UNICEF is trucking in millions of gallons of safe water. This area of Baghdad has been without clean water for weeks.

1. KEY DEVELOPMENTS

A permanent UN presence in Baghdad has been achieved. Ramiro Lopes da Silva, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, arrived in Baghdad on 1 May accompanied by a team of senior officials from the World Health Organisation, the World Food Programme, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The team has moved quickly to establish contact with the coalition’s Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), with key counterparts in line ministries and with NGOs. The UN hosted its first coordination meeting on 6 May which was attended by the representatives of 30 NGOs. It was agreed that daily sectoral meetings will take place for health, watsan, education and food/nutrition.

In a press conference in Baghdad on 4 May, Mr Lopes da Silva stressed the importance of reactivating systems that were in place to provide basic services to the population, warning that social indicators characterised a situation of extreme fragility. He added that disaster had so far been avoided as a result the crucial inputs including from the oil for food programme (OFFP). He paid tribute to the UN’s 3400 national staff that remained behind during the war, continuing to deliver programmes to the best of their abilities and often under great stress. A full transcript of the briefing is posted on the HIC website (www.agoodplacetostart.org).

The UN is now present in several other locations. A third wave of 17 UN staff working in the Three Northern Governorates returned to Erbil on 5 May bringing the total number of international staff to 87. A fourth team is scheduled to travel to Erbil on 7 May. The team to be based in Central Iraq (Ninewa, Tameem, Salah al-Din) will remain in Erbil until security conditions permit establishment in either Kirkuk or Mosul. A humanitarian assessment to Kirkuk will take place on 8 May. The Upper South Team (Najaf, Wasit, Qadissiya, Babil, Kerbala) has deployed to Kuwait. The Lower South Team (Basrah, Missan, Muthanna, Thi-Qar) re-established a permanent presence in Basrah on 3 May.

The coalition has begun emergency payments of US$20 to civil servants in Baghdad, Basrah and Umm Qasr, pending the re-establishment of salary payment systems. While this will have eased the situation, many public sector workers remain unpaid.

The problem of unexploded ordnance is becoming critical. In Baghdad, hospitals report an increased number of accidents caused by UXOs, especially among children. In Basrah, IRCS reported 30 different contaminated locations and several incidents. In Kut (Wasit) ICRC reports widespread contamination. MAG reports 52 killed and 63 injured by UXOs and landmines in the past week in Kirkuk. Children remain the most affected group among the population.

While the security situation has improved sufficiently to allow a UN presence in key
cities, poor security remains an obstacle to humanitarian operations. Baghdad and its environs remain insecure despite the efforts of the coalition, and of the local police who began patrolling the streets on May 5. Looting continues, affecting those facilities and installations which have been repaired or re-equipped. The continued political uncertainty and administrative vacuum has led to many stepping into the breach. Religious and political groups continue to be a force for protection of facilities – large numbers of health centers in Al Sadr city are controlled by clerics. Community frustrations with the pace of improvements, and with uncertainty, have led to some incidents of harassment of those seeking to re-establish essential services.

Security on main land routes appears to be improving, but incidents continue along the Amman-Baghdad road, particularly around Ramadi. Only daylight travel, in convoy, is advised. The Yaroubia border crossing between Syria and Iraq is safe, but the Al Qaim area in Iraq (on the other side of the Abou Kamal border crossing) is still insecure. A local Bedouin tribe, filling the existing power gap, assumed responsibility for security and provides an escort without charging a fee (and without being requested) between Yaroubia and Mosul (a more detailed report on security and roads is available in the UNJLC bulletin www.unjlc.org, and a map of UN security phases can be found on the HIC website at www.agoodplacetostart.org).

Schools have resumed in the north, and are being opened in the centre and south. They reopened in Baghdad on 4 May, but fuel shortages, security concerns (particularly for adolescent girls), and confusion about the curriculum kept up to two-thirds of students and teachers away. With exams approaching this month, there is an increasing concern about the loss of the school year in areas where schooling has not resumed, or where children are not attending. Catch up classes, extension of the school year and adjustments to the examination timetable are options to be considered, but there is currently a lack of administrative decision making power.

There are indications that the situation for children from institutions in Baghdad has taken a turn for the worst: Further assessment is needed, but the abduction of children by armed groups from at least two institutions during the chaos following the war, the apparent growth in numbers of children on the streets and the emergence of armed male “protectors” are disturbing developments.

