

IRAQ: POTENTIAL HUMANITARIAN IMPLICATIONS

Work in progress - DFID

Objective

This paper outlines:

- i) the coverage and systems of the Oil-For-Food Programme (OFF)¹ in Iraq (as the current conduit for humanitarian supplies and equipment)
- ii) potential humanitarian scenarios in the event of military action against Iraq
- iii) DFID's current knowledge regarding other agency contingency planning.

2. Additional information is included in the following annexes:

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|---|---------|
| • Facts About Oil-For-Food | Annex A |
| • Projected Beneficiary Caseload (Food) | Annex B |
| • Border Entry Points and Current Border Policies | Annex C |
| • Contingency Planning – Summary of activity | Annex D |

3. Please note: Information collection has been constrained by the current restrictions on initiating contact with relevant stakeholders. This paper, therefore, does not provide a detailed evaluation of agency capacity or interagency country/regional contingency planning nor does it assess potential domestic humanitarian response and/or local coping capacities. With this in mind, this paper should be treated very much as work in progress.

Key assumptions:

4. For the purposes of this paper our key assumptions are:

- a) That the UN is able to mount a coherent response to the developing situation in Iraq – before, during and after any conflict;
- b) That the UK role should be to develop and sustain a broad international coalition to deal with the humanitarian crisis in co-operation with the UN and other key international players

5. Assumption a) is credible if the UN has a mandate and active support from its members to do so. The situation might be different in the event of military action not backed by the UN. Assumption b) is in line with current UK humanitarian policy.

¹ Facts about OFF attached at Annex A. In Northern Iraq (NI) alone approximately 60% of the population (2.20 million) are overwhelmingly dependent for their basic humanitarian needs on the OFF programme.

Background

6. Nine United Nations (UN) agencies are involved with the Oil-For-Food Programme (OFF) with the United Nations Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (UNOHC/I) as the coordinating body. UNOHC/I also oversees a UN Joint Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC). In Central/Southern Iraq (CSI) the Government of Iraq (GOI) implements OFF with the UN taking an 'observation' role. In Northern Iraq (NI) the UN implements the programme on behalf of the GOI.²

7. OFF addresses key sectors including food, health, water and sanitation, agriculture, education, telecommunications, transport, power, housing, and mine action throughout Iraq. To date, \$37.3 billion worth of contracts for humanitarian supplies and equipment have been approved under OFF. Supplies and equipment worth almost \$24.6 billion have been delivered to Iraq, while another \$9.4 billion are in the pipeline.

8. The Iraqi population (approximately 26 million) is extremely vulnerable³ and highly dependent on OFF, notably within the food sector. According to the latest OFF 90 Day Report, each Iraqi citizen currently receives a monthly food basket⁴ equivalent to approximately 2,257 Kcal.⁵ The UN reports the monthly food requirement under the OFF programme is 459,986 metric tons. Since the first food arrived in March 1997, \$9.8 billion of foodstuffs and \$1.9 billion of health supplies have been delivered to Iraq.

9. The most significant need resulting from possible external military action against Iraq would likely relate to a disruption of the food pipeline and the resultant vacuum. Large-scale population movement is possible. Disruption of the pipeline would have severe consequences for the Iraqi population and require multi-sectoral (i.e. not just food), large-scale immediate, well-targeted interventions from implementing agencies (a combination of UN agencies, Red Cross movement and NGOs).

Possible scenarios

10. Possible conflict scenarios could include:

Scenario A: External military action in CSI combined with relative stability in other parts of Iraq and in the region.

Scenario B: External military action in CSI combined with resultant unrest in other parts of Iraq (notably internal factional fighting or military attempts by the central government to enter NI).

² The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are the only two agencies that have recognized authority (both by the UN and GOI) to implement programmes outside of OFF in NI.

³ For example, according to the World Food Programme (WFP), malnutrition levels are already high, reaching 30% chronic malnutrition and 7.8% acute malnutrition in the CSI.

⁴ comprising of wheat flour, rice, oil, sugar, tea, milk powder, cereal, pulses and iodised salt.

⁵ Under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 986, each citizen is entitled to 2,400 Kcal per day. The UN has not obtained a clear explanation for this discrepancy.

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11. Military action and the resulting consequences (including disruption of the OIF pipeline) could cause one or more of the following:

- Large-scale civilian loss of life;
- Population displacement both within Iraq and across borders.
- Heightened vulnerability;
- Significant infrastructure and environmental damage;
- Inter-factional clashes within Iraq;
- The potential use or visible threat of chemical and biological weapons by GOI;
- Regional unrest as the GOI retaliates in neighbouring countries.

12. Potential vulnerable populations would include the existing caseload of vulnerable Iraqis, refugees currently living in Iraq and the newly war affected (who could stay at their places of origin, be internally displaced⁶ or become refugees in neighbouring countries⁷). The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates its resultant regional caseload could be between 7-8 million people (breakdown attached at Annex B).

