

Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) has become a refuge from Iraq's violence

Over 2 million Iraqis nationwide have been displaced since January 2014

Erbil, 10 December – The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the United Nations (UN) continue to make a concerted effort to track and monitor displacement throughout the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I).

According to the Kurdish Ministry of Planning and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 47 per cent of all Iraq's over 2 million displaced are now in KR-I. The rest of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) are spread throughout Iraq having fled conflicts in Anbar, Ninewa, Diyala and Salah al-Din governorates.

As people continue to flee the violence, the latest count indicates that some 946,266 Iraqis (157,711 families) have sought sanctuary in the region since the beginning of the year. This represents an increase of 53,526 individuals since 1 September.

Through the protection and assistance of the KRG, the majority of these displaced – 60 per cent – are in Dahuk Governorate, followed by Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.

“The hosting of IDPs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq is placing a huge burden both on the region's social services, as well as the Kurdistan Regional Government's financial resources, which is becoming unsustainable. According to the Constitution of Iraq the responsibility for internally displaced populations rests with the Government of Iraq,” Dr Ali Sindi, the KRG Planning Minister, said.

The latest waves of IDPs to the KR-I join about 225,000 refugees to the region escaping the nearly four year-long Syrian civil war. The majority of Syrian refugees in Iraq, about 90 per cent, have fled to the KR-I. Over 20,000 refugees have arrived since 10 October after the opening of the Turkish and KR-I border. There is a concern that the latest influx of Syrian refugees has not had adequate immunization coverage and could import the wild polio virus to the region. The refugee population is also adding to the region's already stretched health infrastructure.

“The Kurdistan Region of Iraq has become a refuge for nearly a million people of the over 2 million people displaced in Iraq in just over 10 months. This is placing a huge burden on the region's host community and severely stretching its social services. The Kurdistan Regional Government's cooperation with the UN and its NGO partners has been invaluable in mitigating this unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Thousands of tons of relief supplies, the deployment of hundreds of humanitarian staff in the most trying of circumstances, could not have been achieved without the commitment and assistance of the authorities,” said Jacqueline Badcock, the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq.

