

OVERVIEW

IRAQ 2014-2016 / CONFLICT

CRISIS

Conflicts in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq provoking protracted cross-border and internal displacement, **2012-onwards**.

PEOPLE AFFECTED¹

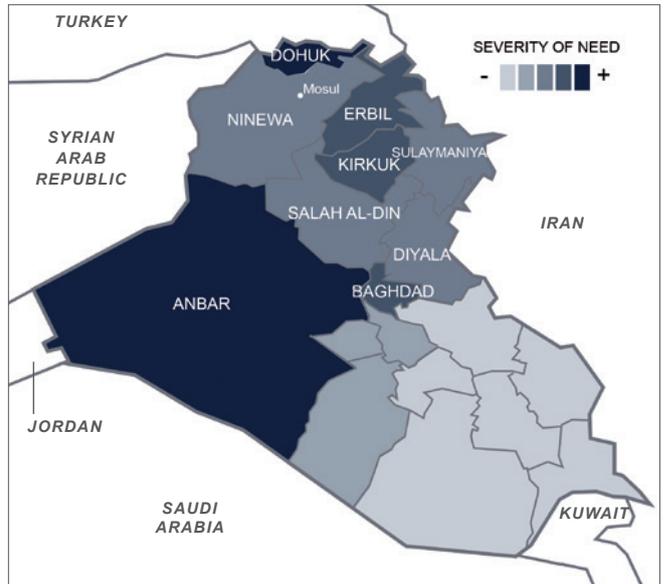
4.4 million in need¹
3.1 million IDPs²
1.3 million returnees²
228,894 Syrian refugees in Iraq (74,984 families)³

PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE RESPONSE⁴ (2014-2016)

597,841 households (NFIs).
201,682 households (Shelter assistance).

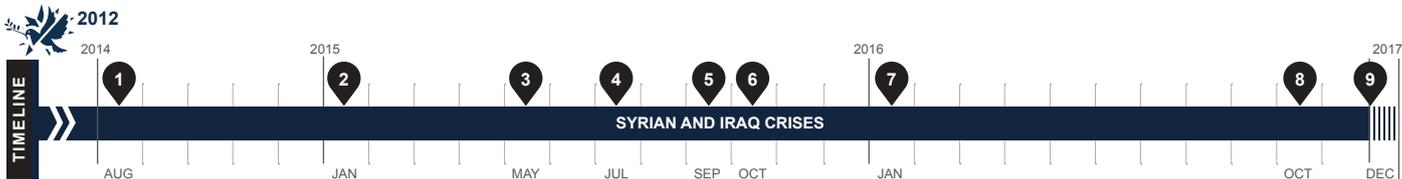
SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSE

The situation in Iraq has been unstable for several years for both the internal conflict and the impacts of the Syrian crisis. The shelter response has taken a range of approaches, from mobile assistance for populations on the move, to a variety of interventions for displaced, host communities, refugee and returnee caseloads in multiple settlement situations, including camps, which have been the preferred form of assistance from the government. Integrated programming, protection and accessibility considerations have become essential in responding to such protracted crisis.



Map based on Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview 2016. Severity of needs has been calculated on: proportion of displaced people compared to the population of Iraq; proportion of displaced people to host governorate population; percentage of displaced people living in critical shelter arrangements.

¹ SHNO / HRP 2017.
² 2017 HRP Advanced Executive Summary, <http://bit.ly/2iCMO24>.
³ UNHCR (30 November 2016).
⁴ Data reported to the Shelter Cluster, as of December 2016.
⁵ Displacement Tracking Matrix factsheet # 10.



- 1 Aug 2014: The UN declares a Level 3 Emergency in Iraq.
- 2 Jan 2015: 2.2 million Iraqis have been displaced from their homes since the start of 2014.
- 3 May 2015: Military operations in Tikrit create some displacement, but also allow returns to commence.
- 4 Jul 2015: The Anbar offensive commences, with 100,000 people displaced over the following six months.
- 5 Sep 2015: Cholera outbreak lasts until November 2015.
- 6 Oct 2015: Heavy rain and flooding creates additional displacement.
- 7 Jan 2016: 3.2 million Iraqis have been displaced since January 2014, 50% in Anbar, Baghdad and Dohuk governorates. 400,000 people have been able to return home. Procurement, planning and prepositioning begin, as plans for the Mosul offensive are shared with the Humanitarian Sector.
- 8 Oct 2016: The Mosul offensive starts; mass displacement prompts humanitarian actors to scale up emergency preparedness and response plans.
- 9 Dec 2016: 121,158 people displaced due to the Mosul crisis by the end of the year, and increasing⁵.

