



Farmers in Mwelha village (Babil) are trained to install and maintain drip irrigation systems provided by the ICRC

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

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IRAQ: PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL AREAS REMAIN AMONG THE MOST AFFECTED

People in rural areas are severely affected by years of violence, lack of economic perspectives and appropriate infrastructures. Returnees still struggle to resume their agricultural production. The ICRC helps needy farmers increase their production in a sustainable way.

Al Harooja village, in Diyala governorate, 110 kilometres north-east of Baghdad, is home to some 120 farmers. Like most people in the area, they rely mainly on farming and livestock breeding to earn a living. However, as a result of the sectarian violence of 2006 and 2007, many of them temporarily left their villages and abandoned their lands. Since then and also due to ongoing violence, their economic situation has steadily worsened.

"To reduce their production costs, farmers started to resort to negative coping mechanisms such as selling part of their livestock, reducing the acreage under cultivation, and using low-quality fertilizer," said Mudhar Ma'an, an ICRC field officer in Diyala governorate. "In addition, traditional irrigation systems no longer provide enough water for the crops, especially during the summer season."

In September, the ICRC began providing and installing drip irrigation systems in Al Harooja with the aim of making vegetable farming more productive. Twenty-five farmers,

identified as especially needy and heading households that number over 175 people in all, were trained by the ICRC in cooperation with the local department of agriculture to install, use and maintain the drip systems.

"The new systems will enable the farmers to increase their monthly income by 50 per cent by expanding their production of vegetables even as they reduce their use of fertilizer by 26 per cent," said Mr Ma'an. "Because the systems require 67 per cent less water, the risk of losing an entire harvest in a severe drought is considerably diminished."

In Iraq, the ICRC helps needy residents and returnees in rural areas affected by violence to improve their livelihoods. In particular, it distributes fertilizer, seed and greenhouses to needy farmers and helps them to increase their agricultural production by upgrading irrigation canals and de-stoning farmlands. With the help of Iraqi veterinarians, the ICRC also vaccinates tens of thousands of animals to protect them from diseases.

Since September, the ICRC has provided some 900 farmers in Diyala, Baghdad, Wasit, Babil and Anbar governorates with drip irrigation systems benefiting over 6,300 people. The programme will continue over the coming months, and will include Kirkuk and Ninawa governorates in 2012. Since the beginning of the year, almost 42,000 people, mainly in rural areas of central Iraq, have been given a boost by ICRC livelihood support projects.



ICRC

ASSISTING HEALTH-CARE FACILITIES



Makhmour - The ICRC provides on-site support to eight primary healthcare centres in Iraq

Health-care services in some rural and conflict-prone areas struggle to meet the needs of the civilian population. The ICRC provides on-site support for selected primary health-care centres, helping renovate premises and train staff.

Between September and November, the ICRC:

- fitted 457 patients with prostheses and 1,562 patients with orthoses at 11 ICRC-supported centres throughout Iraq;
- completed courses on strengthening emergency services in Iraq: in all, 900 health personnel from 91 hospitals in 18 governorates were trained, and the training materials have been handed over to the Iraqi and Kurdistan ministries of health;
- provided on-site support for eight primary health-care centres in the governorates of Ninawa, Kirkuk, Diyala, Babel, and Shanifiya, serving approximately 260,000 people.

For the past 12 years, the ICRC has also been providing patients at Al-Rashad psychiatric hospital in Baghdad with occupational therapy support and supplies.

PROMOTING COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

Reminding parties to a conflict of their obligation to protect civilians is a fundamental part of the ICRC's work. The organization also endeavours to promote and strengthen knowledge of international humanitarian law by organizing presentations and training for military and police forces, prison staff, students and professors.

Between September and November, the ICRC held five information sessions for 390 members of the Iraqi army, the Assayesh and the Peshmerga. Training sessions were also organized for Iraqi army personnel involved in the development of military doctrine, and legal advisers at the Ministry of Defence.

VISITING DETAINEES

Between September and November, ICRC delegates visited detainees held by the Iraqi authorities and various branches of the Kurdish regional government in 51 places of detention in 13 governorates. They monitored the conditions in which detainees were being held and the treatment they received, and shared confidentially their observations and recommendations with the detaining authorities. During this period, the ICRC provided over 2,600 detainees with such items as books, hygiene articles, clothing, shoes and towels.

The ICRC helps restore and maintain ties between people held in detention facilities and their families. Between September and November, 541 Red Cross messages were exchanged between them, in Iraq and abroad. The ICRC responded to 2,871 enquiries from families seeking information on detained or missing relatives. The voluntary repatriation of one released detainee took place under the auspices of the ICRC.

