

# CRS Report for Congress

## Iraq: United Nations and Humanitarian Aid Organizations

Updated July 18, 2008

Thomas Coipuram, Jr.  
Information Research Specialist  
Knowledge Services Group



Prepared for Members and  
Committees of Congress

# Iraq: United Nations and Humanitarian Aid Organizations

## Summary

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) overthrew Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 and a permanent (four-year) Iraqi government is now running the day-to-day operations of the country. However, coalition forces continue to combat insurgents and are attempting to improve the security situation in Iraq. According to the Department of Defense, since early 2007 overall violence is down as much as 80%, as a result of the Administration's "troop surge" strategy.

Elections were held in Iraq for a transitional National Assembly on January 30, 2005, and a permanent constitution was adopted on October 15, 2005. On December 15, 2005, elections were held for a permanent (four-year) national assembly, and Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was named and won approval of a 37-member cabinet on May 20, 2006. According to U.S. officials, the Iraqi government needs to increasingly focus on provision of public services, which is a growing source of public complaint, and on achieving political reconciliation among the relevant parties involved.

This report provides an annotated list of U.N. agencies, key U.S. government agencies, and a sample list of major international and U.S.-based aid organizations that are providing humanitarian assistance to Iraq. Internet links to the U.N. agencies and humanitarian aid organizations are also provided. For detailed discussion on humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in Iraq, see CRS Report RL31833, *Iraq: Reconstruction Assistance*, by Curt Tarnoff; CRS Report RL31339, *Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security*, by Ken Katzman; CRS Report RS21968, *Iraq: Government Formation and Benchmarks*, by Ken Katzman; CRS Report RL33936, *Iraqi Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons: A Deepening Humanitarian Crisis?*, by Rhoda Margesson, Andorra Bruno, and Jeremy M. Sharp; and CRS Report RL32105, *Iraq: Foreign Contributions to Stabilization and Reconstruction*, by Christopher M. Blanchard and Catherine Marie Dale.

This report will be updated as events warrant.

## **Contents**

Introduction .....	1
U.N. Agencies in Iraq .....	1
Key U.S. Government Agencies .....	4
Selected Major International and Nongovernmental Organizations — Iraq .....	6
Selected U.S.-Based Humanitarian Aid Organizations — Iraq .....	7

# Iraq: United Nations and Humanitarian Aid Organizations

## Introduction

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)<sup>1</sup> overthrew Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 and a permanent (4 year) Iraqi government is now running the day-to-day operations of the country. On January 30, 2005, elections were held in Iraq for a transitional National Assembly and a permanent constitution was adopted on October 15, 2005. On December 15, 2005, elections were held for a permanent (4 year) national assembly, and on May 20, 2006, Prime Minister designate Nouri al-Maliki was named and won approval of a 37-member cabinet.<sup>2</sup> However, even with some relative success recently as a result of additional U.S. forces ("troop surge") to help stabilize Baghdad, coalition forces continue to combat insurgents and are attempting to improve the security situation in Iraq.<sup>3</sup> Also, the current refugee crisis and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Iraq have become another major challenge for the Iraqi government and its neighboring countries. It is estimated that there may be 2 million Iraqi refugees who have fled to Jordan, Syria, and other neighboring states, and approximately 2 million Iraqis who have been displaced within Iraq itself.<sup>4</sup>

This report provides an annotated list of U.N. agencies, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), key U.S. government agencies, and a sample list of major international and U.S.-based aid organizations that are providing humanitarian assistance to Iraq.

## U.N. Agencies in Iraq

Following is a list of U.N. agencies currently providing humanitarian assistance to Iraq. Internet addresses of the U.N. agencies as well as links to their websites on Iraq (if available) are provided.

---

<sup>1</sup> Operation Iraqi Freedom began on March 19, 2003 to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. The regime fell on April 9, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> See CRS Report RS21968, *Iraq: Government Formation and Benchmarks*, by Kenneth Katzman.

<sup>3</sup> See CRS Report RL31339, *Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security*, by Kenneth Katzman.

<sup>4</sup> See CRS Report RL33936, *Iraqi Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons: A Deepening Humanitarian Crisis?*, by Rhoda Margesson, Andorra Bruno, and Jeremy M. Sharp.

