

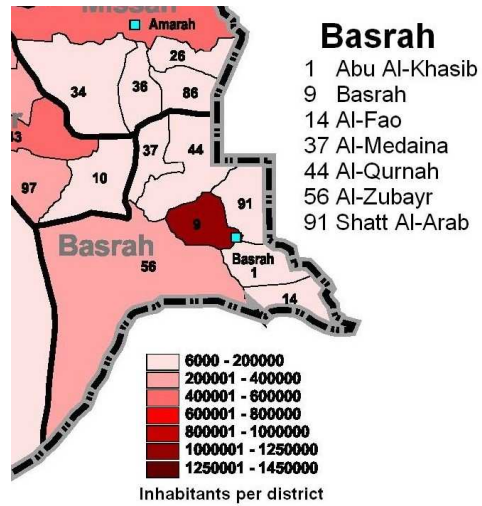


# UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

## BASRAH GOVERNORATE ASSESSMENT REPORT



## August 2006

This UNHCR Assessment Report is intended to provide objective information regarding the overall situation in the Governorate in question, detailing the situation faced by persons of concern and their communities. The report has been drafted by UNHCR with its partners (*Millennium Relief & Development Services, Rafha Organization, Relief International, Iraqi Salvation Organization* and others), and many governmental and non-governmental organizations have been invited to contribute to this report which draws on international sources, reports of district authorities, UNHCR's returnee monitoring activities and consultations with returnees and their communities. Efforts have been made to ensure that only accurate, reliable, factual material, independently confirmed information is reported. This Assessment Report is not intended to be a comprehensive human rights report, nor is the report an expression of political opinion or a statement of UNHCR policy.

While the Assessment Report primarily targets displaced populations and returnees, information in Annexes I to III has been prepared in a format useful for donors and the Iraqi authorities. Therefore, the Assessment Report will be made available to a wide audience, including refugees abroad, IDPs and returnees and their communities, authorities, donors and other agencies.

This report does not take into account events occurring after 31 August 2006, unless a later date is specified. UNHCR plans to update the report on a regular basis.

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## List of Abbreviations

AMS	Association of Muslim Scholars
CRRPD	Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Disputes (previously the Iraq Property Claims Commission IPCC)
ICS	Iraqi Correctional Service
ID	Iraqi Dinar
IECI	Independent Electoral Commission in Iraq
IED	Improvised Explosive Devices
ILCS	Iraq Living Conditions Survey
ING	Iraqi National Guard
IOM	International Organization of Migration
IP	Iraqi Police
IPCC	Iraq Property Claims Commission (now known as the Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Disputes, CRRPD)
IRCS	Iraqi Red Crescent Society
IREP	Iraq Reconstruction and Employment Programme
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISHO	Iraqi Salvation Humanitarian Organization
LAIC	Legal Aid and Information Centre
MNF	Multinational Forces
MoC	Ministry of Culture
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoDM	Ministry of Displacement and Migration
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHC	Ministry of Housing and Construction
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoHR	Ministry of Human Rights
MoPDC	Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation
MoT	Ministry of Trade
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PDS	Public Distribution System
RRC	Returnee Reception Centre
SCIRI	Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UK	United Kingdom
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VRF	Voluntary Repatriation Form
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

## Exchange Rate

As of 31 August 2006, the exchange rate between the Iraqi Dinar (ID) and the US Dollar (US \$) was:

**1 US \$ = 1,476.40 ID**

For simplicity, one may use the approximation:

**1 US \$ = 1,500 ID**

# I. General Information<sup>1</sup>

**Basrah Governorate is the most southerly Governorate in Iraq. It shares land borders with Iran, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.** Basrah was founded by Caliph Omar in 636 AD and has been a centre of trade for thousands of years because of the location of its ports, which link sea routes between Asia, Europe and Africa. **The population of Basrah Governorate is estimated by the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation (MoPDC) to be 1,797,821,<sup>2</sup>** making it the second largest governorate in Iraq after Baghdad. Basrah has seen a population increase of over half a million people since the 1987 census estimates released by the former regime.

The **geographical landscape** of the governorate is dominated by vast desert plains and the Shatt Al-Arab Waterway which runs from the convergence of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers in Al-Qurnah through Basrah City and on to the Persian Gulf. Great lakes in the north of Basrah Governorate near Al-Qurnah and Al-Medina provide the main water source for Basrah City, and the vast Iraqi Marshlands spread north from Basrah to Missan and Thi-Qar Governorates.

Basrah owns the greatest oil wealth in Iraq with a total of 15 oil fields, out of which 10 are producing while 5 are awaiting development and production. The oil fields contain an estimated 65 billion barrels which represent 59% of the total Iraqi oil reserve.<sup>3</sup> Iraqi oil is exported<sup>4</sup> primarily through the Basrah terminal because the northern pipeline to Turkey is none operative due to ongoing attacks.<sup>5</sup> Poor infrastructure, sabotage, corruption and smuggling<sup>6</sup> have meant that benefits from the reserves are limited and urban and rural poverty remains high. Reconstruction continues to be being hampered by insecurity, and Iraqi authorities estimate it will take decades of reconstruction to restore the Governorate's main infrastructure.

**The predominant religion** in Basrah Governorate is the Shiite branch of Islam, although the Governorate also has a sizeable Sunni population as well as Mandaean, Chaldean and Assyrian Christian communities, all of which contribute to the Governorate's rich cultural history. **Tribes** from across Mesopotamia and the Middle East have migrated through the area over the centuries, creating a diverse tribal ancestry. Tribes currently present in Basrah Governorate include the Tameem, Beni Malek, Albu Mohammed, Suad, Alibadi, Al-Gitarna, Awlad Lamer, Al-Sadoon, Al-Imara, Al-Sarrai and Al-Halaf tribes. Not all of these tribes

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<sup>1</sup> General information sources include: MoPDC, media and international reports.

<sup>2</sup> MoPDC/UNDP, *Iraq Living Conditions Survey*, April 2005, <http://www.iq.undp.org/ILCS/PDF/Tabulation%20Report%20-%20Engilsh.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Iraq Revenue Watch, Kamil al-Mehaidi, Geographical distribution of Iraqi Oil Fields and its relation with the New Constitution, May 2006, pp. 3-4, <http://www.iraqrevenuewatch.org/reports/052706.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> In August 2006 some 2.2 million barrels were exported per day in Iraq. The Brookings Institution, *Iraq Index*, 21 August 2006, <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Reuters, *Iraq says oil production at highest since invasion*, 25 June 2006, <http://news.moneycentral.msn.com/provider/providerarticle.asp?Feed=OBR&Date=20060625&ID=5821739>.

<sup>6</sup> Iraq's national security adviser told the *New York Times* there is an estimated 6,000 barrels per day difference between the amount of oil produced and the amount exported. Kenneth Katzman, a Middle East analyst at the Congressional Research Service, estimates at least 10 percent of the oil gets illegally intercepted and loaded onto trucks headed for neighbouring countries, see Council on Foreign Relations, *The Challenge in Iraq's Other Cities: Basra*, 28 June 2006, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/11001/challenge\\_in\\_iraqs\\_other\\_cities.html#4](http://www.cfr.org/publication/11001/challenge_in_iraqs_other_cities.html#4); According to Mohamed Al-Ebadi, the Prime Minister's personal adviser on Oil Affairs, nearly 1.5 million litres of crude oil, fuel and other petroleum products are smuggled from Basrah everyday, see IRIN, *IRAQ: Large-scale oil smuggling operations lead to reconstruction delays*, 26 June 2006, [http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=54169&SelectRegion=Middle\\_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=54169&SelectRegion=Middle_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ).

originate from Basrah; some migrated from the Missan and Thi-Qar marshlands while others originate from traditional lands which straddle borders with neighbouring countries.

**Basrah Governorate has eight administrative districts:** Basrah City and the outlying districts of Al-Medaina, Al-Qurnah, Al-Zubayr, Abu Al-Khasib, Umm Qasr, Safwan and Al-Fao. Basrah City is divided into nine administrative districts: Shatt Al-Arab, Hiyannaya, Al-Ashar, Al-Jumhuriyah, Al-Sarraji, Maqal, Al-Qibla and Al-Hadi. **The governorate administration** is organized according to *Qadha* (district) and *Nahiya* (sub-district) Councils and a Governorate Council which has an office in central Basrah City. A technical secretariat comprised of Ministry Director Generals meets weekly and is attended by the Chairman of the Governorate Council. **MoDM**, which was established in Iraq in August 2003, opened its first regional office in Basrah in April 2004.

## A. Political Developments<sup>7</sup>

**A 41-member Governorate Council was elected in Basrah Governorate** on 30 January 2005. The majority of the twenty seats available were allocated to **Al-Basrah Al-Islamiya**, a joint list of SCIRI, Dawa and other parties. Twelve seats went to **Hizb Al-Fadhila Al-Islamiya**, four seats to **Iraqi National Accord**, three seats to **Harakat Al-Dawa Al-Islamiya** and two seats to the **Iraq Future Gathering**.<sup>8</sup> The January 2005 elections also lead to the **appointment of Governor Mohammed Musbih Al-Waeli** (a member of Hizb Al-Fadhila Al-Islamiya), Deputy Governor Louay Al-Batat (member of a small faction aligned with Al-Fadhila) and Governorate Council Chairman Mohammed Sahr Al-Ibadi (also member of Al-Fadhila). Basrah's political parties have engaged in rivalries over political, economic and social influence (see *Security and Public Order*).<sup>9</sup> Provincial elections planned for August 2006 were postponed for security reasons.

**A referendum on the draft Permanent Constitution was held on 15 October 2005.** Prior to this Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani backed the Permanent Constitution and called upon all Iraqis to participate in the referendum. The Permanent Constitution received strong support in Basrah with 96.02% of voters saying 'yes'.<sup>10</sup> Under a compromise reached before the referendum, it was agreed that the new Council of Representatives would consider amendments to the constitution within four months (Article 142 of the Constitution), and amendments agreed would have to be approved in a popular referendum. The referendum will be considered successful if it is approved by a majority of the voters and if not rejected by two-thirds of the voters in three or more Governorates. Issues at stake include federalism and the distribution of oil.

**Federalism was a key topic of concern to people in Basrah Governorate.** This is however strongly rejected by the Sunni population in Iraq, which fears that federalism will lead the Kurds and Shiites to split Iraq into three parts and exclude them from Iraq's oil wealth.<sup>11</sup> Federalism is a contentious issue that will be addressed again during the constitutional

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<sup>7</sup>Political information sources include: IECI (<http://www.ieciraq.org>), Iraqi Authorities, media and returnees.

<sup>8</sup> IECI, *Elected candidates Basrah Governorate Council* (in Arabic), [http://www.ieciraq.org/Results/Elected\\_Candidate\\_Name\\_Lists.pdf](http://www.ieciraq.org/Results/Elected_Candidate_Name_Lists.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> The New York Times, *Oil, Politics and Bloodshed Corrupt an Iraqi City*, 13 June 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/13/world/middleeast/13basra.html?ex=1307851200&en=39925c1ec9ad927a&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>.

<sup>10</sup> IECI, *Certification of the Constitutional Referendum Final Results*, 25 October 2005, [http://www.ieciraq.org/English/Frameset\\_english.htm](http://www.ieciraq.org/English/Frameset_english.htm).

<sup>11</sup> Washington Post, *Shiites Call for Own State in South*, 12 August 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/11/AR2005081101791.html>.

review process in the months to come. Differing views over territorial boundaries and the degree of autonomy for the Southern Region also persist among Shiite political parties, e.g. SCIRI wants to see a large Southern Region embracing nine Governorates, which contain around 60% of Iraq's proven oil reserves. In contrast, the Hizb Al-Fadhila Al-Islamiya wants Basrah Governorate to be a region in its own right and the Sadrist Movement rejects federalism in the South and supports a stronger central government.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, minority groups as well as secular Shiites fear that a Southern federal region with a theocratic Islamic government could lead to the infringement of their civil liberties.

A second round of **National Assembly (Council of Representatives) elections** was held on 15 December 2005. The results show that Iraqis again cast their ballots along sectarian or ethnic lines: the Shiite coalition (*United Iraqi Alliance*) dominated the voting, but was short of a majority, holding 128 of the 275 seats. Kurdish parties (*Kurdistan Gathering*) won 53 seats and the main Sunni Arab bloc (*Tawafiq Iraqi Front*) won 44, giving them a much stronger political voice than they had before.<sup>13</sup> In spite of complaints by some of the leading parties, the polls were run in accordance with international electoral standards<sup>14</sup> and were accompanied by limited violence. Sunnis, who had boycotted the January 2005 elections participated in large numbers and the overall turnout was relatively high (around 70%), including in the Governorate of Basrah. The *United Iraqi Alliance*, won a large majority in the Governorate (77.50 %, 13 seats), followed by the secular *Iraqi National List* of former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi (11.01%, 2 seats) and the main Sunni list, the *Tawafiq Iraqi Front* (4.65%, 1 seat).

After six months of negotiations a **national unity government** was agreed between the *United Iraqi Alliance*, *Tawafiq Iraqi Front*, *Kurdistan Gathering* and *Iraqi National List*, under the leadership of Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki.<sup>15</sup>

In both the January and the December 2005 elections, Iraqis living abroad in a number of countries (including Iran, Syria and Jordan) were able to participate in the democratic process through an 'out of country' voting system.

## **B. Security and Public Order**<sup>16</sup>

In the past year, Basrah has emerged as a flashpoint of violence with clashes between Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Shiite **militias** as well as among rival militias.<sup>17</sup> The Governorate

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<sup>12</sup> See for example Los Angeles Times, *Shiites Press for a Partition of Iraq*, 9 August 2006, [http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-partition9aug09\\_0,2716106\\_story?coll=la-home-headlines](http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-partition9aug09_0,2716106_story?coll=la-home-headlines); Asia Times, *Iraq's Shiites going their own way*, 8 August 2006, [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle\\_East/HH08Ak03.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/HH08Ak03.html); The New York Times, *Oil, Politics and Bloodshed Corrupt an Iraqi City*, 13 June 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/13/world/middleeast/13basra.html?ex=1307851200&en=39925c1ec9ad927a&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>.

<sup>13</sup> IECI, *Certification of the Council of Representatives Elections Final Results*, 10 February 2006, [http://www.ieciraq.org/English/Frameset\\_english.htm](http://www.ieciraq.org/English/Frameset_english.htm).

<sup>14</sup> International Mission for Iraqi Elections, *Final Report on the December 15, 2005, Iraqi Council of Representatives Elections*, 12 April 2006, [http://www.imie.ca/pdf/final\\_report.pdf](http://www.imie.ca/pdf/final_report.pdf); IECL, Statement No. 39, *Board of Commissioners Decisions on Complaints Regarding the Council of Representatives Elections*, 16 January 2006, [http://www.ieciraq.org/final%20cand/Declaration\\_39\\_Jan\\_17\\_06\\_amended\[1\].edited.pdf](http://www.ieciraq.org/final%20cand/Declaration_39_Jan_17_06_amended[1].edited.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> For a list of cabinet members see BBC, *Who's who in Iraq's new cabinet*, 22 May 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/5000750.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5000750.stm).

<sup>16</sup> Security and public order sources of information include: Ministry of Interior, MNF and media.

<sup>17</sup> Washington Post, *Rival Shiite Militias Clash in Southern Iraq*, 17 August 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/16/AR2006081601900.html?sub=AR>; BBC, *Living in a state of fear*, 18 April 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4916308.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4916308.stm).

is dominated by various Shiite political groups and their armed militias, all vying for power and a share of the area's vast oil wealth. A variety of reports suggest that militias have infiltrated the security forces and are more loyal to their religious leaders than the Iraqi government. An internal US Embassy report on security in Iraq concluded there was 'a high level of militia activity including infiltration of local security forces' in the city.<sup>18</sup> In addition, **criminal gangs** are part of the security problem in Basrah. **Kidnappings** for ransom or political reasons remain common<sup>19</sup> and **assassinations** have been carried out on varying targets, including politicians, religious figures, tribal leaders, journalists,<sup>20</sup> government officials, university professors and the staff of contracting organizations working with foreign organizations (see below *Chronology of Events* for examples). Militias are also accused of carrying out hundreds of **executions of former Ba'athists**.<sup>21</sup>

A wave of anger among Iraq's Shia over a bomb attack on the Al-Askari shrine in Samarra in February 2006 also sparked **sectarian violence** in Basrah, affecting both its Shia and Sunni populations. Basrah's small **Sunni Arab community**, are believed to make up 15% of the population, has increasingly been targeted by armed groups.<sup>22</sup> Local police often do little to prevent such sectarian attacks, which include the killing of clerics, burning of mosques, attacks on Sunni political offices and threats against ordinary Sunni citizens to leave. The *Association of Muslim Scholars* (AMS), a Sunni political party, claims some 1,200 Sunni families have been forced to flee Basrah because of the violence. According to Abdul-Razaq Al-Dosari, a senior AMS cleric, about 25 Sunnis were killed by armed groups affiliated with religious groups in May 2006 alone.<sup>23</sup> According to data provided by the British military, the murder rate has doubled between November 2005 and February 2006, to an average of more than one per day.<sup>24</sup> According to the *New York Times*, the murder rate in May 2006 was 85 deaths; triple the number of killings in January.<sup>25</sup> On 31 May 2006, after a month which had cost more than a 100 people's lives, Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki declared a month-long

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<sup>18</sup> BBC, *Security in Basra 'has improved'*, 22 June 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/5105558.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/5105558.stm); IRIN, *IRAQ: Basra officials warn of rising sectarian violence*, 23 May 2006,

[http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=53480&SelectRegion=Middle\\_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=53480&SelectRegion=Middle_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ).

<sup>19</sup> According to the British Embassy's Travel Advice, 'there is a high threat of kidnapping across Iraq', including in Basrah, see British Embassy Baghdad, *Travel Advice*, updated 21 August 2006,

<http://www.britishembassy.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1052839096870>.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Fakher Haider, a journalist covering Basrah for *The New York Times* and investigating the infiltration of Basrah's police force by Shiite militias was abducted and killed by masked men who identified themselves as police, see Times Online, *Second journalist probing Basrah police killed*, 20 September 2005, [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,7374-1788879\\_00.html](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,7374-1788879_00.html). US journalist Steven Vincent was also found dead in Basrah. Just prior to his death, Vincent had written a *New York Times* editorial charging that the city's police force had fallen under the control of religious militias, see BBC, *US journalist shot dead in Iraq*, 3 August 2005, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4740759.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4740759.stm); The Associated Press, *American journalist found shot dead in Basra*, 3 August 2005, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8804776/>.

<sup>21</sup> The Washington Post, *An End to the Soft Sell By the British in Basra*, 26 February 2006,

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/24/AR2006022402380\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/24/AR2006022402380_pf.html); The

Telegraph, *British Army strikes back against the Shia renegades in Basra*, 8 October 2005,

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/10/08/wirq08.xml>.

<sup>22</sup> The Chairman of the Sunni Endowment in Southern Iraq, Abd Al-Karim Al-Khazraji, said that the proportion of Sunni Muslims in Basrah had declined from 40% to 15%, after three years of forced immigration, see Aljazeera, *Sunnis decline in Basra, official says*, 1 June 2006, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/33385941-1DA5-4D9B-A8AE-E2747AEFFA56.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> IRIN, *IRAQ: Basra officials warn of rising sectarian violence*, 23 May 2006,

[http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=53480&SelectRegion=Middle\\_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=53480&SelectRegion=Middle_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ).

<sup>24</sup> The Washington Post, *An End to the Soft Sell by the British in Basra*, 26 February 2006,

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/24/AR2006022402380\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/24/AR2006022402380_pf.html).

