



Week of Compassion

VIOLENCE DISPLACES PEOPLE IN IRAQ: OUR RESPONSE

WHAT IS HAPPENING: SYRIAN REFUGEES AND ISIL-INITIATED VIOLENCE

The protracted Syrian crisis has meant that over 200,000 Syrian refugees have received asylum in the Kurdish region of north eastern Iraq. Many of the Kurdish ethnicity refugees are being accommodated within the homes and communities of relatives and friends, and are able to pursue a livelihood in the Kurdish region of Iraq. However, over 85,000 have fewer means of support, and are accommodated in several refugee camps run by the Kurdish Regional Government with the assistance of numerous international agencies. While the standard of provision of basic needs in these camps is generally acceptable, this long-term case load of refugees has strained the resources and capacity of both the government and international agencies working in Northern Iraq.

In just the past month, dramatic events have added substantially to the humanitarian situation in Northern Iraq. Al Qaida-related armed faction, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) initiated a blitz campaign that has seen them take over large swaths of north and west Iraq from Iraqi central government control. Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq was overrun quickly, with little resistance put up by the Iraqi national army. This drove large numbers from their homes in Mosul and surrounding areas of conflict to the relative safety of the Kurdish-controlled section of the Nineveh plain to the east and north of Mosul region of Iraq, and further on into the Kurdish Region. Here Kurdish “peshmerga” units, unlike the Iraqi national army, have presented a formidable deterrent to ISIL’s further advance.

While many of the initially displaced population of Sunni Arab ethnicity have returned to their homes in the Mosul area, the displaced minority groups of Shiite, Christian, Yezedians (Zoroastrians) and Kurdish ethnicity remain fearful for their future under ISIL, and seem most likely to remain in the Iraqi Kurdish region or the area of the Nineveh plain immediately bordering the region for the time being.

While many of those displaced by the violence were able to flee with financial resources and find housing with extended family or friends, many of the displaced remain vulnerable, without resources and are finding refuge in churches, mosques, and other makeshift shelters.

In addition, some of the displaced are able to enter the Kurdish Region proper, which is perceived as a safer area, while others have to remain in the Kurdish controlled areas of the Nineveh plain. Those who are unable to do so remain quite vulnerable, often having to settle

among local communities, whose own resources such as water and electricity are coming under increasing stress.

In the past few days, ISIL has cut off water supplies from central pumping plants on the Tigris in Mosul to the Kurdish controlled areas of the Nineveh plain. This is exactly where many of the displaced are hosted, and this new development puts them and their host communities in need of urgent emergency water supply, as well as the continuing need for emergency food rations.

RESPONDING:

Through our partners at ACT Alliance, Week of Compassion is supporting efforts to care for the most vulnerable of the displaced populations, which include the aforementioned religious and ethnic minorities. ACT Alliance partners are working to meet their needs in the following ways:

- Securing clean and sufficient emergency water supply for 12,500 internally displaced persons (IDP) and host community families in the Kurdish controlled areas of the Nineveh plain, north and east of Mosul.
- Ensuring a further 2-months' food security for 2,500 IDP families in the Nineveh plain.
- Providing psycho-social services and trauma counselling for 5,000 IDPs in the Nineveh plain
- Providing emergency food relief to 3,000 families in the Kurdish region of Iraq, and providing non-food item assistance to 400 vulnerable internally displaced households.
- Distributing health and hygiene kits to improve sanitation and promote the personal dignity of 400 vulnerable IDP households in the Kurdish region.
- Paying cash assistance to 439 households (43 households in the Kurdish region and 396 households in Karbala region of Iraq) to help support the most vulnerable families meet their priority needs.

Through our partnership with the ACT Alliance, Week of Compassion is able to respond to the most vulnerable of those affected by sectarian violence. Your generosity allows us, as a ministry of your church, to put our collective Compassion into Action

<https://docgeneralassembly.webconnex.com/weekofcompassion>

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED IN COLORADO

Last fall, northern Colorado was beset by record rainfall. More than 20,000 homes and 2,000 businesses were damaged or destroyed. A long winter delayed significant repairs to the state's infrastructure as well as some debris removal, complicating early response efforts. Despite these challenges, communities have pulled together to plan and prepare for the long haul. Members from Disciples congregations in Weld, Boulder, and Larimer County have been engaged from the beginning.

While the headlines receded along with the floodwaters, the needs remain. All of the pieces necessary for a long-term response have come together and communities across northern Colorado are ready to receive folks from outside the area. Disciples Volunteering is pleased to partner with Week of Compassion, the Central Rocky Mountain Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and First Christian Church, Loveland to establish a Mission Station in Loveland and enable mission teams to serve in the recovery. Work teams will be partnered with local response organizations, assisting people whose needs would otherwise go unmet. More information and registration for your mission team to serve in Colorado is available through Disciples Volunteering (<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/dhm/dhm-ministries/disciples-volunteering/sending-teams-in-mission/mission-stations/loveland-mission-station/>).

Thanks for all that you do. Your partnership is what makes Week of Compassion what it is.

Rev. Brandon Gilvin
Associate Director

This Week's Responses:

Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance

El Salvador, Coffee Rust Response
Guatemala, Coffee Rust Response
Iraq, Displaced People Assistance
Gaza and West Bank, Emergency Medical Support
U.S. Border, Unaccompanied Children Support