

Joint NGO Statement on Unmet Humanitarian Needs of Anbar IDPs

28th April 2014

As the Anbar crisis enters its sixth month, we are facing the increasing possibility that this crisis is no longer a temporary downturn, but has evolved into a protracted crisis with no end in sight.

While the conflict in Anbar persists, the needs of the vulnerable population in and outside of the governorate continue to increase. According to official figures released by Iraq's Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) and by provincial and local councils in Anbar, it can be estimated that as of April 16th, more than 425,000 civilians have been displaced due to the intense fighting and military operations in Fallujah and Ramadi. More than 70% of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain inside Anbar itself, and are often being displaced multiple times due to rising violence in their new areas of residence.

There are twice as many Anbar IDPs as Syrian refugees residing in Iraq, yet they receive less than half of the media and donor attention that goes to their Syrian neighbors. NGOs and UN agencies continue to work hard to attend to the tremendous needs for some of the most basic relief items such as water, food supplies, bedding, clothing and shelter. However, this vital work is highly constrained by the difficult conditions that humanitarian workers face when trying to gain access to some of the most vulnerable populations, in addition to the constraints in available resources and funding. Having to work with unconfirmed information from the field and unsecure access routes increases the need for coordination and for the establishment of partnerships between International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and National Non-Governmental Organisations (NNGOs). This is absolutely necessary in order to assess and prioritize IDP needs and to provide a collaborative humanitarian response inside Anbar.

In the framework of the Strategic Response Plan, the UN launched an emergency appeal for USD103 million in March but while the number of IDPs has been on the rise, only USD 9 million had been raised at the beginning of April. If more money does not come soon, humanitarian operations in Anbar might have to shut down in the near future. Several NNGOs also detailed to NCCI their progressive reliance on donations from wealthy local businessmen and the help of community volunteers in order to bridge the gaps now appearing in their resources. Given these sizeable security and financial constraints facing humanitarian efforts, it is surprising that more international attention has not been directed towards the unmet needs of those affected by the current situation in Anbar.

We, as NGOs working in Iraq, therefore urge the international community to provide greater attention to the worst humanitarian situation faced in Iraq since 2006. Without real, effective, and timely international support for solutions to stop the conflict, and without increased funding for humanitarian aid, our activities will not be sustainable. Unless the international community steps up its support for humanitarian aid provision in Iraq and urges the government of Iraq to do so as well, we will fail to help relieve the impact of this crisis, with catastrophic consequences for Iraqis. We have to act and we have to act now.

Signatories:

**Danish Refugee Council, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Muslim Aid, Mercy Corps, NCCI,
Norwegian Refugee Council, Relief International, Save the Children, War Child UK**

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