

UNICEF
Update on Iraq crisis
18-30 May 2003



"The People of Al-Adhamiya neighborhood would like to thank UNICEF and distinguished members of Al-Adhamiya Municipality for their efforts in cleaning the garbage that filled the streets and residential areas due to the current situation."

Banner in Al-Adhamiya neighborhood, Baghdad, May 2003

BACKGROUND

The payment of salaries to Iraqi civil servants marks an important milestone in involving Iraqi nationals in the rebuilding of their country. The sustainability of current humanitarian actions rests upon the full involvement of Iraqi technical and administrative cadres.

While slight enhancements are noted, security is still hampering improvement in the overall humanitarian situation. Daily reports of shootings, looting and carjackings are continuing. The capacity of humanitarian workers to operate freely in the country is still limited. The importance of ensuring law and order cannot be overstated to safeguard the lives of Iraqi civilians and humanitarian workers and allow for the normalization of social and economic activities.

Remnants of the war litter the country in the form of UXOs, cluster bombs, and all sorts of dumped ammunition with deadly consequences. Civilians, especially children, continue to fall victim to this scourge of war. Given the intensity of the problem, UNICEF calls for priority action to clear affected urban areas

The quality of water supply is still of concern in many areas. The cross-contamination with sewage water from damaged pipe systems partly due to the continuing pilfering of pipe threatens the health and nutrition status of children. In Baghdad, some hospitals have linked the increase in diarrhea level to families who had escaped to rural areas during the war and are now returning to the city.

Confirmed cases of cholera as reported by WHO stood at 52 as of May 26. Humanitarian agencies, in collaboration with national health authorities, are attempting to control this and other potential epidemics linked to water-borne diseases. Given the endemic nature of many illnesses, the searing heat and the lack of clean water, it is essential that a combination of actions is taken including the monitoring of water quality and availability of drugs and medicines.

A major concern in the education sector, at this time, is to ensure that students are able to take their final exams and not lose the school year. UNICEF is committed to providing students, parents educators, and education officials within the 15 governorates of south/center Iraq with this opportunity. This additional initiative is part of UNICEF's support to full resumption of education in Iraq.

In Northern Iraq, UNICEF continues to operate normally within the OFFP mandate. In conjunction with UNOCHI and other UN agencies, UNICEF is now initiating the phasing down of the programme as outlined in Security Council Resolution 1483. Kurdish authorities have complained that the Resolution is unfair to the Kurdish populations as it does not provide for the reallocation of previously earmarked OFFP funds to their areas.

UNICEF is now embarking on a series of assessments in the areas of Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI), nutrition, education, and water and sanitation. A meeting is currently taking place in Erbil (29-30 May) to initiate a nationwide assessment in the area of child protection. All assessments are undertaken in full collaboration with partners including Iraqi representatives, INGOs and UN agencies.

ISSUES

Water and Sanitation

An assessment of Baghdad's complete water distribution system conducted by the Mayoralty of Baghdad Water Authorities and supported by UNICEF showed that forty percent (40%) of the network is damaged with 500 separate "breaks" in the system. Estimates are that up to fifty per cent (50%) of the water is lost as the result of those breaks. The damage, in the form of splits, is mostly directly attributed to the war as decayed

pipes were unable to sustain the shock and vibrations linked to heavy bombardments and military tanks.

In Southern Iraq, the continuous siphoning of water from pipes has negative consequences on many fronts. Children play in stagnant contaminated water, women wade in and collect contaminated water, and hospitals find themselves without water as the pressure in the pipes has become too low due to holes in the pipes. In Basra city, assessment teams found that one third of visited water treatment sites had no water at all. Repairs to the water network are constrained by the lack of security.

The collapse of municipal services has led to huge piles of garbage accumulating across urban centers creating health hazards for the population. While UNICEF is supporting the cleaning up of these heaps of garbage, this initiative needs to be followed up by re-instating garbage collection at household level as soon as possible.

