



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

**Needs Assessment of Recently-Displaced
in Al-Zubair District, Basrah
Governorate**

February 2007

1. Background

It is estimated that over 1.8 million people are currently displaced within Iraq as of 11 February 2007,¹ 690,000 of whom were displaced after February 2006, following the bombing of the Al-Askari Shrine in Samarra. Sectarian violence has since escalated, alongside anti-state insurgency, counter-insurgency and crime, leading to widespread violence and insecurity throughout Iraq.

This report analyses the background and current situation of IDPs displaced to the district of Al-Zubair, in Basrah Governorate since February 2006. It focuses on assessing needs at the district level, rather than the Governorate level, in an effort to better understand the needs of specific IDP populations, so that agencies can tailor assistance to needs identified

Al-Zubair is a district in Basrah Governorate that has accommodated a significant IDP and returnee population since 2003. It is located about 10 miles from Basrah City, and is often seen as the Governorates second city, it is also often left out of larger reconstruction programmes that focus on Basrah City. Basrah Governorate has experienced various waves of displacement due to persecution by the former regime, however, since 2003 it has seen large influxes of both IDPs and returning refugees. While considered a relatively safe Governorate in comparison to central Iraq, Al-Zubair alongside the rest of Basrah Governorate still experiences violence and criminality due to continued militia and insurgent activity.

Governorates in Southern Iraq including Thi-Qar experienced neglect and persecution by the former regime, making them particularly vulnerable to widespread poverty. As yet, the influx of IDPs has not caused tension with the host community, however, the potential for conflict remains due to increased demands on public services that are already near breaking point. The real estate market, rental prices, the cost of basic food stuffs, and fuel have also increased dramatically making living conditions especially difficult.

II. Methodology of monitoring activities

Monitoring activities in Basrah were undertaken by UNHCR's implementing partner who has managed assistance programmes on behalf of UNHCR in Basrah since 2003. The monitoring was targeted at the districts of Al-Zubair and Al-Qurna areas that are known to have high IDP populations.

In order to address the needs of IDPs in specific districts, UNHCR's partner visited IDP locations to assess conditions and monitor the target population. They also spoke to stakeholders with knowledge of the area.

Monitoring was undertaken by implementing partner staff, including a team of two and a data input officer who had all received training. Monitoring teams visited locations in Al-Zubair from November to the end of December 2006. Includes data from 110 household surveys conducted between 06-Nov-2006 and 18-Jan-2007.

¹ See Cluster F, *Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq – Update 11 February 2007*.

This assessment is not a representative sample of the Governorate of Basrah, but it is an account of the identified needs of IDPs who have sought refuge in Al-Zubair district.²

III. Analysis of UNHCR monitoring findings

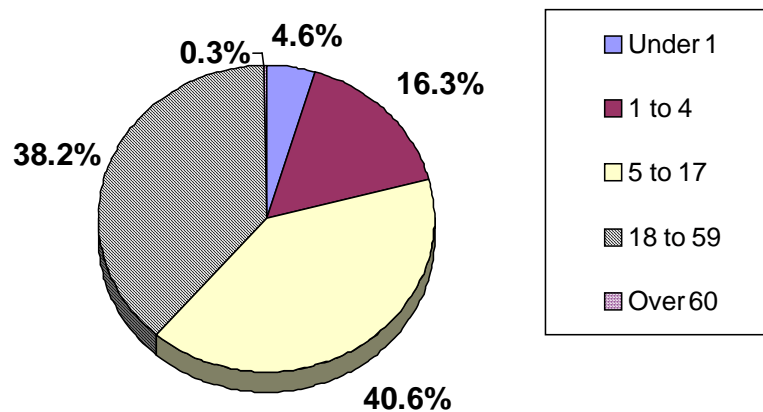
a) Number and profile of IDP population in Al-Zubair

UNHCR monitored up to 110 households in the district of Al-Zubair, representing a sample of 770 individuals, and the average family size is 7 people. The size of the sample in this assessment varies depending on how many IDP households answered a specific question during the monitoring interview.

