

Thursday 25 January 2007

**Countries receiving Iraqi refugees need support to cope with crisis: UNHCR**

STOCKHOLM – The situation in the countries receiving large numbers of Iraqi refugees is getting increasingly difficult and is of great concern, the UN Refugee Agency said on Thursday. At the same time UNHCR reiterated an appeal to the private sector for contributions for its relief work in Jordan and Syria.

"The burden on host communities and governments in the region is enormous. It is essential that the international community support humanitarian efforts to help the most vulnerable people," António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said.

UNHCR and its partners estimate that out of a total population of 26 million, some 1.7 million Iraqis are currently displaced internally and up to 2 million others have fled to nearby countries, mainly to Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon.

The government of Jordan has already said it is unable to cope with the problems created by the influx of Iraqi refugees. Jordan is particularly worried about the security and the strain on its public services.

Local authorities estimate the number of Iraqis living in Jordan to be between 500,000 and 700,000. While many of them were displaced before 2003, increasing numbers of Iraqis are now fleeing escalating sectarian, ethnic and generalised violence, and UNHCR expects the number to rise even further.

High Commissioner António Guterres acknowledged the problems facing Iraq's neighbors while launching an appeal earlier this month for US\$ 60 million to fund UNHCR's work to help the hundreds of thousands of uprooted Iraqis.

The UN Refugee Agency is now working to ensure effective protection and assistance for up to 200,000 of the most vulnerable Iraqis in nearby countries, nearly all of them in urban areas such as Amman and Damascus.

UNHCR also welcomes donations from private individuals, organizations and companies wanting to support its relief operations.

Those who wish to give their support can do so by donating money to the following bank accounts and marking their contribution "UNHCR Iraqi Situation":

UNHCR Regional Office  
For the Baltic and Nordic  
Countries

External  
Affairs Unit  
[www.unhcr.dk](http://www.unhcr.dk)

Tel (46 8) 457 48 80  
Fax (46 8) 457 48 87  
[www.unhcr.se](http://www.unhcr.se),

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Denmark: Nordea 2040-0001 443 194

Finland: Sampo 800013-223667 (via Suomen Pakolaisapu)

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Donations can also be made online at: [www.unhcr.org/donate](http://www.unhcr.org/donate)

For more information, please contact spokesperson Paal Aarsaether, UNHCR Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic Countries, in Stockholm on tel. +46 8 457 48 86 or e-mail [aarsaeth@unhcr.org](mailto:aarsaeth@unhcr.org).

After office hours and on weekends, UNHCR's Press and Information officer on duty in the Baltic and Nordic countries can be reached on mobile +46 70 899 0169.

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