



The Humanitarian Update is a monthly publication from UN OCHA's Regional Office in Dubai, reporting on the main humanitarian events in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia. For more information on Iraq or OPT, please visit [www.ochairaq.org](http://www.ochairaq.org) and [www.ochaopt.org](http://www.ochaopt.org)

### H1N1 - "Swine Flu"

As of 05 July 2009, 454 laboratory-confirmed cases of Pandemic (H1N1) infection have been reported to WHO by 17 countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region; Bahrain (15), Egypt (78), Islamic Republic of Iran (1), Iraq (12), Jordan (23), Kuwait (35), Lebanon (49), Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (1), Morocco (17), Oman (4), Palestine (60), Qatar (23), Saudi Arabia (114), Syrian Arab Republic (1), Tunisia (5), United Arab Emirates (8), Yemen (8). There are no reported deaths from any country in the Region.

For the latest update, please visit [www.emro.int/csr/H1N1](http://www.emro.int/csr/H1N1) and [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

### World Refugee Day

» Several countries in the MENACA region marked World Refugee Day on 20 June. In Yemen, a series of events were held, including photographic exhibitions and musical performances, in acknowledgement of the rights and dignity of refugees. United Nations organizations working in Iraq called for a focus on the communities hit hardest by displacement and violence to restore jobs and services and create conditions for voluntary, dignified and sustainable return. Since the height of Iraq's civil unrest in February 2006, more than 1.6 million people are estimated to have been internally displaced, constituting the world's third largest internally displaced population. The UN expresses its appreciation to Iraq's neighbours for continuing to host Iraqi refugees, most of whom are located in Jordan and Syria and for the support and access to services that have been provided to them so far.

### Saudi Arabia & Iraq

» On 28 June, in recognition of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's generous contribution to UNHCR in Jordan, the UN Refugee Agency held an inauguration



An Iraqi refugee family registers with UNHCR at Douma registration centre on the outskirts of Damascus | File Photo

ceremony at the Amman Grand Hyatt. The Saudi contribution of US\$1.5 million will go towards a program providing direct financial assistance to Iraqi refugees in Jordan. This program provides an important safety-net to some six thousand vulnerable families to cover basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing. The ceremony brought together a delegation from the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Finance in addition to members of the Jordanian government, local embassies, UN partners, NGOs and the media.

» Two days later, on 30 June, Saudi Arabia announced a further donation of US\$3.5 million to UNHCR's humanitarian assistance programmes for Iraqi refugees in Syria. A high level Saudi delegation conducted a two-day visit to Damascus from 29 June - 1 July, where it toured the world's largest refugee registration centre in Douma, and a health clinic managed by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, UNHCR's main implementing partner. The Saudi funds will go towards healthcare and food assistance programmes in support of Iraqis who are currently registered with UNHCR in Syria; many of whom rely on the UN Refugee Agency for protection as well as medical, financial, education, food assistance and outreach support.

The UNHCR Iraq operation (covering Iraq and Iraqi refugee hosting countries) has received 42.6 per cent of the US\$397 million required for the year 2009 as of 7 July. Continuous funding support is essential to sustain ongoing assistance programmes for displaced Iraqis by UNHCR and its partner UN agencies.

## Pakistan

» From 20-22 June, the Special Humanitarian Envoy for the Secretary-General, Mr. Abdul Aziz Arrukban, conducted a fact-finding mission to Pakistan. In Mardan district, where the majority of the men, women and children displaced from Swat and Buner are living, Mr. Arrukban visited a camp, a girls' high school that is currently occupied by internally displaced families as well as a humanitarian distribution centre where food and non-food items are handed out to the displaced. The Special Envoy was also able to observe the impact on some of the host communities that have taken in a vast proportion of the approximate 2 million people who have had to leave their homes since last August.

"The need for support to the existing infrastructure in host communities is striking", noted Mr. Arrukban. "In particular, the healthcare, sanitation and water systems are under enormous strain".