<sup>25</sup> The New York Times, *Oil, Politics and Bloodshed Corrupt an Iraqi City*, 13 June 2006,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/13/world/middleeast/13basra.html?ex=1307851200&en=39925c1ec9ad927a&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>.

state of emergency in Basrah to restore security.<sup>26</sup> However, violence continued (see below *Chronology of Events*) and Jawad Al-Bolani, Iraq's Minister of Interior, acknowledged that the initiative had not worked. Morgue officials report that the number of people killed in sectarian violence remains unchanged.<sup>27</sup>

Relations between the **British Forces** and the local government soured after January 2006. After a series of arrests of corrupt police officials and following the release of a video appearing to show UK troops beating Iraqi civilians in Southern Iraq, the Provincial Council suspended relations with British Forces in February 2006. It was not until early May that local authorities agreed to formally resume co-operation.<sup>28</sup>

Militias and insurgent groups continue to execute **attacks on Multinational Forces (MNF) and the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), foreign contractors, private security firms and oil facilities.**<sup>29</sup> Belligerents also specifically target Iraqis involved in reconstruction efforts, Iraqis working with MNF/ISF and Iraqis working with the Iraqi Government. Numerous nationals and internationals working in the South have been shot or kidnapped for working with or for international organizations. The main types of attacks against international actors are indirect fire (mortars and rockets), Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and small arms fire (SAF). IEDs in the South pose the main security concern for MNF because some insurgents are using explosively formed projectile IEDs, which are lethal to any vehicle that is directly hit by one.

The city of Basrah has largely come under the control of Shiite clerics and militias: shops selling liquor, DVDs or recorded music have been targeted, as have men and women who mix in public.<sup>30</sup> The increasing tendency towards strict Islamic behaviour and dress codes has taken a particular toll on **women** in Basrah. Women of all religions risk being targeted, verbally and physically, if they do not comply with strict Islamic dress codes (e.g. not covering their hair or wearing Western-style fashions) or if they behave in a manner considered 'immoral' (e.g. working in professions such as prostitution or dancing).<sup>31</sup> A physician who heads the Basrah Maternity and Paediatric Hospital reported that Mehdi Army followers came to the hospital to tell the male doctors not to treat female patients.<sup>32</sup> The

<sup>26</sup> BBC, *Iraq imposes emergency in Basra*, 31 May 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/5032294.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5032294.stm).

<sup>27</sup> McClatchy Newspapers, *In Basra, state of emergency provides little relief from violence*, 4 July 2006, <http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/14965478.htm>; see also IRIN, *Basra residents call for human rights recognition*, 28 June 2006,

[http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=54273&SelectRegion=Middle\\_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=54273&SelectRegion=Middle_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ).

<sup>28</sup> The Washington Post, *An End to the Soft Sell By the British in Basra*, 26 February 2006, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/24/AR2006022402380\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/24/AR2006022402380_pf.html); BBC, *Iraqis resume ties with British*, 7 May 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4982930.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4982930.stm).

<sup>29</sup> Regarding attacks on oil facilities and oil personnel in Basrah, see Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, *Iraq Pipeline Watch*, updated 4 August 2005, <http://www.iags.org/iraqpipelinewatch.htm>.

<sup>30</sup> NBC News, *Basra, Iraq: Model city or police state?*, 1 December 2005, <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/10285078/>; Knight Ridder Newspapers, *Once-liberal Basrah trades cultural freedom for security*, 4 August 2005, <http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/12304496.htm>; The New York Times, *Killings of Vendors in Iraqi City Drive Alcohol Sales Off Streets*, 19 February 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/19/international/middleeast/19BASR.html?ex=1392526800&en=4c6dd3b6bf6da7ab&ei=5007&partner=USERLAND>.

<sup>31</sup> The Independent, *For the Women of Iraq, the War is Just Beginning*, 8 June 2006, <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines06/0608-02.htm>; Los Angeles Times, *Islamic Law Controls the Streets of Basra*, 27 June 2005, [http://www.occupationwatch.org/headlines/archives/2005/06/islamic\\_law\\_con.html](http://www.occupationwatch.org/headlines/archives/2005/06/islamic_law_con.html); The Telegraph, *British keep out of Basra's lethal Islamic take-over*, 15 June 2005, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/07/15/wbasra15.xml>; Guardian Unlimited, *Liberal Basrah pushed to the right*, 13 June 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,1505112,00.html>.

<sup>32</sup> Post-Gazette, *Islamist militias patrolling Basrah*, 24 April 2005, <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/05114/493468.stm>.

Governor of Basrah stated that ‘today, our society is changing, becoming more religious’, and ‘we must reflect [the fact] that Basrah is becoming a purely Islamic city.’<sup>33</sup>

### a) Chronology of Events

The following provides a sample summary of the type and nature of security incidents in Basrah (January 2006 – August 2006, not exhaustive):

#### **August 2006:**

- A motorcycle bomb at a market in Basrah City killed four people and wounded 15.<sup>34</sup>
- Gunmen killed a Colonel in the Facility Protection Services in Basrah.<sup>35</sup>
- Gunmen killed two off-duty members of the Interior Ministry Intelligence Service in Basrah.<sup>36</sup>
- The Secretary General of Thar Allah Islamic Party escaped an assassination attempt when two roadside bombs went off near his house in Basrah.<sup>37</sup>
- Clashes broke out in Basrah City when members of the Bani Assad tribe attacked the Governor’s office, believing provincial officials were behind the killing of their tribal leader. Fighting between ISF, British Forces, militias and tribesmen left at least four policemen dead.<sup>38</sup>
- Gunmen killed an Army Colonel on his way to work in Basrah.<sup>39</sup>
- A British soldier was killed in a mortar attack on a MNF base in Basrah.<sup>40</sup>

#### **July 2006:**

- Assailants killed a mother and her three children in Basrah, the family had fled from Baghdad to escape threats that they had cooperated with the US Forces.<sup>41</sup>
- A British soldier was killed and another one injured as dozens of troops arrested a leading member of the Mehdi army, which is believed to be behind the majority of attacks on MNF in Basrah.<sup>42</sup>
- A Basrah Police source said that the director of a paper factory in Basrah and the head accountant were kidnapped by unknown men.<sup>43</sup>

#### **June 2006:**

- Gunmen attacked the home of the Basrah Deputy Governor injuring one of his guards.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The Christian Science Monitor, *Shiites bring rigid piety to Iraq's south*, 13 July 2005, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0713/p01s01-wome.html?s=eee>.

<sup>34</sup> The Associated Press, *Violence Sweeps Across Iraq; Dozens Dead*, 27 August 2006, <http://ap.washingtontimes.com/dynamic/stories/I/IRAQ?SITE=DCTMS&SECTION=HOME>.

<sup>35</sup> Reuters Alertnet, *Security developments in Iraq, Aug 21*, 21 August 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Reuters Alertnet, *Security incidents in Iraq, 16 Aug 2006*, 16 August 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Washington Post, *Rival Shiite Militias Clash in Southern Iraq*, 17 August 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/16/AR2006081601900.html?sub=AR>; The Associated Press, *Iraqi and British Troops clash with Shiite Militias*, 17 August 2006, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/08/17/africa/web.0817iraq.php>.

<sup>39</sup> Reuters Alertnet, *Security incidents in Iraq, Aug 9*, 9 August 2006.

<sup>40</sup> Agence France-Presse/Reuters, *British soldier killed in Iraq mortar attack*, 1 August 2006, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200608/s1703328.htm>.

<sup>41</sup> The Associated Press, *Mother, 3 children slaughtered in Basra*, 19 July 2006, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/13937215/>.

<sup>42</sup> Telegraph, *British soldier dies in Basra raid*, 17 July 2006, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/07/17/wirq17.xml>.

<sup>43</sup> MidEastWire.com, *Daily Iraq Monitor*, 10 July 2006, <http://dahrjamaillraq.com/mideastwire/index.php?id=168>.

- A car bomb exploded near a petrol station in Basrah City, killing at least 10 people.<sup>45</sup>
- A suicide bomber blew himself up inside a home for the elderly, killing two and wounding three persons.<sup>46</sup>
- The chairman of the AMS for the Southern Region, Dean of the Basrah Sunni religious school *Imam Al-Hassan Al-Basri* and Imam at the *Al-Basra Al-Kabeer* mosque was killed by unknown gunmen.<sup>47</sup>
- Hundreds of followers of cleric Mahmoud Sarkhi Al-Hassani attacked the Iranian Consulate in Basrah after a Shiite cleric criticized Al-Hassani on Iranian television as a fake cleric and pawn of Israel.<sup>48</sup>
- A Sunni Arab professor at the College of Chemistry in the University of Basrah was killed on 10 June. Another lecturer at the Basrah University was killed on 15 June. On 21 June gunmen killed the Dean of the *Abdullah Bin Om Kalthoum School* in Al-Zubayr during the final examinations. The dean was reported to have been killed in front of his students.<sup>49</sup>
- A Sunni sheikh was assassinated while on his way to *Al-Hasanain Mosque* in the Al-Mishraq area of Basrah City.<sup>50</sup>
- A car bomb in the main market place of Basrah City left at least 33 people dead and another 55 wounded.<sup>51</sup>

### May 2006:

- A total of nine British soldiers were killed in Basrah during this month. Five were killed when a helicopter crashed after an apparent rocket attack and four others died in two different incidents with roadside bombs.<sup>52</sup> In clashes between UK Forces and Shiite militia members, which erupted after the helicopter crash, five Iraqis were killed.<sup>53</sup>
- A bomb went off at the home of the Basrah Chief of Police.<sup>54</sup>
- A sheikh of the Garamsha tribe was killed by men in police uniform. The killing was blamed on provincial authorities and in an apparent act of revenge tribesmen attacked a police station outside Basrah and killed 10 officers.<sup>55</sup>
- On 10 and 12 May, two Sunni clerics were killed in and near Basrah. On 26 May in Basrah, a Sunni Sheikh was killed reportedly on his way to lead prayers in the Al-Kawaz mosque in Al-Qadimah quarter.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Los Angeles Times, *Oil Rivalry Rocks Basra*, 4 July 2006,

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-basra4jul04.1.5281184.story?coll=la-headlines-world>.

<sup>45</sup> Reuters, *Car bomb hits Iraq's Basra, at least 10 killed*, 23 June 2006,

<http://www.kurdmedia.com/articles.asp?id=12704>.

<sup>46</sup> The Associated Press, *Suicide bomber hits Iraqi home for elderly*, 20 June 2006,

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/06/20/news/basra.php>.

<sup>47</sup> UNAMI, *Human Rights Report 1 May-30 June 2006*, p. 4,

<http://www.uniraq.org/documents/HR%20Report%20May%20Jun%202006%20EN.pdf#search=%22basra%20006%20killed%22>.

<sup>48</sup> The Washington Post, *Rival Shiite Militias Clash in Southern Iraq*, 17 August 2006, The Associated Press, *Iranian consulate attacked over TV show*, 14 June 2006,

[http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2006/06/14/iran\\_consulate\\_attacked\\_over\\_tv\\_show/?rss\\_id=Boston.com+%2F+News](http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2006/06/14/iran_consulate_attacked_over_tv_show/?rss_id=Boston.com+%2F+News).

<sup>49</sup> UNAMI, *Human Rights Report 1 May-30 June 2006*, p. 6,

<http://www.uniraq.org/documents/HR%20Report%20May%20Jun%202006%20EN.pdf#search=%22basra%20006%20killed%22>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> CNN, *Bomb causes carnage at Iraq market*, 3 June 2006,

<http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/06/03/iraq.main/index.html>.

<sup>52</sup> BBC, *Two UK soldiers killed in Basra*, 29 May 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/5026378.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5026378.stm).

<sup>53</sup> [http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/060525\\_lowintensitychron.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/060525_lowintensitychron.pdf).

<sup>54</sup> IRIN, *IRAQ: Basra officials warn of rising sectarian violence*, 23 May 2006,

[http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=53480&SelectRegion=Middle\\_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=53480&SelectRegion=Middle_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ).

<sup>55</sup> The Christian Science Monitor, *Vying for power, militias roil Basra*, 2 June 2006,

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0602/p01s04-woiq.html>.

## April 2006:

- Seven Iraqi workers with a construction company, apparently all Sunni Arabs, were killed in Basrah.<sup>57</sup>
- One British soldier was killed and three injured when a roadside bomb exploded near Ad-Dayr, northwest of Basrah. A few days earlier, four soldiers suffered minor injuries in a suicide bomb attack close to the British logistics base at Shaibah.<sup>58</sup>
- Basrah police found the body of a Sunni ambulance driver, handcuffed and shot in an execution-style.<sup>59</sup>
- The body of a Sunni lecturer from the Basrah Technical Institution was found by police a day after he was seized by gunmen. He was said to have links to the AMS.<sup>60</sup>
- Two mortar rounds exploded near the British Consulate in Basrah during a reception but caused no injuries.<sup>61</sup>
- A roadside bomb blast near an oil pipeline south of Basrah killed two members of Iraq's Facility Protection Services.<sup>62</sup>
- Gunmen shot down six people in a market area of Basrah.<sup>63</sup>
- A Sunni sheikh was killed by armed men when leaving his home in Basrah.<sup>64</sup>

## March 2006

- Drive-by shooters killed a lawyer as she got out of a taxi in Basrah City.<sup>65</sup>
- Drive-by gunmen killed the Head of Basrah's Sunni Endowment's bodyguard, the organization that oversees Sunni religious property in the Governorate.<sup>66</sup>
- An explosion caused by a bomb or mortar at the Southern Oil Company's Basrah Headquarters damaged the fuel section's building.<sup>67</sup>

## February 2006

- A bomb exploded in a Shiite mosque in Basrah, causing minor injuries.<sup>68</sup>
- Gunmen kidnapped three children of a Shiite legislator belonging to the Islamic Dawa Party-Iraq Organization and former head of Basrah's Provincial Council.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> UNAMI, *Human Rights Report 1 May-30 June 2006*, p. 9, <http://www.uniraq.org/documents/HR%20Report%20May%20Jun%202006%20EN.pdf#search=%22basra%20006%20killed%22>.

<sup>57</sup> BBC, *Iraqi construction workers killed*, 14 April 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4909246.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4909246.stm).

<sup>58</sup> BBC, *UK soldier killed in Iraq named*, 16 April 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4914644.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4914644.stm).

<sup>59</sup> The Associated Press, *Kidnap victims freed in Iraq, professor found dead in Basra*, 5 April 2006, <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/003200604051654.htm>.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> The Associated Press, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0602/p01s04-woiq.html>. *Deadly explosions rock Baghdad and Basra as political process stalls*, 4 April 2006, <http://www.newspress.com/Top/Article/article.jsp?Section=WORLD&ID=564711702030321337>.

<sup>62</sup> [Institute for the Analysis of Global Security](http://www.iags.org/iraqpipelinewatch.htm), *Iraq Pipeline Watch*, updated 4 August 2006, <http://www.iags.org/iraqpipelinewatch.htm>.

<sup>63</sup> The Associated Press, *Two car bombs explode in Baghdad, top US, UK officials wrap up Iraq visit*, 3 April 2006, <http://www.canada.com/topics/news/world/story.html?id=bca72e41-9f96-41d3-b046-7fb7e3ae69b1&k=82132>.

<sup>64</sup> Aljazeera, *US helicopter downed near Baghdad*, 2 April 2006, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/99F8C058-606C-4A48-ABB4-D7BCA9BA7839.htm>.

<sup>65</sup> MSNBC, *Gunmen kill eight Iraq oil refinery workers*, 30 March 2006, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12076934/>.

<sup>66</sup> The Associated Press, *Senators to Iraqis: U.S. losing patience*, 25 March 2006,

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2006-03-25-iraq\\_x.htm?POE=NEWISVA](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2006-03-25-iraq_x.htm?POE=NEWISVA).

<sup>67</sup> [Institute for the Analysis of Global Security](http://www.iags.org/iraqpipelinewatch.htm), *Iraq Pipeline Watch*, updated 4 August 2006, <http://www.iags.org/iraqpipelinewatch.htm>.

<sup>68</sup> Centre of Strategic and International Studies, Eric M. Brewer / Sara B. Moller / Stephen S. Lanier, *Low Intensity Conflict and Nation-Building in Iraq: A Chronology*, updated 26 May 2006, p. 103, [http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/060525\\_lowintensitychron.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/060525_lowintensitychron.pdf).

- Police found the bodies of two of Basrah's Head of the Sunni Endowment's two bodyguards.<sup>70</sup>
- Outrage at the attack on the Al-Askari Shrine in Samarra provoked attacks in many parts of Iraq, including Basrah, where gunmen killed 11 people in Mina Prison, all of them suspected Sunni militants.<sup>71</sup> Shia militiamen attacked the headquarters of the Sunni-led *Iraqi Islamic Party* in Basrah, injuring two party members. Several hours later, men wearing black clothing reportedly took the two injured members from the hospital and executed them.<sup>72</sup>
- Stones were thrown at two Sunni mosques and a Sunni shrine was set on fire.<sup>73</sup>
- Three Iraqis working for UK forces at the Shaibah base in Basrah were kidnapped and released the same day.<sup>74</sup>

### **January 2006:**

- Basrah's Governor threatened to suspend dealings with UK forces over security and other issues unless five Iraqi policemen held as suspected insurgents in British custody were released. Several hundred Iraqis demonstrated outside the Governor's Office demanding the release of the detainees.<sup>75</sup>
- An improvised bomb exploded in a market, killing a girl and injuring four people.<sup>76</sup>
- Twenty schoolchildren were wounded, two seriously, when a roadside bomb targeted a British patrol in Basrah.<sup>77</sup>
- British troops arrested 14 police officials suspected of carrying out kidnappings and assassinations.<sup>78</sup>
- Eight coast-guard members were captured by the Iranian navy during a skirmish near Basrah and released after nearly a week. One coast-guard member was reportedly killed in the clash.<sup>79</sup>
- Two US civilians working for a security company were killed in a roadside bombing in Basrah.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> The Associated Press, *Shiites, Sunnis pray for peace as Iraq extends curfew*, 25 February 2006, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2006/02/25/2003294526>.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> BBC, *'Sunni militants' killed in Basra*, 23 February 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4741762.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4741762.stm).

<sup>72</sup> UNAMI, *Human Rights Report, 1 January – 28 February 2006*, p. 2, <http://www.uniraq.org/documents/HR%20Report%20Jan%20Feb%2006%20EN.PDF#search=%22Iraqi%20Islamic%20Party%20basra%202006%22>.

<sup>73</sup> The Telegraph, *Shias take bloody revenge for attack on shrine*, 23 February 2006, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/02/23/wirq23.xml>.

<sup>74</sup> BBC, *UK-base workers seized in Basra*, 15 February 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/4715176.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4715176.stm).

<sup>75</sup> The Washington Post, *Tension Grows between British, Iraqis*, 28 January 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/27/AR2006012701601.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Reuters Alertnet, *Security incidents in Iraq, Jan. 24*, 24 January 2006.

<sup>78</sup> The Washington Post, *An End to the Soft Sell by the British in Basra*, 26 February 2006, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/24/AR2006022402380\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/24/AR2006022402380_pf.html).

<sup>79</sup> BBC, *Iran releases Iraqi coastguards*, 20 January 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4630810.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4630810.stm); Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, *Iran Denies Seizing Iraqi Coast Guards*, 17 January 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/1/BB4108B5-E630-4875-A1C8-B8E5AEE4BCE3.html>.

<sup>80</sup> The Associated Press, *Two U.S. Civilians Killed in Iraq Bombing*, 18 January 2006, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=1518342>.

## b) Security Forces

**The former Iraqi Army, Republican Guard, and Ministry of Defence as well as other security forces were disbanded in 2003** (by CPA Order No. 2) and were replaced by the new Iraqi Army. Prior to 2003, military service was compulsory for all Iraqi males but it is now a voluntary service. Though the new ISF have grown in numbers and are increasingly trained, this has not yet translated into a decrease in violence, and infiltration by militias remains a problem.<sup>81</sup> **The Iraqi National Guard (ING)** was established as a civil protection force which has been merged into the new Iraqi Army.<sup>82</sup> The ING has six battalions across Iraq's four Southern Governorates (Basrah, Missan, Thi-Qar and Muthanna).<sup>83</sup>

The **Iraqi Navy** is critically short of seaworthy ships to patrol potential terrorist targets such as the Basrah Oil Terminal or the Khor Al-Amaya Terminal. At present they are guarded against attack by U.S., British and Australian warships and a lone Iraqi patrol boat that has to sail three hours from Umm Qasr to reach the platforms.<sup>84</sup>

The **Iraqi Police (IP)** in Basrah increased from 5,500 in 2003<sup>85</sup> to 14,000 in January 2006.<sup>86</sup> Members of the Iraqi Police undergo training at an academy in Al-Zubayr or in Jordan before going on duty. There are **approximately 42 police stations in Basrah Governorate**, 16 of which are in Basrah City. The IP Headquarters is currently in Al-Ashar District and additional District Headquarters are located in Al-Rabbat, Al-Hussein and Maqal. The IP's affiliation to radical **militias** is of particular concern and seriously undermines the forces' independence from political interference. In May 2005, Basrah's police chief, Major General Hassan Swadi told The Guardian newspaper that militias were the 'real power' in Basrah and that he trusted only 25% of his force. The General further claimed that the militias were involved in criminal activities, including assassinations of former Ba'athists.<sup>87</sup> In late 2005, the Ministry of Interior closed Basrah's *Internal Affairs Unit*, a police intelligence unit, suspected of carrying out kidnappings and assassinations.<sup>88</sup> In January 2006, the British Forces arrested 14 law enforcement officials, all of them members of the former *Internal Affairs Unit*, for alleged 'corruption, assassinations and persecutions of citizens'.<sup>89</sup> In May 2006, Basrah's Governor suspended the city's police chief Major General Hassan Swadi, a strong supporter of British attempts to purge the force of militia elements, and demanded the

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<sup>81</sup> Reuters, *Iraqi security forces grow, violence doesn't drop*, 21 July 2006,

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/world/iraq/20060721-1139-iraq-usa-forces.html>.