**U.N. Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)**

[<http://www.uniraq.org/>]

The UNAMI was mandated by the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1500<sup>5</sup> on August 14, 2003, as a mission to oversee the U.N. Oil for Food program handover on November 21, 2003. Currently, this mission helps direct the United Nations' future role and the various humanitarian and reconstruction programs in Iraq, and this site is a Web portal for U.N. agencies and NGOs working in Iraq.

**U.N. Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in Iraq**

[<http://ochaonline.un.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1768>]

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is a stand-by fund established by the United Nations to enable more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance to those affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts, including Iraq.

**U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

[<http://www.unhcr.org/country/irq.html>]

The agency's primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees, and to coordinate efforts to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide.

**U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq**

[<http://www.iq.undp.org/>]

UNDP [<http://www.undp.org/>] is the United Nations' global development network, helping countries build solutions to the challenges of democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, energy and environment, information and communications technology, and HIV/AIDS. The United Nations Development Programme has been engaged in Iraq since 1976.

**World Food Programme (WFP) Country Involvement — Iraq**

[[http://www.wfp.org/country\\_brief/indexcountry.asp?country=368](http://www.wfp.org/country_brief/indexcountry.asp?country=368)]

The WFP [<http://www.wfp.org/>] was set up in 1963 and is the U.N. agency that combats global hunger and supports economic and social development in countries of need.

**World Health Organization (WHO) Iraq Country Page**

[<http://www.who.int/country/irq/en/>]

WHO [<http://www.who.int/en/>] is the United Nations' specialized agency for health.

---

<sup>5</sup> For full text, see

[<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N03/467/78/PDF/N0346778.pdf?OpenElement>].

**UNICEF: Iraq**

[<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/iraq.html>]

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) [<http://www.unicef.org/>] is an advocate for the protection of children's rights and is tasked to help children living in poverty, reduce childhood death and illness in developing countries, and protect children in the midst of war and natural disasters.

**U.N. E-MINE Electronic Mine Information Network — Iraq Update**

[<http://www.mineaction.org/country.asp?c=14>]

Following the invasion in 2003, a National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) was established in Baghdad, with regional mine action centers (RMAC) in Erbil in the north and in Basra in the south. *Landmine Monitor* reports, *Mine Action* projects and related documents concerning Iraq are available at this site.

**U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP)**

[<http://www.unep.org/>]

The UNEP works to promote the future of the earth's environment. Its activities cover a wide range of environmental issues, including the promotion of environmental science and information and dealing with environmental disasters and emergencies. The UNEP in 2005 issued a report, *Assessment of Environmental 'Hot Spots' in Iraq*, concerning highly polluted sites in Iraq.<sup>6</sup>

The following two U.N. resources and two independent organizations provide background information and major documents pertaining to Iraq, and current news and information concerning the U.N.'s and the humanitarian community's role in Iraq:

**ReliefWeb Iraq**

[<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc104?OpenForm&rc=3&cc=irq>]

This ReliefWeb Iraq page contains the latest major documents and background information on humanitarian issues pertaining to Iraq.

ReliefWeb [<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc100?openForm>] is a project of the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and serves the information needs of the humanitarian community.

**U.N. News Centre: Iraq**

[<http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusRel.asp?infocusID=50&Body=Iraq&Body1=>]

The Iraq page provides current news stories and information on the United Nations' role and work in Iraq.

---

<sup>6</sup> U.N. Environment Programme, *Assessment of Environmental 'Hot Spots' in Iraq, 2005*. Available online at [<http://new.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=457&ArticleID=5023&l=en>]. See also the 2003 UNEP report, *Desk Study on the Environment in Iraq*. Available online at [[http://www.unep.org/pdf/iraq\\_ds\\_lowres.pdf](http://www.unep.org/pdf/iraq_ds_lowres.pdf)].

The *U.N. News Centre* [<http://www.un.org/News/>] is a U.N. news service that provides the latest daily news covering the United Nations, as well as links to other U.N. news resources.

### **NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq (NCCI)**

[<http://www.ncciraq.org/>]

The NCCI is an independent initiative launched by a group of 14 NGOs in Baghdad in April 2003 to promote information sharing and coordination among NGOs and to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian action in Iraq at a national level. The NCCI is currently comprised of a network of about 80 International NGOs and 200 Iraqi NGOs.