13. Likely Emergency Requirements would include:

- Emergency support for basic needs provision - supplies of food, water, sanitation equipment, winterised shelter, emergency non-food items.
- Establishment of information management and logistics management systems in the region.
- Establishment of humanitarian co-ordination centres.
- Provision of emergency health services (support to the wounded, nutrition, primary health care and public health care services).
- Provision of protection, tracing and family reunification services.
- Public information services.
- Early focus on recovery initiatives, particularly linking into infrastructure and environmental damage, and the impact on livelihoods.

14. In addition, recovery and support to livelihood generation would be integral considerations when planning and implementing any humanitarian crisis response in Iraq.

15. Humanitarian access would probably be severely constrained in the event of open hostilities. The level of humanitarian access would depend on the intensity and length of fighting, GOI entry/travel restrictions, and physical access issues (including poor infrastructure, difficult terrain and mines/UXO). Access could also be affected by potential GOI use of chemical/biological weapons.

⁶ DFID currently has limited information pertaining to likely routes for internal displacement. An ongoing CSI humanitarian situation analysis should provide insight into distribution of vulnerable populations.

⁷ See Annex C for border policies of neighbouring countries and profiles of potential refugee populations.

16. As was seen in Afghanistan, a partial or complete withdrawal of international personnel from Iraq on security grounds would have severe implications for the ability of agencies to reach vulnerable populations and maintain current information on type/scale of needs. But some Iraqi staff from international organisations are likely to continue working under most circumstances.

17. Donors have a number of options for increasing humanitarian assistance. Donors, including UK, could look to provide financial, technical, logistical and other material support through the international system including UN agencies, ICRC, and NGOs. Practical interventions would include relief convoys, water tankering, air-lift, airfield cargo handling, rapid procurement, emergency infrastructure rehabilitation, health sector projects and sector specialist reinforcement. To be quickly effective these activities would require strong and direct management by donors – including UK – as was done during the Kosovo Crisis. Close liaison between civilian aid agencies and the military would be required.

Non military-led changes in the humanitarian situation

18. In the event of Iraqi compliance with UN SCRs there is likely to be increasing public and Parliamentary pressure around the UK position within the UN on sanctions and their humanitarian implications. Whatever the UK policy, clear and agreed lines would be needed. If there is no conflict but the path to sanctions being lifted is not clear, the humanitarian situation may deteriorate further in 2003. Ministers may want to consider what if any change to current humanitarian policy (including allocations) this might warrant.

Agency contingency planning

19. We do not currently have sufficient information to gauge Iraq's domestic capacity to cope with disruption of basic services in CSI and are currently conducting a desktop humanitarian situation analysis to obtain a more complete picture. However, considering potential disruption/destruction of supply networks as well as limited local coping mechanisms, vulnerable populations would most likely be highly dependent on an international response for their immediate humanitarian needs.

20. Nine UN agencies, INGOs (three in CSI and approximately 20 in NI), the ICRC and the Iraqi Red Crescent currently have country programmes in Iraq. Agency geographical coverage and in-country capacity vary widely.

21. UN contingency planning is taking place and a UN Interagency Contingency Plan is being drafted. WFP, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have either developed country/regional contingency plans or are in process.

22. WFP would be a key actor in any response. It has a country programme based in Baghdad and a Regional Bureau in Cairo (from which a regional response would be coordinated). Although WFP capacity in NI is established, more information is required regarding WFP's capacity to respond in CSI as well as the status of its regional stockpiles/supply pipelines.

23. International NGO contingency planning is in the early stages and is primarily proceeding on an agency-by-agency basis. Various INGOs are participating in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Committees run by the de facto authorities in NI.

24. The International Red Cross Movement has held internal discussions on contingency planning. Iraq, Iran and Turkey Red Crescent Societies have experience in disaster response and are well placed with networks throughout each country. They have begun stockpiling and other preparedness measures.

25. CHAD have not received all regional or country contingency plans and are therefore unable to assess the status of planning or readiness of many agencies to address potential needs. (Summary of current knowledge on agency contingency planning attached at Annex D).

Overstretch of the international humanitarian system

26. It should be noted that the International Humanitarian System is becoming overstretched. Key staff from numerous agencies have already been redirected to strengthen ongoing operations in Southern Africa. Many agencies remain heavily engaged in Afghanistan as well as in other countries affected by natural disasters and complex emergencies globally. A large-scale regional response to a crisis in Iraq would certainly test the already stretched human resource and monetary capacity of many agencies and donors.

Finance

27. Any large-scale UK humanitarian response would require additional funding from the Central Reserve. DFID's existing small (£6m) humanitarian programme in Iraq is fully committed; available humanitarian funds within CHAD are likely to be grossly insufficient and most of DFID's contingency reserve has already been allocated.

