. In addition to the construction of durable shelters, UN-Habitat has comparative advantage in providing technical support for the planning and management of IDP shelter sites. This enables the establishment of socially sustainable IDP sites that provide comprehensive support to IDPs.

In March 2016, the Government of Japan made further contributions to establish two new IDP prefabricated shelter sites in Iraq. One of the ongoing projects is an extension of an IDP prefabricated shelter site in Bahirka, Erbil Governorate, to host approximately 300 IDP families fleeing areas around Mosul as agreed with the Governorate. The second project is located in Anbar as a transitional shelter area for the returnees to Ramadi City with a capacity of 500 units. Overall, the new projects will take in more than 5,000 IDPs once completed later this year.

UN-Habitat received around USD 32.5 million from the Governments of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Japan between 2014-2016 and requires an additional USD 20 million in 2016-2017 for the newly planned prefabricated shelter sites for IDPs fleeing Mosul and the surrounding areas.

IDP SHELTER SITES ESTABLISHED BY UN-HABITAT



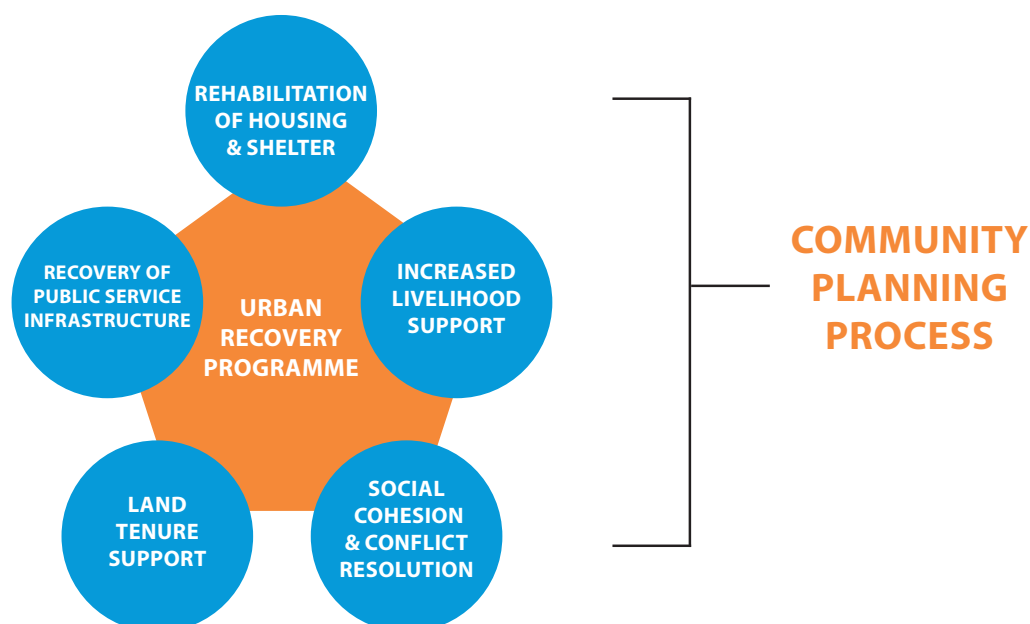
■ PROMOTING URBAN RECOVERY/HOUSING SELF-REPAIR IN AREAS LIBERATED FROM ISIL

Recovery and stabilization of areas liberated from ISIL after military operations have a critical significance for the Government of Iraq in reasserting its authority over the fragile country. In many cases, newly liberated areas have strategic importance whereby the Government is able to secure major supply links for future operations in areas where ISIL still maintains its influence. Newly liberated areas also hold symbolic roles in demonstrating the Government's efforts to restore stability and bridge Iraq's sectarian divide. Furthermore, successful repopulation and recovery of newly liberated areas may accelerate the fight against ISIL, bringing back the support of local populations in ISIL controlled areas.

As such UN-Habitat has established a new community-based self-repair approach to facilitate returns to and recovery of key areas liberated from ISIL. Under this housing self-repair scheme, UN-Habitat provides materials and necessary technical support for the rehabilitation of damaged houses by community members themselves, creating job opportunities for returnees and civilians and in turn encouraging them to engage in the rebuilding of their community. Adopting a community-based participatory planning process, the programme addresses five interlinked components: public service infrastructure; housing and shelter; access to income; social cohesion and security; and land tenure support.