## **Key U.S. Government Agencies**

Following is a list of key U.S. government agencies that are currently involved in providing humanitarian assistance to Iraq. Internet addresses of these agencies as well as links to their websites on Iraq (if available) are provided.

### **U.S. Embassy in Iraq**

[<http://iraq.usembassy.gov/>]

This website provides current information for Iraq, which includes “Key Embassy Links” and other useful information concerning Iraq.

### **Office of International Information Programs (IIP)**

[<http://www.america.gov/>]

The IIP, part of the Department of State, is the principal international communications service for the State Department.

See “Middle East & North Africa” for latest news, including articles and fact sheets concerning Iraq.

[<http://www.america.gov/world//mideast.html>]

### **Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)**

[<http://www.state.gov/g/prm/>]

The PRM Bureau of the Department of State coordinates U.S. international population policy and promotes its goals through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. It works closely with the U.S. Agency for International Development, which administers U.S. international population programs. PRM also administers and monitors U.S. contributions to international and nongovernmental organizations to assist and protect refugees abroad. Current activities in Iraq are profiled in “Highlights.”

### **Agency for International Development (USAID)**

Assistance for Iraq

[<http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/>]

USAID is an independent federal government agency responsible for providing economic and humanitarian assistance around the globe. Information is provided on all USAID assistance programs by country and region. The Iraq pages focus on reconstruction and aid programs.

**USAID's Iraq Community Action Program (CAP)**

[<http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/accomplishments/cap.html>]

The Iraq CAP is a community-led-development and reconstruction program whose main objective is to directly engage the Iraqis in rebuilding the country. Its goals include democracy building at the grassroots level, restoration of basic services, economic stabilization, youth employment, conflict resolution, and reconciliation.

**USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)**

[<http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/updates/index.html>]

The OFDA focuses on disaster prevention, preparedness, and delivery of disaster relief. This site provides weekly updates of humanitarian and reconstruction in Iraq.

**Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA)**

[<http://www.coe-dmha.org/HARIraq.cfm>]

The COE-DMHA, called COE for short, issues the *Iraq Humanitarian Assistance Report* every week, which provides an overview of the current humanitarian situation in Iraq as well as in-country humanitarian assistance information by region and by neighboring countries' humanitarian activities and preparations.

The COE [<http://www.coe-dmha.org/>] is a small U.S. Department of Defense organization whose focus is to improve civil-military coordination internationally, particularly for humanitarian assistance, disaster management, and peacekeeping.

**Department of Agriculture**

[<http://www.fas.usda.gov/icd/iraq/iraq.asp>]

United States Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) page, *Rebuilding Agriculture and Food Security in Iraq*, describes the work of FAS personnel on provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in Iraq.

**Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC)**

[<http://www.ustreas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/index.html>]

The OFAC of the U.S. Department of the Treasury administers and enforces economic and trade sanctions based on U.S. foreign policy and national security goals against targeted foreign countries, terrorists, international narcotics traffickers, and those engaged in activities related to the proliferation of weapons of mass



destruction. The OFAC also issues licenses for American NGOs planning to provide humanitarian assistance independently to the Iraqi people.

See OFAC's Sanctions Program and Country Summaries — Iraq Sanctions: [<http://www.ustreas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/programs/iraq/iraq.shtml>]

**The Defense Security Cooperation Agency's (DSCA) Middle East South Asia Division (MSA)**

[[http://www.dsca.mil/programs/Country\\_Programs/msa.htm](http://www.dsca.mil/programs/Country_Programs/msa.htm)]

The mission of the MSA Division is to provide policy oversight, guidance, planning, coordination, and direction for the execution of security cooperation programs. Programs include sale, lease, commercial contracts and drawdown of defense articles and services to foreign governments, including Iraq.

## **Selected Major International and Nongovernmental Organizations — Iraq**

Following is a list of major international aid organizations that may possibly provide humanitarian assistance to Iraq. Internet addresses of the humanitarian aid organizations as well as links to their websites on Iraq (if available) are provided.