Health and Nutrition

The protection of Iraqi children's health requires the re-activation of routine immunization activities. To this effect, a nation-wide assessment of the EPI system in all 18 governorates was undertaken to establish the vaccines and cold chain needs. This was done in conjunction with an assessment of the PHCs in the 15 governorates of south/center Iraq. The results indicate that eighty percent (80%) of these centers are ready to resume immunization and have a functional cold chain. UNICEF aims at re-starting routine vaccination in early June. UNICEF estimates that since the outbreak of the war, 120,000 children have been born and none has been immunized. These newborns need to be traced and vaccinated as soon as possible.

As a follow-up to the rapid assessment in nutrition which showed a doubling of malnutrition rates in children under five in Baghdad, UNICEF is keen on re-activating the network of Community Care Children Units (CCCU). Despite the lack of security which has kept most of the network closed, CCCUs in Um Qasr are functioning again and in Baghdad, one hundred out of three hundred existing CCCUs are now screening children.

Education

Education in Iraq has been thrown into further disarray by the war, the looting, and the climate of insecurity and fear that has kept many children, especially girls, at home. The school year has been extended by one month to make up for the two months lost and final exams are now scheduled for 21 June. UNICEF is providing support to ensure that equipment and supplies needed to prepare and carry out the exams nation-wide are available. It will also support an information campaign on the holding of the final exams. However, it is essential that security is provided to ensure that this milestone event takes place.

Child Protection

Anecdotal evidence points to an increase in the number of street children especially in the sprawling city of Baghdad. However, one must remember that even prior to the war, a quarter of school age children did not attend school and most of these children worked in cities' markets, shops or scavenged for scrap. In addition, children attend school in shifts which adds to the number of children on the streets at any one time. Given the lack of baseline data to assess the scope of the problem of street children, UNICEF will, as a first step, in partnership with Enfants du Monde, undertake a survey of street children with the aim of developing appropriate responses. In addition, in collaboration with civic and religious leaders, UNICEF is supporting the collection of information to identify children newly orphaned by the war,

UXOs, landmine and abandoned live ammunition will continue to be a problem in Iraq for years to come as Iraq is now described as the most contaminated country. The pervasiveness of the problem is so huge that military and NGOs representatives admit that it is beyond their abilities. Mine awareness programmes are being developed, however, it is feared that many civilians, including children, will continue to fall victim to these deadly remnants of war if a huge clean up effort is not urgently undertaken.

ACTION

Water and Sanitation

Water tankering continues in the capital area and in the south. In Baghdad area, UNICEF is sending

out 15 water tankers a day on multiple trips, targeting impoverished areas and selected hospitals, child care institutions and schools. In the south, an average of 79 tankers is bringing fresh water into Iraq every day. UNICEF is also starting to hire water tankers locally in the south to add to the amount of clean water that it is able to provide communities.

In Baghdad, an assessment of complete water distribution network has been carried out by the Mayorality of Baghdad Water Authorities with the support of UNICEF. The assessment found that forty per cent (40%) of the network was damaged and that there were over 500 separate breaks in the system. Estimates are that up to fifty per cent (50%) of the city's water is lost as a result of these breaks. UNICEF has awarded a contract to a company to repair the breaks in the water network, which consists of hundreds of kilometres of pipes.

UNICEF has assessed a total of 66 water projects in Baghdad, including 9 Water Treatment Plants (WTP), 53 Compact Units (CU), and 4 boosting stations and begun rehabilitation work on the Al-Wihda water treatment plant. Contracts are being tendered for the rehabilitation of two Compact Units as well. UNICEF continues to supply and transport fuel to run the generators at the city's water projects.

As a one time measure, UNICEF has paid a total of US \$46,000 in incentives to 15,000 Baghdad Water Authority staff who kept working throughout the war and the chaos that followed. This is a one off payment to reimburse them for the two months they worked without pay. OCPA will take over paying civil servants' salaries in the future.

In other parts of South/Center Iraq, UNICEF is supporting the General Corporation of Water and Sewage (GCWS) to assess the country's water and sewage system, including for any damage caused by the war and looting. The assessment began 25 May 2003 is to be completed within three weeks and will be accompanied by Bill of Quantities for all WTPs, CUs and Sewage Treatment Plants in need of repair.