2. POPULATION MOVEMENTS

Several UNHCR missions visited the Makhmour camp from Erbil and have re-established the security system, the management of the camp and the provisions of services in coordination with the local district authorities and NGO.

Iranian authorities have not given clearance to UN agencies to make an assessment of the 800-1000 people still inside Iraq at the border opposite to Dehloran until they make their own assessment of the group. They are Iranian refugees who fled to Iraq in the 1980s and who now wish to repatriate. UNHCR continues to press the Iranian authorities for access.

The Government of Jordan continues to allow small numbers of refugees to enter Jordan and the Ruwayshid refugee camp. On 4 May, another 20 refugees were admitted, bringing the total camp population to 782 refugees. With the registration on 4 May of another 17 Iranian Kurds, the total population in no-man’s land is now 1076, of whom 996 are Iranian Kurd refugees from Al Tash camp, west of Al Ramadi, 13 Iranian-Persians, and 67 Arabs (includes Palestinians, Iraqis, Jordanians with documentation problems). UNHCR undertook an assessment of Al Tash camp on 6 May.

In southern Iraq, UNHCR’s overall priorities are to prepare the future return of refugees, and to follow up on the refugees located in the area. UNHCR is still waiting for security clearance to travel to the refugee settlements in Wassit and Missan governorates to assess the situation. Iranian refugee leaders have met with UNHCR in Basrah to request repatriation back to Iran.

Returns of Iraqi from Jordan and Syria have started and are increasing everyday.

IOM reports Third Country National outflows saw a surge during the first week after fighting ended in Iraq (average 109 per day) but have
now returned to levels seen during the war (average 70 per day).

IOM also reports that Jordan has seen a steady influx of Palestinians from Iraq in the past two weeks (825 as of 4 May).

3. KEY SECTORS: NEEDS AND RESPONSE

3.1 Health

Although the situation has improved in some areas, security, water supply, and electricity supply are still serious problems. The lack of staff salaries and running costs continue. Reactivation of public health laboratories is a priority which agencies are beginning to address.

In Baghdad, the absence of administrative structures continues to hamper work. Most hospitals can only address emergency needs. In Rashad psychiatric hospital materials have been looted again, leading to suspension of ICRC work. Sanitation is still a major concern: UNICEF, ICRC and NGOs continue to clear refuse from hospitals.

Drug distribution remains a problem. Prior to the war, drugs were distributed from central warehouses in Baghdad to governorate warehouses and to health facilities on monthly basis. While the distribution system within Baghdad has been re-activated, the main problem for the governorates is a lack of security and a shortage of vehicles for transportation (many of them were looted). Assessments are ongoing to evaluate the magnitude of the problem. With regard to shortages, a list of 49 line items in short supply has been provided to WHO by Baghdad central warehouse staff. These items are being supplied from Amman and 3NG.

Vaccines are in short supply across the country. As a result of looting and power blackouts experienced during the war, and the consequent interruption of the cold chain, most of the vaccines stored in central warehouses and health facilities are no longer reliable. Vaccine supply has traditionally been problematic in Iraq, and resupply will need to be accompanied by efforts to boost the efficiency of the supply chain.

One month ago UNICEF placed urgent orders for 3 months vaccine requirement (all vaccines). Delivery was delayed due to limited storage space in Kuwait. Now that walk-in coolers are currently being restored/repairs in Iraq, to be ready by 12 May, it is expected that the ordered vaccines will arrive in Amman in one week's time.

Achievements in the Health sector

WHO with MoH have established a sentinel site surveillance system of eight primary health centres and six hospitals in Baghdad for 27 communicable diseases. From each centre, a focal point will provide daily reports to WHO in Baghdad.

UNICEF has delivered 90,000 doses of measles vaccine and 150,000 doses of DPT vaccine from Iran to Basrah.

130,000 doses of DPT, 250,000 doses of measles and 250,000 doses of TT have arrived in Kuwait to be delivered by UNICEF to Nassriyah and Basra this week.

Two trucks carrying health supplies sufficient for the needs of 100,000 people for three months provided by UNICEF arrived in Baghdad this week. The supplies will be distributed by UNICEF national staff to medical centres and hospitals in Baghdad.

3.2 Food Assistance

The WFP Representative, now in Baghdad, is giving priority to determining the status of the Public Distribution System (PDS). A number of meetings have been held with representatives from the Ministry of Trade in Baghdad to discuss the reactivation of the PDS. WFP aims to ship into Iraq more than 500,000 MT of food in May, and 600,000 MT in June, so that the pipeline is secured for distributions to meet the needs of some 22 million Iraqis who receive the monthly food ration.
WFP is now dispatching an average of 4,000 MT of food into Iraq each day via five corridors – Jordan, Iran, Turkey, Kuwait and Syria.