52.4% of the surveyed households were male, and 47.6% were female. 97.2% of households described themselves as male-headed, and 2.8% as female-headed. Figure 1 shows the age breakdown of IDP families living in Al-Zubair. With over 60% of those monitored under the age of 17, it is clear that increased demands are being placed on education and child health services as a result of the recent influx of IDP children to the area.

Due to security concerns, IDPs surveyed in Al-Zubair did not indicate their religious or ethnic background, however monitors indicated the majority of those surveyed in the district were Shiite Muslims.

Figure 1: Age range of monitored IDP households
(Sample of 109 households who indicated their age range)



² For information on the IDP situation in the whole Governorate, please see: IOM, *Emergency IDP Monitoring and Assessments*, 10 October 2006.

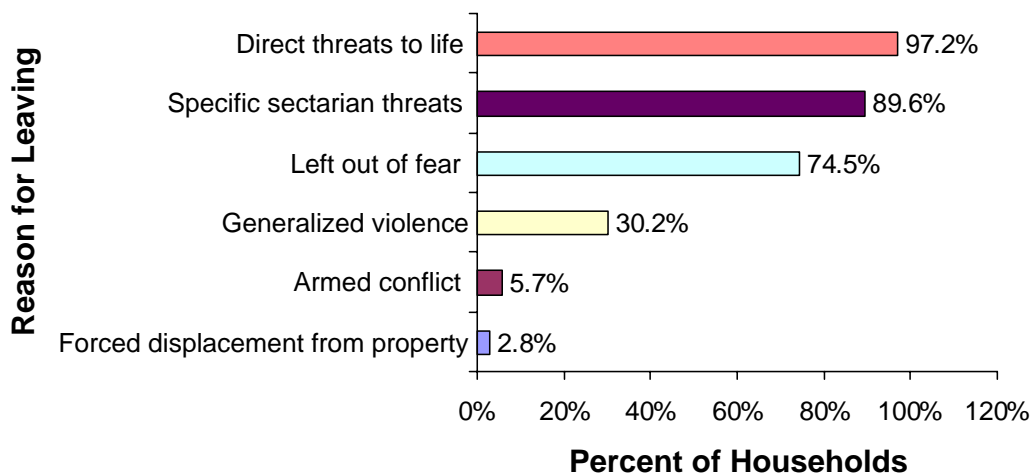
b) Place of residence prior to departure and reason for flight

UNHCR monitoring indicated that the majority of IDPs in Al-Zubair were most recently displaced from Governorates in the centre of Iraq, predominantly from Baghdad (44%) and Salah Al Din (30.2%). The remaining areas were Anbar (11%), Babylon (4.8%), Tameem (3.7%), Diyala (3.6%), Dahuk (0.9%), Ninewa (0.9%) and Wassit (0.9%). Increasing sectarian violence in these religiously mixed Governorates has led directly to their arrival in Al-Zubair during 2006. A significant number of IDPs have been displaced from single districts in the centre of Iraq, for example 28.4% of IDPs surveyed are from Baiji district in Salah Al-Din.

IDPs surveyed in Al-Zubair left their place of residence for the reasons outlined in Figure 2. Almost all households (97.2%) said that they were fleeing because of direct threats to their lives, and 89.6% said they left because of specific sectarian threats. The trauma of displacement and the impact of witnessing extreme violence prior to flight should not be underestimated. Moreover, 100% of monitored households said that their family has been targeted because of belonging to a specific religion or sect.

Figure 2: Reason for leaving place of residence

(Sample of 106 households monitored)



c) Security and relationship with the host community

Most IDPs have chosen to settle in Al-Zubair because of the comparatively quiet security environment in the district, in 100% of households said they felt safe in their current place of residence. However, 96.4% (See Figure 4) still identified security as being their top priority, emphasizing how concerns about security impact on both everyday lives and decision making, despite feeling relatively safe in their current place of residence.

