

UNAMI - Humanitarian, Reconstruction and Development Unit  
Erbil Regional Office

SITUATION REPORT no. 1  
- 11 October 2008 -

Displacement of Christians from Mosul, Ninewa Governorate

**Overview**

More than 882 families have fled the city of Mosul since the beginning of October 2008 as a result of targeted attacks against members of the Christian community in the city. Most have fled to neighbouring towns in Tilkaif and Hamdaniya districts (Ninewa Governorate) as well as Ainkawa in Erbil Governorate. The NGO IMC has mobilised to respond to first humanitarian needs while the UN is ready to provide additional support from the Erbil hub if required. The movement out of Mosul is expected to continue.

**Situation**

Since the beginning of October 2008 there have been reports of coordinated threats to Christians living in the Mosul neighbourhoods of Alarabii, Alshifaa, Alsukar, RasAlkoor, Alsa'a, Almydan. Since 7 October 2008, 11 Christian men have been shot dead in what appear to be sectarian-motivated killings. The intimidation and sectarian targeting has resulted in significant numbers of Christian families to leave the city. By 11 October 2008, more than 882 families fled the city moving to neighbouring villages with a Christian majority in Tilkaif and Hamdaniya districts, as well as Ainkawa district in Erbil.

According to the latest information collected by the NGO IMC through the Ministry of Municipalities and the Assyrian Aid Committee, the numbers of IDPs fleeing Mosul city break down as follows:

Tilkaif district – Ninewa Governorate

Alqosh – 102 families

Tel Usquf – 218 families

Batnay – 30 families

Tilkaif – 53 families

**District total – 403 families**

Hamdaniya district – Ninewa Governorate

Hamdaniya (Karakosh) – 175 families

Bartalah – 153 families

Bashiqa (including Bahzani) – 96 families

Krmales – 45 families

**District total - 469 families**

Ainkawa district – Erbil Governorate

Ainkawa – 10 families

**District total – 10 families**

The movement of Christian families out of Mosul accelerated over the weekend (10-11 October 2008) and is expected to continue. Contrary to earlier reports, initial rapid assessments by IMC indicate that entire families are fleeing the city of Mosul, including men. Those fleeing reach Christian towns with their own means of transport but no belongings. Already the absorption in

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some towns appears to have been exhausted (i.e. Alqosh) as families move on to look for accommodation in other towns. Most are eventually hosted in families or in public structures (schools).

### **Response**

The first response on the ground has been by the IMC, in cooperation with village mayors and the Assyrian Aid Committee: the initial assessments and response were conducted within the framework of the UNICEF-sponsored IMPACT programme.

IMC distributed 150 food parcels and non-food items took place in the town of Tel Usqif (Tilkaif district) on 9 October 2008, complemented a day later by an additional distribution covering new IDP arrivals. A shortage of items in their non-food item package will be covered by UNHCR through their contingency stock in Erbil (mattresses, blankets and heating stoves): a joint distribution plan to augment the non-food item package was agreed on 11 October 2008.

From 12 October 2008, IMC intends to distribute food and non-food items (including hygiene kits and kitchen sets) to all of the communities hosting IDPs. For coordination purposes, it will rely on town representatives in Tilkaif district, while it will channel assistance through the MoDM in Hamdanya district. Here it will deliver to a hub in Bartalah created by the authorities, where IDP families will come to register and collect humanitarian assistance. It is understood, that the MoDM intends to build a tented camp in this location as a contingency for future arrivals.

The MoDM has approached UNHCR with a request for 100 tents but assessments on the ground suggest that there is no need for them yet and that IDPs prefer to stay in homes rather than tents due to the cold temperatures already registered at night. UNHCR will provide IMC with 100 tents to pre-position in their Batnay (Tilkaif district) warehouse in case of need.

UNAMI-HRDU will continue to monitor the situation with partners on the ground and facilitate coordination services.

### **Outstanding needs**

According to IMC rapid assessment teams, Tilkaif district is seeing increased numbers of IDPs and it is possible that the absorption capacity for greater number of IDP families will be exceeded particularly as these are poor communities to start with. IMC continues to conduct assessments and has agreed to share information on additional needs. For the moment, IMC has the capacity to respond to the needs in cooperation with other regional partners if necessary.

Contingency stock levels in the region are high. UNHCR has a stock of 7,000 NFI packages and a similar number of tents. IOM has currently 1,000 NFI packages in stock, and will increase its stock by another 2,000 and 1,000 food parcels within a week. Both have warehouses in Erbil.

In the event of prolonged displacement, the WFP regional emergency coordinator has informed UNAMI that it would negotiate with the authorities for the inclusion of the new IDPs in the PDS system.

No information is currently available on whether security and protection of the minority areas in Mosul has been stepped up. From the KRG side, it is assumed that authorities are monitoring the situation and will offer assistance to the Christian community, nevertheless, the KRG have stipulated that, unlike past practices, they will *not* dispatch Peshmerga forces to Christian areas in Mosul to avoid a repetition of the stand-off in Khanaqen, Diyala Governorate.

As for the ISF, the Iraqi Army command in Ninewa Governorate is likely to be asked to provide security for vulnerable communities in the Governorate but this remains unconfirmed.