CHAD activities to date

28. CHAD response to date has consisted of on-going monitoring and information gathering within the current restrictions on initiating contact with relevant stakeholders. In order to obtain a more complete picture of the current conditions in CSI, we are also undertaking a short-term desktop study of the humanitarian situation.

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29. If restrictions on external contacts are removed, CHAD will obtain a fuller picture of regional inter-agency contingency planning and agency capacities. Additionally, CHAD could investigate and, where appropriate, activate support to potential UN agency specific activities, including deployable Humanitarian Information Centres (HICs) and the UNJLC.

30. As a preparedness measure, CHAD OT is currently accelerating its refitting after Afghanistan with respect to deployment capability (modules) and is bringing CHAD OT up to its full authorised strength of 30.

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FACTS ABOUT OIL-FOR-FOOD (OFF)

SCR 986 initially permitted up to US\$2 billion worth of Iraqi oil to be sold every six months, a portion of the proceeds of which were to be used to provide humanitarian supplies to Iraq. The ceiling on the amount of oil Iraq could export was later modified and then completely lifted under SCR 1284.

The revenue from the oil sales is deposited into an escrow account from which money can be drawn to purchase items listed in a distribution plan which have been approved for export to Iraq by UNOIP. Revenue from the OFF programme is allocated according to the following breakdown:

- 72% of OFF funds the humanitarian programme of which 59% is allocated to CSI and 13% to NI;
- 25% is for the UN compensation fund for Kuwait (this sum comes out of the allotment from OFF for CSI);
- 2.2% to cover the costs of UN programme administration;
- 0.8% is allocated to UNMOVIC's work.

The programme runs in 180-day cycles called 'phases' and is subject to renewal by the Security Council at the end of each cycle. The programme is currently in its XII phase. In CSI the GOI implements the programme with the UN taking on an 'observation' role. In NI the UN implements the programme on behalf of the GOI. There are nine agencies implementing OFF: WHO, UNICEF, UNOPS, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), WFP, the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Settlements Programme (HABITAT), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is also operational throughout Iraq but does so through its Country Programme independent of OFF.

In NI UN agencies implement their programmes through international contractors, local contractors, local NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs). UN agencies cannot implement OFF through International NGOs. International NGOs are not licensed to implement programmes in NI.

Due to the size of the OFF programme and the limited number of available implementing partners in NI, local capacity to implement has been essentially saturated. Many local NGOs have been created by the Kurdish Authorities as a means of accessing OFF funds rather than engendering the humanitarian ethos.

The humanitarian component of the OFF programme brings in goods for humanitarian programmes. There is no cash component or local procurement (including local contracting of services) allowed under SCR 986. Essentially the programme as it was envisaged was a commodity driven process.

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There are many elements to the OFF programme. One of the main inputs is the import and distribution of the food basket, comprised of wheat-flour, rice, oil, sugar, tea, milk powder, cereal, pulses and iodised salt, which provides approximately 2300 kcal per day to every resident of NI.

AGENCIES OPERATING IN IRAQ

Northern Iraq

1. UN Agencies
 - FAO
 - HABITAT
 - ITU
 - UNDP
 - UNESCO
 - UNICEF
 - UNOPS
 - WFP
 - WHO
2. INGOs (20 operating without license)
3. NGOs
4. International Red Cross Movement
 - ICRC
 - Iraqi Red Crescent

Central/Southern Iraq

1. UN Agencies
 - FAO
 - HABITAT
 - ITU
 - UNDP
 - UNESCO
 - UNICEF
 - UNOPS
 - WFP
 - WHO
2. INGOs
 - CARE (most significant presence)
 - Premiere Urgence
 - Enfants du Monde
 - INGO's trying to establish presence include OXFAM, ACF/MDM and Islamic Relief
3. NGOs
4. International Red Cross Movement
 - ICRC
 - Iraqi Red Crescent
 - IFRC (based in the Regional Delegation in Amman)

PROJECTED BENEFICIARY CASELOAD (FOOD)

The current planning figures for WFP beneficiary caseload as stated in WFP Sub-Regional Contingency Plan Middle East June 2002 Update are as follows (this document provided in confidence):

Caseload Scenario A

| COUNTRY | CASELOAD |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| IRAQ CENTER & SOUTH | |
| FOOD INSECURE | 4,080,000 |
| IDPS AND REFUGEES | 191,200 |
| WAR AFFECTED | 1,533,087 |
| SUBTOTAL | 5,804,287 |
| IRAQ NORTH | |
| FOOD INSECURE | 580,000 |
| IDPS AND REFUGEES IN IRAQ | 636,500 |
| SUBTOTAL | 1,216,500 |
| TOTAL IRAQ SCENARIO A | 7,020,787 |
| REFUGEES OUTSIDE IRAQ | |
| JORDAN | 10,000 |
| SYRIA | 10,000 |
| TURKEY | 100,000 |
| IRAN | 150,000 |
| SUBTOTAL | 270,000 |
| GRAND TOTAL SCENARIO A | 7,290,787 |