For projects in Iraq or similar approaches see:

Shelter Projects 2011-2012, A.16 and A.17: Lebanon, on shelter repairs/upgrades and sealing off.

Shelter Projects 2013-2014, A.13 and A.14: Lebanon, on sealing off kits; and on multisector, mixed modality interventions.

Shelter Projects 2013-2014, A.9: Iraq, on cash/voucher programmes for shelter maintenance.

Shelter Projects 2015-2016, A.34, A.35 and A.36: Iraq, on repairs of damaged homes and religious buildings; on accessibility upgrades in camps; and on resettlement of IDPs to a planned site.



Camps have been established in Iraq since 2013 to host Syrian refugees.



Sealing-off kits were distributed as one of the shelter response options. IDPs live in a variety of conditions, including in rented accommodation, collective centres (such as schools) and spontaneous, self-settled, sites. Most of the displaced population (both refugees and IDPs) lives outside of camps.

BACKGROUND TO THE CRISIS

Against the background of the ongoing Syrian crisis as it entered its fifth year, Iraq's internal conflict against armed opposition groups has resulted in a protracted crisis that has left almost 3.2 million people displaced. The economic crisis has seen a 40% drop in oil revenues, resulting in the collapse of the social protection floor across the country and seriously compromising the ability of communities to access basic services, maintain incomes and meet everyday needs. Overcrowding, dwindling resources, perceptions of disproportionate assistance, lack of (or competition for) employment opportunities, and continued insecurity threatened to exacerbate already fragile ethnic and sectarian tensions across the country, particularly as sections of the non-displaced population are already in a situation of destitution. By the end of 2016, **it was estimated that over 10 million people in Iraq required some form of humanitarian assistance**, of whom a large proportion were host communities. More broadly, informal settlements increased significantly after 2003, due to a shortage of land allocated for housing, lack of services and infrastructural investment, corruption and poor governance, compounded by significant waves of displacement in 2003 and 2007-2008⁶.

SHELTER STRATEGIES AND RESPONSES

The Shelter and Non-Food Items (Shelter-NFI) Cluster in Iraq was activated in January 2014 to address the IDP crisis, with a

⁶ Over one million people were already displaced during these years, according to the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration.

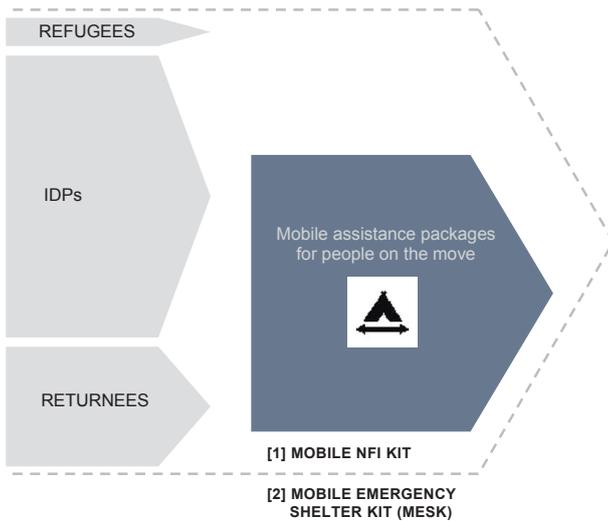
Shelter Sector Working Group already established to focus on the Syrian refugee response. Given that many host communities (particularly in northern Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq) were composed of a mix of vulnerable non-displaced, refugee and IDP families living in similarly substandard shelter and settlement conditions within proximity of each other, the **Shelter-NFI Cluster merged to consider both IDP and refugee responses in this mixed crisis**.

In parallel to allowing longer-term displaced families achieve and maintain adequate shelter, agencies in Iraq have also had to prepare for **regular waves of new displacement across the country**, as the active conflict continued. This required a **phased and incremental approach**, covering emergency, post-emergency and early recovery activities, often in the same locations during the same timeframe. Building on the national strategy set out by the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, the Shelter-NFI Cluster in Iraq set out the response strategy in the following three packages: **1) first-line response** to address the emergency shelter needs of the newly displaced; **2) second-line response** to upgrade shelter for existing IDPs in critical need; and **3) full-cluster response** to maintain shelter for the most vulnerable and support rapid return. However, due to the scale of emergency needs, funding for first-line, and sometimes second-line responses, has had to be prioritized over the longer-term responses. For 2017, the strategic objectives also included: replenish core households items (second-line) and expand shelter and housing options for vulnerable households, according to standards (full-cluster).