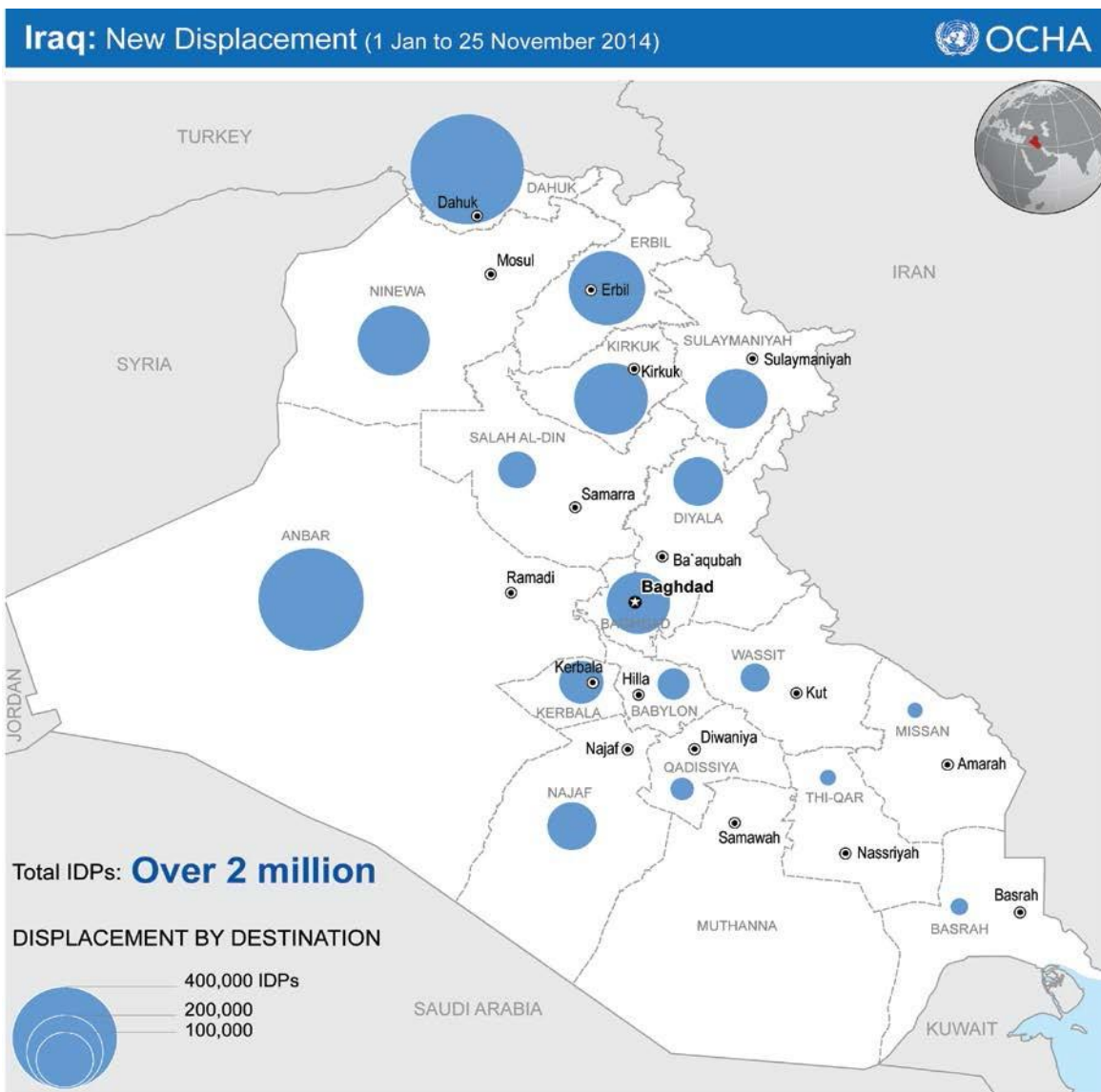
The winter has arrived and is already testing the humanitarian response to the limit, with nearly 50 per cent of the IDP population expected to require some form of medical assistance during the winter months.

The high altitude areas of the KR-I can see temperatures during the winter regularly plummet below freezing. Displaced populations across Iraq are resorting to a variety of shelter solutions, from abandoned and unfinished buildings and religious buildings, which account for 25 per cent of IDP shelter solutions. Many camps have been built and schools evacuated from IDPs. Staying with host families remains the most common arrangement with 19 per cent finding shelter in this regard. Others have rented accommodation, but with their funds rapidly drying up, many are likely to have no option than to resort to inadequate winter shelters.

While the Government of Iraq has committed 12 million litres of kerosene to the northern governorates of Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk for IDPs, much more is needed. Throughout Iraq, 600,000 IDPs are in need of shelter and non-food items interventions combined to cope with the winter weather.

“The KRG and the United Nations developed and implemented the IDP Immediate Response Plan to provide the most vulnerable IDPs with basic assistance, such as shelter. Much has been achieved, but much more remains to be done: the KRG, the Government of Iraq and the United Nations are redoubling efforts to make sure that IDPs in the region are sufficiently equipped and assisted to survive the winter months and this must be done urgently, but resources are limited. We are likely to see a deterioration of the conditions of IDPs in the coming months: we depend on the generosity of the international community for additional funding for the response,” Dr Ali Sindi said.

”This humanitarian emergency is far from over and with the winter months the challenges are becoming greater by the day. The partnership between the Government of Iraq, the KRG and the international community is fundamental to address the response, but this is not enough: fresh funds are now needed to avert this crisis from becoming a humanitarian catastrophe,” said Jacqueline Badcock.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. The data for this map has a limited number of sources, including parties to the conflict. The data has not been independently verified and is subject to error or omission, deliberate or otherwise by the various sources. Due to the fluidity of the conflict, humanitarian access areas are likely to change.

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