

IRAQ: HELPING WOMEN TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR DESTINIES

All too often, women are among the most vulnerable people in Iraq. But Iraqi women are strong. They take on responsibility for their families or they devote their lives to alleviating the suffering of others. The ICRC is supporting them in their struggle for a more dignified future.



Summaya offers psychological support to a child affected by cancer.

SUMMAYA, PSYCHOSOCIAL WORKER IN BAGHDAD

Summaya provides psychosocial support to cancer patients at Central Paediatric Teaching Hospital in Baghdad. "Through my work with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS), I can help the most vulnerable groups in the community. I strongly believe in the principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, such as humanity, which are reflected in the sympathy and empathy I show towards the patients I work with", she stresses. Driven by her strong desire to help people in need, Summaya started to work with the IRCS four years ago, as a volunteer, taking part in one of the first-aid courses organized by the ICRC for IRCS staff and volunteers.

ZAINAB, "ABAYA" MAKER IN MISSAN

Zainab lost her left leg in 2003 after a rocket hit the market where she was shopping. Then her husband abandoned her because of her disability. Left alone with a 12-year-old daughter, she had to rely on her parents, who have also been struggling to make ends meet. Recently, her daughter had to drop out of school to take care of her mother. The



Parzhen helps disabled patients to learn how to live with an artificial limb.

PARZHEN, PHYSIOTHERAPIST IN ERBIL

"I like my job and I'm proud of what I'm doing," says Parzhen. She is 23, and has been working at the ICRC-run physical rehabilitation centre in Erbil since April 2010, where she helps people resume a normal life after they receive an artificial limb. "Physical disability doesn't make anyone less human," she insists. A graduate of the Medical Institute in Erbil, Parzhen treats 30 to 35 women and children a week. She helps them learn how to walk with an artificial leg or to use a wheelchair. "There's the humanitarian aspect of my work, and helping patients live the fullest lives they can is highly rewarding. On top of that, the working atmosphere here is very friendly. I hope to continue supporting disabled people for a long time."



Eman proudly runs her shop, to make a living for her family.

EMAN, SHOPKEEPER IN BAGHDAD

A mother of seven children, Eman became a widow when her husband was kidnapped and killed in 2007. Even though she received substantial support from her community and got a job as a cleaner, she experienced the typical economic and social difficulties that women face when left alone to raise their children and feed their families. "I want my children to be educated and get good jobs," she says. With the help of the ICRC, she opened a small shop in Al Dora, where she moved after the death of her husband.

"I can now meet the basic needs of my family," she explains. "I feel more independent and I don't have to rely completely on my parents and parents-in-law. With the money she earns, she hopes to give her children the future she has been dreaming of for them. "I want to tell all women heading households that even if you end up alone, you have to trust yourselves that you can support your family."



ICRC

VISITING DETAINEES

Between January and February, ICRC delegates visited people held by the Iraqi authorities and various branches of the Kurdish regional government in 41 places of detention in 12 governorates. They monitored the conditions in which detainees were being held and the treatment they were receiving, and shared their observations and recommendations with the detaining authorities in confidence. During this period, the ICRC provided over 500

detainees with such items as books, hygiene articles and clothing. The ICRC helps restore and maintain ties between people held in detention facilities and their families. In January and February, nearly 300 Red Cross messages were exchanged between them, in Iraq and abroad. The ICRC responded to some 2,000 enquiries from families seeking information on detained or missing relatives.

BRINGING AID TO PEOPLE FACING HARDSHIP

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

- enabled upgrades to 71 kilometres of irrigation canals and 257 hectares of agricultural land by organizing cash-for-work schemes, benefiting 1,800 displaced persons and residents of Ninawa, Dokuk and Diyala governorates;
- awarded 98 grants to disabled people and women heading households in Kirkuk, Diyala, Ninawa, Sulaimaniya, Basra and

Missan, enabling them to start small businesses and regain economic self-sufficiency;

- distributed essential hygiene and household items to 8,000 displaced persons in Diyala, Baghdad, Salah Al-Din and Babil;
- distributed aid to 407 women heading households in Baghdad and Anbar governorates, and helped them register with the State welfare allowance system;
- distributed 67 greenhouses to needy farmers in Babil governorate.

CLEARING UNEXPLODED MUNITIONS



Missan - ICRC weapon contamination specialists remove unexploded ordnance in areas where civilians are at risk

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. These devices are putting the safety and livelihoods of more than 1.6 million Iraqis at risk. Since the launching of its weapon clearance activities in July 2010, the ICRC has removed over 2,500 pieces of unexploded ordnance from 42 danger areas in 30 communities inhabited by more than 25,000

people. Between January and February, eight ICRC mine clearance specialists were certified as EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) Operators Level 1. They removed 44 pieces of unexploded ordnance and inspected 5,000 square metres of potentially contaminated land in one community where more than 1,500 civilians have been directly exposed to danger.

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 continues and in rural areas.

In January and February, the ICRC regularly delivered water by truck to nearly 8,500 displaced people and residents in Al-Sadr City, Baghdad governorate. With the support of the authorities concerned, it also:

- repaired the water pumping station in Sader Al-Mahawil, Babil

governorate, which serves about 120,000 people;

- supplied and installed a new compact unit in Jbela, Babil governorate, serving 15,100 people;
- improved the treatment process and the pumping capacity of the Al-Hurr compact unit complex, Karbala governorate, serving 27,000 people;
- rehabilitated Madain 3rd primary health-care centre in Baghdad governorate, serving 250 patients a day;
- trained almost 90 water operators and technical personnel who work at water treatment plants in Missan governorate.



Erbil – In Sufaya, the ICRC renovates infrastructures to provide the population with clean water.

ASSISTING HEALTH-CARE FACILITIES

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

Between January and February, the ICRC:

- treated over 5,000 patients and manufactured nearly 3,000 devices at 12 ICRC-supported centres throughout Iraq;

- held a war surgery seminar in Najaf, and an emergency room trauma course in Basra, attended by almost 80 Iraqi doctors;
- provided on-site support for eight primary health-care centres in areas including Ninawa, Kirkuk Diyala, Babil, and Diwaniya, 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



Babil - An ICRC staff member explains the organization's mission and activities to community elders.

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

Between January and February, the ICRC held three information sessions for 121 members of the Iraqi army and the Peshmerga, plus a training session for 16 formation commanders.

CLARIFYING THE FATE OF MISSING PEOPLE

In January and February, a joint Iraqi-Iranian mission went to Al Fao, southern Iraq. The mission was headed by the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights, and took place under ICRC auspices. The mission's efforts made it possible to locate and exhume the remains of 178 soldiers killed during the 1980-1988 war and the remains of 21 Iranian soldiers were handed over to the Iranian authorities on 22

February. The ICRC also chaired two meetings in Kuwait on clarifying the fate of people still unaccounted for as a result of the 1990-1991 Gulf war. The ICRC continued to expand the capabilities of national organizations, arranging for three employees of the Medico-Legal Institute in Baghdad to attend the conference of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.

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 AND VIOLENCE

For more information visit www.icrc.org or contact us at iqs_com@icrc.org or bag_com@icrc.org
For media inquiries: ICRC Iraq: +962 777 399 614 or +964 790 1916 927; ICRC Geneva: +41 79 536 92 57