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DFID Department for
International
Development

Submission to Ministers

To : 1. Barbara Hendrie (Agreed)
2. Michael Anderson (Agreed - there
is clearly demonstrated humanitarian
need, combined with effective delivery
agencies to ensure high impact for DFID
funding - MA 13 March)
3. PS/ Secretary of State

From:

Date: 12 March 2008
CC: Submissions List
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MENAD Iraq Team

IRAQ: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Issue

1. How to respond to the latest international appeals and humanitarian needs in Iraq and the region.

Recommendation

2. We recommend that the Secretary of State approves a £15 million contribution, as follows:
 - £5 million (\$9.9 million) to the \$265 million UN-led Consolidated Appeal (CAP) for humanitarian assistance inside Iraq.
 - £7 million (\$13.9 million) to the \$99 million International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appeal for humanitarian assistance and protection work inside Iraq.
 - £3 million (\$5.9 million) to UNHCR's \$261 million Supplementary Appeal for displaced Iraqis in Iraq and across the region (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey).
3. We also recommend that the Secretary of State approves a draft press release (**Flag A**) announcing the total of £15 million for humanitarian funding.

Communications and parliamentary handling

4. There is considerable parliamentary and public interest; we have had nine PQ's about Iraqi refugees and internally displaced people since January 2008.

Timing

5. Routine, though a reply is needed in time to disburse this financial year.

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Information

Humanitarian needs inside Iraq

6. Humanitarian needs inside Iraq have risen sharply over the last two years. There are no accurate figures, but the UN estimates that 2.2 million people are internally displaced, mainly in response to violence and intimidation. The UN World Food Programme estimates that 4 million people do not have adequate or reliable access to food. Health, water and sanitation services have been in decline since the 1980s, and have been put under increased pressure by recent violence. An estimated 50% of doctors have left Iraq as a result of threats, kidnappings or generalised violence. Only 40% of Iraqis have a reliable source of safe drinking water. Displaced Iraqis are particularly vulnerable, often living in poor and overcrowded conditions. They also face difficulties registering to receive food rations at their new location.
7. While the Government of Iraq recently announced a \$40 million contribution to the UN-led Consolidated Appeal, it is doing little to actively support vulnerable people inside the country. The Government is struggling to deliver basic services to the population at large. The Ministry of Migration is formally responsible for managing the Government's humanitarian response but lacks the resources and political authority to provide real leadership.
8. Humanitarian programmes in Iraq are mainly delivered by a combination of international organisations – notably the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the UN – and national and international NGOs. However, lack of access to vulnerable populations due to security remains a key constraint in these operations. There are few international organisations with the ability to access all areas of Iraq.

Humanitarian needs amongst Iraqis displaced in the region

9. There are no accurate figures, but the UN estimates 2 million Iraqis are displaced across the region. The majority live in Syria (up to 1.4 million) and Jordan (up to 500,000). UNHCR has so far registered close to 250,000 Iraqi refugees throughout the region, including 165,000 in Syria and 52,000 in Jordan. Apart from Egypt and Turkey, host countries in the region have not signed the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention. Iraqis in these countries are therefore not technically 'refugees', although UNHCR registration gives them some level of protection.
10. Needs among the Iraqi 'refugee' population vary. Most people live in urban areas and are dispersed in host communities; there are no large refugee camps in Syria or Jordan. Officially, Iraqi refugees are not allowed to work in either Syria or Jordan, and as a consequence assets and savings are running out. This has triggered a limited-scale return of some 46,000 people from Syria at the end of last year. However, UNHCR has advised against mass returns given the poor security situation inside Iraq.

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11. Iraqis displaced in the region are mainly supported by UNHCR as the lead international agency. In addition, the World Food Programme (WFP) provides food assistance, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) provides education and nutrition support, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) supports provision of healthcare. The Governments of Syria and Jordan have agreed, with UN support, to allow Iraqis access to their health and education systems.

DFID's humanitarian response to date

12. Since 2003, DFID has contributed over £130 million in humanitarian assistance for Iraq, including refugees in the region. During calendar year 2007, DFID contributed £15 million to various international agencies. The bulk of our support has been to meet needs inside Iraq, as we assess these to be greatest.
13. The breakdown of our support in 2007 was as follows:
 - £10 million to the ICRC for delivery of humanitarian assistance and medical equipment, monitoring of compliance with International Humanitarian Law, and rehabilitation of water and sanitation structures.
 - £1 million to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for mapping of internal displacement and associated needs in Iraq.
 - £1 million to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for setting up an Iraq coordination office in Amman.
 - £3 million to UNHCR for refugee registration and delivery of humanitarian assistance for Iraqis displaced in Iraq and the region.
14. The UK also contributes to the European Commission's support to the Syrian and Jordanian health and education sectors. Last year, the EC allocated €9 million to strengthen Syrian health systems in areas with large Iraqi populations. The EC also allocated €26.7 million for Jordan in 2007 to help the Jordanian education sector accommodate Iraqi refugees. DFID has been lobbying the EC to increase the humanitarian assistance it provides for operations inside Iraq.
15. Given the scale of needs and continued parliamentary and public interest, it is important that DFID matches the levels of humanitarian assistance we provided last calendar year. We are able to provide a full £15 million contribution now as a result of a £7 million increase in our aid framework for 2007/08. This has been confirmed by Finance and Corporate Performance Division. We recommend dividing the £15 million between three appeals: The UN-led Consolidated Appeal for Iraq, ICRC's 2008 Appeal for operations in Iraq, and UNHCR's Supplementary Appeal for Iraqi refugees.