<sup>82</sup> BBC News, *Iraq to dissolve National Guard*, 29 December 2004,

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/middle\\_east/4133039.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/middle_east/4133039.stm).

<sup>83</sup> UK Parliament, *Iraq: An Initial Assessment of Post Conflict Operations: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2004-05*, 27 July 2005, <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmdfence/436/43602.htm>.

<sup>84</sup> Reuters Alertnet, *US, Italy shipyards in lead to build new Iraqi navy*, 11 August 2006.

<sup>85</sup> BBC, *On the beat in Basrah*, 11 September 2003, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/3309547.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3309547.stm).

<sup>86</sup> Report from UK civil police adviser, July 2005.

<sup>87</sup> **Radio** Free Europe/Radio Liberty, *Iraq: Al-Sadr Militia Taking Law Into Own Hands*, 4 November 2005, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/11/35b8bb23-2a15-4275-99ee-b368fde58b0a.html>; The Telegraph, *Police infiltrators hold Basrah in grip of terror*, 28 September 2005, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?jsessionid=MTKM14DD03EJXQFIQMFCFFWAVCBQYIV0?xml=/news/2005/09/28/wirq28.xml>.

<sup>88</sup> The New York Times, *A 'quagmire' as violence upsets efforts to reconstitute Iraq police forces*, 24 May 2006, <http://www.ihl.com/articles/2006/05/22/news/police.php>; The Washington Post, *An End to the Soft Sell By the British in Basra*, 26 February 2006, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/24/AR2006022402380\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/24/AR2006022402380_pf.html).

<sup>89</sup> The Washington Post, *U.S., Iraqi forces beat back insurgent attacks 7 rebels, newsman die; allies unscathed in Ramadi battles*, 26 January 2006, <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2006/01/26/MNGPEGT2H01.DTL>.

resignation of the commander of the Iraqi army's Basrah-based 10<sup>th</sup> Brigade, General Abdul Latif Thaban, accusing them of links to terrorist groups.<sup>90</sup>

**A 24-hour emergency telephone number (115)** is available in Basrah for the public to report criminal acts, terrorism and fire. Calls are responded to by auxiliary police vehicles, which are marked with yellow doors.

**The Iraqi Correctional Service (ICS)** is responsible for running the prisons in Iraq, under the authority of the Ministry of Justice. The ICS was reformed in 2004 and subsequently Basrah Prison, which is located at Maqal Port, was reopened. **If a person is arrested by the ISF, he/she has the right to legal counsel and to have the case heard by an investigative judge within 24 hours.** The investigative judge can extend the period of detention for up to fifteen days after each review, however, the total period of extension cannot exceed six months, after which authorization for further extension has to be obtained from the criminal court responsible. In practice, referrals often occur with delay. Persons arrested by the MNF fall under a different legal regime for arrest and detention, depending on the reason for their arrest (whether they are criminal detainees or security detainees).<sup>91</sup>

**If a member of the public wishes to make a complaint** against a member of the IP, it should be addressed to the investigative judge or made in writing to the Inspector General for South Iraq based at Basrah IP Headquarters.

**UK military forces have around 7,200 troops in Southern Iraq, mostly in Basrah Governorate, providing support to the ISF.** In late September 2005, British forces handed over their main base in the city of Basrah to the Iraqi military to allow it to take over the main security duties there.<sup>92</sup> The Brigade's mandate is to support Security Sector Reform (SSR) and to assist the ISF to provide security in the region. The UK's Commons Defence Committee warned recently that British armed forces in Iraq are overstretched and face 'serious problems' with their equipment.<sup>93</sup> Since June 2003, the MNF's presence in Iraq has been at the request of the Iraqi authorities and authorized by the UN Security Council. In November 2005, the UN Security Council, upon request of the Iraqi Transitional Government, unanimously extended the **MNF's mandate** for another year until the end of 2006, subject to a review no later than 15 June 2006.<sup>94</sup> On 15 June 2006, members of the UN Security Council upon request of Iraq's Government (letter from Foreign Minister Zebari dating 9 June 2006), agreed the continuation of the mandate of the MNF.<sup>95</sup>

In August 2006, a senior British military commander said that British forces could **hand over responsibility for security** in Basrah Governorate to the Iraqi Government within nine to twelve months. He also said that British Forces could be cut from their current level of 7,200 troops to around 4,000 troops by the middle of 2007. However, he also acknowledged that '(t)here are rogue elements linked to people committing illicit killings, some of them

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<sup>90</sup> Aljazeera, *Basra police chief suspended*, 13 May 2006, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/749420DA-746E-43EE-B60D-00E02621DFC7.htm>.

<sup>91</sup> For further information see UNHCR, *Country of Origin Information Iraq*, October 2005 <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/openssl.pdf?tbl=RSDCOI&id=435637914>.

<sup>92</sup> The Press Association, *British hand over control of Basra*, 29 September 2005, <http://news.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=2014112005>.

<sup>93</sup> Politics.co.uk, *UK forces in Iraq 'overstretched and under-resourced'*, 10 August 2006, <http://www.politics.co.uk/printerfriendly.aspx?itemid=447193>; BBC, *Iraq 'challenges' for UK forces*, 10 August 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/politics/4780707.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/4780707.stm).

<sup>94</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 1637 (2005)*, 11 November 2005, [http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc\\_resolutions05.htm](http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions05.htm).

<sup>95</sup> UN Security Council, *Security Council Press Statement on Review of Multinational Force, Development Fund for Iraq Mandates*, SC/8752 IK/548, 15 June 2006, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8752.doc.htm>.

alarming close to the government structure' and that any handover would depend on the security situation and on an agreement with the Iraqi government. He suggested that even after a handover of security duties, the UK would maintain a presence in Iraq, probably in the form of one or two bases around Basra City.<sup>96</sup> In addition, Denmark has 535 troops stationed in Basrah, and it is expected to begin drawing down its forces this year.<sup>97</sup>

### c) UXO and Mines<sup>98</sup>

**Mines and UXO (unexploded ordnance) are prevalent along borders with Iran and Kuwait as a result of military positions abandoned after the Iran-Iraq and Gulf Wars. They have also been identified at Al-Zubayr, Burjesia and Shuaiba.** The Iraq Landmine Impact Survey, which was undertaken by the MoPDC/National Mine Action Authority through the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, has documented almost **1,800 km<sup>2</sup> of land 'contaminated' with mines and UXO in Basrah Governorate** (almost 9% of Basrah's total land area).<sup>99</sup>

**The authority responsible for mines and UXO clearance in Basrah** is the Iraqi Civil Defence (the fire service). **A Regional Mine Action Centre** is also located in Basrah City and is coordinated by the National Mine Action Authority. **Other organizations involved in mine/UXO clearance in Basrah Governorate** include the Danish Demining Group (an NGO), the MNF and ISF. Mine awareness training for returnees coming back to Iraq is being conducted by UNHCR through one of its partner organizations. The Danish Demining Group has been working on the border between Iraq and Kuwait since 2004 and has defused some ten thousand UXOs. Their objective is to clear the area during 2007.

### d) Freedom of Movement<sup>100</sup>

**Basrah Governorate has two external border crossing points: Al-Shalamsha crossing point located 30 km east of Basrah City on the border with Iran and Safwan crossing point located south of Basrah City on the border with Kuwait.** Persons can freely return across these border crossing points as long they have a passport or Iraqi identity card. Returnees travelling spontaneously across external borders risk hijacking, arrest by authorities or injury from mines/UXO.

**Basrah Governorate has internal boundaries with the Governorates of Thi-Qar, Missan and Muthanna.** Identification such as a food ration card must be displayed at the Governorate's internal boundaries within Iraq. Returnees and refugees have been refused access at internal boundary checkpoints for having inaccurate or insufficient documentation.

A traffic branch of the IP controls the flow of traffic in Basrah City. Members of the traffic police wear a uniform consisting of a white shirt, a white belt and a white-topped cap. There are **a number of permanent vehicle checkpoints** around Basrah City, all of which are manned by uniformed IP officers. **Unofficial or illegal checkpoints** should be reported to the IP.

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<sup>96</sup> BBC, *Basra handover 'feasible' in 2007*, 22 August 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/5274430.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/5274430.stm).

<sup>97</sup> Aaron Glantz, *Basra Explodes*, 25 May 2006, <http://www.antiwar.com/glantz/?articleid=9039>.

<sup>98</sup> UXO and mines sources of information include: the National Mine Authority and UNHCR.

<sup>99</sup> MoPDC/UNDP, *Iraq Living Conditions Survey*, April 2005, <http://www.iq.undp.org/ILCS/PDF/Tabulation%20Report%20-%20Englilsh.pdf>.

<sup>100</sup> Freedom of movement sources of information include: Implementing partners, Border Authorities, MNF and returnees.

During the one month state of emergency in June 2006, a curfew was imposed in Basrah City, lasting from 22.00 until 6.00. **Currently, there are no official curfews in place** in Basrah but residents of both Basrah City and outlying areas say that people rarely travel after dark because of safety concerns.

## II. Legal Issues<sup>101</sup>

### A. Justice System

**The Main House of Justice** in Basrah Governorate is located in Al-Ashar, Basrah City. It was severely damaged by fire and looted in 2003, and although partly renovated is still awaiting full reconstruction. The building includes:

- **The Felony Court**
- **The Appeal Court**
- **The Juvenile Court**
- **The First Instance Courts for Basrah City**
- **The Governorate Headquarters for Land Registry**
- **The Notary Public's Office**
- **The Enforcement Office**
- **The Orphans/Juvenile Assets Directorate**

**District First Instance Courts** are located at:

- **Shatt Al-Arab**
- **Al-Zubayr** (also including enforcement office and land registry)
- **Safwan**
- **Abu Al-Khasib**
- **Al-Fao**
- **Al-Qurnah**
- **Al-Medaina**

**The number of staff working in the courts** is considered low for the number of cases admitted to Basrah's court system. The Penal and Appeal Courts have three full-time judges each, and all other courts have one judge. Cases are heard by an investigation judge within 24 hours from the time of arrest. Processing the case to the relevant court may however take up to six months.

**The Basrah Court of Appeal** deals with appeals against decisions from the civil or criminal courts. In circumstances of extreme sensitivity, cases can also be referred to the Court of Appeal in Baghdad.

Under Ba'athist rule the judiciary was seriously marginalized, because of both the control exercised by the executive branch and the presence of military and special courts that operated outside the regular judicial system. All senior judges were Ba'ath Party members and most legal officials were at least nominal members. In addition, the regular judicial system was weakened by the regime's encouragement of the use of tribal courts in order to garner support from tribal leaders. A Legal Needs Assessment Mission carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and others in August 2003 came to the

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<sup>101</sup> Legal issues sources of information include: LAIC, Ministry of Justice, Bar Association, University Legal Departments, Ministry of Human Rights, Ministry of Interior and Iraq Property Claims Commission (IPCC) / Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Claims (CRRPD).

conclusion that during the last 30 years the Iraqi legal system had become ‘chronically dysfunctional’, with corruption, torture and other abuses being endemic.<sup>102</sup>

**In 2003, necessary judicial reform commenced.** The Judicial Review Committee undertook the necessary vetting of judges and prosecutors. **The Bar Association** in Basrah has been reformed since 2003 and advocates for improved counsel for defence lawyers. Communication with the Council of Judges and the police force is considered to have improved since 2003.<sup>103</sup> **Ombudsmen**, who would investigate corruption and outside interference in court affairs, are not currently present in Basrah’s courts. However, the Office of the General Attorney has offices in every Iraqi Governorate, and carries out this function to a certain degree. Some courts have only one judge carrying out both investigative and trial functions, which raises questions regarding their independence and outcomes of judicial reviews. Furthermore, external influence from political groups and tribes remains high, affecting the courts’ abilities to remain impartial and to provide fair trials.

## **B. Restitution of Property Claims**

The Iraq Property Claims Commission (IPCC) was established on 1 July 2004 as a means for dealing with illegal property confiscation that had occurred in Iraq. A revision to the IPCC statute was published on 10 March 2006 changing the name of the IPCC to the Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Disputes (CRRPD). The jurisdiction of the CRRPD runs from 17 July 1968 to 9 April 2003 and covers the following types of properties:

- *Properties that were confiscated and seized for political, ethnic reasons or on the basis of religion or religious doctrine or any other events resulting from the policies of the previous regime of ethnic, sectarian and nationalist displacement.*
- *Properties that were seized without consideration or appropriated with manifest injustice or in violation of the legal practices adopted for property acquisition. Exception is made to the properties that were seized pursuant to the law of agricultural reform, the cases of in kind compensation and appropriation for purposes of public use and which were actually utilized for public use.*
- *The State real properties that were allocated to the factions of the previous regime without consideration or for a symbolic amount.*

**The CRRPD office** is based at the Basrah Court House and has been processing property claims in the Governorate since May 2004. **The CRRPD office provides assistance with the completion and filing of claims.** It also collects evidence from the appropriate real estate registry and government offices, holds hearings and requests additional evidence on aspects of claims that need further clarification.

Between May 2004 and 31 August 2006, the **CRRPD office in Basrah received 1,859 claims, of which 948 have been settled** (of the 948 cases, 602 claims were rejected, 220 claimants had their property returned and 122 received compensation). Most of the settled claims were directed against the government (789 out of 948).<sup>104</sup> The Basrah CRRPD office is currently staffed by six claims administrators, four attorneys and four office management staff. **Property restitution claims in Basrah can take over a year to process** and poor coordination between government departments often slows applications. An initial deadline

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<sup>102</sup> UNAMI/OHCHR, *Building and Strengthening the National Human Rights Protection System in Iraq*, December 2004, p. 50.

<sup>103</sup> Criminal Justice Conference Southern Iraq, 12 December 2004.

<sup>104</sup> CRRPD, *The Weekly General Information Form*, 31 August 2006.

of 30 June 2005 for the submission of claims was extended for two more years, until 30 June 2007.

**To submit a claim to the CRRPD, a claimant should submit the following documents to any CRRPD Office,<sup>105</sup> preferably to the one nearest to the real property in question:**

- A completed CRRPD claim form (in Arabic or Kurdish);<sup>106</sup>
- Originals of supporting documentation;
- Copies of supporting documentation;<sup>107</sup>
- A valid identification document (for claimant and/or representative);
- Evidence of representation signed by the claimant (if a representative is submitting the claim).

Claims from persons in Iraq must be filed in person or through a legally authorized representative.

**Property claims can also be submitted abroad.** Out-of-country claimants (or their representative) can file their claims with Iraqi embassies and consular offices as with any CRRPD office in Iraq, either in person or through a legally authorized representative.

The same documentation is required as for the submission of in-country claims.<sup>108</sup>

There is no fee for filing a claim, both for in-country and out-of-country claims.

**The Property Registration Department in the Ministry of Justice** has re-opened in Basrah but has not been reformed since 2003, when many of the records were damaged or lost during looting. **An original document issued by the Real Estate Registry Authority confirming property ownership is usually required** to register a claim; if this is not available, a new letter is required from the Registry Office in Basrah confirming that the property was previously registered in the claimant's name. Where returnees have had their nationality, personal records and assets erased by the former regime, access to entitlements has been very difficult to ascertain (see below *'Reacquisition of Nationality'*).

Offices are open from 08.00-15.00, Saturday to Thursday. For additional assistance in completing the forms, claimants and respondents may contact the CRRPD from 8.00-15.00 (Baghdad time) at the following mobile numbers until further notice: **+9647901945767**.<sup>109</sup>

### **C. Reacquisition of Nationality**

**There are two documents in Iraq confirming Iraqi nationality:**

- **Nationality certificate**
- **Civil ID card.**

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<sup>105</sup> A list of CRRPD offices in Iraq and their contacts can be found at <http://www.ipcciraq.org/en/contactus.php>.

<sup>106</sup> The claim form is available at any IPCC/CRRPD Office, Iraqi embassies and consular offices and can be downloaded at <http://www.ipcciraq.org/en/forms05.php>.

<sup>107</sup> Examples of supporting documentation include: property registration certificates, land contracts, certificates of the transfer of title, tax documentation and utility bills. Copies of the supporting documentation will be certified and submitted with the claim form after the originals are presented to and verified by CRRPD or Iraqi embassy/consular staff. Originals of documentation should not be submitted.

<sup>108</sup> For further guidance, see CRRPD, *Procedures for Persons Living Outside of Iraq*, <http://www.ipcciraq.org/en/outofcountry.php>.

<sup>109</sup> CRRPD, *Contact us*, <http://www.ipcciraq.org/en/contactus.php>.

**Persons whose nationality was withdrawn by the former regime should apply for these two documents. In the process, their entitlement to nationality will be checked. UNHCR's Legal Aid and Information Centre (LAIC) and the MoDM Basrah Branch Office, both located in Basrah City, can assist with reacquisition of nationality by advocating on behalf of individual applicants to the authorities.**

**Applications to obtain the nationality certificate must be submitted to the Nationality and Travel Directorate/Ministry of Interior (MoI) in Basrah. An investigation into the reasons for loss of nationality** will be carried out by the Nationality and Travel Directorate in Basrah and a request for reacquisition will be sent to the MoI in Baghdad where a final verification is carried out. **Accordingly, applicants are required to go to Baghdad in person for the documents to be approved.** Final investigations in Baghdad can take anything from a week to several months to process, in part due to the destruction of individual census documents during the 2003 bombing of the Central Ministry of Planning or in the looting that followed the fall of the former regime.<sup>110</sup>

**Applications to obtain the civil ID card** must be submitted to one of the six Civil Affairs offices/MoI in Basrah Governorate, it can usually be obtained within a few days.

Procedures to reacquire the nationality card as well as the civil ID card are described under *Section D. Documentation*.

#### **D. Documentation**

**This section contains information on the issuance/renewal of identity documents, travel documents, passports, visas, birth, death and marriage certificates, and social welfare cards, etc.**

The nationality certificate and civil ID card are the most urgently needed forms of documentation for returning refugees as they restore the right to access all entitlements of Iraqi citizenship. Returnees still carrying old Iraqi documentation are able to renew documents easily. For those without these documents, further investigation into records must be carried out to prove entitlement. A non-Iraqi (e.g. Iranian) spouse of a returnee can apply for all the documents listed below except the civil ID card and the nationality certificate, which he/she may qualify for after legally remaining in Iraq for five years according to current Iraqi Nationality Law.

##### Civil ID cards

Civil ID cards, which are used in order to obtain most official documents, **can be renewed within a few days at any of the six Civil Affairs offices/MoI in Basrah Governorate.** Politically sensitive cases can be submitted to the Central ID Office in Baghdad. A request should be forwarded to the ID Offices, and the following documents are required:

- Iraqi birth certificate. If the applicant is born outside Iraq, a new birth certificate approved by the Personal Status Court is required. In order to obtain a new birth certificate, the applicant needs the parent's marriage certificate or any other document that confirms the parent's marriage (e.g. parent's civil ID card);
- An official letter from the Civil Status Office in the applicant's hometown, listing the members of the family (*Sourat Qaid*);
- Food ration card;

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<sup>110</sup> The New York Times, *Fewer Iraqi Men: Dead or Undercounted?*, 8 August 2003, <http://www.genocidewatch.org/IraqAugust8DeadMen.htm>.