The humanitarian community has scaled up its operations greatly since the number of displaced people rose dramatically earlier this year. Camps and shelters are being reinforced to prepare for the monsoon rains, and there are now a total of 45 humanitarian hubs, in and out of camps, that are disbursing tens of thousands of tonnes of food and non-food items. However, efforts need to be scaled up even further in order to meet current needs as well as the challenges posed by the coming monsoon. As part of his mission, the Special Humanitarian Envoy is trying to galvanize international support for the Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan, especially amongst Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states.

"The humanitarian community is making a valiant effort to reach those in need, but they will not be able to sustain their activities unless they receive greater support from donors", Mr. Arrukban said at the end of his mission.

» A revised appeal (the Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan) was launched on 22 May for \$533m. As of 6 July, the PHRP is only 40% funded.

## United Arab Emirates

» On 26 June, Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al-Hussein, called for a massive international aid effort to assist hundreds of thousands of people recently uprooted by fighting in Pakistan's north-west region. Describing the crisis in Pakistan as



*Special Humanitarian Envoy for the Secretary-General, Mr. Abdul Aziz Arrukban, visits one of the humanitarian hubs in Mardan, Pakistan | Photo: Fawad Hussein, OCHA*

the largest humanitarian emergency in the world today, the UN Messenger of Peace and wife of HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum urged the public to step up support for the operation by donating to UNHCR. Her message appeared in a public service announcement on television networks broadcast across the Middle East and elsewhere.

"Millions have been forced to leave, abandoning their homes, their communities and their loved ones," she said. "They arrive needing everything: shelter, food, and medical care. Only with your help, can UNHCR revive hope, assist with shelter and meet other basic needs".

» Following this plea, on 6 July UNHCR and the United Arab Emirates, represented by the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Neyyan Foundation, signed a partnership agreement in support of humanitarian operations in Pakistan. The partnership includes procurement of basic relief items such as tents, blankets, sleeping mats, plastic sheeting, mosquito nets and kitchen sets to displaced Pakistani families living in some 21 camps or with host families. It will also help facilitate the voluntary return of displaced people back to their homes.

» In June, the global emergency stockpile of UNHCR in Dubai dispatched 22 vehicles and 2 generators to various field locations in Africa and the Middle East, and also provided IT and telecommunication expertise to operations in Yemen, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

## Yemen

» According to an IRIN report on 17 June, the security situation in Saada Governorate, northern Yemen, has deteriorated in the wake of sporadic clashes between government forces and a group of Shia rebels since



May. The International Committee of the Red Cross told IRIN on 16 June that the recent clashes had displaced over 500 families (some 3,500 people) who have now fled to Saada City. The Saada conflict between the government and al-Houthi rebels, in which hundreds have been killed and thousands displaced, started in 2004 and has flared up on several occasions since.

## Kyrgyzstan

» The first ever Flash Appeal for Kyrgyzstan, launched on 30 November 2009, came to an end on 30 May. A total of US\$8.9 million (61% of the revised total requested funds) were received. While Appeal projects alleviated the hardship of several hundred thousand of the most vulnerable people in Kyrgyzstan over the winter and spring, the roots of problems of energy and food insecurity still remain unresolved.

The Flash Appeal was launched after it had become clear that a series of shocks were seriously affecting several sectors and livelihoods, particularly those of vulnerable groups. A worsening energy situation, caused by significantly depleted hydroelectric resources, necessitated stringent power cuts in the winter, the period when electricity is most needed for home heating. The Flash Appeal was also a response to soaring food and fuel prices, adverse weather and declining remittances, which had weakened the purchasing power of the most vulnerable and contributed to a precarious food security situation for some.

The Flash Appeal was revised downwards in February 2009 from US\$20.6 million to US\$ 14.7 million after the mild winter and the Government's programme to reduce electricity consumption had averted a full breakdown in power supply, though regular blackouts still had to be made.

The Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)'s four month food distribution programme in Southern Kyrgyzstan in conjunction with World Food Programme also ended in June. During this project, wheat flour and oil was provided to over 44,000 households.

## Tajikistan

» On 1 June, the Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (REACT) launched an appeal for US\$1.5 million to support the Government of Tajikistan in its efforts to address humanitarian needs of some 12,000 individuals that have been severely affected by



12,000 individuals have been impacted by mud flows in Tajikistan during spring 2009  
| Photo: OCHA

floods and mud flows during spring 2009. Abnormally heavy rainfall had led to severe flooding and mudflows in many parts of Tajikistan, including the capital city, resulting in the loss of lives, displacement, destruction of key transport and social infrastructure, residential housing, loss of crops and livestock throughout the country. On 18 May, the government appealed for international assistance, citing difficulties in responding due to the economic crises and falling budget revenues.