Women's security appears to be a significant concern with only 19.1% of households saying that women felt safe outside of the home. Women's ability to move freely in Iraq is increasingly

being restricted, and 60.6% of households said women were less able to move around since 2003,³ while 39.4% said there was no change.

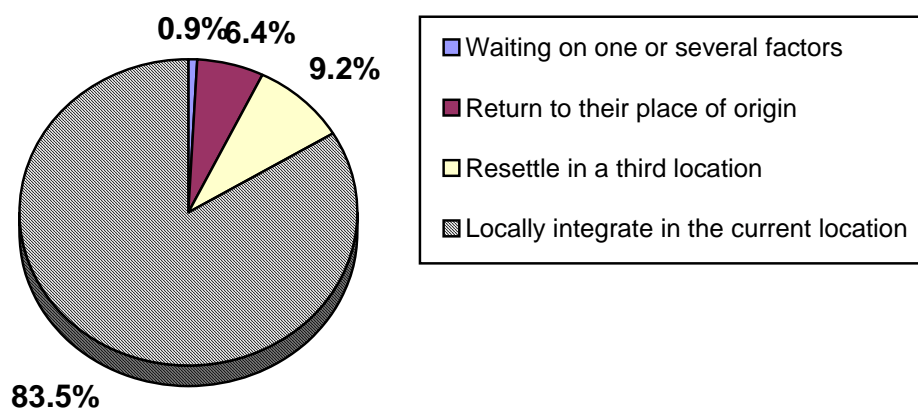
The relationship between the new population of IDPs and the host community in Al-Zubair appears to be good, with 99% of those surveyed saying that they had been received well. Many of the IDPs in Al-Zubair have familial/tribal links to the area, or they originate from the Governorate or have relatives who do, a factor that helps to explain continued good relations despite the obvious pressures a new influx of people brings.

d) Intentions

83.5% of IDPs in Al-Zubair indicated their intention to settle in their current location, 9.2% said they intended to settle in a third location, and only 6.4% said they intended to return to their place of origin. 0.9% said they were waiting on a number of factors to make a decision. Moreover, a high percentage of IDPs (94.4%) said they would not make a decision on whether to move until the security situation had improved. With such a large percentage of IDPs choosing to settle in Al-Zubair the sustainability of their current housing situation and services available, needs to be addressed. It is also likely that Al-Zubair will attract increasing numbers of IDPs due to its relatively quiet security environment.

Figure 3: IDP Intentions

(Sample of 109 IDP households which indicated their intentions)



³ This is in comparison to the place IDPs were residing in 2003.