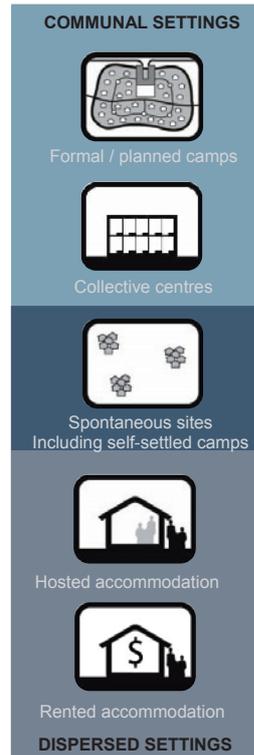


"Transit camps" with tents as a temporary measure were initially established for temporary accommodation of the influx of Syrian refugees. These grew in number and size over time, and structures were partially upgraded. The number of refugees was only a fraction of the total number of people displaced (IDPs and returnees).

POPULATIONS IN NEED



SETTLEMENT OPTIONS



TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

- [A] TEMPORARY CAMPS / TRANSIT SITES
- [B] CONSTRUCTION OF TENT - FREE CAMPS
- [C] UPGRADING OF TRANSIT SITES TO TENT - FREE CAMPS
- [D] CAMP INFRASTRUCTURE

- [3] BASIC NFI KIT
- [4] BASIC EMERGENCY SHELTER KIT (BESK)
- [5] EMERGENCY SEALING OFF KIT (ESOK)
- [6] FULL SEALING OFF
- [7] REHABILITATION AND DURABLE UPGRADE

Diagram summarizing the main types of assistance by settlement typology

MAIN TYPES OF SHELTER ASSISTANCE IN IRAQ	
[1] MOBILE NFI KIT USD 100-120 per kit	Non-shelter-grade plastic sheeting, blankets, Mylar blankets, spoons, forks, cups, bowls, deep plates, basic First Aid Kit, solar lantern, hand-crank torch, collapsible jerry can, duct tape, rope, wet wipes, bag
[2] MOBILE EMERGENCY SHELTER KIT (MESK) USD 60-80 per kit	One woven bag containing: 2 x tarpaulin (shelter-grade); 1 x rope (30m); 1 x wire (5m); 0.5kg x roofing nails; 0.5kg x wire nails; 1 x claw hammer; 1 x shovel; 10 x tent pegs
[3] BASIC NFI KIT USD 220-260 per kit (including supplemental seasonal support)	Shelter-grade tarpaulin, blankets (possible to replace with sheets in summer), mattresses, hygiene kit (30 day), kerosene or gas cooker, kitchen set, solar lantern, water jerry can
[4] BASIC EMERGENCY SHELTER KIT (BESK) USD 80-100 per kit	One woven bag containing: 2 x tarpaulin (shelter-grade); 4 x timber lengths or poles (2.3m); 1 x rope (30m); 1 x wire (5m); 0.5kg x roofing nails; 0.5kg x wire nails; 1 x claw hammer; 1 x shovel; 10 x tent pegs
[5] EMERGENCY SEALING OFF KIT (ESOK) USD 250-300 per kit	Select items and quantities to form a kit within cost envelope in response to needs assessment at each location: (1) Construction materials: tarpaulin and plastic sheeting, square cut timbers, other framing material, plywood sheeting, fixings and rope, sealants and adhesives, metal straps and angles, insulation materials (2) Personal and site safety equipment (3) Tools
[6] FULL SEALING OFF	BoQs and technical design led by agency, implemented by beneficiary families with supervision or by hired contractors. Includes more durable sealing off measures such as insulation, PVC windows and doors, and roof repair
[7] REHABILITATION AND DURABLE UPGRADE	Repair of existing shelters (e.g. unfinished and abandoned buildings) and/or installation of good quality shelter or settlement level interventions that address priority issues identified through technical assessments of shelter safety and adequacy. Security of tenure and scope of works confirmed through signed agreements with legal owner. The Shelter Cluster works very closely with the HLP Sub-Cluster to develop robust guidelines on how to ensure that HLP issues are addressed and do not become barriers for the upgrades. All partners follow the same process.