UNICEF continues to bring in chlorine gas for 15 South and Center governorates with 100 MT already provided to Basra governorate and 500 MT on its way. UNICEF is providing Office in a Box Kits to the water authorities in 4 of the southern governorates to enable them to function more effectively.

UNICEF is currently assessing Baghdad City's 256 sewage pumping stations and preparing Bill of Quantities for urgent repairs and rehabilitation by partners. UNICEF will support the rehabilitation of seven of these stations including the Al-Huriya sewage pumping station. The breakdown of this particular pumping station led to sewage flooding urban neighborhoods, affecting 200,000 people. Pending the start of rehabilitation work, UNICEF has hired crews to unblock the sewage drainage system in Al-Huriya. In addition, UNICEF will contract a number of trucks to drain the over-filled septic tanks and transport the sewage out of the streets of Zafarania, a community that tends to use septic tanks but has suffered floods of sewage filling the streets and homes due to lack of workers to drain the septic tanks.

To address the hygiene issue caused by the piling up of refuse on streets of municipalities, UNICEF is supporting the removal of the huge piles of garbage that have amassed and plans to move towards daily household level collection in the near future. The refuse removal began in Adhamiya and Rusapha Central municipalities - Adhamiya covers 126 square kilometers and Rusapha Central, a commercial and industrial area, is home to more than 600,000 people, which swells during the day to a population of more than one million.

UNICEF will also provide similar support to Rasheed municipality, which covers thirty eight per cent (38%) of the total area of Baghdad. The support for these three municipalities will last for 30 days and cost US \$200,000. UNICEF may also undertake similar projects in Karada and Kardamiya.

Health and Nutrition

UNICEF has been focusing its efforts on re-establishing the country's EPI system as main priority for protecting the health of Iraqi children. In this endeavor, UNICEF has been supporting the Ministry of Health (MOH) in assessing Iraq's EPI system in all 18 governorates, by providing transportation and incentives for the survey teams. The assessment finalized on 24 May will help map the needs to be addressed in the near future.

Vaccines have continued to arrive to allow urgent resumption of immunization programme. In the south, all required vaccines have been received and distributed to the governorates of Misan, Basra, Thiqr and Muthana, and MOH will soon be reactivating the immunization programme in these four governorates. In the Center of Iraq, required vaccines arrived and those for the north are expected to arrive in early June. UNICEF expects that by the end of the first week of June, routine immunization will be ready for reactivation across the country.

Planning is underway for a defaulter campaign to make up for the fact that there has been no immunization done in the past two months. UNICEF estimates that 120,000 children have been born since the outbreak of the war and that none of these infants have been vaccinated to date. They will have to be traced and vaccinated as soon as possible.

Rehabilitation of Primary Health Care Centers (PHCs) is another priority for UNICEF intervention in health. UNICEF-supported teams have begun assessing the health activities of PHCs across the 15 South/Centre governorates. The Baghdad portion of the assessment has been finalized. The assessment for the rest of the country is expected to be finalized in two weeks.

At this time, UNICEF-supported teams have begun assessing 50 PHCs located in the 15 South/Centre governorates for rehabilitation and are expected to come up with Bills of Quantities for each of them. UNICEF has also completed the rehabilitation of the central vaccine warehouse, which is now ready to handle the arrival of vaccines.

On nutrition, UNICEF is striving to re-establish the entire network of nutrition programme in order to reach children suffering from malnutrition and to provide families with vital health information on how to prevent malnutrition, diarrhea and other diseases that pose a threat to children's wellbeing.

UNICEF and the Iraqi Nutritional Research Institute (NRI) are currently undertaking a large scale survey of all the CCCUs, PHCs and Nutrition Rehabilitation Centers (NRC) that form the Targeted Nutrition Programme (TNP) to assess damages caused by the war and looting and to find out what their urgent staffing and supply needs are. Once the assessment is finalized, UNICEF will begin the process of reactivating the system, fixing the infrastructure, supplying the centres and training new volunteers. So far, UNICEF has managed to reactivate the TNP network in Umm Qasr and, in Baghdad, 100 of the 300 CCCUs are now screening children.

