



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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EU announces increased humanitarian assistance to Iraqis fleeing from violence

The European Commission will increase its humanitarian assistance to Iraq by €5 million following the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people as a result of the recent attacks perpetrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other armed groups. This additional funding will bring the total 2014 humanitarian funding for Iraq to €12 million.

Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, said, *"This fresh wave of violence has terrible consequences for vulnerable children, women and men. Our new funding comes on top of €3 million I announced in March during my visit to Baghdad and the Kurdish region of Iraq in anticipation of a further deterioration in the country's security. It will help relieve suffering by providing basic services and assistance. I appeal to all parties to the fighting to ensure the safety of civilians and to respect the role of humanitarians working in dangerous conditions."*

The recent spate of displacement was precipitated by the capture of the city of Mosul by ISIL and attacks by armed opposition groups targeting the governorates of Ninewah, Salah Al-Din, Diyala and Al Anbar. Up to half a million people have been displaced from Ninewah so far, adding to the more than 400 000 persons already displaced in the last six months.

The full scale of the humanitarian disaster is as yet unclear, as many displaced families are currently being hosted by relatives and communities of origin. The number of displaced people is expected to rise due to the severity of the fighting. The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) has been preparing its response to new waves of displacement and this additional funding is a further step in that process.

Background

The city of Mosul (Ninewah governorate) fell under the control of armed opposition groups (AOGs), including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). All hospitals in Mosul, with a population close to two million people, are reported to be closed. Humanitarian organizations have also relocated from Mosul.

A large-scale humanitarian crisis is developing. The UN has reported casualties in the hundreds and massive displacement of the population. Violence continues to cause displacement across central and north Iraq, causing the numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) to rise. Current estimates suggest that up to 500 000 people have been displaced since January. An estimated 300 000 IDPs have arrived in Erbil and Dohuk in recent days.

Humanitarian agencies continue to organise assistance for internally displaced families. Although conditions for IDPs hosted by local communities are stable for the moment, there

are concerns about the capacities of Kurdish communities who already host a large number of IDPs from Al-Anbar as well as Syrian refugees.

On the disputed borders between Ninewa and the Kurdish governorates, food shortages on the local markets as well as the disruption of electricity and water services are being reported. Humanitarian agencies continue working on the establishment of temporary sheltering in Shikan and Khabat, and the distribution of food and emergency items. The restoration and strengthening of health services in the areas where IDPs are gathering is a priority.

The European Commission's total humanitarian support to Iraq since 2007 amounts to almost €145 million, including support to Syrian refugees in Iraq. Its humanitarian programme responds to the needs of internally displaced Iraqis in the country and Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Lebanon with €7 million in 2013 and €12 million in 2014.

For more information

The European Commission's humanitarian aid and civil protection:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

Commissioner Georgieva's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/georgieva/index_en.htm

Emergency Response Coordination Centre:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/thematic/ERC_en.pdf

Contacts :

[David Sharrock](#) (+32 2 296 89 09)

[Irina Novakova](#) (+32 2 295 75 17)

For the public: **Europe Direct** by phone **00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11** or by [e-mail](#)