Why fund the UN-led CAP?

16. International agencies are slowly improving the effectiveness of their operations in Iraq. DFID has been lobbying the UN in particular to improve coordination and avoid too many individual, overlapping appeals. The launch in February of the UN-led Consolidated Appeal (CAP) for 2008 represents a major step forward. It is the best analysis we have seen to date on the humanitarian needs in Iraq, and the first appeal covering both UN agencies and NGOs.

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17. The CAP requests \$265 million to cover urgent needs in health care, water/sanitation, shelter, protection, education and food assistance. It includes 15 NGO projects and 10 UN agencies as well as an 'Expanded Humanitarian Response Fund' (ERF) for small scale, urgent interventions. The UN has committed to conducting a mid-term review of the CAP in the summer.
18. We have lobbied the UN hard for a consolidated appeal. A DFID contribution to the CAP at this time would make us one of the first donors to support the appeal. We believe our contribution should be significant, as the needs inside Iraq are large. A sizeable contribution will also underline our support for a more coordinated UN operation in Iraq.
19. The Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, David Shearer, has requested that donors earmark their support within the CAP. We would allocate our contribution so as to cover a reasonable range of agencies and sectors:
 - £2 million to the UN Children's Fund's (UNICEF) programme covering primary health care, nutrition and immunisation, water/sanitation/hygiene and protection for women and children.
 - £1.5 million to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for their data collection, returnee monitoring and assistance programme.
 - £1.5 million for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) programme, of which £1 million will be for the Expanded Humanitarian Response Fund (ERF).

Why fund the ICRC Iraq appeal?

20. The ICRC is a key partner and one of the few international agencies able to access most areas of Iraq, including some of the most volatile provinces. They currently have 72 expatriates and 515 national staff in the field. Last year, DFID was the largest donor, covering 25% of the ICRC appeal.
21. This year ICRC has launched a \$99 million appeal. They plan to expand the geographical scope of their programme, providing assistance for up to 100,000 vulnerable households. In addition, they will provide equipment and medical supplies on a regular basis to treat 400,000 patients in 20 primary health care centres in areas with high concentrations of internally displaced people. Other activities include rehabilitation of water and sanitation structures, tracing of missing family members, and monitoring compliance with International Humanitarian Law across Iraq.
22. Wherever possible, the ICRC monitors the impact of their programmes themselves. Where this is not possible for security reasons, they will recruit consultants who have not been involved with the implementation of their projects, to do this for them. The ICRC is not able to participate in the CAP, given their need to remain independent. However, they will coordinate operations with other humanitarian actors in Iraq. (The ICRC has requested that we do not publicise our support to them).

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23. Given the needs inside Iraq, and the access of ICRC to most areas of the country including monitoring visits by international staff, we recommend a sizeable contribution (£7 million) to their 2008 appeal.

Why fund the UNHCR Supplementary Appeal for 2008?

24. UNHCR is leading the international response to the Iraqi refugee situation in the region, but has so far only received limited support its 2008 appeal. UNHCR has developed good relationships with host countries, including the Governments of Jordan and Syria. It remains the UN agency with the largest programme and capacity to respond to the needs of externally displaced Iraqis.
25. UNHCR's 2008 Supplementary appeal for Iraq and the region requests \$261 million dollars, of which \$137 million is for Iraqi refugees and host communities in Syria, \$54 million is for operations in Jordan, and \$44 million is for Iraq. Their activities include refugee registration and the delivery of financial, material and legal assistance to internally and externally displaced populations.
26. In Syria, UNHCR is assisting 145,000 refugees with food and non-food items. UNHCR is increasing its outreach efforts this year to register more refugees. A more accurate record of refugee numbers and the degree of vulnerability will lead to a more efficient response. The UNHCR does much of the procurement of assistance items themselves to ensure accountability and value for money. The UNHCR Appeal also includes support for strengthening the health and education sectors in Syria and Jordan more generally, which has a positive impact on Iraqi refugees who use these services.
27. We recommend providing the same level of support to UNHCR in 2008 as in 2007. A DFID contribution of £3 million now would demonstrate our commitment to supporting Iraqis displaced in the region as well as inside Iraq. We are not aware of other contributions to the UNHCR appeal to date, apart from the US which has pledged \$150 million in support for humanitarian operations in Iraq and the region, including the UNHCR appeal.

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