The programme recognizes that the responsibility for recovery rests with the families and local communities with the support of the authorities, and therefore assists national and local authorities to adequately address the needs of returnees. The programme's approach is expected to build self-reliance of local communities and authorities; ensure security, protection, and rights; generate a process that would allow families in need to overcome obstacles preventing return; cultivate a spirit of peacebuilding and community cohesiveness; and design the recovery investment to remain with the community. Furthermore, the programme highlights the need to link reconstruction activities with future development plans to ensure the sustainability of gains made. Through this community planning approach, the affected people are placed at the centre of their recovery process. Lessons learned and good practices prove that recovery response is most effective when people are empowered and in control of their own recovery process. Therefore the programme will be based on the input of communities, build on existing community structures, be implemented in line with national development priorities, and ensure human rights.

Under this programme, UN-Habitat has launched one pilot in Al Ta'meem neighborhood in Ramadi City (targeting 1,000 houses), and one pilot in Sinouni/Sinjar sub-district (targeting 500 houses) in 2016. The Programme has received USD 5.5 million for the Ramadi project from the Government of Japan and USD 2 million for the Sinouni project from UNDP's Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme. The urban recovery/Housing self-repair programme will require additional funding of USD 30 million for 2016-2017 for the planned interventions in the liberated areas of Anbar and Nineveh Governorates.





■ SHELTER AND WASH SUPPORT TO NON-CAMP REFUGEES

To raise resilience, endurance, solidarity, tolerance and community cohesion, UN-Habitat launched a programme supporting Syrian refugees outside of camps with a focus on providing minimum shelter requirements in agreement with beneficiaries, house owners and local government. The themes considered are:

- The structural safety of shelters
- Provision of adequate protection from elements of the environment
- Gender and cultural sensitivity
- Appropriate and hygienic water and sanitation sources
- Safe electrical connections
- Healthy interior living conditions (e.g. light, ventilation, health hazards)
- Adequate indoor space that improves basic living activities
- Secure semi-formal leases between lessor and lessee

Following the field assessment conducted by UN-Habitat's field officers, the proposed list of rehabilitation interventions is implemented in consent with owners and tenants. An agreement is arranged with the house owner to sign on tenure security documents for the beneficiary family(ies) residing in the owner's house. These tenure documents should secure the family(ies) from eviction and rental increase for an agreed period.

The pressure on infrastructure services is greater in poorly serviced and high-density communities where large numbers of Syrian refugee families reside. The municipalities in the hosting communities (mainly in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq) are engaged in numerous upgrading projects and are in need of support to improve their service delivery and fill the existing funding gap. The support of UN-Habitat comes in the form of procurement of needed equipment and materials, in addition to direct implementation of infrastructure projects as identified in consultation with mukhtars and representatives of local communities. Through the programme supporting Syrian refugees UN-Habitat aims to encourage tolerance towards refugee families and enhance community cohesion.






Thus far, 1,045 families living in 665 improved houses have benefited from shelter rehabilitation, and the provision of leases; additionally, 232,200 beneficiaries in host communities have gained access to upgraded infrastructure.

This programme received USD 3.5 million through UNHCR and is currently suspended due to lack of funding.

■ HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY ISSUES FACING IDPS AND RETURNEES

Forced displacement almost inevitably means the loss of housing, land and property (HLP); and disputes regarding HLP ownership and usage often further destabilize an unstable community affected by crisis. When displaced individuals eventually consider returning, whether and how they will be able to reclaim their HLP and thus rebuild their livelihoods will often be one of the most crucial concerns. To the larger community and the nation as a whole, safeguarding progress towards peace and security in a post-conflict period will to a large extent depend on how well these HLP issues are addressed. In an attempt to tackle this problem, UN-Habitat in Iraq has incorporated a new system into its urban recovery programmes to protect HLP rights of people affected by the crisis through the introduction and implementation of the GIS-based Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM). STDM, a land administration prototype, will help map property claims, promote community-based dispute resolution and expedite land tenure verification procedures.



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