CaseLoad Scenario B

| COUNTRY | CASELOAD |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| IRAQ CENTER & SOUTH | |
| FOOD INSECURE | 4,080,000 |
| IDPS AND REFUGEES | 191,200 |
| WAR AFFECTED | 1,533,087 |
| SUBTOTAL | 5,804,287 |
| IRAQ NORTH | |
| FOOD INSECURE | 580,000 |
| IDPS AND REFUGEES IN IRAQ | 736,500 |
| SUBTOTAL | 1,316,500 |
| TOTAL IRAQ SCENARIO B | 7,120,787 |
| REFUGEES OUTSIDE IRAQ | |
| JORDAN | 50,000 |
| SYRIA | 20,000 |
| TURKEY | 500,000 |
| IRAN | 500,000 |
| SUBTOTAL | 1,070,000 |
| GRAND TOTAL SCENARIO B | 8,190,787 |

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BORDER ENTRY POINTS

The following table indicates potential border entry points:

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Entry Points</i> |
|----------------|---|
| Jordan | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Official border (main road Baghdad-Amman) |
| Syria | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abu Kamal• Al Tanaf• Fishkhabour• Al Yaaroubiya |
| Turkey | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Silopi• Van |
| Iran | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parvizkhan• Shushmee (Kermanshah)• Seranband• Bashmagh (Kurdestan) |

Source : IASC-RG on Preparedness and Contingency Planning
Mission to the Middle East (Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt), 5-17 June 2002

CURRENT BORDER POLICIES

| Country | Open border policy | Profile/Nationality of Likely Refugee Movement |
|----------------|---|---|
| Jordan | No | Iraqi |
| Syria | Yes | Iraqi Kurd |
| Turkey | No | Iraqi Turkoman & Kurd |
| Iran | No (potentially border camps or cross border) | Iraqi Shia |

Source : IASC-RG on Preparedness and Contingency Planning
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CONTINGENCY PLANNING – SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITY

Inter-agency work

- Inter-agency disaster preparedness group consisting of OCHA, WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF. Undertaking several preparedness missions to the region to discuss inter-agency co-ordination and identify measures to augment inter-agency preparedness for a sub-regional crisis.

OCHA

- OCHA recently hosted an inter-agency Contingency Planning Meeting in New York (17-18 September, tbc) and has advised that a joint UN Contingency Plan is being drafted. Information sharing meetings with interested donors will be held once documents are finalised.
- OCHA is assessing the feasibility of setting up Humanitarian Information Centres (HICs). Current thinking indicates that the WFP/VAM Regional Office in Cairo could host an OCHA HIC. UNHCR Cairo could host a joint HIC.

WFP

- On-going Contingency Planning work taking a regional focus and concentrating on the effects of a disruption in the food pipeline. Preliminary costing equivalent to USD 305 million based on a caseload of 8.2 million in need of assistance.

UNHCR

- Leading multi-sectoral inter-agency Contingency Planning exercise in Iran. Plan submitted to the Government of Iran for approval. UNHCR has not had access to preparedness plans of Iranian authorities. As a result it is not known how well the International agency planning process dovetails into the efforts of national authorities.
- UNHCR Contingency Plans also produced for Turkey, Syria and Jordan.

UNICEF

- In January 2002 UNICEF undertook a regional Contingency Planning exercise with participation from country offices in Iran, Turkey, Jordan and Syria.
- UNICEF is currently strengthening its emergency response capacity in Iran through the deployment of additional staff, due to undertake assessment missions in Western Iran.

NGOs

- Iraq Platform meetings, on-going.
- DEC teleconference call to discuss Contingency Planning efforts with its partners (September 20).
- Contingency Planning efforts of the NGOs are in their early stages and are currently being taken forward on an individual agency basis. Key activities include assessment of the potential to pre-position emergency stocks, visits to the region to identify operational bases, and assessments of regional capacity to cope with a new refugee crisis.
- In NI inter-agency emergency planning work is being taken forward in conjunction with de-facto authorities through the Emergency Preparedness and Response Committees.

International Red Cross Movement

- Reports indicate that the ICRC is developing contingency plans for the region.
- The Federation is currently considering building its regional capacity (based in Amman).
- The Iraqi Red Crescent has begun stockpiling in six regional warehouses across Iraq, reviewing its telecommunications systems and distributing generators to branch offices.
- Both the ICRC and the Federation report ongoing 'discussions' with Iraq Red Crescent to strengthen their planning and implementation capacity.

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