

UNICEF

Update on Iraq crisis

1- 15 July 2003



Sixth grade students sit for their terminal maths exam at Al-Sharqiya High Secondary School, July 2003.

BACKGROUND

The Iraqi Governing Council convened on 13 July, raising hopes of appointment of Iraqi ministers, constitutional reform and democratic elections. However, the security situation has remained highly unstable, with coalition forces coming under daily attack. Also security incidents in Mosul and Basra near UN facilities have resulted in heightened restrictions on the movement of UN staff in these locations. In the south, there are still reported incidents of trucks being hijacked especially those contracted by humanitarian organizations.

ISSUES

Key obstacles for all sectors

As some areas remain unsafe, UNICEF teams often face difficulties obtaining security clearance to travel outside of Baghdad. As a result, planned activities are slowed down and coverage in assessment and service delivery remains constrained, while beneficiaries eagerly wait for humanitarian assistance.

A lack of transportation and communication still affect implementation across all sectors. Difficulties in communication between the Baghdad-based ministries and their sub-offices in governorates seriously undermines effective and efficient programme delivery. The high cost of moving staff and maintenance teams to project sites continues to be a problem for ministries amidst scarcity of transportation and fuel.

Non-payment of salaries in some areas continue to affect staff attendance at basic services facilities and shortage of electrical power continues to be a prime obstacle to UNICEF programme interventions.

UNICEF PRIORITIES in Past 2 Weeks

Water and Sanitation

- Sustain water tankering operations and deliver water treatment chemicals
- Implement planned rehabilitation of water distribution networks and water and sanitation treatment facilities
- Implement water quality monitoring

Health and Nutrition

- Fully revitalize routine immunization programme
- Control diarrhea
- Revive Mother and Child Health Programme at PHCs

Education

- Support final exams

Child Protection

- Inter-agency child protection assessment in cooperation with NGOs
- Support NGO summer camps by providing recreation kits and MRE materials

ACTION

Water and Sanitation

- Supply of Water and Addressing Water Quality –

Crumbling infrastructure, war damage and looting at water facilities, as well as unreliable power supplies make continued water tankering a priority. Thirty-four districts in Baghdad have been receiving a daily average of 4.7 million liters of clean water through UNICEF tankering. In Basra, where only 50% of the population enjoy tap water, as well as in Um Qasr, Zubair, Safwan, Abul Khassib and Fao, UNICEF continues to deploy over 100 water tankers each day, delivering an average of 3.2 million liters. Since the implementation of the water tankering began, fifteen water bladders have been positioned in the southern governorates and, in July, UNICEF has installed six more water bladders to facilitate water distribution in the southern region. UNICEF has now reached an agreement with an international NGO to tanker in 550,000 liters of drinking water a day over the next 2 months to Muthanna governorate serving 100,000 people.

To tackle water quality problem, one thousand tonnes of alum sulphate have been delivered to Baghdad, along with 300 tonnes of bleaching powder. To ensure adequate distribution throughout the Lower South Zone, UNICEF provides funds to the Basrah Water Directorate warehouse manager to distribute chemicals to Water Treatment Plants (WTP) in Basrah governorate, and to act as a focal point for supply of chemicals for the other three governorates. A total of 700 tonnes of chlorine gas has been distributed to central and southern governorates.

In addition, to help alleviate the continuing shortage of fuel across the country, UNICEF has supported the purchase and transportation of fuel to water treatment plants at a weekly average of 1,500,000 liters

In the southern governorates, training on the use of Portable Water Testing kits was conducted by UNICEF/NCA. Staff from Environment Directorates and Water Authorities from the four southern governorates attended the meeting. Three Portable Testing kits were given to each governorate. Thirteen more kits should soon arrive to Lower South Iraq. This will enable water authorities to conduct more accurate tests on the presence of chlorine in the water and on the bacteria contamination, in order to adjust chemical dosages.

- Rehabilitating the Water & Sanitation Facilities -

New bids have been issued for rehabilitation works in Baghdad. These include the rehabilitation of Baghdad's two major water treatment plants, Al-Karkh and Al-Karama, and the rehabilitation of the city's three main water pumping stations. More than 50 compact units located in Baghdad have also had bids placed for rehabilitation.

While the new rehabilitation projects get ready, work that had already begun has continued on, for instance the rehabilitation of more than 80 sewage pumping stations in Baghdad. UNICEF has also repaired a collapsed sewer line in Jadriya district of Baghdad, as well as 2,000 breaks on water distribution system in the city.

Repair and rehabilitation have also been carried out outside of Baghdad. As described above, water authorities in the southern region use large quantities of water treatment chemicals but this is not sufficient to combat the development of bacteria in the network and high turbidity of water because of the dilapidated infrastructure and decrepit network. UNICEF, thus, has facilitated the creation of nine repair teams in the Water Directorate equipping them with full tool kits. These teams are conducting repairs of water network to increase the number of beneficiaries of tap water. A mapping system of leaks and repairs is also being implemented to monitor the programme. So far, 332 leakages have been identified, and 78 have been fixed.