- Letter from the Municipal Council confirming the applicant's residency;
- Father's, uncle's or grand-father's citizenship card; if none of these documents are available, different procedures will apply involving the Baghdad ID and Nationality office;
- Two personal photographs.

The fees for the issuance of the civil ID card amounts to 3,000 ID.

#### Nationality Certificates

Nationality certificates, needed for most official purposes, can be applied for at the Directorate of Nationality and Travel. The process normally takes several days after an application is submitted. However, delays of several weeks or months can occur in cases where the original records have been lost or destroyed and the application needs to be referred to the Headquarters in Baghdad. The following documents are required:

- An official letter from the Civil Status Office in the applicant's hometown, listing the members of the family (*Sourat Qaid*);
- Civil ID card;
- Food ration card;
- Letter from the Municipal Council confirming the applicant's residency;
- Two personal photographs.

The fees for the issuance of the nationality certificate amounts to 3,000 ID. Other costs incurred for transportation, copying and stamps and may exceed 30,000 ID.

#### Passports

Passports can be applied for at the Passport and Residence Office in Basrah City. Applications usually take about 1-3 weeks to be processed, and passports are valid for two years. The following documents are required:

- Civil ID card;
- Nationality certificate;
- Food ration card;
- Letter from the Municipal Council confirming the applicant's residency;
- Four personal photographs on white background.

A cheque for 25,000 ID addressed to the Directorate of Nationality and Travel needs to be submitted with the application.

**Non-Iraqi spouses of Iraqi returnees should register with the Passport and Residence Office in Basrah** in line with Article 3 of the Foreigner Residence Law. Initial registration lasts for three months, after which non-Iraqi spouses need to extend their residency every year. After five years of continuous legal residency, non-Iraqi spouses can apply for Iraqi citizenship under certain criteria (Article 11 of the new Iraqi Nationality Law No. 26). Registration requires the spouse to have a valid passport, visa and proof of entry through an official Iraqi border crossing point. This has caused difficulties for many who travelled to Iraq illegally and did not use an official crossing point, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the 2003 conflict. If non-Iraqi spouses do not register and do not have the necessary documents, their stay in Iraq is considered illegal and they are subject to detention and deportation. Please see Section *IV.A - Spontaneous Repatriation Procedures* for information on how unregistered non-Iraqi persons in Iraq can become registered.

### Marriage Certificates

Marriage certificates are issued by the Personal Status Courts, usually the next day. The following documents are required:

- Civil ID cards of both spouses;
- Civil ID cards of both spouses;
- Nationality certificate of both spouses;
- Husband's food ration card;
- Residency card;
- Letter from the Municipal Council confirming applicants' residency;
- Medical report for both spouses issued by the local hospital.

Marriage certificates are issued for free.

### Birth Certificates

Birth Certificates are required for the issuance of a civil ID card, to add children to the food ration card, to facilitate the registration of children at school and to apply for social welfare benefits. Birth certificates are issued by the Ministry of Health's (MoH) Births/Deaths Administrative Offices, which are located in Public Hospitals, and are usually issued within two days. To apply for a new birth certificate, a citizen is required to go to his/her place of origin. This creates hurdles for returnees and IDPs who may not be able to travel to their place of birth for economic, security or other reasons. The following documents are required:

- Civil ID cards of both parents.

Birth certificates are issued for free, however returnee parents applying for Iraqi birth certificates for their children born abroad may require authorisation from the Personal Status Courts which can cost about 1,500 - 3,000 ID.

### Death Certificates

Death certificates, which are needed in order to obtain retirement benefits for a person's surviving spouse or children, as well as for inheritance purposes, are issued by the MoH Births/Deaths Administrative Offices which are located in Public Hospitals. Death certificates are usually issued the same day. The following documents are required:

- Medical report;
- Civil ID card of the deceased person;
- Food ration card of the deceased person.

The issuance of death certificates is free.

Returnees with relatives who died while abroad should apply for a death certificate in the host country before returning. If they do not have a death certificate from the host country, they must get authorisation through the Personal Status Courts, which will issue a death certificate. This may involve costs up to 30,000 ID for legal representation and court fees.

### Food Ration Card (PDS Card)

Returnees from abroad applying for the PDS food ration card for the first time should provide any Ministry of Trade (MoT) Office with the following documents:

- Civil ID card of all family members;
- Residence confirmation letter from the Municipal Council.

Applications usually take about thirty days to be processed, and registration is free. In order to include/exclude a newborn/deceased person from a family’s food ration card, a copy of the relevant birth/death certificate must be sent to the PDS centre. Those who return within Iraq should de-register and then re-register at their place of new residence with the nearest MoT office.

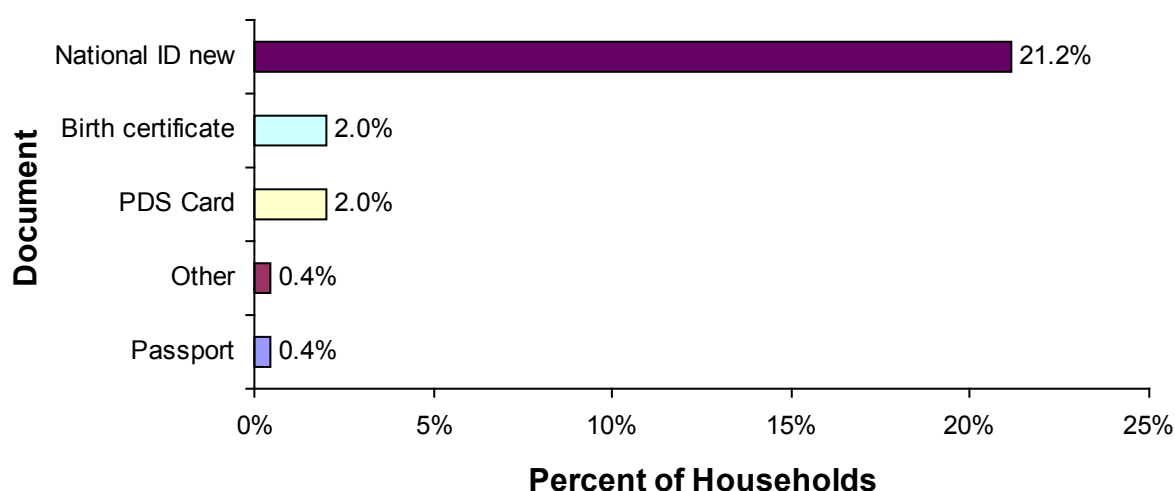
### Social Security Applications

Social security applications are processed through MoLSA (see Section on *Public Services*).

Returnees lacking other forms of documentation may need the death certificate or an ID card of their father or grandfather to prove their Iraqi identity or right to inherit property. Under these circumstances, a search of identity and death certificate records may have to be conducted in the ID offices in Basrah City or Baghdad which can result in long delays to applications.

**Figure 1: Documents that monitored returnees had trouble renewing**

(Sample of 2,031 returnee households)



### **E. Human Rights**<sup>111</sup>

**The newly established Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) opened an office in Basrah Governorate in the central MoLSA office on 27 October 2004.** The MoHR catalogues the atrocities of the former regime and works with returnees, political prisoners and victims of human rights abuses. It is also investigating the thousands of missing persons, mass grave sites and gathering evidence regarding the drainage of the Iraqi Marshlands. The MoHR seeks to educate Iraqis on human rights and has been working with schools and authorities, including the Iraqi Correctional Service (responsible for administering the prisons) and the Iraqi Police.

<sup>111</sup> Human rights sources of information include: Ministry of Human Rights and international media.

**Political organizations**, persecuted and banned from operating in Iraq under the former regime, have had an established presence in Basrah since 2003. The Political Prisoners Union has an office in Basrah to advocate on behalf of people imprisoned as political opponents of the former regime.

While many Iraqis no longer face legal obstacles in exercising their human rights and can make use of their new freedoms, the precarious security situation and the population's embrace of strict Islamic values, often enforced by religious militias, are major obstacles to the full enjoyment of these rights. **Politically or sectarian-motivated assassinations** have been reported in the Governorate (see the *Security and Public Order* Section).

**Minority religious groups** have expressed concern that the establishment and growth of religious groups, political groups and militias in Basrah since 2003 has impacted on their ability to pursue their traditions, customs and ways of life. Chaldo-Assyrian and Mandaean community members have been killed in Basrah, and consider themselves a vulnerable group in Iraqi society because of their limited financial means and lack of tribal links to protect their members.<sup>112</sup> Many have fled the area, either abroad or to areas under the administration of the Kurdish Regional Government. **Minority tribal and ethnic groups are more vulnerable to persecution** and criminality because they lack the support and protection of influential powers such as political parties, militias or tribes. As a result of escalating **sectarian violence** after the 22 February 2006 Samarra bombing, members of the Sunni Muslim community have fled Basrah Governorate to mainly Sunni-dominated areas in Central Iraq (see also *Security and Public Order* for further information).

**Women's participation in social and political life** in Iraq is recognized in the establishment of a National Women's Commission and the inclusion of women in electoral legislation. However, in Southern Iraq, women have reported deteriorating opportunities for active participation in society, education and employment, as well as increased pressure to adhere to conservative traditions, including dress codes (see also the *Security and Public Order* Section). There is currently an absence of services for women within the judicial or security systems in Basrah Governorate. Police stations rarely have a female staff member, lawyer or health adviser available for women to speak with. Furthermore, there are no institutions providing legal advice, social counselling, mediation programmes or shelter for women at risk of domestic violence, including 'honour killings'.

A number of journalists, professors, teachers and judges as well as people working with the Iraqi Government, Security Forces and the MNF have been assassinated in the Governorate of Basrah. In addition, former members of the Ba'ath Party have been targeted (see also the *Security and Public Order* Section).

## **IV. Housing/Land / Employment / Infrastructure / Public Services**

### **A. Housing / Land**<sup>113</sup>

**Since 2003 rising demand for housing in Basrah City has increased the cost of construction, purchase and rental property.** Property construction prices are thought to

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<sup>112</sup> The Assyrian Academic Society, *Chaldo-Assyrians of Iraq and the Iraqi Interim Constitution*, March 2004, <http://www.aina.org/reports/catal.pdf>.

<sup>113</sup> Housing and land sources of information include: Ministry of Housing, UN-Habitat, UNOPS, IOM and international media.

have tripled and rental prices doubled between April 2003 and 2005. However, due to the flight of members of minority groups from Basrah and the greater availability of housing, rental prices decreased again in 2006. **There is a shortage of available land for building new housing** in Basrah because of the high water table, which also regularly damages existing building foundations. **Any new construction must first be granted planning permission from the MoPDC and the Municipality Office in Basrah.** Applications for planning permission require proof of nationality, which returnees may not have or which could be pending renewal. Lack of property documentation further inhibits returnees' chances of finding secure housing opportunities and further contributes to the cycle of Iraqis returning from abroad into displacement.

**A former Governor of Basrah estimated the city's need for additional housing at over 250,000 units and the UNDP/MoPDC Iraq Living Conditions Survey (ILCS) showed that 'among Iraq's Governorates, Basrah stands out with 40% of all households unsatisfied with their level of privacy'.<sup>114</sup>**

A pilot project of 20 houses, funded by the CPA and managed by the Ministry of Housing and Construction (MoHC) was completed in Basrah City in 2004. The MoHC, the Ministry of Works and Municipalities and MoDM have plans for additional housing projects for returnees or displaced persons.

**UNHCR Returnee monitoring indicates that housing is a key priority for returning refugees. Constraints in finding suitable housing contribute to the vulnerability of returnees and complicate reintegration opportunities.** Some returnees found that the bricks of their houses in Basrah had been looted. UNHCR Returnee Monitoring showed that returnees and IDPs in Basrah Governorate faced the following constraints in finding housing:

- Misappropriation of property by the former regime;
- Loss of assets while abroad;
- A highly inflated property market;
- Illegal occupation of previously owned property;
- Damage caused during conflict or looting.

UNHCR Returnee Monitoring found that returnee housing in Basrah is predominantly made of brick and cement in the cities, and mud brick in rural areas. However, **in Basrah City, returnees can be found sheltering under plastic sheeting, in tents, in temporary structures on public land and in buildings that have been bombed and are now structurally unstable and at risk from UXOs.** These buildings include, but are not limited to, former intelligence and military buildings, the building next to the Central Bank, the area around Maqal Port and the train station. According to MoDM, more than 9,000 IDP families were registered in Basrah before June 2006.

**The most poverty-affected returnees are those least able to afford or apply for housing** and often seek temporary accommodation with relatives or occupy derelict government buildings. Returnees living in disused government buildings are at risk from eviction notices from authorities needing to restore government services and also from exploitation by people or organizations who charge illegal rent.

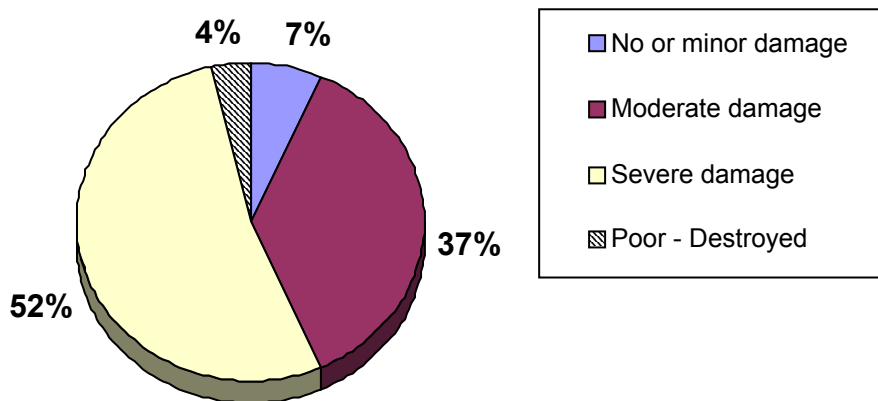
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<sup>114</sup> MoPDC/UNDP, *Iraq Living Conditions Survey*, April 2005, <http://www.iq.undp.org/ILCS/PDF/Tabulation%20Report%20-%20English.pdf>.

UNHCR Returnee Monitoring revealed that over half of the returnees live in accommodation that has been severely damaged or completely destroyed. Another 37 percent live in accommodation that requires rehabilitation (see *Figure 2*).

**Figure 2: Condition of housing according to returnee households monitored**

(Sample of 2,005 returnee households)



## B. Employment and Economy<sup>115</sup>

**The economy of Basrah Governorate is mainly based on the refining and export of oil and chemicals** and the commerce of merchants through the ports at Umm Qasr, Al-Fao, Khur Al-Zubayr, Abu Fuloos and Maqal. **Construction and trade in electrical goods** have been considered growth sectors for employment in Basrah Governorate since 2003. **Date production and agriculture** also form important employment sectors.

**Basrah’s regional economy has been affected by the closure of state-owned enterprises and a reduction in public sector employment.** The fertilizer and cement factories in Basrah are functioning but the future of other state-owned factories is uncertain and they await possible privatization.

**Unemployment in Basrah Governorate is estimated by local officials to be approximately 60%. On 14 March 2004, MoLSA opened an Employment Centre in Basrah City.** Over 10,000 unemployed persons were registered in the first year of the Centre’s operation. Unemployed persons can register in the Ministry’s database, which is linked to a national database across Iraq. However, the shortage of employment opportunities in the Governorate as well as the large number of unemployed men has meant that MoLSA is unable to find jobs for the majority of people registered.

Although salaries have generally increased since 2003, **disposable income** has not increased to the same extent because benefits have been cut in some sectors and living costs have increased.<sup>116</sup> On several occasions since 2003, Labour Unions including the Southern Oil Company Union and the Basrah Oil Company Union have demonstrated for increased pay and benefits.

<sup>115</sup> Employment and economy sources of information include: MoT, MoLSA, Unemployment Registration Offices, Ministry for Municipalities and Public Works and international media.

<sup>116</sup> MoPDC/UNDP, *Iraq Living Conditions Survey*, April 2005, <http://www.iq.undp.org/ILCS/PDF/Tabulation%20Report%20-%20Englilsh.pdf>.

**Returnees previously employed in the public sector** have had difficulty finding positions within the new administration in Basrah. However, a directive by the National Council allowing former political refugees to be reinstated in previously held public sector positions has helped overcome this problem.

**Returnees have found employment in companies trading between Iraq and their former host countries**, particularly Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. As import/export legislation changes in Iraq, returnees working in these sectors must be careful to ensure that they are working within the law. Returnees working in this sector will also be affected by possible changes to import/export tariffs. For example, in July 2005 Basrah Governorate recently imposed a 7% tariff fee on imports handled by the Southern Iraqi ports.<sup>117</sup>

**Women's organizations in Basrah have reported that opportunities for the employment of women have decreased in Basrah** since 2003. The reduction of public sector jobs has meant that women are often the first to be replaced or laid off. Furthermore, women receive lower wages than their male counterparts and their opportunities for promotion are fewer. Opportunities for women in Basrah are reportedly being increasingly restricted to the service sector and administrative positions.

### **C. Infrastructure and Communications**<sup>118</sup>

**The infrastructure of Basrah Governorate has experienced severe under-investment and negligence over the last 30 years.** Most public services are operational but have limited reach or effectiveness and need adapting to the evolving needs of the new Iraq and its people. **Slow reconstruction, the reform of service provision, clarification of roles and legislation, delays to financial budgets and poor security have impacted public service delivery in Basrah Governorate.**

**Basrah Governorate has a Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works Office** which contains the Departments of Administration, Sewerage, Design, Construction, Water, Planning and Municipal Affairs. The MoHC and the Directorate of Roads and Bridges are responsible for housing, public buildings and roads.

#### **a) Water**

**Repairs to water resources and water distribution networks in Basrah Governorate have been ongoing since 2003, but water produced by pumping stations is thought to deliver only 50% of water needed in the area.**<sup>119</sup> The current consumption of water is approximately 50 litres per household per day in the cities and 20 litres per household per day in the outlying districts.

**In Basrah Governorate, UNHCR Returnee monitoring indicated that water tankers and reverse osmosis stations** are the main sources of water in urban areas, while **rivers and streams** were found to be the main sources of water for monitored villages in rural areas.

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<sup>117</sup> Azzaman Newspaper, *Basrah imposes tariff fees on goods entering ports*, 19 July 2005.

<sup>118</sup> Infrastructure and Communication sources of information include: UNDP, UNICEF, Ministry of Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Electricity, Ministry of Oil and Fuel.

<sup>119</sup> Ministry of Water and Sanitation Directorate, Basrah.

## b) Electricity

**Repairs have been made to Al-Hartha and Najibeya Power Plants in Basrah Governorate which service the whole of Iraq through the national grid.** The looting of electrical pylons and essential equipment has delayed repair work. The electricity network needs extensive repairs and expansion if it is to serve the increased electricity needs in Iraq resulting from greater population density and the increased use of electrical appliances since 2003. In April 2006, the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity announced that it has started operations at the **Khor Al-Zubayr Power Plant**, providing an additional 250 megawatts of power generation to the Iraqi national power grid.<sup>120</sup>

Basrah City suffers from **acute power shortages**, electricity supply is sporadic and usually delivered in three hour windows throughout the day. Many rural areas do not have any access to electricity. Provincial electricity officials estimate Basrah's needs for power at 550 megawatts; however, there are only about 150 megawatts available for Basrah's nearly two million inhabitants. A part of the deficit, 175 megawatts, is to be covered by supplies from Iran on the basis of an agreement concluded between the Government of Iran and Basrah's Governorate Council in May 2006.<sup>121</sup> The ongoing electricity and fuel crisis has led to a number of protests in Basrah, most recently on 17 August 2006.

## c) Fuel

**Natural gas, gasoline and diesel for cars, and heating oil** are the main fuels needed in Basrah Governorate. **Natural gas is the main source of cooking and heating.** There is no national network of natural gas supply but the Ministry of Oil and Fuel operates a distribution system of natural gas to some areas in the Governorate. Natural gas is mainly available in Basrah through the private sale of natural gas bottles.