IV. Analysis of identified need priorities in Al-Zubair

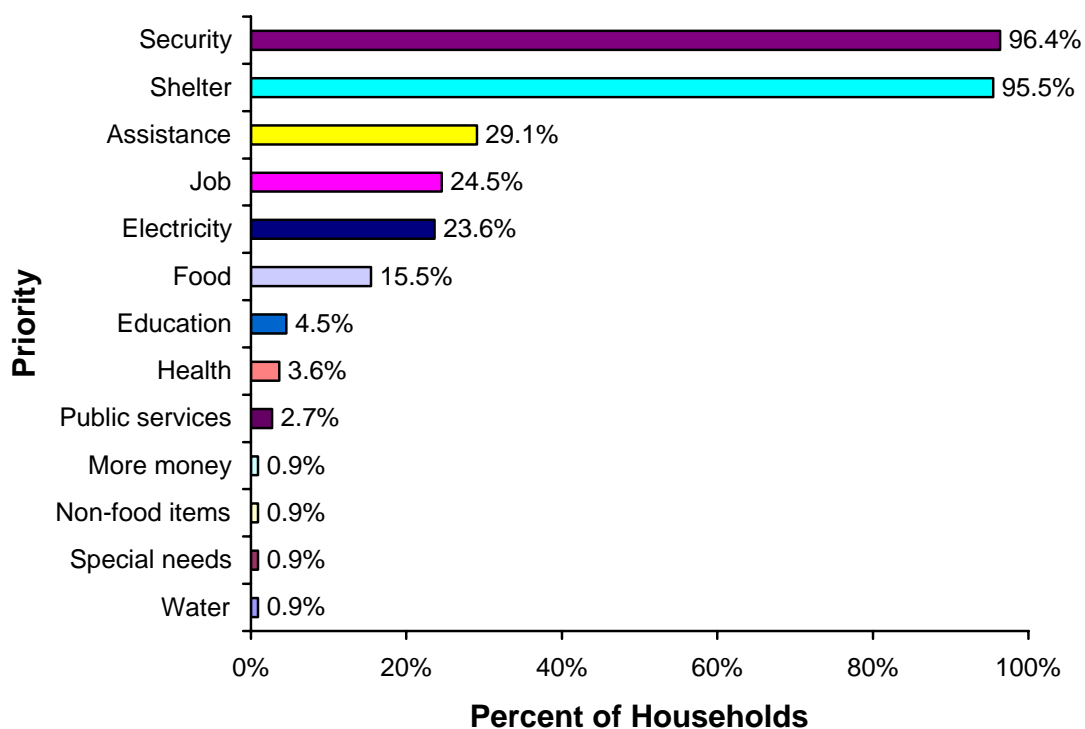
Priorities

This section analyses the situation and needs of IDPs in Al-Zubair, and prioritises them in order of the needs identified by IDPs themselves. When asked what their top three priorities were, 96.4% of monitored IDPs indicated security, 95.5% said that shelter was a top priority, 29.1% highlighted assistance, and 24.5% said that finding employment was a top priority.

Monitoring at the district level reveals how the IDPs needs differ greatly in each district, emphasizing the need for targeted and tailored assistance programmes. While shelter was identified as a priority in all districts that were monitored, IDPs in Al-Chibayish (Thi-Qar Governorate) saw a greater need for access to services such as water, employment and health, as opposed to Al-Zubair where extra assistance and security were highlighted as priorities.

Figure 4: Top three priorities of IDPs households

(Sample of 110 IDP households)



a) Security

Nearly all IDPs monitored in Al-Zubair reported that security was their main priority, despite the same monitored group saying that they felt safe in the village/town. Security continues to be an overriding concern, impacting on decisions on where to settle, and whether to return to their place of origin. Although Basrah is considered to be a relatively safe Governorate in contrast to

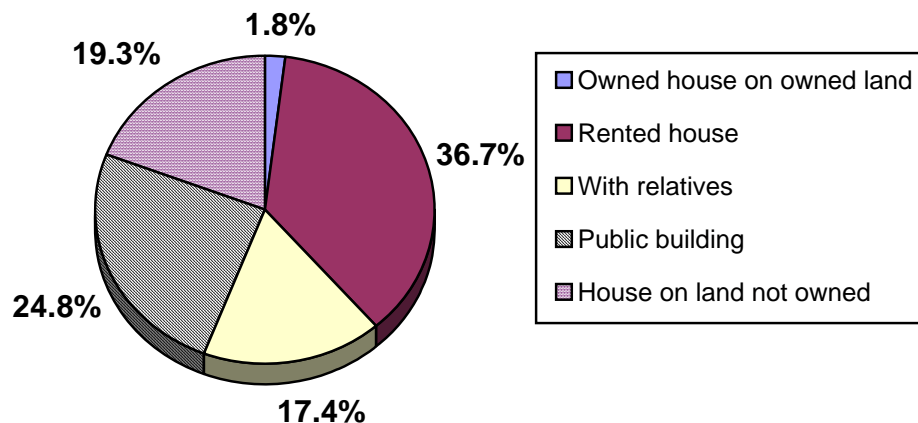
Governorates in the centre of Iraq, the threat of kidnapping, militia violence and crime still exists, and is a major concern for IDPs and the host community.

b) Housing and shelter

UNHCR monitoring revealed that shelter was a top priority for IDPs in Al-Zubair, with over 90% of IDPs saying it was their greatest need. The majority of IDPs monitored by UNHCR live in urban areas that appear to have access to basic services such as water, health and education, hence public services were not listed as a priority. Out of 110 households monitored 69.4% described themselves as living in urban areas, 8.3% in semi-rural areas, 4.6% in rural areas, and 17.6% are living in the IDP camp located in Al-Zubair district.