Until the entire system is functional again UNICEF will continue to ensure that PHCs have a steady supply of High Protein Biscuits (HPB) and Therapeutic Milk (THM) to assist children suffering from malnutrition. In the past couple of weeks, UNICEF has delivered 14,000 cartons of HPBs totaling 112,000kgs to assist the recovery of 56,000 malnourished children. Twenty PHCs in Baghdad received between 150 and 200 cartons. Each carton contains 8kgs of HPB. UNICEF has also delivered 2 MT of THM to the Baghdad pediatric hospital. It should be noted that the 167 MT of THM brought into Iraq by UNICEF prior to the war and pre-positioned at hospital level across the country is available and is being used.

Education

Schools have reopened across the country and UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education (MOE) in its endeavors to keep the schools operational.

UNICEF's immediate priority in Education is to prepare the country's children for end-of-year exams to ensure that children do not lose an entire year of school because of the war. The school year has been extended by one month to make up for the two months that children were unable to go to school because of the fighting and the chaos that followed it. To realize this goal, UNICEF is supporting the printing of 15 million exam booklets for the children to write their exams in and will provide 20,000 ballpoint pens to use for the exams. UNICEF is assisting with the printing and production of the exams for all primary and secondary school students by providing computers and photocopiers to MOE. UNICEF is also launching a social mobilization campaign, through media outlets, to inform many parents who may not know that the exams are going ahead.

With regard to the physical rehabilitation of schools, UNICEF is planning on bringing a large number of engineers down from northern Iraq to undertake assessments of 1,000 schools over the next 2 months. Rehabilitation work will follow shortly after pending availability of donor contribution for this purpose, possibly sharing the Bills of Quantity (BOQs) with other entities and partners that would undertake the work.

Child Protection

UNICEF has continued to address the needs of all four orphanages in Baghdad, supplying them with food, basic hygiene supplies, school-in-a-box kits and recreation kits. UNICEF has also provided similar supplies for disabled children in institutions and schools. UNICEF has assisted in repairing generators in these orphanages and provided fuel, while supporting the orphanage staff with a USD 1 a day incentive. UNICEF

has collaborated with Enfants du Monde in these endeavors but as of June 1, Enfants du Monde will continue the support to children in institutions while UNICEF will focus on coordination and facilitation.

UNICEF is working to collect information to identify children newly orphaned from the war. This work is being carried out by communities, institution staff and religious leaders with UNICEF support.

UNICEF, along with Enfants du Monde, has undertaken assessments of all 29 institutions for children in need of protection in the country, including those for orphans, children with disabilities and children in conflict with the law. The assessments have been completed and the final report expected shortly.

To address the reportedly increasing number of street children, UNICEF and Enfants du Monde have partnered up on two projects. Firstly, a team of one headmaster and social workers has been organized to care for the children at the Al-Rahma centre. Enfants du Monde is collaborating with doctors from Architects for People in Need (APN) to make regular visits and give the children checkups. Secondly, a team has been formed to search for the children missing from the centre. While patrolling the streets, this team will also undertake an assessment of the situation of the city's street children, including what their living conditions are like, what they do during the day/night, why they are on the streets, where they came from before they moved to the streets, etc. Currently the team is establishing contacts with the children to build trust and confidence. Soon the team will survey the children more formally to get the information that is required. The survey will facilitate the gathering of valuable information upon which appropriate response programmes to assist these children will be developed. UNICEF is currently seeking a suitable location to establish a drop-in center where street children could receive care, education and psychosocial interventions.

Materials for mine awareness programmes are being developed and field tested with Iraqi parents and children. Awareness sessions are conducted in schools. However, they cannot substitute for the urgent need to clean up as much as possible of the huge amount of live ammunitions littering the country.

IMPACT

Re-activating routine immunization nation-wide can be considered a tremendous achievement. Prior to the war, one out of eight of under five children in Iraq died, mostly of vaccine-preventable diseases as the provision of vaccines was erratic leading to low immunization rates. It is no small feat that the cold chain is now functional and that all necessary vaccines for infants and children are now available in Iraq in such a short time. This represents one important step in ensuring the survival of Iraqi children.