In December 2005, the government began to gradually increase the price of petrol as well as cooking and heating fuel. This was a response to the International Monetary Fund's demand for an increase in Iraq's heavily subsidized fuel prices before it would consider writing off the country's debts.<sup>122</sup> Regular gasoline rose from 20 ID to 150-350 ID.<sup>123</sup>

**The sabotage of oil and fuel pipelines creates frequent shortages** of fuel and has resulted in the rapid escalation of prices through black-market sales.

## d) Telephone/Internet

**National Iraqi telephone land lines are operating in Basrah Governorate** for calls across

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<sup>120</sup> Portal Iraq, *Khor Az Zubayr power plant begins official operations – Iraq*, 5 April 2006, <http://www.iraqieconomy.org/home/infra/electricity/press/20060405>.

<sup>121</sup> Azzaman Newspaper, *Iran to supply Basra with electricity*, 30 May 2006, <http://www.iraqieconomy.org/home/infra/electricity/pressimports/20060530>.

<sup>122</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, *Oil Woes Continue*, 6 January 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/reports/iraq-report/2006/01/1-060106.asp>.

<sup>123</sup> Violent demonstrations broke out in Basrah after the government raised the prices of gasoline and other petroleum products in December 2005. Drivers blocked roads and burned tires near fuel stations and hundreds of Iraqis demonstrated outside the Governor's headquarters to protest the price increases, see The Associated Press, *Protests erupt in Iraq after fuel hike*, 20 December 2005, [http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2005/12/20/protests\\_erupt\\_in\\_iraq\\_after\\_fuel\\_hike/](http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2005/12/20/protests_erupt_in_iraq_after_fuel_hike/); Reuters Alertnet, *Iraqis protest as government hikes fuel prices*, 19 December 2005; Also see The New York Times, *Weary Iraqis Face New Foe: Rising Prices*, 26 August 2006, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/26/world/middleeast/26iraq.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/26/world/middleeast/26iraq.html?_r=1&oref=slogin).

Iraq but not for international calls. **Mobile network coverage in Basrah** and across Southern Iraq is provided by the Atheer network. Network providers operating in other parts of the country (Asia cell and Iraqna) have also extended coverage to Basrah. Mobile phones are the preferred form of telephone communication and have the ability to make international calls. The land line telephone code for Basrah Governorate is (040).

**Internet service providers** can install private internet connections in Basrah and there are numerous Internet Cafés in Basrah City.

#### e) Post

Each district in Basrah has a post office operated by the Ministry for Communications, open from 09.00 – 13.00 Saturday to Thursday. **Postal Services** are available at all postal offices although postal services are unreliable and rarely used. The cost of posting a letter from Basrah to Baghdad is 500 ID.<sup>124</sup> Registered services are currently not operating in Basrah Governorate. **Current and savings accounts** are available at post offices, but are not widely used. **Post offices are also responsible for distribution of pensions and employment benefits** to former state employees as allocated through MoLSA.

#### f) Banking and Money Transfers

**The Central Bank, the Rasheed Bank and the Rafidan Bank are Iraq's main public banks, all of which maintain branch offices in Basrah.** A number of private banks, including Al-Basrah and the Middle East Bank, also have branches in Basrah City. Bank accounts can be established with all banks with the provision of proof of nationality. Banks use paper rather than computer banking systems and confidence in the current banking system is low. Consequently, money transfer companies are a more popular option, but can be unreliable. **State-owned agricultural, industrial and commercial banks** also operate in Basrah City. They are open from 09.00 – 13.00 Sunday to Thursday and provide a range of services as instructed by their line ministries.

**Credit and loans** are available through public and private banks. Credit is most readily available through private moneylenders who charge high rates of interest and who are unregulated. The Ministry of Agriculture is now operating a national agricultural credit scheme, which was first piloted in Basrah.

#### g) Transport

**Road transport (e.g. taxis, buses and trucks), rail transport and air transport are all available in Basrah Governorate.** The main roads in Basrah Governorate are well used, even though most are damaged or in disrepair. Roads in rural areas are predominantly unpaved and maintenance usually falls to local communities or district councils who have limited funds for repairs.

**The Basrah-Baghdad Railway** has been a target of frequent attacks and trips from Basrah to Baghdad were suspended in 2006 after saboteurs destroyed rails just south of capital.<sup>125</sup> Trips to other Southern Governorates continue to be operated.

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<sup>124</sup> Prices as of August 2006.

<sup>125</sup> Reuters Alertnet, *The 8 a.m. ghost train from Baghdad to Mosul*, 16 July 2006.

**Basrah Airport** was reopened in July 2005 mainly for freight services and limited civilian passenger flights. **The Umm Qasr Port** in Basrah Governorate was reopened for commercial traffic on 17 June 2003. Passenger services are not yet available.

#### **D. Public Services**

Public service delivery still falls dramatically short of public needs in Basrah Governorate. Limited access to health, education, social security and other public services has an immediate impact on stability in the area but also has the potential for longer term damage. UNICEF has already noted that the under-18 demographic in Iraq is less literate than the generation preceding them and constitutes nearly 50% of the population. Lack of education for girls as well as boys could lead to a fall in Basrah's human development potential if the education system is not urgently upgraded. UNHCR Returnee Monitoring showed that returnees and IDPs face additional hurdles in accessing public services compared to their non-displaced neighbours.

##### **a) Health**<sup>126</sup>

**In the 1960s, the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Basrah Governorate was well equipped with well-trained staff, however thirty years of under-investment and extensive looting following the fall of the former regime in April 2003, has taken its toll on the quality of health services.** The deteriorating security situation has also hampered reconstruction efforts in the health sector.<sup>127</sup>

The Basrah Health Directorate lists the following factors as contributing to the current poor state of health facilities in the Governorate:

- Under-investment and lack of replacement/maintenance of antiquated equipment;
- Shortage of drugs for chronic diseases;
- Limited training and expertise of medical practitioners;
- Poor sanitation and hygiene.

NGOs devoted to health issues in Southern Iraq say that dozens of **children** have died of relatively common diseases since January 2006 due to a lack of medicine. It is reported that there is a lack of essential supplies, especially intravenous infusions and blood bags, antibiotics, Pentostam, special milk for dehydrated children and medical material for emergency conditions. Children between the ages of one and three years are the most affected by problems of dehydration and pneumonia, meningitis, malnutrition and typhoid. Also some cases of cholera have been reported. Specialists also note a disturbing increase of cases of **Kala Azar (Leishmania)** among children, especially at the height of summer and under deteriorating sanitation conditions in Basrah. *Kala Azar*, transmitted by the sand fly, is a chronic and potentially fatal parasitic disease if not treated. *Kala Azar* can be completely cured with Pentostam, however, it has not been available in Southern Iraq for several months

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<sup>126</sup> Health sources of information include: MoH, WHO and media.

<sup>127</sup> 142 health clinics were meant to be constructed with \$180 million in US funds by the end of 2005, so far only six have been built so far, according to a recent report by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, a US-funded independent oversight office, see Council on Foreign Relations, Lionel Beehner, *Iraq's Faltering Infrastructure*, 22 June 2006, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/10971/iraqs\\_faltering\\_infrastructure.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/10971/iraqs_faltering_infrastructure.html); The Washington Post, *U.S. Plan to Build Iraq Clinics Falters*, 3 April 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/02/AR2006040201209.html>. On the general health situation in Iraq, see Medact, *Iraq Health Update*, 30 March 2006, [http://www.medact.org/content/wmd\\_and\\_conflict/iraqupdate2006.pdf](http://www.medact.org/content/wmd_and_conflict/iraqupdate2006.pdf).

– not even on the black market.<sup>128</sup> Due to reduced garbage collection in Basrah with only weekly pickups or even less in the suburbs, children exposed to piles of rotting garbage are increasingly suffering from typhoid fever as well as fungal and bacterial skin diseases. According to Dr. Hussein Ashayri, clinician at the Children’s Hospital of Basrah, up to 15 children per week come to the Children’s Hospital with diseases related to their contact with accumulated garbage. Reportedly, many garbage collectors have abandoned their jobs due to increased insecurity and trucks are old and are no longer working.<sup>129</sup>

The European aid agency *Saving Children from War* reported that as a result of water-borne diseases and a lack of medical supplies such as I.V. fluids or cancer drugs, infants born in the city of Basrah are subject to abnormally **high mortality rates**.<sup>130</sup>

An increasing number of **anaemia** cases among children and women countrywide are being tackled by the Iraqi government and the UN, who are supplying flour fortified with iron and folic acid as part of monthly food rations. According to the Director of the Nutrition Research Institute, 60 percent of students in primary schools and 79 percent of women of childbearing age in Basrah Governorate suffer from anaemia.<sup>131</sup>

A **shortage of doctors and nurses** has also been reported in Basrah. Though there are no reliable statistics on how many doctors, dentists, pharmacists and nurses have left the area, but unofficial data suggests that at least 200 health professionals have left since January 2006. Health ministry statistics also suggest that an average of 30 doctors and nurses per month have left Iraq over the past year after being targeted by criminal gangs.<sup>132</sup>

**MoH reports that there are 84 Primary Health Centres in Basrah Governorate, 31 of which are located in Basrah City.** Health care centres open from 08.30 - 15.00 Sunday to Thursday, and some have two or three shifts daily. **There are five general public hospitals in Basrah City** in addition to the Ibn Ghazwan Maternity and Children’s Hospital and the Basrah Teaching Hospital. **The Basrah MoH has 70 ambulances**, of which 10 are currently inoperative. Ambulance services are mainly available in the cities, with limited services in rural areas.

**There are four private hospitals in Basrah City:**

- Al-Noor Orthopaedic Hospital;
- Al-Rahma Maternity Hospital;
- Ibn Al-Beetar Hospital for general surgery;
- Al-Musawi Hospital for eyes and general surgery.

The Emergency Unit in the Teaching Hospital was closed for five months in 2006 after a number of doctors were killed by unidentified attackers while working there.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> IRIN, *IRAQ: Insecurity, under-funding threaten children's health in Basra*, 9 July 2006, [http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=54487&SelectRegion=Middle\\_East](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=54487&SelectRegion=Middle_East); see also Society for Austro-Arab Relations / Aladdin’s Magic Lamp, *Helping to Hope--Helping to Live* (in German language), June 2006, <http://www.saar.at/aladin/pdf/report13.pdf>

<sup>129</sup> IRIN, *IRAQ: Garbage accumulation causes health problems*, 8 August 2006, [http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=55038&SelectRegion=Middle\\_East](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=55038&SelectRegion=Middle_East).

<sup>130</sup> IRIN, *IRAQ: Doctors, NGOs warn of high infant mortality in Basra*, 11 April 2006, [http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=52727&SelectRegion=Middle\\_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=52727&SelectRegion=Middle_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ).

<sup>131</sup> IRIN, *IRAQ: Beefed up flour to tackle anaemia*, 23 August 2006, [http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=55240&SelectRegion=Middle\\_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=55240&SelectRegion=Middle_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ).

<sup>132</sup> IRIN, *IRAQ: Insecurity, under-funding threaten children's health in Basra*, 9 July 2006, [http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=54487&SelectRegion=Middle\\_East](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=54487&SelectRegion=Middle_East).

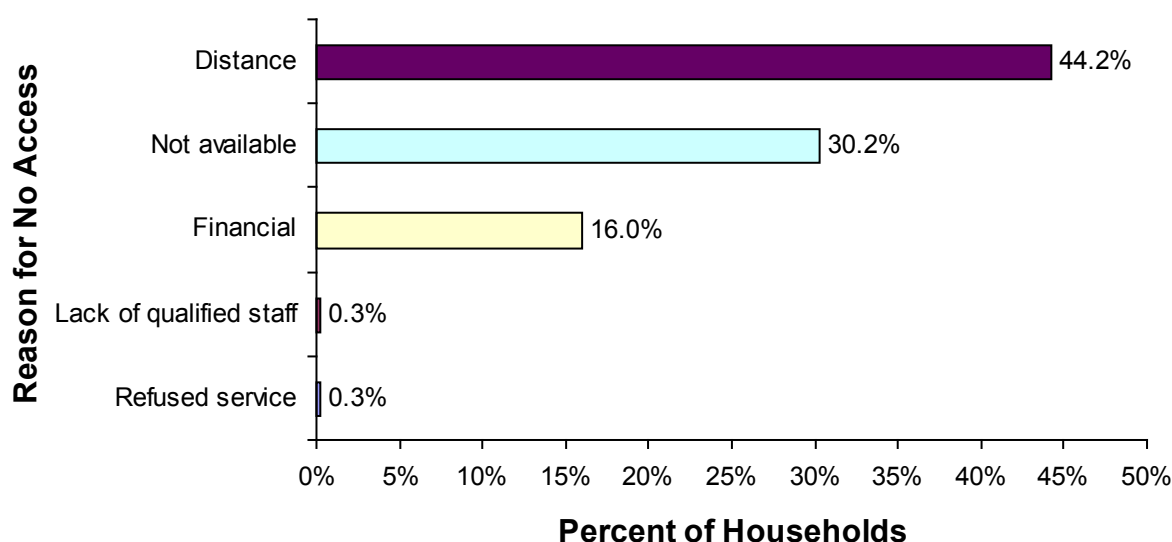
<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

**The MoH reports that the supply of pharmaceutical drugs in Basrah is inadequate to cover the scale of health needs in the Governorate.** Drugs are available at considerably higher prices from private pharmacies and are sold on the black-market without prescriptions, even though drugs sold through this channel are often out of date or used for purposes other than their intended use.

UNHCR Returnee Monitoring showed that returnees with no access to health facilities indicated that the main reason for this was a lack of financial resources to travel to these facilities (see *Figure 3*).

**Figure 3: Monitored returnee households’ reasons for no access to health facilities**

(Sample of 344 returnee households which indicated that they had no access to health facilities. The values do not add up to 100% because not all households provided the reason for their lack of access)



**b) Education**<sup>134</sup>

**The MoE in Basrah Governorate owns over 729 buildings.** Many buildings were looted in 2003, although it is estimated that nearly half of these have been reconstructed. **The scarcity of books and teaching resources,** an antiquated school curriculum and limited training of staff in contemporary teaching and learning methods limit the quality of education in most, if not all, educational facilities.<sup>135</sup>

**Basrah City has two Technical Colleges and two Universities run by the MoE/Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE),** all of which have seen rehabilitation work but are short of resources. **Basrah Governorate also has three Vocational Training Centres** (transferred to MoLSA from the Ministry for Industry and Minerals in 2003). MoLSA also offers English language skills, literacy and computer training for unemployed persons.

<sup>134</sup> Health sources of information include: the Ministry of Education (MoE), UNICEF and media.

<sup>135</sup> Ministry of Education/UNICEF, *School Survey 2003-2004 in Iraq*, October 2004, <http://www.unicef.org/files/school-survey-vol1-eng.pdf>.

**The MoE enrolled 7,025 children into kindergartens, 305,541 children into primary schools** (137,858 of these were female) and 106,278 children into secondary schools (40,551 of which are female) in Basrah Governorate in 2003/2004.<sup>136</sup> The student teacher ratio for kindergartens in Basrah Governorate is 18, compared to a national average of 16.<sup>137</sup> There is no data available on how many of those registered are returnee children. **MoE registrations of students show that the number of female students attending school in Basrah Governorate is significantly lower than the number of male students**, particularly at the secondary school level and above. Varying social pressures on girls which inhibit school attendance could have long-term consequences for the labour force in Basrah Governorate. Limited school attendance also impacts the socialization of returnee girls and women and their ability to reintegrate.

**UNHCR Returnee Monitoring in Basrah found that children who speak Farsi as their mother tongue have difficulty integrating into the Arabic-speaking education system.** Arabic lessons are not yet available in the public education system for returnee children who were born abroad and are unfamiliar with Arabic or local dialects. **UNHCR Returnee Monitoring also found that returnee children in Basrah are often involved in labour activities, inhibiting their opportunities for education.** Returnee children from households with no regular income and living in damaged housing were more likely to be engaged in child labour.

**MoDM and MoE offices in Basrah have worked together to facilitate the reintegration of returnee children within the free public education system.** The MoE office explains that in cases where uncertainty exists over a student's grade, he/she is assessed by a school committee which decides what level is most suited to the student's abilities. However, UNHCR Returnee Monitoring in Basrah showed that school certificates awarded abroad are not always recognized by education facilities in Basrah and that some returnee children were subjected to downgrading one or two classes.

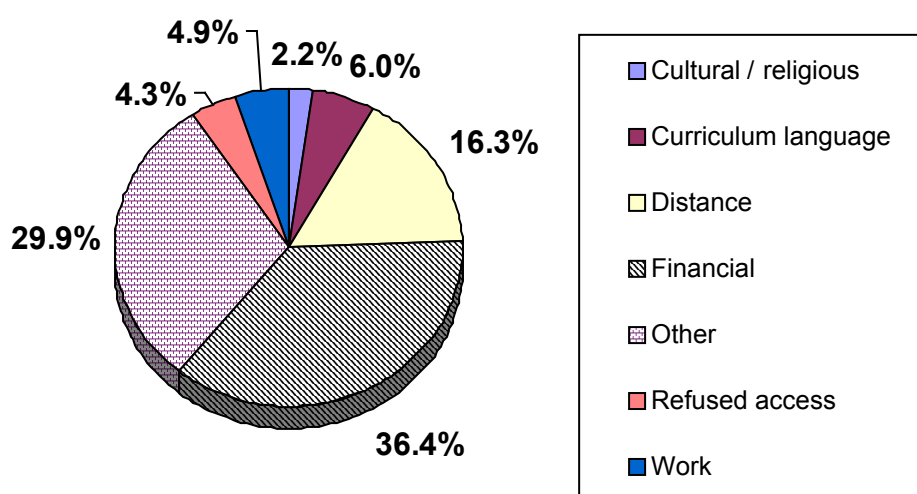
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<sup>136</sup> Ministry of Education, *Educational Statistics in Iraq*, 2003-2004.

<sup>137</sup> Ministry of Education, *Educational Statistics in Iraq*, 2003-2004.

**Figure 4: Monitored returnees' reasons for not attending school**

(Sample of 184 returnee households which gave reasons for not attending school)



### c) Social Welfare<sup>138</sup>

Iraq's social safety net program is small and beset by inefficiencies and inequality. In June 2006, the World Bank approved a grant agreement with MoLSA. Its aim is to help strengthen the country's capacity to reform social safety net and pensions programs which would better assist poor and vulnerable people in Iraq. A multi-donor Iraq Trust Fund administered by the World Bank will finance the Emergency Social Protection Project, worth US \$8 million. The Project will be complemented by the *Emergency Household Survey & Policies Project* which aims to provide updated and comprehensive data on household income and consumption, to help Iraq establish a poverty line and develop targeted and efficient safety nets.<sup>139</sup>

**MoLSA has three main offices in Basrah.** The Labour and Unemployment Office and the Social Security Office are located together in central Basrah while the Social Welfare Office is located in the Al-Jamiaa District. The Social Welfare Centre has an orphanage, an old-age centre and schools for deaf and blind children. All of these buildings have been rehabilitated although re-equipping and staff training is desperately needed. The centre for down syndrome children and the girls' orphanage in central Basrah have not yet been rehabilitated due to the illegal occupation of two of the buildings and are therefore not in use.

**Communities in rural areas have limited access to MoLSA services because of security and travel constraints.** MoLSA currently has no outreach capacity in Basrah Governorate. People travel across the Governorate in hope of seeking assistance but often find themselves waiting outside offices for hours each day, usually with no result.

<sup>138</sup> Social welfare sources of information include: UNICEF, MoLSA, MOT and media.

<sup>139</sup> World Bank, *The World Bank Iraq Trust Fund Newsletter*, Volume 1 / Issue 7, June 2006, [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IRFFI/64168382-1092419012421/21008602/ITFNewsletterJune2006\(Final\).pdf#search=%22Social%20protection%20network%20iraq%20%22](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IRFFI/64168382-1092419012421/21008602/ITFNewsletterJune2006(Final).pdf#search=%22Social%20protection%20network%20iraq%20%22).

### *Pensions and social security*

Prior to 2003, Iraq had two social security schemes, one for government employees (including military and semi-governmental agencies) and one for private sector employees. Under the *Civil Service Law for Government Employees* (Law No. 24 of 1960), **public-sector employees** are eligible for retirement at the age of 60 if they have served for at least 15 years in the public service. Alternatively, men can retire at the age of 55 if they have a 30-year service record while women can retire at 50 if they have at least a 25-year service record.