UNICEF is preparing bill of quantities (BOQs) to rehabilitate 39 water and sewage projects across Babil, Qadisiya, Najaf and Kerbala governorates as well, and 15 water and sewage

projects in Saladdin and Meisan governorates.

The campaign to open blocked sewage system has continued, including at six municipalities in Baghdad, namely; Baladiyat, Karada, Al-Rasheed, Al-Karkh, Mansour and Thawra.

- Cleaning up Neighborhoods -

Garbage collection campaigns continued in Rasafa, Adhamiya and Al-Rasheed municipalities. This campaign has now been expanded to other urban centers of Central and Southern governorates. UNICEF is supporting an assessment aimed at launching the garbage collection campaigns at the level of districts and sub districts in the future.

- Support to Address Lack of Electricity –

Acknowledging that the continuing lack of electricity is a fundamental constraint in reaping the real benefits of efforts made to revive the water and sanitation sector, UNICEF has begun to make interventions in electric power supply system. This has included provision of tools, vehicle repair and support for power substations maintenance teams. UNICEF has asked Iraqi Power Supply Commission to present a plan detailing all required support.

Health and Nutrition

- Immunization, Diarrhoea Control and Safe Motherhood -

UNICEF has placed priority during the past two weeks on full revitalization of the immunization programme. A campaign is due to start in mid July aimed at vaccinating defaulters who could not receive their vaccination schedule between mid March and mid June. UNICEF has continued to support rehabilitation and repair of all cold chain equipment and cold stores in Baghdad and southern governorates. While vaccines were being distributed to all PHC's in central and southern governorates to carry out routine immunization, additional vaccines were procured during this period securing coverage for the coming 3 months. The immunization exercise proceeds not without challenges. In remote rural areas, security situation discourages parents from bringing their children for vaccination and mobile vaccination teams have found families afraid to open their doors to strangers. UNICEF health team continues to explore ways to reach children in remote areas. However, the challenge will exist until the security situation improves.

The second priority during the period has been the implementation of the programme to Control Diarrhoeal Disease (CDD). 1,700,000 million sachets of ORS have been distributed in Baghdad and southern governorates to help combat diarrhoeal epidemic, while equipment was procured to refurbish Oral Rehydration Treatment (ORT) corners in hospitals. On the other hand, focus has been given equally on the training of health workers and newly recruited physicians in CDD and in providing refresher courses for existing medical staff.

The third priority in health is to revive the Mother and Child Health (MCH) Programme at PHCs. MCH programme has been a core component of UNICEF country programme since mid 1980s aimed at reducing maternal mortality. This programme had focused on upgrading the service delivery of health workers and physicians on safe motherhood and on capacity building. In 2002, the MCH programme began to address emergency obstetric care as well. With revitalization of the routine immunization and control of diarrhoea well underway, UNICEF has now moved on to resuming the MCH programme, starting with the training of core trainers, and to be expanded soon to training of health workers at PHCs.

- Nutrition -

In nutrition, efforts continue on revitalization of Community Child Care Units (CCCU). By the end of July, more than 300 additional CCCUs will be operational with more than 1,000 health

workers and volunteers trained to run these CCCUs. In addition to the 1,500 MT of High Protein Biscuits recently distributed to PHCs and CCCUs across the country, an additional 3,400 metric tons have been ordered and in the pipeline. 20 metric tons of Therapeutic Milk is also in the pipeline.

UNICEF's national breastfeeding promotion campaign is fully underway using the mass media and other channels.

As a lead agency in the nutrition sector, UNICEF coordinates with WFP, WHO and Care developing agreements on supplies, programme standards and appropriate geographical coverage.

Education

Despite prevailing insecurity, approximately 5.5 million Iraqi children have successfully taken final exams with the support of UNICEF. Given two months of lost school days during the war and prevailing security conditions, the completion of the final exams can be considered as a major achievement both for the children and their families, as well as for the Iraqi Ministry of Education and UNICEF.

UNICEF rallied behind the MOE to ensure that the exams went ahead and that children did not suffer another ramification of war. UNICEF's support for this milestone included the printing and delivering of 15 million exam booklets, stationery and pens right across the country. UNICEF also provided computers and photocopiers to the Ministry of Education, and produced radio and TV campaigns to get the children back to school in time for the exams.

Assessment of 1,000 schools in centre/South and rehabilitation of 100 schools is in progress. With regard to rehabilitation of schools, as well as in other aspects of primary school education, UNICEF plays a key role in coordination by centralizing and making available data/information to all key partners involved. Efforts are under way, also, to assist the Ministry of Education in restoring the Educational Management Information System (EMIS), which would substantially assist in bring the education process in Iraq back on its feet.