The control of water-borne diseases such as cholera is at the top of UNICEF's concerns for the health of Iraqi children. The tankering of water, provision of ORS, chlorine gas, repair to water pipes and water treatment plants, are compounded with hygiene information and breast feeding promotion campaigns. However, the endemic nature of these diseases in southern Iraq, the summer heat, and present circumstances such as the sheer magnitude of restoring the potable water supply system in a few months suggests that there will be greater than normal outbreaks of diarrhea diseases, including cholera, possibly of epidemic proportions. UNICEF is working with WHO, MoH and OHRA to, as much as possible, limit the extent of outbreaks.

The work currently done through individual contractors to repair water networks including pipes and plants provide much needed quick fixes to systemic problems. The revamping of the water and sanitation system in Iraq will obviously require long term and expansive investments. However, restoring limited quantity of potable water to health centers and households and restoring a cleaner environment free of garbage goes a long way in meeting the needs of the civilian population.

The undertaking of nation-wide assessments in key areas such as water and sanitation, EPI, education, and protection of children will serve as the basis for the development of appropriate responses by UNICEF, local authorities, UN and NGO partners. UNICEF is using its technical knowledge and experience in Iraq for the preparation of Bill of Quantities for rehabilitation of schools and PHCs to share with its partners. This will ensure that the much needed rehabilitation of these spaces for children is prioritized.

In education, the taking of year-end tests is a rite of passage that Iraqi children should not miss. The efforts to be put in the organization of the final tests will be worthwhile as they are part of a return to normal life for children. Moreover, they will encourage children to return to school next school year and they will limit the level of dropout linked to loss of school years.

The three day visit of the UNICEF Executive Director to Iraq (18-20 May) focused on the issues of health, education and protection of children. The Executive Director singled out the courage and dedication of Iraqi

national staff as deserving special recognition. The staff continued working under adverse circumstances and even used their own funds to support the continuation of UNICEF operations during the war.

UNICEF is keenly aware that all the achievements in restoring services for children are nonetheless vulnerable. Security is paramount in protecting these achievements and moving ahead in addressing issues in a more comprehensive manner.

IRAQ

Duration : Dec 2002-September 2003

Contributions/Pledges and Indications

Status as at 30 May 2003

FLASH			
	Indication	Received	TOTAL
GOVERNMENTS			
Japan		15,285,822	15,285,822
United Kingdom		11,146,520	11,146,520
United States		11,000,000	11,000,000
ECHO	-	6,268,462	6,268,462
Canada	-	6,085,910	6,085,910
Australia	-	5,834,420	5,834,420
Netherlands	3,229,279	-	3,229,279
France	2,152,853	-	2,152,853
Norway	-	2,040,100	2,040,100
Italy	656,620	958,023	1,614,643
Belgium	-	1,123,666	1,123,666
Ireland	-	1,087,060	1,087,060
Spain	-	1,076,430	1,076,430
Denmark	-	1,014,510	1,014,510
Korea, Rep	-	1,000,000	1,000,000
Finland	-	753,501	753,501
Sweden	-	600,250	600,250
Luxembourg	430,571	-	430,571
AGFUND	300,000	-	300,000
Greece	200,000	-	200,000
Portugal	-	109,769	109,769
Andorra	65,862	-	65,862
Sub-Total GOVTS	7,035,184	65,384,443	72,419,627
NATCOMS			
Japan NC	-	4,000,000	4,000,000
German NC	-	3,271,810	3,271,810
US Fund	1,480,000	520,000	2,000,000
Australian NC	-	1,139,678	1,139,678
Italian NC	-	1,076,430	1,076,430
French NC	-	861,144	861,144
UK NC	-	782,475	782,475
Netherlands NC	-	484,394	484,394
Hong Kong NC	-	448,603	448,603
Finnish NC	-	325,055	325,055
Korean NC	-	300,000	300,000
Portuguese NC	-	215,286	215,286
Belgian NC	-	215,286	215,286
Slovenian NC	-	114,842	114,842
Norwegian NC	-	27,778	27,778
Sub-total NATCOMs	1,480,000	13,782,781	15,262,781
UN System	-	96,600	96,600
Others	-	415,279	415,279

TOTAL FLASH	8,515,184	79,679,103	88,194,287
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