Many of the affected areas, especially rural, were vulnerable even before the floods and mudflows destroyed their livelihoods due to cumulative impact of previous years draughts, cold winter and energy crises combined with high poverty rates. Targeted humanitarian assistance will be provided during six months from 1 June - 31 November 2009 while concerted efforts will be made to mobilize funding for longer-term programmes to address the large-scale rehabilitation needs. This is in addition to resources which are being mobilized for the food security and nutrition sector through a revision of the "Humanitarian Food Security Appeal", Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Appeal or bilaterally. For more information, please visit [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

» Tajikistan Red Crescent staff, national disaster response teams (NDRT), local disaster committees (LDC) in Dushanbe city, Kurgantube region, Rasht valley, Shahrinau and Tursunzade districts have continued their assessments and non-food relief distribution to the most affected families. As of 10 June, in total 570 affected families had received humanitarian assistance from the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, including tents, bedding sets, hygiene kits, kitchen sets and water cans.

For more information please visit <http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/responding/drs/tools/dref/donors.asp>

## Syria

- » Drought and Iraqi Refugees crisis are still the most urgent issues. Preparedness and risk reduction activities were also carried out this month. WFP conducted a Joint Needs Assessment for Iraqi Refugees; the previous Joint Food Need Assessment was conducted in 2007.
- » On 30 June, the Minister of Health declared the first confirmed case of H1N1. The Minister mentioned that the lady had travelled from Australia, that she is being treated with her family members, and the passengers who were on board the same flight are also under surveillance by the health authorities
- » As part of the national preparedness efforts for natural disasters, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, is producing a National Drought Strategy and enhanced Drought Early Warning system.

## Egypt

- » Regional humanitarian partners held the first Regional IASC Consultation on Climate Change for the Middle East and North Africa in Cairo on Thursday 4 June. The Regional Consultation, which was held under the auspices of the IASC Informal Task Force on Climate Change in preparation for the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, was attended by 20 participants from 13 humanitarian organisations. Its purpose was to: 1) discuss the role of humanitarian actors in climate change adaptation; 2) consider linkages between humanitarian and development actors in the adaptation process;

and 3) identify key issues to be addressed by humanitarian agencies in the coming three years. The anticipated implications of climate change for the region were discussed, including increased storm surges for some low-lying countries, increased exposure to drought and desertification, and increased migration of people. At present, IASC partners' activities in relation to climate change primarily focus on short-term response rather than actual adaptation. It was agreed that activities need to be part of a holistic approach, incorporating humanitarian and development aspects. A full report of the Consultation, including recommendations, will be issued shortly.

- » On 2-3 July, the third in a series of regional Humanitarian Action Workshops was held, targeting senior leaders and decision-makers involved in effective humanitarian action (previous workshops had been held in Central Asia and Latin America earlier this year). The workshop was a joint inter-agency initiative, and was attended by approximately 40 participants from 10 Humanitarian Country Teams (Egypt, Iran, Iran, OPT, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Yemen, Qatar, Somalia and Syria) and UN, IFRC and NGO regional offices. It was developed and designed with input from IASC partners and global cluster leads, and was an opportunity for humanitarian leaders from across the region to share experiences, good practice, lessons learned, and challenges faced at field level in preparing for and responding effectively to emergencies. The workshop also aimed to strengthen participants' understanding of their role in leading sectoral coordination in emergency response, as per their globally mandated responsibilities as cluster lead agencies, and to equip them with a better knowledge of the latest policy guidance and developments in support of this.

### Useful Links

[www.reliefweb.org](http://www.reliefweb.org)  
[www.humanitarianappeal.net](http://www.humanitarianappeal.net)  
[www.ochaopt.org](http://www.ochaopt.org)  
[www.ochairaq.org](http://www.ochairaq.org)  
[www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)  
<http://cerf.un.org>  
[www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)  
[www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)

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