PROVIDING CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Access to clean water remains a challenge in much of Iraq. ICRC engineers repair and upgrade water, electrical and sanitary facilities, especially in places where violence remains a concern and in rural areas, to improve the quality of services provided in communities and health-care facilities.

Between September and November, the ICRC regularly delivered water by truck in Al-Sadr City, Baghdad governorate, for nearly 8,400 displaced people. With the support of, the authorities concerned, it also:

- upgraded 12 water facilities in Baghdad governorate, serving 850,000 people;
- upgraded Ana water treatment plant, Anbar governorate, serving about 350,000 people;
- improved the quality of drinking water produced at Al Qadissiya water treatment plant, Baghdad governorate, serving about 230,000 people;
- upgraded Al Zahra boosting station, Khalis district, Diyala governorate, serving about 135,000 people;
- upgraded Al Faris compact water purification unit, Al-Sadr City, serving about 61,500 people;

- upgraded Hatra water treatment plant, Ninawa governorate, serving about 42,000 people;
- installed a compact unit in Jbela area, Mahwil district, Babil governorate, serving about 15,100 people;
- installed a compact unit in Al Hawraa camp housing displaced people, Wasit governorate, serving about 4,000 people;
- upgraded a water desalination unit at the Iraqi Red Crescent branch in Basra, serving about 3,000 people;
- upgraded two compact units in Missan governorate, serving about 2,500 people in total;
- built a new limb-fitting centre in Nasiriya, Thi Qar governorate, intended for about 500 patients;
- renovated and expanded Rabea primary health-care centre, serving more than 120 patients a day;
- built a drug dispensary in Mosul al-Jimhury Hospital, Ninawa governorate, which has 520 beds;
- completed the training of 92 hospital maintenance staff, and of 28 operations and maintenance staff at a water treatment plant in Baghdad;
- upgraded the visiting area and installed water purification units in Al Adala prison, Baghdad.

CLARIFYING THE FATE OF MISSING PEOPLE



In October, the Iraqi authorities, with ICRC support and in coordination with Kuwaiti and British representatives, pursued their efforts in Thi Qar governorate to locate remains of Kuwaiti missing persons, to no avail. In November, a joint Iraqi-Iranian mission was conducted, under ICRC auspices, in Al Fao peninsula, in southern Iraq. The mission resulted in the recovery of the remains of 103 soldiers killed during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War. The exhumed remains of three Iranian soldiers were handed over to the Iranian authorities in December.

In September, the ICRC organized a one-week training course for 19 experts involved in the recovery of mortal remains.

CLEARING UNEXPLODED MUNITIONS

Iraq is littered with more than 25 million mines, unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war, in particular along the borders with Iran and Turkey. As a result, the safety and livelihood of more than 1.6 million Iraqis are at risk. Over the last 18 months, the ICRC has removed over 2,500 pieces of unexploded ordnance from 42 danger areas in 21 communities inhabited by more than 23,000 people.

Between September and November, ICRC mine clearance specialists destroyed 427 pieces of unexploded ordnance in 14 areas where more than 12,000 civilians had been directly exposed to danger.

BRINGING AID TO PEOPLE FACING HARDSHIP



Zafraniya (Baghdad) - Internally displaced people receive food, hygiene and essential household items from the ICRC

Many people in Iraq are still struggling to earn a living and support their families. Between September and November, the ICRC:

- organized a cash-for-work scheme involving upgrades to 120 kilometres of irrigation canals and 71 hectares of agricultural land, benefiting over 8,700 displaced people and residents of Baghdad, Diyala and Dohuk governorates;
- vaccinated more than 107,000 animals belonging to over 2,200 farmers in Tilkaif and Makhmour districts, Ninawa, and Khanaqin district, Diyala;
- distributed 114 tonnes of fertilizer to 325 needy farmers in Khalis and Muqdadiya districts, Diyala;
- awarded 244 grants to disabled people and women heading households in Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninawa, Sulaimaniya, Basra and Missan, enabling them to start small businesses and regain economic self-sufficiency;
- distributed food and hygiene parcels to nearly 1,300 people displaced by shelling in the northern border areas;
- distributed food and hygiene items to almost 3,900 orphans, women heading households and displaced people in Kirkuk and Mosul;
- distributed aid to 453 women heading households in Falluja district of Anbar and Baghdad, and helped them register with the State welfare allowance system.

MISSION

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and

strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.



ICRC

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC) HAS BEEN WORKING IN IRAQ CONTINUOUSLY SINCE 1980 RESPONDING TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF ARMED CONFLICTS

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