After the fall of the former Government, the CPA and the Iraqi Ministry of Finance began reforming the existing pension scheme, including the increase of pension payments for pensioners as of 1 January 2004. Whereas under the former regime pensioners received between 15-24,000 ID every three months, pensions were increased in early 2004 to a minimum of 95,000 ID and a maximum of 125,000 ID per quarter.<sup>140</sup>

**Military pension entitlement is allocated** to military personnel if they retire at 63 years of age, if they have been injured during military service and their injuries are certified by a MoE medical committee, or if they have over 25 years of active service. If they are killed during active service, their families are eligible to receive their pension entitlement. Families with a relative killed by mines or UXO do not qualify for welfare benefit. Pensions paid to retired military personnel are 75,000 ID–130,000 ID per month depending on the length of active service. Pensions paid to the family of those who have died in active service (a ‘martyr’s family’) is between 90,000 ID–250,000 ID per month. Members of entities dissolved by CPA Order No. 2 such as the Iraqi Army, the security and intelligence apparatus, the Ministries of Defence, and Information and Military Affairs are not entitled to pension payments if they were senior Ba’ath Party members, as is outlined in CPA Order No. 1.<sup>141</sup>

The *Pension and Social Security Law for Workers* (Law No. 39 of 1971) covers **private-sector employees** of enterprises with five or more workers (except for agricultural employees, temporary employees, domestic servants and family labour). It provides for old-age pension at the age of 60 for men and 55 for women after 20 years of contributions, or at any age with 30 years of contributions for men and 25 years of contributions for women. Furthermore, it guarantees a disability pension in case of permanent or long-term loss of at least 35 percent of the working capacity and a survivor pension (if the deceased was a pensioner or met the contribution conditions for the old-age pension). The law also covers sickness, maternity and work injury benefits. These programmes are administered by the Labour and Social Security Institute under the general supervision of MoLSA.<sup>142</sup>

**Pensions and the public welfare system have been the cause of demonstrations in Basrah Governorate in 2003-2005.** Urgently needed reform in the pension and benefit sectors has been slow to materialise since 2003, leaving some of Iraq’s most vulnerable persons in an even more vulnerable state. The Emergency Social Protection Project aims at enhancing Iraq's capacity to develop a more equitable yet fiscally sustainable pension system. The pension component of the project will be implemented by the Ministry of Finance.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> CPA, *Policy on Payment of Public Sector Pensions and Benefits for the First Quarter 2004*, 23 January 2004, <http://www.iraqcoalition.org/budget/1-4pensions.html>.

<sup>141</sup> Sections 3.5 and 3.6 of CPA Order No. 2, *Dissolution of Entities with Annex A*, 23 August 2003, [http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030823\\_CPAORD\\_2\\_Dissolution\\_of\\_Entities\\_with\\_Annex\\_A.pdf](http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030823_CPAORD_2_Dissolution_of_Entities_with_Annex_A.pdf).

<sup>142</sup> U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World, Iraq*, 2002, <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdsc/ssptw/2002-2003/asia/iraq.pdf>.

<sup>143</sup> World Bank, *The World Bank Iraq Trust Fund Newsletter*, Volume 1 / Issue 7, June 2006, [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IRFFI/64168382-1092419012421/21008602/ITFNewsletterJune2006\(Final\).pdf#search=%22Social%20protection%20network%20iraq%20%22](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IRFFI/64168382-1092419012421/21008602/ITFNewsletterJune2006(Final).pdf#search=%22Social%20protection%20network%20iraq%20%22).

A returning refugee who was deprived of Iraqi nationality, who has a public employment record and who retired while abroad (or on return) may be entitled to a pension after his/her reacquisition of Iraqi nationality has been completed and an application has been sent to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) to renew pension entitlement. **UNHCR Returnee Monitoring found that returnees faced additional constraints accessing pensions and benefits** because of lost documentation, time spent abroad during which they defaulted on pension payments and because the former regime cancelled the benefits of Iraqis and their families who fled from Iraq as refugees. Some persons in Basrah lost pension savings invested in private sector banks as a result of the post-invasion looting in 2003.

#### *Social welfare benefits*

The *Law of Social Welfare* (Law No. 126 of 1980) provides for a monthly salary to poor families, including to older persons with no income, widows or divorced women with children, orphans and persons with disabilities. To make an application for social welfare, the following documents are required

- A letter from the Municipal Council confirming the applicant status (i.e. as a widow or unemployed);
- PDS card;
- Civil ID;
- Citizenship certificate.

The Emergency Social Protection Project will introduce a modern management and information system to help improve targeting and reduce leakages, thereby increasing the benefits that reach the poor.<sup>144</sup>

In addition, the Iraqi Government decided to use revenues from increased fuel prices to pay monthly stipends (between 50,000-150,000 ID) to vulnerable families.

Returnees and IDPs are entitled to apply for social benefits, and should approach the municipal council in their current location to file a claim. The municipal council require a number of documents, (listed above) in order to register a returnee/IDP family and transfer their details to the Social Welfare Department. Once the documents have been verified, the Social Welfare Department will send the information to Baghdad with a recommendation. It currently takes an average of four months for a claim to be processed in Baghdad, and the authorities in Basra to be notified of a decision. LAICs based in the governorate will advise returnee/IDP families on procedures, and can also assist in obtaining any missing documents needed to make a claim for social welfare. Despite efforts to reform the pension and welfare system in Iraq, a large number of needy persons continue to live with insufficient assistance or no assistance from the government, leaving them dependent on either family structures or charity.

#### *Food distribution*

The **PDS** is the prime source of food provision for families of limited income. A monthly food ration is available to all Iraqi households and food is available at a subsidised price. The PDS is indispensable for many but the quantity and quality of the PDS is still considered inadequate for the needs of the population. Returnees should therefore consider the PDS as a supplement rather than a sole source of food.

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

Despite the PDS, **food insecurity** persists in Iraq. The WFP Baseline Food Security Analysis in Iraq (2006)<sup>145</sup> established that in the Governorate of Basrah all factors related to malnutrition are slightly above the national average. Among the children in Basrah,

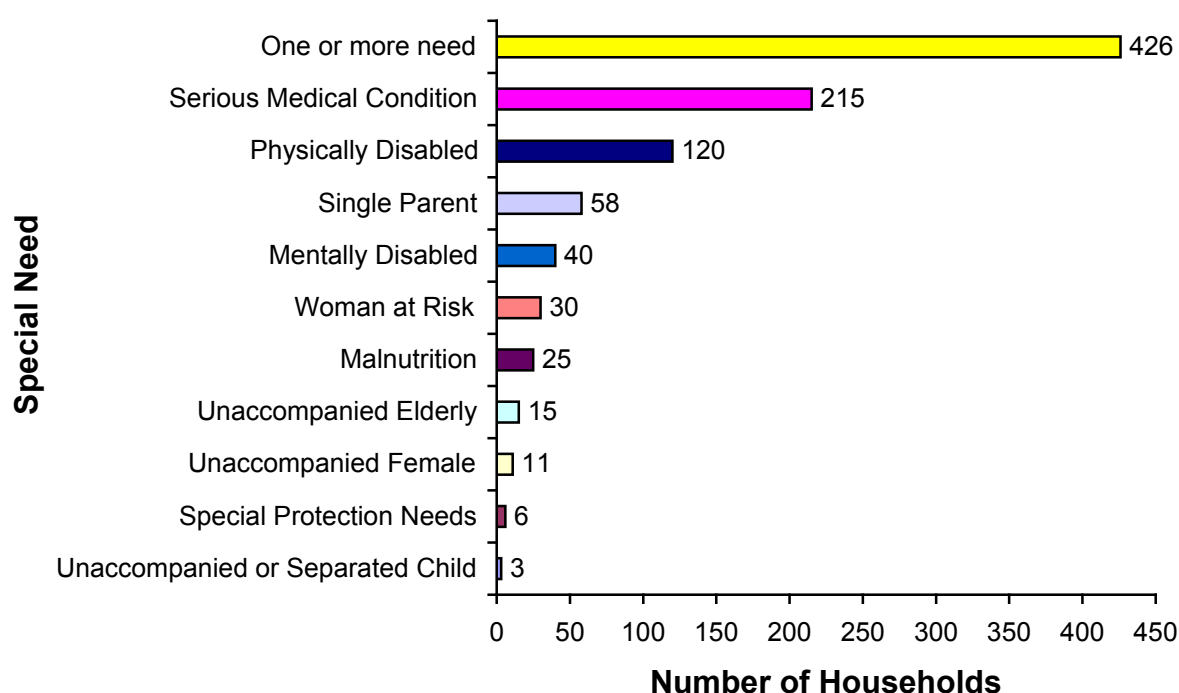
- **26.2% are stunting** (national average: 25.9%);
- **17.1% are underweight** (national average: 15.7%)
- **9.1% are wasting** (national average: 9.0%).

The situation is of particular concern in areas such as Al-Medaina (22.5% of the children stunting, 22.1% underweight, 14.7% wasting), Fao (25.1% stunting, 18.8% underweight, 14% wasting) and Al-Qurnah (23.5% stunting, 24.6% underweight, 9.6% wasting).

A small number of returnees monitored in Basrah indicated difficulty in registering with the PDS. Returnees can register at any of the local village MoT distribution centres or at the main distribution centre in Basrah City.

Figure 6 shows that almost 50% of the returnee households (949 of 2,031) monitored in Basrah Governorate had special needs.

**Figure 5: Special needs of returnee households monitored in Basrah Governorate**  
(Sample of 2,031 returnee households)



#### d) Religious Facilities and Pilgrimage<sup>146</sup>

**The Ministry of Religious Affairs was dissolved in 2003 and replaced by two Religious Affairs Endowments Offices** (one for Sunnis and one for Shiites) which are responsible for the upkeep of religious buildings and facilities in Iraq. The offices are also an important part of Iraq's social security network and administer funds from *zakat* (funds donated to the poor

<sup>145</sup> WFP Iraq Country Office – Central Organization for Statistics & Information Technology (Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, Iraq), *Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis in Iraq*, 2006.

<sup>146</sup> Religious facilities and pilgrimage sources of information include: Endowments Offices, religious leaders and religious minorities.

in Ramadan) and *waqf* (legacies committed for religious works).

**The Endowments Offices are also responsible for pilgrimages in Iraq.** Since 2003, thousands of pilgrims participated in *Ashura* and other religious festivals. Pilgrims from across the Middle East crossed through Basrah Governorate to travel to the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala. The Endowments Offices also receive applications from Iraqi pilgrims wishing to attend the Hajj in Medina, Saudi Arabia.

**In 2005, Iran and Iraq reached agreements allowing for 1,000 Iranians to visit the shrines of Najaf and Karbala every day beginning in August, although this has been subject to postponement for security reasons.**<sup>147</sup> Potential pilgrims should check current procedures for pilgrimage with authorities in their country of residence to ensure that they have the necessary approvals and documents before travelling. Pilgrims found crossing borders illegally without required documentation may be detained or forcibly returned by the authorities.

**While Christian and Mandaean religious festivals** are recognized in Basrah Governorate, the expression of both religions – including actions such as the ringing of church bells and other overt expressions of religious symbolism – are prevented for fear of reprisals. In addition, members of minority groups, including Sunnis, Christians and Mandaeans, have left Basrah Governorate in the wake of escalating violence since the February 2006 Samarra bombing. Many of them received threat letters urging them to leave (also see Sections on *Security and Public Order* and *Human Rights*).

#### **E. Cultural and Sporting Activities**

**The Ministry of Culture (MoC)** operates three museums and seven libraries in Basrah City with a few services in outlying districts. Basrah has a history of music and poetry and a strong literary culture. In 2003, the *Mirbad* poetry festival was re-opened for independent artists and poets in Basrah for the first time in 14 years.

**The Ministry of Youth and Sport** manages centres across Basrah Governorate providing community services for young people and older men and women. Most are in need of repair and maintenance. Basrah Governorate also has a number of sporting federations.

#### **F. Civil Society and Media**

**Between 150 and 300 civil society organizations** are thought to have been established in Basrah since 2003 to represent the needs of vulnerable groups. These organizations have differing levels of experience and a diverse range of mandates, including environmental protection, social development, displacement, health, education, religious affairs and protection of the families of those martyred in conflict. Prior to 2003, independent civil society organizations were not allowed to establish themselves in Iraq and many newly emerging organizations are yet to become fully independent, non-political or neutral.

**Trade Unions**, formerly funded by the former regime, were disbanded in 2003. A number of unions have re-established themselves in Basrah as NGOs under newly elected leadership. Unions are no longer government-funded; instead they are supported by their members, on

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<sup>147</sup> Azzaman Newspaper, *Iranian Pilgrims to resume journeys to Iraq in August*, 2005.

whose behalf they advocate for improved working conditions. The Chamber of Commerce also has an office in Central Basrah.

**Private media groups** have also been established in Basrah Governorate since 2003. Local media in Basrah include Al-Nakheel TV, Basrah Radio and newspapers such as Al-Manarah. Basrah also has branch offices for national media networks, including Nahareen Radio, Future Radio and Azzaman Newspaper.

## **IV. Repatriation / Relocation / Return**<sup>148</sup>

### **A. Spontaneous Repatriation Procedures (without UNHCR facilitation)**

**Any person travelling across Iraq's borders, including returnees, is required by Iraqi law to register his/her arrival with the Passport and Customs Authorities.** Those who cross the border illegally at points other than the official border crossing points may later have difficulty applying for documentation renewals if their arrival in Iraq is not registered.

**Returnees who did not register at the border can register with the Passport and Residence Office in Basrah and should do so immediately on arrival,** explaining their reasons for delayed registration. In May 2003, discussions were held in Basrah over the reactivation of Iraqi Law No. 102 (1999) under which fines of 10,000 ID – 50,000 ID are now being charged for **illegal border crossing into Iraq by foreigners.** On top of this fine, foreigners who illegally crossed into Iraq and who later seek to obtain a one-year residence permit are being charged an additional fine of US \$80. In order to avoid penalties, non-Iraqi returnees should check current registration and border crossing procedures with local authorities and abide by them.

**Returnees should bring any documentation they possess back to Iraq with them,** even if it is outdated. This includes civil ID cards, citizenship cards, military service cards, property documents and birth/death certificates of relatives which could assist in obtaining new documentation, proving Iraqi nationality or regaining property.

Returnees should apply for **Iraqi visas for non-Iraqi spouses or children** before approaching the border. Iraqi visas for persons of other nationalities must be applied for at an Iraqi Embassy before crossing the Iraqi border. The documents required for such a visa are:

- Spouse/parent's Iraqi nationality certificate card (copy or original);
- Spouse/parent's valid national passport (alternate to above document if in copy);
- Couple's marriage certificate / child's birth certificate;
- Two personal photographs of applicant;
- Applicant's valid national passport.

**Returnees are currently exempted from customs charges (previously up to US \$20 or 30,000 ID) for the transit of personal luggage through the border crossing point.** Customs are however imposed on furniture and electronics that exceed the value of US \$50. Returnees should note that border crossing charges are subject to change and returnees should check current charges with local authorities. Returnees should also be aware that customs authorities routinely check persons crossing the borders for prohibited items (e.g. firearms and drugs) and that prosecution could result in imprisonment.

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<sup>148</sup> Spontaneous repatriation sources of information include: Border Authorities and UNHCR.

Returnees are advised to register at the MoDM Branch office in Basrah City.

## **B. Voluntary Repatriation Procedures (with UNHCR facilitation)**<sup>149</sup>

**Refugees interested in voluntarily returning to Iraq and who need assistance should register their interest with UNHCR offices in their host country.** Assisted voluntary return convoys are currently operated from Iran but have not taken place since January 2006 due to the security situation. Return convoys are no longer operating from Saudi Arabia. Once refugees have completed the application procedures, they will be informed of opportunities for return on a repatriation convoy.

Once a returnee family has expressed their wish to return voluntarily, they will be requested to fill in a manifest at the UNHCR office, giving their families details and intended travel dates. If they do not possess valid travel documents, UNHCR will then transfer these details to MoI, who will check their names and clear their entry. If the returnee family have appropriate travel documents, they can travel on their own without assistance, however, if there are mass returns, the authorities need to be informed.

**After crossing into Iraq, the return convoys travel to the Returnee Reception Centre (RRC) at Maqal Port in Basrah City,** where returnees register with border authorities and complete immigration procedures.

**Returnees should be aware that, in addition to the travel time of convoys, the border procedures can take up to three hours and registration at the RRC up to four hours, depending on the size of the returnee group.** Returnees can arrange for friends or relatives to collect them from the RRC but they must wait until registration has been completed for the entire convoy before family members are allowed to be reunited with returnees.

**Each returnee will be given US \$20 to cover onward travel costs and initial reintegration expenses.** Returnees will receive mine awareness training at the RRC and medical facilities are available for those with health conditions.

**Transport to onward destinations is provided** for returnees to a central point in other Governorates (e.g. Missan, Thi-Qar, Najaf and Karbala) but transport within Governorates must be arranged by the returnees themselves. Returnees should be aware that all furniture and belongings must be transferred onto new transport for onward journeys from the RRC.

MoDM encourages persons returning to the Governorate of Missan via UNHCR facilitated returns process to also register with the MoDM Branch Office in Basrah City.

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<sup>149</sup> Voluntary repatriation sources of information include: Shalamsha Passport and Customs offices and UNHCR.

## V. Organizations Providing Humanitarian and Development Assistance

*The following organizations provide services in areas of return in Basrah Governorate. It is important that returnees are aware of the limitations of these services, which are often overstretched and under-resourced. Some organizations listed do not have the capacity to receive individual returnees. Returnees should seek assistance from local authorities in the first instance. Contacting any of the organizations listed below does not guarantee assistance and returnees should not hold such organizations' staff accountable if they are unable to assist in a particular situation.*

### A. International Agencies

- UNHCR – ([www.hcriraq.org](http://www.hcriraq.org)) – In Basrah Governorate, UNHCR is providing community assistance, individual assistance and protection assistance to returnees through shelter, health, education and water projects, mainly in rural areas. UNHCR is also facilitating voluntary repatriation to Basrah, monitoring the situation faced by returnees in the Governorate, supporting two Legal Aid and Information Centres and a civil society centre and providing capacity-building support to MoDM's Regional Office in Basrah. UNHCR has also provided emergency assistance to flood victims and the newly displaced.
- UNAMI – ([www.uniraq.org](http://www.uniraq.org)) – The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq is coordinating UN activities in Iraq and has an office in Basrah Governorate.
- UNDP – ([www.iq.undp.org](http://www.iq.undp.org)) – UNDP has provided support to the Al-Hartha electricity power station as well as dredging the Umm Qasr waterways. UNDP is also implementing the IREP (Iraq Reconstruction and Employment Programme).
- UNICEF – (<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/iraq.html>) – UNICEF has supported a drop-in centre for street children in Basrah as well as providing water and education projects.
- WHO – ([www.emro.who.int/iraq](http://www.emro.who.int/iraq)) – WHO has provided support to the Basrah DoH, including capacity building of staff.
- IOM – ([www.iom-iraq.net](http://www.iom-iraq.net)) – IOM is working on health and migration initiatives in Basrah Governorate.
- UNOPS – ([www.unops.org](http://www.unops.org)) – UNOPS are supporting a HIC (Humanitarian Information Centre).
- WFP – ([www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)) – WFP are providing support to MoT and coordinating with MoDM.

## **B. Government Development Agencies**

- DFID – (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/asia/iraq.asp>) – In Basrah Governorate, DFID is supporting a local governance programme, and infrastructure reconstruction in water, electricity and essential service sectors.
- USAID – ([www.usaid.gov/iraq](http://www.usaid.gov/iraq)) – In Basrah Governorate, USAID is funding the dredging of the Umm Qasr waterways, community action programmes, education, water, governance and civil society projects.

## **C. International Non-Governmental Organizations**

- Millennium Relief and Development Services – Millennium is implementing water and quick-impact projects in Basrah Governorate.
- Danish Institute for Human Rights, Basrah Office – DIHR is supporting Iraqi local NGOs in Basrah and the Southern area of Iraq (nine governorates in total).
- INTERSOS – Intersos is providing medical and mine awareness support to refugees returning via UNHCR-facilitated returns. Intersos is also implementing quick-impact projects and is operating two LAICs in Thi-Qar Governorate.