WFP distributed approximately 651 MT of assorted commodities to around 74,250 vulnerable groups in three northern governorates. Other food distributions include 269 MT of High Energy Biscuits (HEB) to 512 primary school students in Dahuk and Erbil under its School Feeding Programme and 14 MT of food aid to 1,641 IDPs.

Following a request from the Department of Health in Mosul, and an assessment by national staff, WFP has provided 147 MT of wheat-soya milk, 680 MT of vegetable oil and wheat flour to some 1,500 hospital patients.

OFFP: Oil-For-Food shipments to the Jordanian port of Aqaba last week included 20,000 MT of bagged rice and 12,500 MT of bagged sugar. Fifty thousand MT of wheat arrived in Kuwait last week. Shipments into northern Iraq this week included 2,479 MT of high-energy biscuits and 2,008 MT of sugar.

### 3.3 Water and Sanitation

In Baghdad, water supply is beginning to improve, but the outskirts of Baghdad still require water tankering. Power and water supply reach 80% of the urban population at least on intermittent basis, but fuel supply for plants is a major concern. Just one water treatment plant in Baghdad requires 120,000 litres of fuel per day. The coalition has sought the assistance of NGOs. Solid waste disposal remains a major problem, particularly in suburbs.

Security is a key constraint to repair of facilities. Of particular concern is the status of Rustumiya sewage treatment plant. Sewage from 3 million people (around 60% the population of Baghdad) is being pumped untreated into the Tigris River from the plant. Although the plant has now been secured by coalition forces, it will be some time before repairs can be completed and the current problems addressed.

The water situation in the south is gradually improving, but shortages of drinking water are serious in many areas. Tankering has increased considerably and repairs are underway on key water treatment and supply facilities. If current delays at the Kuwait border can be overcome, UNICEF plans to double water shipments from the current 40 tanker loads/day to over 80 to service Basrah, Safwan, Zubair, Umm Qasr and Nassriyah.

With the stabilisation of power supply in Basrah this week, most of the water systems are working. The daily per-capita water supply has increased from 15 to 20-30 litres. However, the water distribution capacity is seriously affected by widespread leakages and illegal home connection. UNICEF and ICRC have started to work on a leak detection programme in order to commence immediate repairs. The R-Zero water treatment plant near Basrah airport which covers 60% of water needs is working at only 50% capacity as a result of war damage and looting. Coalition forces are having difficulty providing security for the site. The only sewerage treatment plant in Basrah has been assessed. Hardly functional before the war, it is in a deplorable state. Areas North and South of Basrah are without water: UNICEF will extend water tankering to these areas.

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**Achievements in the Food sector**

Contact has been established with senior representatives of the Ministry of Trade.

As of 5 May, WFP had dispatched 92,075 MT of mixed commodities into Iraq. The majority of dispatches continue to originate from Turkey – 59,850 MT to date - into the Northern Iraqi governorates of Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah as well as Tameem.

The first WFP vessel arrived at the Iraqi Port of Umm Qasr on May 2 carrying 14,000 MT of rice.

WFP continues wheat flour distribution in the northern governorates. In Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah some 21,300 MT has been distributed to approximately 2.2 million people. These distributions are part of the regular monthly food rations.
UNICEF warned this week that rapidly dwindling supplies of chlorine in southern Iraq would leave drinking water untreated within weeks, with potentially disastrous consequences. Nassriyah (Thi-Qar), Basrah, Zubair, and Safwan (Basrah) are all affected by shortages and assessments indicate that water plants in those places will run out of chlorine by the middle of this month. In Basrah, UNDP is planning to renovate the country’s main chlorine producing factory as soon as possible. The plant, with a 20 MT daily capacity, had been rehabilitated only in 2002 with UNDP funding and UNIDO technical support. Engineers are on standby for a full assessment of the plant. Repairs are expected to begin within the next few weeks.

Drilling of deep wells has commenced in Khanaqeen town (Sulaymaniyah) with the aid of equipment provided by UNICEF, in order to meet the water needs of the town.

In Kirkuk, water supply is back to pre-war Mosul, 80% of the town has access to water.