As the situation slowly comes back to normalcy, UNICEF hopes to resume in the near future activities such as Child Friendly Schools, non-formal education for young people, especially girls, as well as Teachers' Training Programmes. These activities will not only be restored, but also expanded in terms of content and coverage.

Child Protection

UNICEF has started establishing a national Psychosocial Programme involving key partners like the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Iraqi Psychiatric Association, and NGO partners, to address children's exposure to increased psychological stress resulting from the war and its aftermath. Psychosocial mass interventions will help children to regain some sense of normalcy and alleviate their distress experienced during the war.

A UNICEF-led nationwide assessment of the child protection sector has begun in earnest with participation of five NGOs. The five NGO teams have begun collecting data on key risks Iraqi children face and the coping mechanism that exist in their families and communities. The information will be compiled throughout the year culminating in a national child protection report at the end of the year.

With the support of UNICEF, street children previously residing in Dar Al-Rahma Center have moved to newly refurbished "Child's Home", receiving improved level of care and psychosocial intervention. In further effort to assist street children, a Drop-in Center has been established

in Baghdad, a first of its kind in Iraq, with the cooperation of NGO. Establishment of Child Friendly Space is underway in Baghdad with cooperation of NGO, with enthusiastic response of the community.

Mine Risk Education (MRE) is ongoing in the southern governorates, and thousands of leaflets, hundreds of posters and "Dangerous Objects Report" forms were distributed to populations in Basrah region.

UNICEF is also supporting summer camps for children from 5 to 18, which will remain open until the beginning of September. With UNICEF providing recreational kits and MRE material, the summer camp sessions will last one week each and will offer hygiene education, MRE, art, handicraft and sport activities as well as recreation to the children.

IMPACT

The final examination exercise that began in late June and was completed this week is a significant milestone in the determination of the Iraqi people to pull themselves out of the impact of war and to focus on their future through continued education of their children. The success at this nationally mobilized exercise will also greatly facilitate further national activities to be undertaken for the children in Iraq.

Routine immunization is well underway and, with active intervention to control diarrhoea, the epidemic seems to have come under control and reached a plateau. It is a sign of incremental accomplishment in reviving the capacity of Iraq's health system, that UNICEF and the Ministry of Health are able to expand its focus to include new priorities such as revitalization of safe motherhood programme.

Despite security restrictions across the country, more projects are being initiated such as in water and sanitation facilities' rehabilitation.

FINANCIAL DETAILS AS OF 15 July 2003.

FLASH APPEAL (April - December 2003)			
Target: USD 182,700,000			
	Pledges	Contributions	Total
United States	-	23,000,000	23,000,000
Japan	-	15,285,822	15,285,822
United Kingdom	-	11,146,520	11,146,520
ECHO	-	6,461,963	6,461,963
Canada	-	6,085,910	6,085,910
Australia	-	5,834,420	5,834,420
Norway	1,655,172	2,040,100	3,695,272
Netherlands	-	3,000,000	3,000,000
France	2,152,853	-	2,152,853
Italy	656,620	958,023	1,614,643
Belgium	-	1,179,328	1,179,328
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	-	460,828	460,828
AGFUND	300,000	-	300,000
Greece	-	200,000	200,000
Portugal	-	109,769	109,769
Turkey	-	100,000	100,000
Slovenia	-	72,143	72,143
Andorra	65,862	-	65,862
Lithuania	-	31,791	31,791
Sub-Total GOVTS	4,830,507	81,498,368	86,328,875
<u>NATCOMS</u>			
Japan NC	-	7,000,000	7,000,000
German NC	-	5,575,950	5,575,950
US Fund	-	2,346,000	2,346,000
Italian NC	-	2,254,286	2,254,286
UK NC	-	1,817,509	1,817,509
French NC	-	1,600,418	1,600,418
Australian NC	-	1,139,678	1,139,678
Canadian NC	-	905,981	905,981
Danish NC	-	590,840	590,840
Netherlands NC	-	484,394	484,394
Spanish NC	-	460,838	460,838
Hong Kong NC	-	448,603	448,603
Belgian NC	-	388,097	388,097
Finnish NC	-	325,055	325,055
Korean NC	-	300,000	300,000
Irish NC	-	250,000	250,000
Norwegian NC	-	227,778	227,778
Portuguese NC	-	215,286	215,286
Austrian NC	-	137,142	137,142
Slovenian NC	-	114,842	114,842
Sub-total	-	26,582,697	26,582,697
<u>NATCOMs</u>			

UN System	-	96,600	96,600
Others	-	430,169	430,169
TOTAL FLASH	4,830,507	108,607,834	113,438,341

Italy - funds (\$656,620) formally pledged, but not yet received.

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