## **D. Iraqi Non-Governmental Organizations**

- Iraqi Red Crescent Society – IRCS/Basrah branch is providing emergency relief for disaster victims, health assistance and assistance to mothers and children. Furthermore, it is disseminating the principles of International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
- Iraqi Salvation Humanitarian Organization (ISHO) – ISHO has been working in Iraq since 2004, and has an office in Basrah. This NGO is working in the field of training of other NGOs and is assisting IDPs and other displaced populations in cooperation with MoDM (e.g. the victims of flooding in Safwan).
- Rafha Organization – This organization is representing and advocating for the needs of returnee communities in Basrah and other governorates with local authorities and development organizations. Rafha has also implemented community projects in Basrah.
- Other Iraqi NGOs – Current estimates put the number of Iraqi NGOs working in Basrah Governorate at between 150 and 300. Any NGO that would like to be registered in this report should e-mail UNHCR to the contacts included on the [www.hcriraq.org](http://www.hcriraq.org) website.

## **E. Government Offices/Other Institutions**

Governorate Directorates are open from 8.00 to 15.00, except on holidays and Fridays.

- House of Justice and IPCC / CRRPD  
Al-Ashar District
- Governorate Building  
Al-Ashar District

- LAICs
  - Al- Ashar District: Manawi Pasha neighbourhood
  - Al-Qurna District: near the police HQ in Al-Qurna
  
- Maternity and Children’s Hospital  
Al-Sarraji District
  
- MoDM Branch Office  
Al-Ashar District, Manawi Pasha neighbourhood
  
- MoE Directorate  
Maqal, Al-Qadisiah St., near the Technical Secondary School
  
- MoH Directorate  
Al-Ashar District, Al-Saady Street
  
- MoH, Births/Deaths Administrative Offices  
Al-Jamiat neighbourhood, Al-Tarbia Street
  
- MoHR Office  
Al-Saady Street, same building as Social Welfare Department
  
- MoI, Civil Affairs offices
  - Basrah City: Kuwait Street, Al-Ashar District
  - Al-Qurnah: City centre, close to the Local Council Building
  - Abu Al-Khasib: Main Street, near the Central Court
  - Al-Zubayr: City centre, close to the police station
  - Shatt Al-Arab: Near the Local Council Directorate
  - Al-Medaina: City centre
  
- MoI, Nationality and Travel Directorate Offices
  - Basrah City: Kuwait Street, Al-Ashar District
  - Al-Qurnah: City centre, close to the Local Council Building
  - Abu Al-Khasib: Main Street, near the Central Court
  - Al-Zubayr: City centre, close to the police station
  - Shatt Al-Arab: Near the Local Council Directorate
  - Al-Medaina: City centre
  
- MoI, Passport and Residence Office  
Former Military Service Recruitment Office in Al-Ashar, near Al-Marbad garage
  
- MoLSA, Labour and Unemployment Office  
Central Basrah, close to the Qasr Sultan Hotel
  
- MoLSA, Social Care Centre and Directorate  
Al-Jamiat District, close to the police station
  
- MoLSA, Social Security Office  
Al-Saaidy Street, near the Health Directorate in Basrah City
  
- MoT, main Food Ration Centre  
Al-Ashar District, in front of the Old Governorate Building

- RRC  
Maqal Port, Basrah City
  
- Universities in Basrah
  - Scientific Section (Northern campus): Qarmat Ali District, before the highway bridge
  - Humanitarian Section (Southern campus): Saad Square
  
- Technical College  
Bab Al-Zubayr District, close to the Technical Institute

# ANNEX I: Summary of Returnee Monitoring Findings and Recommendations

## A. UNHCR Returnee Monitoring in Basrah Governorate

UNHCR has been monitoring returnees in Basrah Governorate since October 2003 in order to determine to what degree Iraqi refugees can return in safety and dignity. The initial phase of monitoring ceased at the end of January 2006, and is due to resume in September 2006. As of 31 January 2006, 272 village surveys and 2,031 household surveys had been performed and entered into a central database. Note that village surveys describe the overall situation within the village, while household surveys focus on the situation of individual returnee families.

**Figure 6: UNHCR Returnee Monitoring in Basrah Governorate**

	Monitored villages, households and returnees	Comments
<b>Monitored Villages</b>	272	Shatt Al-Arab, Basrah City, Abu Al-Khasib, Al-Zubayr, Al-Fao, Al-Qurnah and Al-Medaina
<b>Monitored Households</b>	2,031	Shatt Al-Arab, Basrah City, Abu Al-Khasib, Al-Zubayr, Al-Fao, Al-Qurnah and Al-Medaina
<b>Estimated returnee population</b>	112,243	Estimated returnee population from village surveys

The figures in this report are based on 2,031 household surveys. The sample size in each figure refers to the number of households which provided an answer to the relevant question.

## B. Security and Justice

**Issue: Security was rated within the top three priority concerns of monitored returnees in the Governorate of Basrah.**

**Recommendations:** MoDM and UNHCR to advocate for a safe and secure return environment for returnees in the Governorate of Basrah, a continuation of the policy of ‘voluntary returns only’ and of legal advice and support for returnees until the security situation improves and justice and security structures are able to enforce law and order.

## C. Employment

**Issue: Unemployment in Basrah Governorate is estimated by local officials to be approximately 60%.** Returnees monitored indicated the difficulty in finding jobs as a key constraint to their reintegration in Iraq. Returnees that were previously employed in the public sector found that public sector job cuts since 2003 had increased competition in the job market and that they often lost out to non-returnee candidates when applying for jobs. Young returnees and returnee women had particular difficulties finding employment opportunities on return.

**Recommendations:** MoDM and UNHCR to advocate with MoLSA, other government ministries and development organizations for equal employment opportunities for returnees

and for ‘skills upgrading courses’ that will help returnees to overcome skill shortages resulting from time spent abroad. This is particularly pressing in priority areas of return, including Al-Qurnah, Shatt Al-Arab, Hiyannaya, Maqal, Abu Al-Khasib and Al-Zubayr.

#### **D. Housing**

**Issue: The severe housing shortage** is an urgent priority for returnees monitored in Basrah. The high water table creates a shortage of land for construction and the rapid inflation of housing rents and construction costs has left many returnees homeless. Returnees are living in disused and unstable government buildings and are building houses illegally on public land because of lack of alternative housing options. The former regime’s liquidation of the property and assets of refugees and the looting of the main Property Registry Office in Basrah means that property claims often have to be verified against records in Baghdad, creating long delays and perpetuating return into continued displacement for many returnees.

**Recommendations:** MoDM and UNHCR to advocate with other government departments (Ministry of Housing and Construction) and UN Agencies (UN-Habitat) for social housing policies which consider returnees as potential beneficiaries of housing projects. MoDM and UNHCR are also to advocate for government land and credit to be made available to returnees for the purpose of constructing self-built housing.

#### **E. Education**

**Issue: Women and children returnees to the Governorate of Basrah were found to be at an educational disadvantage** because of illiteracy and language barriers, especially those for whom Arabic is not their mother tongue. Occasionally, returnees applying for education in Basrah found that school certificates earned abroad were not recognized or were undervalued in Iraq.

**Recommendations:** MoDM and UNHCR to advocate with MoE, MoHE and UNICEF for additional Arabic language and literacy training in returnee areas and for a national policy stipulating the free enrolment of returnees in all educational facilities.

#### **F. Health**

**Issue: Basrah’s degraded health facilities are not able to cope with the vast population increase in the Governorate.** Returnees often live in poor, overcrowded slum areas of Basrah (e.g. Hiyannaya District) with open sewers that are prone to diseases, or in isolated rural areas with limited access to health services. The outbreak of cholera in Basrah City in 2003 provides one example of the severity of such health conditions. Access to maternal and child health is of particular concern to returnees in Basrah.

**Recommendations:** Equal access to health facilities is required for returnees to ensure that medical conditions can be treated as soon as they are identified. Improved health care for women and children and additional health resources and training for governorate hospitals, primary health care centres and pharmacies are urgently needed.

#### **G. Infrastructure**

**Issue: Under-investment in Basrah’s essential infrastructure** by the former regime is now being compounded as population increases and the return of Iraqi refugees as well as new IDPs exerts additional pressure on overstretched resources.

**Recommendations:** Increased essential infrastructure investment in areas of displacement/return and additional resources devolved to local authorities for infrastructure rehabilitation are both potential solutions for this issue.

## **H. Documentation**

**Issue:** The erasing of records by the former regime and looting of Civil Affairs offices, land registry offices, courts and hospitals in Basrah during 2003 means that some returnees find that there is no record of their Iraqi citizenship or property rights.

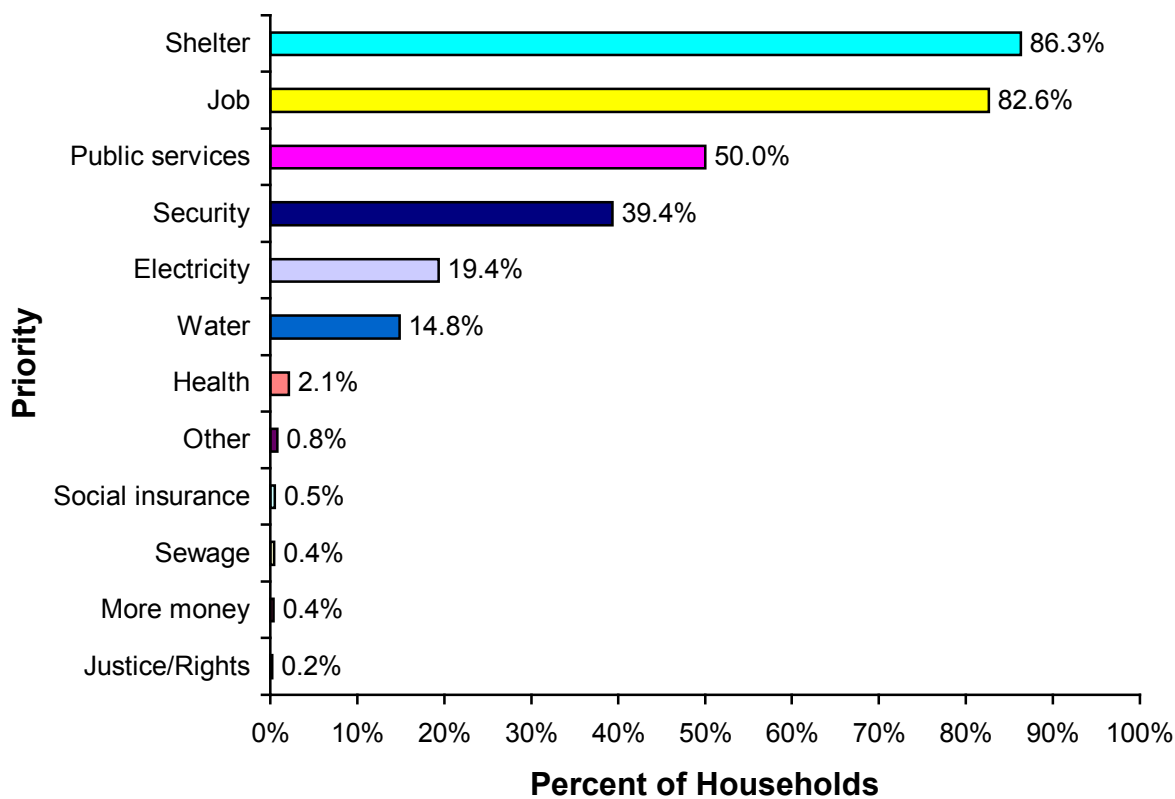
**Recommendations:** MoDM and UNHCR to advocate with the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice to appoint additional staff members in Baghdad offices to search for documents needed by the Basrah regional offices and to provide additional resources and delegation of authority to the Basrah offices so that they can renew documents locally. In addition, it is recommended that MoDM and UNHCR advocate for the acceptance of additional methods of proving one's identity through means such as the provision of expired documents, documents that confirm residence in a certain area (e.g. bills or registry excerpts with service providers) and witness statements.

## **I. Vulnerable Groups**

**Issue:** The number of widows, disabled persons and older heads of households, frequently a tragic consequence of the Iran-Iraq and Gulf Wars, are of particular concern to UNHCR in Basrah Governorate. Returnee households with vulnerabilities face additional reintegration hurdles. The high number of young returnees (in Basrah, 50% are under the age of 18) is also a major concern. MoLSA is overstretched and does not have the resources needed to provide assistance for all vulnerable returnees in Basrah.

**Recommendations:** MoDM to advocate with MoLSA and Central Government for additional social welfare resources for the high caseload of vulnerable returnees in Basrah Governorate. Advocacy is specifically needed towards increased education, training and service provision for returnee women and children, particularly through the Ministries of Youth and Sport, Labour and Social Affairs, Education, Higher Education and Health.

**Figure 7: Top three priorities of returnee households monitored in Basrah Governorate**  
 (Sample of 2,002 returnee households that indicated their top three priorities. The values do not add up to 100% because households listed up to three priorities for assistance.)



## **ANNEX II: Overview of Displacement and Displacement Situation in Basrah Governorate**

### **A. Displacement from the Governorate of Basrah (pre-2003)**

Basrah Governorate has experienced a legacy of conflicts, the most tumultuous of which being the **Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)** and the **Gulf War (1991)**. **The uprising which followed the 1991 Gulf War** originated in Basrah and the neighbouring Governorates of Thi-Qar and Missan. These events all led to the displacement of large numbers of persons from the Governorate of Basrah.

**Persecution by the former regime towards the Shiite community in Basrah Governorate after the 1991 Uprising was the primary reason given by returnees monitored in the Governorate for their flight across international borders as refugees.** In the Abu Al-Khasib District, 80% of families monitored gave the 1991 Uprising as one of their reasons for fleeing Iraq.

**Furthermore, Basrah Governorate was denied resources and investments in infrastructure by the former regime. This, combined with years of economic sanctions, led to an increase in poverty<sup>150</sup> and a decrease in living standards between 1991 and 2003,<sup>151</sup> another factor contributing to migration from the Governorate.**

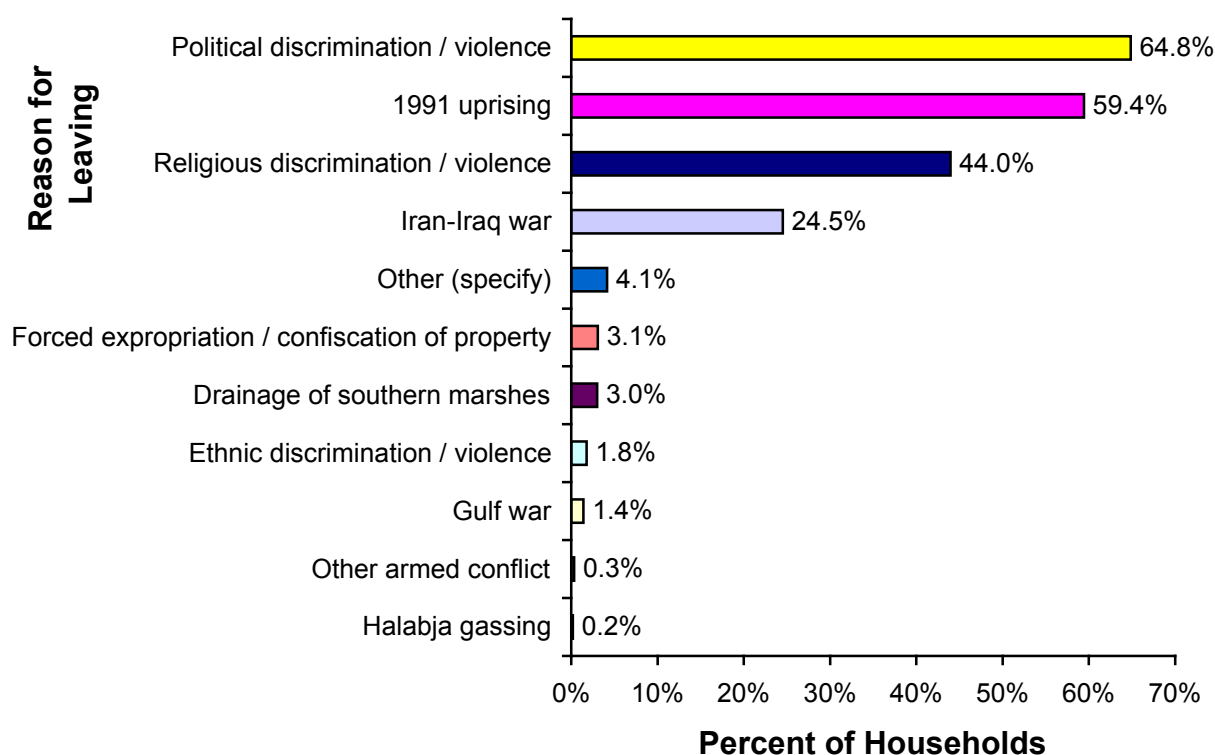
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<sup>150</sup> AMAR, *Marsh Arabs of South Iraq*, 1989.

<sup>151</sup> Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*, 1989.

**Figure 8: Reasons for leaving Iraq**

(Sample of 2,002 returnee households that indicated their reason for leaving Iraq. The values do not add up to 100% because households listed up to three reasons for leaving.)



**In December 2005, IOM IDP Monitoring accounted for 16,869 IDP and IDP returnee families in Basrah Governorate (some 101,200 persons).** The majority of the IDP families (mostly Marsh Arabs) were displaced pre-2003, either as result of the Iran-Iraq conflict or the drainage of the Marshes. IDPs are found in all the districts throughout Basrah Governorate, however, the majority of IDPs are located in Basrah Centre district. Basrah City hosts the largest portion of the post-2003 conflict IDPs, while Al-Qurnah and Al-Medaina hold the Marsh Arab concentrations. A quarter of all IDPs were reported to be living in tented camps, a quarter in public buildings and the remaining half with host communities.<sup>152</sup>

Since the February 2006 Samarra bombing and consequent escalation of Sunni-Shiite violence, more than 400, 000 persons (as of October 2006) have been displaced. According to MoDM, 2,010 IDP families have been registered in the Governorate of Basrah.<sup>153</sup> Most of them originate from areas around Baghdad, in particular the areas of Abu Ghraib, Doura and Mahmoudiyah. MoDM has established a tented camp for some of these families in Al-Zubayr and is providing some assistance.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>152</sup> IOM, *Basrah Profile*, October-December 2005.

<sup>153</sup> MoDM, *Number of IDPs from Areas of Tension in all Iraqi Governorates* (translated from Arabic), 22 October, 2006.

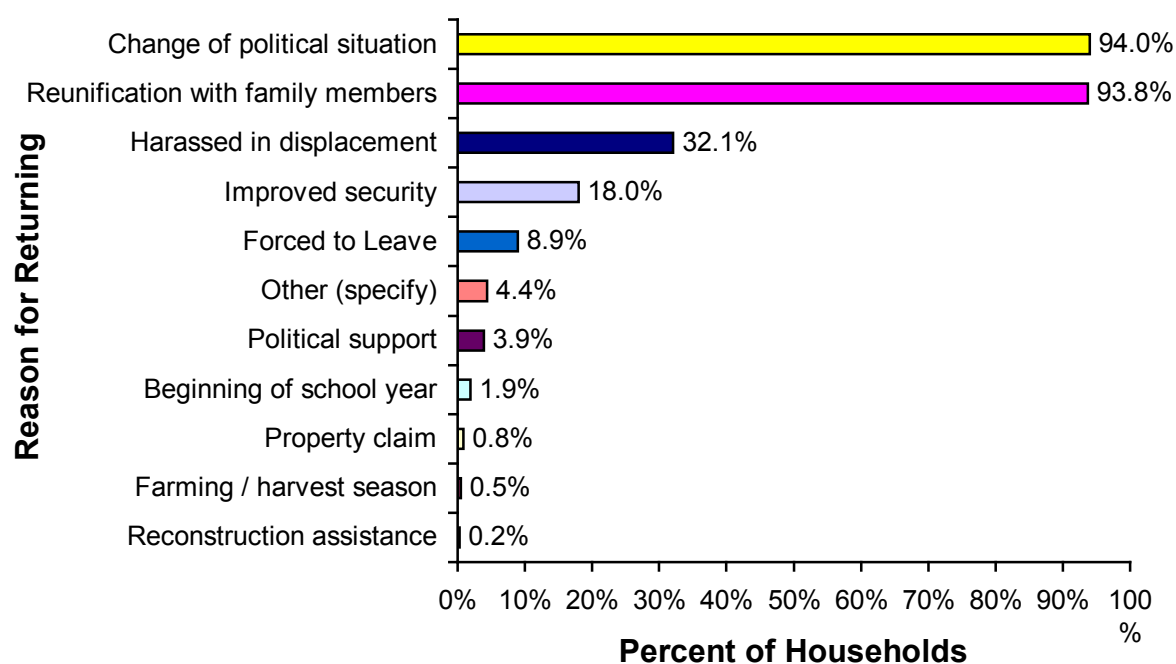
<sup>154</sup> MoDM, *Number of IDPs from Areas of Tension in All Iraqi Governorates* (translated from Arabic), 23 August 2006.