OUT-OF-CAMP

While the preferred response option for the authorities in Iraq has been the establishment of formal, planned, camps for both refugees and IDPs, 62% of the Syrian refugee population⁶ and 86% of the IDP population⁷ across the country have been living outside of camps within the host community, though there has been insufficient focus on their needs and conditions. As the crisis in Iraq continued, **greater efforts towards supporting self-reliance, sustainability and building resilience has become increasingly urgent.** This had to be addressed within affected populations, as well as at the administrative level through local authorities.

As of December 2016, **45% of the displaced population were in rented accommodation** (including hotels), facing increasing financial pressure, as a result of saturation in the rental market and high rental costs, leading to greater vulnerability – and particularly a risk of eviction – as resources were depleted and families fell into debt. In addition, the ability to rent private accommodation did not necessarily correlate with achieving adequate shelter, with **17% of families living in what was considered “critical shelter” types** – unfinished or abandoned buildings, schools or religious buildings and informal settlements⁸. A main approach of cluster partners working outside of the camp context has been to **improve shelter alongside securing tenure**, while coordinating closely with WASH, CCCM and Cash and Livelihoods actors, to ensure displaced families do not fall into deteriorating shelter and settlement situations over time. Therefore, the shelter response had to adopt a holistic and cross-sector approach towards meeting complex, multi-faceted, needs outside of camp settings, over a longer duration.

- Approaches have included combinations of the following:
- Standardized and complementary **Mobile or Basic Emergency Shelter Kits (ESK)** and **Mobile or Basic NFI Kits**, to respond to anticipated new and large-scale

⁶ 3RP, 2016-2017.

⁷ Shelter-NFI Cluster Factsheet, September 2016.

⁸ See case study A.34 for an example of a repairs project in these shelter types.



Unfinished buildings were occupied by some people. Where agreements were possible with landowners, repairs, light or durable upgrades were made. In some cases, frame tents or sealing-off kits were provided.

displacement, aiming to address emergency, life-saving, needs in a variety of potential transit, non-camp and camp-like settings.

- **Sealing-off shelters** through distribution of sealing-off kits or implemented sealing-off activities. Inter-agency joint methodologies and mobile site monitoring by CCCM teams have been developed to ensure site, shelter & settlement, WASH and protection (including HLP/tenure security) issues are addressed.
- Development of **Emergency Sealing-Off Kits (ESOK)** for rapid distribution in the case of a large influx, returns, or for climatization measures.
- **Repair, rehabilitation and “durable upgrades”** of collective centres and unfinished / abandoned buildings, including the installation of appropriate shelter-level water and sanitation facilities, as part of shelter actors’ responsibility.
- **Phased and incremental approaches** towards collective centres, unfinished and abandoned buildings and spontaneous sites transitioning to more formally managed settlements. These include sealing-off (often non-structural, for climatization purposes), followed by rehabilitation and durable upgrades to ensure protection against climate in the short term, while longer-term shelter needs are addressed comprehensively.
- **Tenure security and incentives** have been integrated through negotiated bi- or tri-partite agreements between beneficiary, land or building owner, and sometimes with local authorities and/or the agency. For example, in exchange for allowing a displaced family to remain in a house with set rent levels and duration, durable upgrading works to the property (such as installing windows and doors, or bathrooms) would be undertaken. Cash-for-Rent and other cash-based programming have also been piloted.
- **Community construction activities**, such as Quick Impact Projects, to support over-stretched public services in host communities with large populations of refugees and IDPs, often engaging Cash-for-Work or skills-building modalities.

WITHIN CAMPS

In some locations, shelters have been established from the start in so-called **“permanent” (or “tent-free”) camps** with concrete slabs, kitchens and bathrooms, or planned as transitional settlements with prefabricated composite panel caravans forming single-family dwelling units. In other areas, where **“transit camps”** were initially established for temporary accommodation of the influx of Syrian refugees, a process of transformation and shelter upgrading has been underway since 2014. Tents as temporary, emergency shelter solutions have been phased out and replaced with more durable shelters.

A key aspect of camp activities has been **installing, upgrading and maintaining camp infrastructure**, from public service facilities, educational buildings and recreation areas, to roads, electrical connections and drainage. Close working relationships with WASH and CCCM actors have been required, in order to coordinate both hardware and software components, with increasing coordination and engagement with local authority counterparts, as management of camps and their associated infrastructure and service provision was handed over to primary duty-bearers. Although rules vary between camps, single-storey construction (masonry or using mixed materials) has been permitted, resulting in the stabilization of the areas as settlements.