Only 1.8% of households indicated they were living in a house or had land that was owned (See Figure 5), the remaining families were living in potentially unsustainable and/or temporary housing. 36.7% of IDPs were renting property or simple shelters in Al-Zubair, 17.4% are living with relatives, and 24.8% are living in public buildings. In light of increasing rental prices and general overcrowding sustainable housing options for these IDPs needs to be addressed. While 99% of households said they felt no immediate pressure to leave their current place of residence, 66.4% of IDPs said their current accommodation was somewhat overcrowded, 5.5% said it was extremely overcrowded, and 28.2% said they were not living in overcrowded conditions.

Figure 5: Type of housing
(Sample 109 IDP households)



c) Assistance and access to food

77.3% of IDPs monitored said that they rely solely on the PDS rations to feed their family, of which 99.1% said they were receiving some form of PDS rations. These figures do not reflect the quality or quantity of food, nor indicate the regularity of delivery. Reports indicate that quality, quantity, access and regularity of the PDS is not consistent across all districts and governorates. 15.5% of IDP households said that extra food assistance was a priority, whilst only 26.4% said

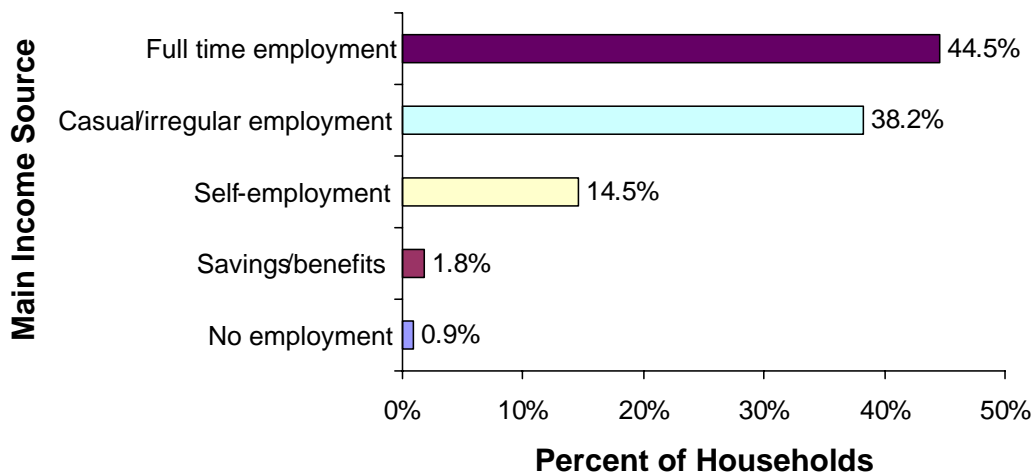
they had received food assistance. Problems with transferring details in order to obtain PDS rations were not reported in Al-Zubair. The majority of those monitored said they had received shelter assistance, and 66.4% indicated that they had received legal assistance.

d) Employment and income

It does not appear that IDPs are being denied access to the job market in Al-Zubair due to their status as IDPs, this is despite existing high levels of unemployment in Governorates across Southern Iraq. Over 40% of households monitored said that their main source of income was employment; however, finding sustainable employment is still a major concern for many families surveyed, with 24.5% of households identifying it as one of their main priorities. Less than 1% of families stated they had no employment (*See Figure 6*), 38.2% had casual or irregular employment, 14.5% were self employed, and 1.8% were relying on savings and benefits to support their families.

The majority of households brought equipment with them to Al-Zubair, 98.2% brought shelter material, and 89.9% brought winter clothing.