## B. Return to the Governorate of Basrah

For many Iraqi refugees, the fall of the former regime in April 2003 meant the end of the persecution from which they had fled. Enthusiasm to return home to renew Iraqi citizenship combined with optimism about the future resulted in the spontaneous return of an estimated **220,382 Iraqis to Southern Iraq between June 2003 and September 2006.**<sup>155</sup> Accordingly, the major reasons for return indicated by surveyed returnees were ‘change of political situation’ as well as ‘reunification with family members’. It is of concern that 32.1% of the surveyed returnees indicated that they had faced harassment in their place of displacement and that 8.9% had been forced to leave their country of asylum (see *Figure 10*)

**Figure 9: Reasons for return to Iraq**

(Sample of 1,601 returnee households that indicated their reasons for return to Iraq. The values do not add up to 100% because households listed up to three reasons for returning.)



UNHCR estimates that **85,080 persons returned to Basrah Governorate between 2003 and September 2006 (based on MoT registrations of returnees for the monthly food ration)**. Between 1 January 2006 and 30 September 2006, MoDM registered 1300 returnee families in the governorate.

Political parties, including SCIRI and the Badr Organization, also assisted refugees to return by organizing transport across the border from Iran.

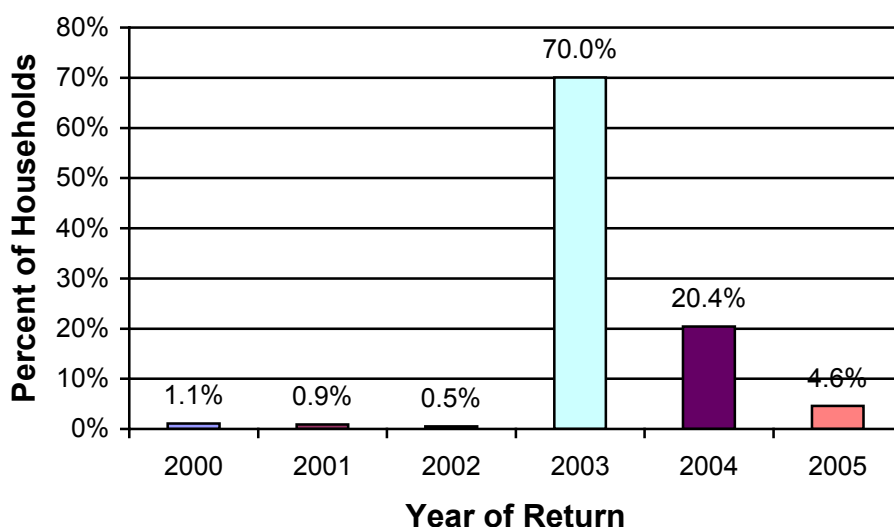
In October 2003, UNHCR established a **voluntary repatriation process** to facilitate the return of Iraqi refugees mainly in Saudi Arabia and Iran to their places of origin. Through this facilitated return process **8,479 persons returned to the Governorate of Basrah out of a total of 25,171 Iraqis returning to Iraq with assistance from UNHCR between August 2003 and 31 August 2006**. Most returnees to Basrah Governorate came from Iran (6,550 persons), Saudi Arabia (1,837), Jordan (58), Lebanon (25) while nine returned from other countries.

<sup>155</sup> Ministry of Trade, September 2006.

**Most facilitated returns occurred immediately after the fall of the former regime and throughout the remainder of 2003.** While returns continued in 2004 and 2005, UNHCR monitoring showed that a more cautious approach to the planning of return has been applied given the uncertainty over Iraq’s political future combined with rising national insecurity. It is therefore expected that return movements will continue, but more gradually and with lower numbers than those seen in 2003.

**UNHCR Returnee Monitoring in Basrah Governorate suggests that returnees are maintaining transnational links between their host and home countries.** Maintaining easy transit procedures for returnees between host and home countries that allow for a gradual or phased return process will be essential to long-term reintegration success.

**Figure 10: Year of return to Iraq for households monitored in Basrah Governorate**  
(Sample of 1,572 returnee households that indicated the year of return)



Many of the early returnees were heads of household returning to assess the potential for reintegration before bringing additional family members across the border. Increasing insecurity in Iraq and uncertainty over the future has affected the plans of Iraqi refugees abroad to return. Many have therefore delayed their plans for return, particularly if they have vulnerable family members.

**C. Obstacles to Reintegration**

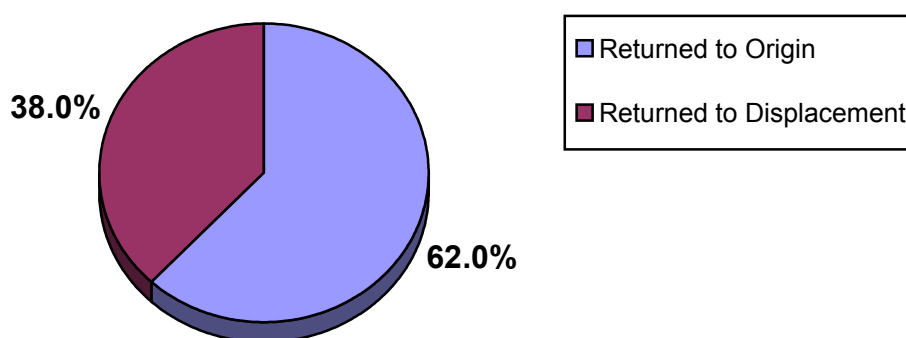
Reintegration has proven more difficult than many had anticipated, mainly because of the lack of shelter and employment opportunities on return, and the deteriorating security situation. The former regime’s liquidation of refugees’ assets and removal of refugees’ nationality status also inhibits them from proving their legal entitlements once back in Iraq.

**D. Return into Continued Displacement**

UNHCR Monitoring showed that among the 1,557 households which indicated their place of return, 38% (591 out of 1,557) said that they were returning into continued displacement. This figure is thought to be much higher among families returning from Iran.

**Figure 11: Return into continued displacement**

(Sample of 1,557 returnee households which indicated their place of return)



**Rural-urban migration in Basrah is high.** The full extent of this flow is unknown, but migration has undoubtedly been a key contributor to the dramatic rise in population between the 1997 census figures and 2005 population estimates in Basrah. Returnees originally from rural areas, particularly the Marshlands (Missan, Thi-Qar, Basrah), have returned to find their land drained of water resources by the former regime's drainage programme,<sup>156</sup> their assets destroyed or looted and their land inaccessible to basic services and employment opportunities. A similar pattern of migration can be seen in other parts of Iraq including areas of Baghdad (e.g. Sadr City) where there are a high proportion of returnees from the rural areas of southern Iraq.

**The legacy of persecution by the former regime continues to displace returnees to this day, and cities provide the most viable reintegration option for many.**<sup>157</sup> The adoption of a semi-urbanized or camp lifestyle while abroad and the evolution of Iraqi social structures, including religious and tribal affiliations, have further contributed to the movement of persons from rural areas to the cities.

#### **E. Profile of Returnees**

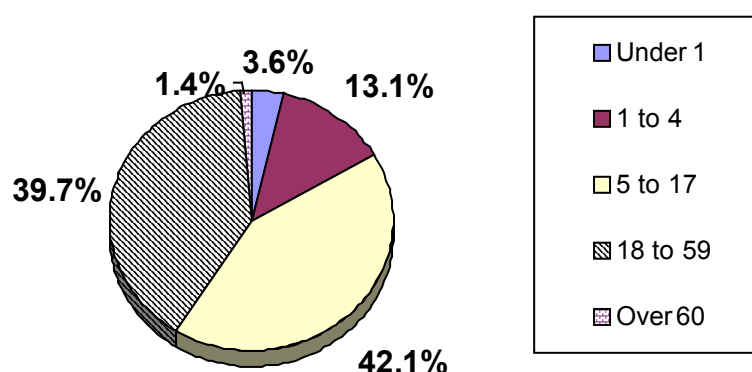
**Poor areas of Basrah, including Al-Hiyannaya, Al-Jamahiriya and North Basrah are projected to have the largest numbers of returnees and yet are difficult to monitor because of their insecurity.** Returnees often do not want to be identified as returnees by the communities into which they have returned, partly because of negative social attitudes towards people considered to be bringing 'foreign influences' to the area.

**UNHCR Monitoring found that over 50% of the returnees in Basrah Governorate are below 18 years of age** (see *Figure 13*). Children reintegrating into an unfamiliar school system and young people searching for scarce employment opportunities are particularly vulnerable. Most returnees to Basrah fled Iraq more than ten years ago, and young people are less likely than older persons to have the social connections and links in Iraq that could help them to reintegrate more easily.

<sup>156</sup> AMAR, *Iraqi Marshlands of South Iraq*, 1999.

<sup>157</sup> IOM, *Basrah Profile*, September 2005.

**Figure 12: Age range of monitored returnee households**  
 (Sample of 1,962 returnee households which indicated their age range)



**Returnee households monitored in Basrah by UNHCR recounted tragic family histories** in which three or more male family members had been killed by the former regime or in wars (predominantly the Iran-Iraq War), resulting in many difficulties for the remaining family members to cope with in their daily lives. Returnees spoke of facing feelings of isolation and psychological trauma upon return, as well as physical injuries of family members, particularly those who had lost limbs from mines/UXO. Those living with family members spoke of the pressure that cramped living conditions placed on them and their families, especially in areas where accommodation and employment are scarce.

#### Additional Notes

**The UNDP/MoPDC Iraq Living Conditions Survey (ILCS) 2004 sampling is referenced in this report but may show differing results to the findings of the UNHCR Returnee Monitoring.** The ILCS is based on the 1997 census and therefore excludes ‘areas that became inhabited after the 1997 census, such as marsh areas in the South where the original inhabitants moved in after the recent war. Returnees and IDPs have therefore only been covered ‘to the extent that they reside in housing that existed in the 1997 census or newly built housing within the 1997 census enumeration areas’. As most of the returnees are living in rural areas outside the initial 1997 census areas, UNHCR Monitoring in Basrah Governorate is mostly carried out in the very areas that were not covered by the ILCS.

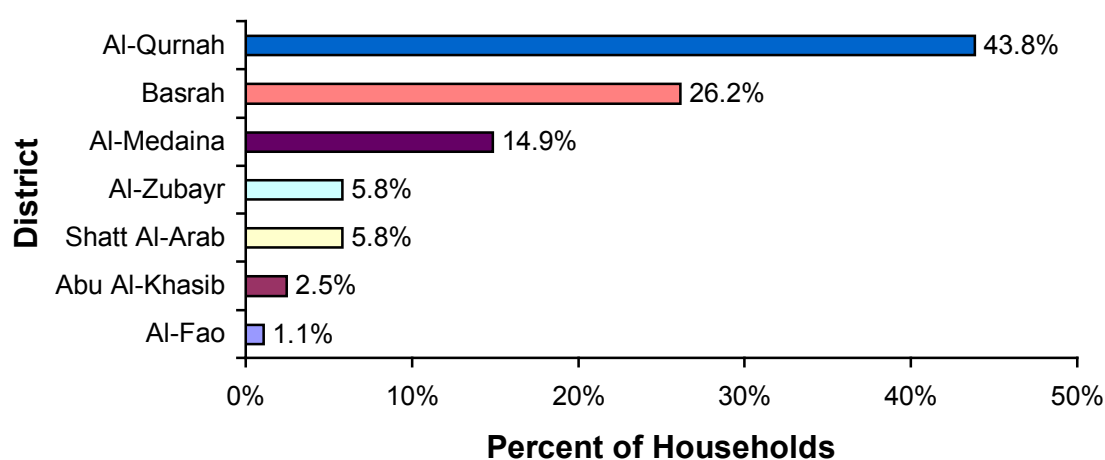
**It is important to note that these figures constitute a sample of the total number of returnees to Southern Iraq, estimated to be about 50% of the total returnee population.** Most returnees have returned spontaneously to Iraq and therefore may not be fully represented in the cross-border monitoring. Returnees who have integrated successfully into their society are also more difficult for UNHCR to register because they are less likely to approach UNHCR and its implementing partner staff for assistance.

## ANNEX III: Summary of District Profiles

*Note: The following district profile summaries and charts of returnee monitoring data included in this report are provided as an overview of the patterns highlighted and the issues raised during returnee monitoring in Basrah Governorate. They should be considered as an indication of the issues faced by returnees in each district of concern (e.g. for guiding further evaluation) rather than as a definitive picture of the return situation (e.g. for policy-making). District profile analysis of returnee monitoring data was started by UNHCR in September 2005, and therefore this section will be upgraded as the analysis develops further. More detailed district profiles will be made available on [www.hcriraq.org](http://www.hcriraq.org).*

**Figure 13: Returnee households monitored by district**

(Sample of 2,019 returnee households)



### **A. Returnees to Al-Zubayr District**

**(Sample of 117 returnee households: refugee returnees from Iran [64%] and Saudi Arabia [35%])**

- Al-Zubayr District is south-west of Basrah City and has an estimated population of 178,350 persons;
- 95-106 returnee households out of 117 monitored in Al-Zubayr gave ‘religious and political persecution’ and the ‘1991 Uprising’ as reasons for leaving Iraq;
- ‘Change of political situation’ and ‘reunification with family members’ were given as reasons for return by 105 households;
- 46% of returnee households monitored in Al-Zubayr have returned into continued displacement. Out of these, only 37% were not intending to settle in their current location, indicating that returnees view Al-Zubayr as a place with potential for reintegration;
- All monitored families in Al-Zubayr are registered with the PDS with 35% indicating that they had access to a drinkable water supply;
- Only 20 households indicated that they had a regular source of income and 65% indicated that casual employment is their main source of income;
- Employment, security and shelter were the top three priorities given by monitored returnee households. These also represent the key priorities given by village leaders that monitors spoke with in the district.

## **B. Returnees to Shatt Al-Arab District**

**(Sample of 117 returnee households: 99% refugee returnees from Iran)**

- Shatt Al-Arab is the district located South-East of Basrah City, on the east side of the Shatt Al-Arab River close to the border with Iran;
- 99% of the returnee households in Shatt Al-Arab have returned from Iran (predominantly from Khuzestan, Ahwaz, Desful and Shoshter);
- 79 returnee households gave casual employment as their main source of income;
- 81% of returnees monitored in Shatt Al-Arab District returned to their place of origin, predominantly in Tanouma and Fayihaa Sub-districts. Only 8% of the returnees are not intending to settle in their current location.

## **C. Returnees to Al-Khasib District**

**(Sample of 50 returnee households: 84% refugee returnees from Iran)**

- Abu Al-Khasib lies South-East of Basrah City, close to the border with Iran;
- 84% of the returnees monitored in this district returned from Iran (from Khuzestan and Ahwaz Districts and Desful, Shoshter, Abadan and Qom Sub-districts);
- 80% of the returnees monitored gave the '1991 Uprising' as their reason for leaving Iraq and 96% gave 'change in political situation' as their reason for return;
- Only 10% of those monitored live in a privately owned house;
- Agriculture comprises a main source of income for over 50% of returnee households monitored in Abu Al-Khasib;
- 24% of the returnee households monitored were not planning to settle in their current location.

## **D. Returnees to Basrah Governorate from Saudi Arabia**

**(Sample of 381 returnee households)**

- 99% of the returnee households monitored gave the '1991 Uprising' as a reason for leaving Iraq; The Iran-Iraq War and the drainage of the Marshlands were additional factors given for leaving Iraq;
- 92.8% of the returnee households monitored gave 'change in political situation' as a reason for return;
- 94.7% of the monitored households returning from Saudi Arabia gave 'harassment in displacement' as a reason for return;
- Households monitored had a higher percentage of males returning (57%) than females (43%). This is because those participating in the 1991 Uprising were mainly male, who fled across the border to escape subsequent persecution by the former regime, often leaving their families behind in Iraq;
- This factor also explains the high number (98%) of monitored households giving reunification with family members as a reason for return and for the finding that over 53% of the returnees monitored are living with relatives upon return (returnees from Iran were found to be less likely to find accommodation with family members upon return);
- Monitored households returning from Saudi Arabia were mostly found to be settling in Al-Qurnah/Al-Medaina and Shatt Al-Arab Districts of Basrah Governorate.

## **E. Returnees to Al-Qurnah District**

**(Among 885 households surveyed in the district, 50% are refugee returnee households [440 households, 93% of which are from Iran and 5% of which are from Saudi Arabia]. The other 50 % [445 households] are IDPs)**

- Al-Qurnah is located on the junction of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers and has an estimated population of 137,400. The Iraqi Marshlands of Missan and Thi-Qar also

converge in Al-Qurnah and the drainage of the Marshlands is thought to be a significant factor affecting return and reintegration in this district;

- 51% of returnee households gave the ‘Iran-Iraq War’ as a reason for leaving Iraq and 35% listed ‘religious and political persecution’ and the ‘1991 Uprising’ as reasons for leaving Iraq;
- ‘Reunification with family members’ and ‘change of political situation’ were given as reasons for return by 461 and 432 households;
- Among the 445 IDP households surveyed, 71% are not in their place of origin and not intending to settle;
- Among returned refugees, only 25% are not in their place of origin and not intending to settle;
- 64% of returnee households monitored in Al-Qurnah have returned into continued displacement;
- 98% of monitored families in Al-Qurnah are registered with the PDS and only 2% indicate that they had access to a drinkable water supply in their village;
- Only 28% of households indicated that they had a regular source of income and 69% indicated that casual employment is their main source of income;
- Public services, shelter and employment were the top three priorities given by monitored returnee households.

#### **F. Returnees to Al-Medaina District**

**(Sample of 300 returnee households: returnees from Iran [63%] and Saudi Arabia [37%])**

- Al-Qurnah is in the northwest part of Basrah Governorate, with an estimated population of 159,000.
- As reasons for leaving Iraq, 81% of returnee households listed ‘political discrimination and violence’, 70% listed the ‘1991 Uprising’, 37% listed ‘religious discrimination and violence’ and 8% listed ‘drainage of the southern marshes’.
- ‘Reunification with family members’ and ‘change of political situation’ were given as reasons for return by over 96% of households;
- 63% of the surveyed households are returnees to their place of origin and 26% are returnees not intending to settle;
- 36% of returnee households monitored in Al-Medaina have returned into continued displacement.
- 99% of monitored families in Al-Medaina are registered with the PDS and only 2% indicate that they had access to a drinkable water supply in their village;
- Only 8% of households indicated that they had a regular source of income and 66% indicated that casual employment is their main source of income;
- Shelter, employment, public services and security were the top priorities given by monitored returnee households.

#### **G. Returnee Communities of Concern needing further Monitoring**

**Urban Returnees to Basrah City: Maqal, Al-Qibla, Hiyannaya, Al-Jamahiriya, Khamsa Mil, Al-Jamiat (no sufficient data available)**

Monitoring returnees in Basrah City has proven difficult because of population density and because many returnees are merged within the wider population of urban poor and often do not wish to be identified as returnees for fear of the negative social connotations accorded to returnees by the non-returnee community. However, Basrah City is estimated to have the largest returnee caseload in the Governorate and therefore remains a key area of concern for UNHCR. UNHCR is working with a local implementing partner in Basrah City to improve

returnee monitoring in districts of concern and is developing approaches to build the capacity of returnee communities to be able to monitor themselves.