Background

The Iraqi military launched a large operation in October 2016, supported by international forces, to retake control of Mosul, Iraq’s second largest city located in the Ninewa governorate, which was under the control of the Islamic State (IS) militants since June 2014. More than 946,000 people (176,000 from east Mosul, 771,000 from west Mosul) were displaced over the 9-month operation, of which 823,000 remain displaced as of December 2017 (Source: IOM – Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix). Severe damage was also reported, particularly in and around the Old City on the western bank.

The Iraqi military also conducted operations to retake other areas that remained under IS control, including Telafar, Hawija, Shirqat, and western Anbar, with tens of thousands of additional displacements recorded mostly across Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, and Anbar governorates.

After the September 2017 referendum over independence held in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), tensions with the central Government have been growing. This has led to the ban of international flights to and from KRI airports, territorial shifts in the contested areas of Diyala, Kirkuk and Ninewa governorates, and a further 148,000 people are currently still displaced (as of January 2018).

Overall, 2.8 million Iraqis are currently displaced throughout the country and humanitarian access remains an ongoing challenge due to the volatile environment and an unpredictable security situation. There continues to be shifts and changing restrictions with regards to customs clearance and internal access approvals, particularly regarding movements between the KRI and federal Iraq. Additional logistics issues remain around disputed territories and in areas where IS concentrate asymmetric attacks. These constraints and the nature of the operational context will persist and require a flexible and mobile humanitarian response in 2018.

The Logistics Cluster will facilitate access to common storage and emergency transport for the humanitarian community, including for contingency stocks and consolidation purposes. The Logistics Cluster will maintain a coordination and information management role to maximise the use of available resources in-country, provide support and advocacy for customs clearance and government liaison, and ensure a more coordinated and effective operational approach.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The major constraints on the ability of humanitarian organisations to respond to the needs of affected populations throughout Iraq continue to be inconsistent access due to insecurity, a rapidly changing security situation and an instable operational context. Specifically, the following logistics gaps have been identified:

- High on-going needs for logistics coordination and information, due to an unpredictable operational scenario and the movement of IDPs to hard-to-reach locations throughout several Governorates with different structures and authorities.
- Potential restrictions on the movement of humanitarian cargo and personnel in key operational areas, due to a volatile security situation and potentially damaged infrastructure (especially bridges).
- Presence of various armed actors on key supply routes.

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• Delays in the customs and clearances process due to several layers of bureaucratic impediments or in case of significantly altered procedures for incoming cargo and in-country commodity movements both to/from the KRI and federal Iraq.

• Potential lack of handling and storage capacity at key entry points should there be a significant increase in the amount of supplies being brought in country, particularly at previously un-used entry points.

• Limited storage capacity for prepositioning and contingency stocks to support a flexible and mobile logistics response and ensure remote and hard-to-reach areas close to the frontline and informal displacement sites are served.

Objectives

Based on the needs identified and expressed by the humanitarian community, the Logistics Cluster aims to facilitate access to sufficient and reliable logistics services and consolidated information related to logistics capacities, to enhance the capacity of the humanitarian community to deliver relief items to hard-to-reach locations, hence ensuring timely and uninterrupted supply of life-saving relief items to affected populations.

Planned Activities

The following range of activities and services are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of individual agencies or organisations, but rather to fill identified gaps in the humanitarian supply chain and enhance the response of the humanitarian community through the provision of common services, based on need.

1. Coordination:

Coordination will entail the following:

• Hold regular and ad hoc Logistics Cluster coordination meetings in Erbil, Dahuk and Baghdad, and in field locations if/when required.

• Liaise with authorities and relevant national and international parties on behalf of the humanitarian community, to raise logistics issues of common concern, including access and clearance procedures.

• Continue to support the established One Stop Shop (OSS) (a dedicated office focused on customs clearance facilitation) in Erbil; and roll out a project in Baghdad to expedite the importation and movement of humanitarian items and simplify clearance processes in federal Iraq.

• Deploy specialised staff at major entry points (border crossings, airports and seaport) and other strategic logistics infrastructure to facilitate timely delivery and avoid major bottlenecks for incoming humanitarian supplies, if/when necessary.

• Coordinate with other clusters and agencies, including through participation in the inter-cluster and inter-agencies fora, on strategic planning and pipeline information to enhance preparedness and response actions.

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2. Information Management (IM):

Information Management will include the following:

- A dedicated Information Management Officer responsible for the consolidation and sharing of updated operational and logistics information, including Customs Snapshots, Situation Updates, Operation Overviews, Meeting Minutes, Maps and Infographics.
- Information sharing platforms including a common mailing list and a dedicated Iraq Operation webpage maintained on the Logistics Cluster website to disseminate relevant and up-to-date logistics information to the humanitarian community: [http://www.logcluster.org/ops/irq14a](http://www.logcluster.org/ops/irq14a).
- A dedicated Skype group to enhance communication and exchange information among humanitarian actors, as well as additional groups for Baghdad and Dahuk to address region-specific matters.

3. Logistics Services:

The services made available by the Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of the agencies, organisations, or of the local market but rather to enable humanitarian actors through the provision of common services. Access permitting, the following services will be provided at no cost to the user, dependent on the availability of funds:

Common Storage:

- Presently, the Logistics Cluster has the following storage capacity:
  - Baghdad: 2,000 m²
  - Dahuk: 2,760 m²
  - Erbil: 5,400 m²
  - Hamam al ‘Alil – UNHCR camp: 2,080 m²
  - Hamam al ‘Alil – MODM camp: 1,040 m²
  - Tikrit: 3,400 m²

The Logistics Cluster will continue to monitor the usage and criticality of these hubs, adjust the capacity and scale down/up according to the needs.

- Maintain common storage facilities in, or in close vicinity to, the emergency sites and displacement locations to facilitate stocks prepositioning and contingency measures.
- MSUs will be made available on loan to organisations requesting additional storage space for their specific programme implementation outside the existing logistics hubs, if supplies permit.

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Organisations requesting storage services must complete a Service Request Form (SRF) available at: http://www.logcluster.org/document/service-request-form-6 and submit it to Iraq.ClusterCargo@wfp.org.

Road Transport:
- Support the humanitarian community in planning, coordinating, and if necessary, facilitating inter-agency humanitarian convoys, when needed and depending on access constraints, prevailing security restrictions and required endorsements by the Humanitarian Country Team.
- Should there be a need, establish a cargo consolidation mechanism to ensure swift movement of humanitarian cargo to destination.
- When major issues are faced in terms of road deliveries, facilitate initial road transport for emergency humanitarian supplies.
- Adopt all necessary preparedness actions to activate a “last resort” provision of transport services to support relief operations should the situation on the ground require it.

Air Transport:
- In case of emergency gaps in available stocks in-country, air-bridge services for priority items may be facilitated, subject to the availability of funds and on case-by-case basis, and coordination with airport cargo services and necessary liaison between airport authorities and humanitarian actors would be ensured in close coordination with WFP management and Logistics Cluster partners and stakeholders.
- Coordinate and facilitate inter-agency humanitarian airlifts, when needed and depending on access constraints, prevailing security restrictions and required endorsements by the Humanitarian Country Team.

As “Provider of Last Resort” WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, is responsible only to provide logistics services that fill identified gaps in logistics capacity and/or demanded by organisations operating in Iraq, where access and funding permit and where these gaps limit the ability of the humanitarian community to meet the needs of the affected population.

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