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### Achievements in the Water sector

UNDP purchased 2 300 KVA gensets in collaboration with UNICEF for the water treatment complex in Zubair that was operating at only 10% of its capacity. The plant is back to normal capacity for the 400,000 residents of Zubair.

UNICEF estimates at least 15 million litres of clean water have so far been transported to southern Iraq.

In collaboration with DOE Dohuk, distribution of 179 Sanitation Kits to schools occupied earlier by IDP families.

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### 3.4 Electricity/Essential Infrastructure

Damage and looting during and after the war has reduced what was already an inadequate supply across much of the country prior to the war, and health, water and sanitation services have suffered from a combination of fuel and power shortages.

In the north the situation has stabilised and supply is relatively good with temporary problems experienced in Dahuk due to disruption to the supply from Mosul. UNDP national staff contributed to the continuation of emergency maintenance support to the electricity networks throughout the region and helped to avoid any significant disruption since the start of the conflict.

In Kirkuk, UNDP engineers have completed assessments, and will help restore two 400 KV power transmission lines to the communities in the north and south of the governorate. This will stabilize voltage and enhance power transmission in the area. Similar work is planned for Kirkuk City and the district of Tooz. Work is expected to be completed within 10 days.

In the south the priority is to ensure supplies for basic public services including health, water, and sanitation. In Zubair, generators and other equipment were supplied for the water treatment plant that was running at only 10% of its capacity. The plant is back to full power now.

The Port of Umm Qasr has become partially blocked by a natural build up of silt that must be dredged away regularly. Large shipments cannot currently access this most important port of entry. UNDP engineers have completed initial dredging assessments and the first dredging operation is expected to be completed by 7 June. This will greatly enhance delivery speed of emergency humanitarian supplies for Iraq.

### 3.5 Mine Action

Landmines contaminate much of northern Iraq and Iraq’s borders with Iran, Kuwait, Jordan, Syria and Turkey. There is also a significant level of contamination from Unexploded
Ordnance (UXO) in the northern, central and southern areas of Iraq. The contamination extracts a high human toll, constrains access to agricultural land and basic social services and is an obstacle to the distribution of humanitarian aid. A substantial component of the mine and UXO threat is a result of the caches of mines and UXO that have been stored in schools, mosques and other public places in Iraq. This threat is exacerbated by the break down in security since the end of the war.

In 2002 there were approximately 300 mine and UXO casualties in northern Iraq where UNOPS and a number of NGOs have been implementing mine action activities. ICRC has initiated Mine Risk Education activities in the south and center of the country.

Events since the end of the war suggest a significant worsening of the situation in the north, particularly around Kirkuk and Mosul. Mines Advisory Group (MAG) indicate that there have been at least 249 casualties in the Kirkuk governorate in the last three weeks. This figure includes 133 Children (4 fatalities), 113 Men (2 fatalities), and 3 Women. In Mosul MAG has reported 15-20 casualties a day from landmines and UXO accidents. MAG has identified 19 schools that have been used by GOI forces to stockpile mines and UXO. The vast majority of accidents involving children are caused by tampering/playing with UXO, that apparently litter playgrounds.

These new figures suggest that the situation in these areas is among the worst in the world today. UNMAS is following up closely with MAG to ensure awareness and clearance programs are timely and appropriate in both Kirkuk and Mosul.

The situation in the centre and south of the country is not yet known, but agencies expect that a similar pattern of increased risk from UXOs and mines will be occurring in areas that were the focus of fighting. The Mine Action Coordination Team, (MACT), comprising UNMAS, UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, UNOPS and a number of mine action NGOs, will established office in Basrah on May 5. The Danish NGO Dan Church Aid will provide an integrated mine clearance capacity in the south from next week, which will be enhanced by additional agencies in the near future. This capacity will initially be used to clear munitions dumps in schools, mosques and other public places. The first wave of UN personnel who returned to Baghdad on 1 May included mines expertise. UNMAS, through UNOPS, has also identified mine clearance capacity that can be used to clear mines, UXO and ammunition dumps in other affected areas in Iraq, including Baghdad.

4. FUEL

UNJLC is working on a plan to assist UN Agencies with an internal fuel supply and distribution system to support their activities without influencing the fragile fuel balance in Iraq.

The underproduction of LPG in Iraq continues to cause alarm. Counter measures have been put in place by the Coalition and contracts placed to import large quantities of LPG & gasoline from surrounding countries, whilst the coalition adjust the production programme to meet the internal demands. This intervention is expected have an impact within 4 days.

OFFICE OF THE HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR IRAQ

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