**Human Rights Watch (HRW) — Iraq**

Current information on Iraq: [<http://hrw.org/doc/?t=mideast&c=iraq>]

HRW Publications on Iraq: [[http://hrw.org/doc/?t=mideast\\_pub&c=iraq](http://hrw.org/doc/?t=mideast_pub&c=iraq)]

Background on War in Iraq: [<http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/iraq/>]

HRW World Report 2007 (*Iraq*)

[<http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/iraq14705.htm>]

HRW [<http://www.hrw.org/>] is an NGO dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world.

**International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Iraq**

[<http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwplist74/F8EB853A6796F202C1256B6600601EDD>]

The ICRC [<http://www.icrc.org/>], established in 1863, is an impartial, neutral, and independent international organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance.

**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) —  
*Where We Work: Iraq***

[<http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/cn6.asp?countryid=87>]

The IFRC [<http://www.ifrc.org/>] is the world's largest humanitarian organization, and its mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity.

**International Organization for Migration (IOM) — Iraq**

[<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pid/423>]

The IOM [<http://www.iom.int/jahia/jsp/index.jsp>] is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental partners. The IOM was established in 1951 and currently has 120 member states and offices in more than 100 countries.

**Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS)**

[[http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_profile.pl?iqprofile.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_profile.pl?iqprofile.pdf)]

The IRCS, founded in 1932, works closely with the ministries of health, education, foreign affairs, communication, and industry in relief and emergency assistance programs.

**Oxfam International** — *Rising to the Humanitarian Challenge in Iraq*, July 2007,

[[http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingpapers/bp105\\_humanitarian\\_challenge\\_in\\_iraq\\_0707](http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingpapers/bp105_humanitarian_challenge_in_iraq_0707)]

Oxfam International [<http://www.oxfam.org/>] is a confederation of 12 organizations working together in more than 100 countries to find lasting solutions to poverty, suffering, and injustice.

**Refugees International** — Iraq

[<http://www.refintl.org/content/country/detail/2939/>]

Refugees International [<http://www.refintl.org/>] provides humanitarian assistance and protection for displaced people around the world and works to end the conditions that create displacement.

## **Selected U.S.-Based Humanitarian Aid Organizations — Iraq**

Following is a selected list of U.S.-based aid organizations that may possibly provide humanitarian assistance to Iraq. Internet addresses of the aid organizations as well as links to their Web pages on Iraq (if available) are provided.

**InterAction**

[<http://www.interaction.org/>]

InterAction, formed in 1984, is the largest coalition of U.S.-based international nongovernmental aid organizations (NGOs) with more than 165 members who work in developing countries, including Iraq.

**American Friends Service Committee (AFSC): *Learn About Iraq***

[<http://www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/default.shtm>]

The AFSC [<http://www.afsc.org/>] is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace, and humanitarian service.

**Church World Service (CWS): *Response to Iraq Crisis***  
[<http://www.churchworldservice.org/news/Iraq/index.html>]

CWS is the relief, development, and refugee assistance ministry of 35 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations in the United States. CWS works worldwide to meet human needs and foster self-reliance.

**Physicians for Human Rights (PHR): — Iraq** (current and historical reports prior to the war search for “Iraq” in the search box)

PHR [<http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/>] promotes health by protecting human rights. Using medical and scientific methods, PHR investigates and exposes violations of human rights worldwide and works to stop them.

**U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI): *Iraq: World Refugee Survey 2007 Country Report***  
[<http://www.refugees.org/countryreports.aspx?id=2002>]

USCRI [<http://www.refugees.org/>] defends the rights and calls for adequate protection and assistance of all uprooted people, including refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants.

**World Resources Institute (WRI): *Environmental profiles for Iraq and other Middle Eastern Countries***  
[[http://pubs.wri.org/pubs\\_content\\_text.cfm?ContentID=2865](http://pubs.wri.org/pubs_content_text.cfm?ContentID=2865)]

WRI [<http://www.wri.org/>] is an environmental think tank that provides information, ideas, and solutions to global environmental problems and finds practical ways to protect the earth and improve people’s lives.

**World Vision International — Iraq Refugee Crisis**  
[<http://www.wvi.org/wvi/wviweb.nsf/section/2D3F471B917A649F8825738C0079053A?opendocument>]

World Vision [<http://www.wvi.org/wvi/wviweb.nsf>] is an international Christian aid and development organization that promotes the well-being of all people, especially children, in countries around the world.