SYRIAN REFUGEE RESPONSE

Refugees and IDPs comprised 25% of the total population of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) in 2016. A spike in arrivals of Syrian refugees came in August 2013, with a subsequent influx in late 2014. The majority of Syrian refugees entered the KRI. As of December 2016, around 39% resided in one of ten camps established from 2013, with the remaining 61% of refugees living outside of camps, in host communities. The refugee population remained largely stable, with movement into and out of camps characterizing population movements in some areas, alongside migration to Europe and other countries.



IDP and refugee camps, in some cases, initially consisted of emergency shelter solutions (e.g. tents), which have been gradually replaced by more durable shelters.

Throughout 2015 and 2016, the refugee camps have moved into a period of significantly reduced involvement of humanitarian actors, accompanied by an increased role for the government authorities, through mentorship, capacity development and partnership programmes. For this, a Joint Crisis Centre was established by the Kurdistan Regional Government in 2015, to continue coordination of responses. Enhancement of livelihoods remained a key focus of resilience-building amongst the refugee population and within host communities, which have struggled to cope with the influx of both refugees and IDPs since 2014.

INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING

The needs encountered by the newly displaced, those experiencing multiple and/or prolonged displacement, returnees, host and non-displaced communities have been of large scale and complexity. This has made **necessary to trial ways to effectively integrate sectors**, for reasons of stimulating longer-term impacts, cost-effectiveness and sometimes due to changing security and access situations. Examples include:

- Encouraging the use of **conditional and multipurpose cash-based modalities** for shelter and NFI activities.
- Shelter activities include installation or repair of household-level and shared **water and sanitation facilities**; WASH cluster partners could then more effectively focus on addressing the high needs of community-level networks and municipal systems.
- Development of **referral databases** and staff sensitization across the sectors (particularly between Shelter, WASH, CCCM and Protection), to refer potential issues rapidly to relevant counterparts.
- **Mobile site monitoring** (or CCCM) teams roving between settlements to monitor conditions, identify issues and engage or follow up with responsible agencies.
- **Combining NFI distributions with sealing-off kit distributions**, assessments and information dissemination.
- **Training beneficiary and host community** households in basic safety and construction, using emergency shelter kits and sealing-off kits, complemented by training in fire prevention and fire-fighting by CCCM actors.
- **Hiring local labour and residents** to install shelter and WASH facilities, with training in operation and maintenance to ensure shelters and settlements remain in serviceable condition and to strengthen a sense of ownership.

PROTECTION, ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

The crisis in Iraq has been called “a protection crisis” and required to address the challenges faced by persons with special needs, supporting the security of women and girls within the household and settlement (often in very overcrowded conditions), and ensuring that health and safety considerations are woven through physical interventions, as well as in use and behaviour of beneficiaries. Shelter actors have been active in attempting to mainstream protection through:

- Using sealing-off and upgrading activities for **partitioning, segregation or fire compartmentalization**, to provide more culturally acceptable, safe and secure shelter and settlements.
- Participating in **gender-based violence and safety audits**, to identify critical areas at shelter and site level.
- Awareness-raising campaigns with displaced communities on **electrical and fire safety**, fire prevention and fire fighting.
- **Adapting shelter improvements** to meet both physical and cultural needs, and facilitating the role of carers⁹.
- Developing “**Quality of Life**” indicators, in addition to technical assessments, and furthering **consideration of accessibility** through multiple sectors.
- Designing **mobile, agile and rapid response packages**, to deliver assistance on the move, in temporary situations, scattered across dispersed host communities or wide geographical areas, and in insecure or inaccessible areas.

LOOKING FORWARD

Prior to the start of the Mosul offensive by the Iraqi government on 17 October 2016, partners prepared for the expected displacement by pre-positioning standardized NFI and shelter kits and building camps. Once the offensive started and villages and districts of Mosul became accessible, partners moved in to provide first-line critical shelter and NFI assistance. During this period, temperatures dropped to below freezing, with heavy rain and snow.

As of early 2017, the East of Mosul was largely taken back from the so-called Islamic State, and the focus was shifting to the West, which prompted Shelter partners to pre-position items and prepare camps again, as well as facilitating safe and voluntary return to the regained areas. The Cluster and its partners were also working very closely with the authorities, to ensure gaps were filled and to avoid duplication.

⁹ See case study A.35, on accessibility upgrades in camps