Figure 6: Main sources of income
(Sample of 110 IDP households)



e) Access to services

Electricity and fuel

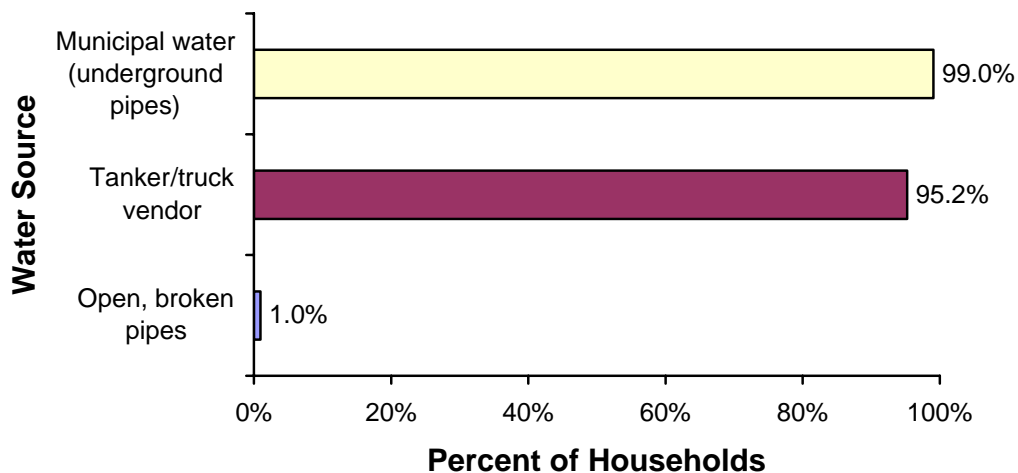
Access to electricity was listed as a priority by 23.6% of IDPs monitored in Al-Zubair, the majority (97.2%) said they had four hours of electricity or more per day, while only 2.8% had electricity between 1-3 hours per day. All IDP households said they had access to fuel including benzene, diesel, propane, and kerosene in Al-Zubair.

Water and sanitation

Monitoring in Al-Zubair reveals that only 43.6% of IDPs had access to clean drinking water in their village or town, and is a concern for those living in Al-Zubair. Up to 74.2% of IDPs said this was due to insufficient water quality, and 25.8% indicated that because of distance⁴ they could not access safe drinking water. Only 42.2% of households said that they had enough water for both drinking and cooking.

However, access to water used for general purposes is less problematic (*see Figure 7*), with the majority of households using municipal water sources delivered through underground pipes, and/or water from tanker and truck vendors. All IDPs surveyed had enough water to use for hygiene purposes, and nearly all of those interviewed had access to toilets, although 22.7% of families were sharing toilet facilities with other families.

Figure 7: Water sources available (not drinking water)
(Out of 105 IDP households)



Education

UNHCR monitoring shows that most IDP households in Al-Zubair have good access to education in their village or town, and no IDPs indicated they have had any problems accessing education since or because of their displacement. However, 26% said that they had problems registering because of lack of documentation.

Both female and male IDP students attend schools in Al-Zubair, and in total there is 14.2% more boys attending school than girls, with 57.1% of boys enrolled in all levels of education and 42.9% of girls. Both girls and boys at primary school level appear to be equally represented, however, the proportion of girls attending school at intermediate, secondary, and higher level education dramatically decreases in comparison to boys. Of the households monitored, only 35.2% of students attending intermediate education were female, and only 21.7% of secondary students were female. Only one boy was enrolled in higher education, while no girls were attending.

⁴ More than 500m

Health

Access to health was not listed as a top priority by IDPs in Al-Zubair (3.6%), and all IDPs surveyed said they had access to primary health facilities in their village or town. 97.2% of households stated they had access to all the necessary drugs that were needed, and of 91 households 98.9% said that children under five, had vaccination records. The following graph (see *Figure 8*) outlines the type of medical services that IDPs in Al-Zubair have received during 2006, while 57.4% having received vaccinations, 36.6% said they had not been visited specifically by a medical worker.

Figure 8: Households that have been visited by a health worker in current location, and services provided by them.

(Sample of 101 IDP households)

