Background

The city of Mosul, Iraq’s second largest city, located in the northern Ninewa governorate, was officially taken by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants in June 2014. The capture of Mosul resulted in the sudden displacement of 500,000 people from the city and surrounding areas, largely to the Kurdish Region in Iraq (KRI). Since the summer of 2014, the Iraqi Government have planned to retake the city, however a renewed offensive began in March 2016, near the Makhmur area of Ninewa. Despite resistance, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have been progressing towards Mosul with momentum, leading military experts to anticipate an attack on Mosul city itself in the final quarter of 2016.

It is estimated that 1.2 – 1.5 million civilians residing in and around Mosul will be impacted by the retake of the city. It is also estimated that up to one million people may be displaced into areas indicated by the military forces. The humanitarian operation in Mosul is likely to be the single largest, most complex response in 2016.

With the rapid deterioration of the security situation across the country, an increase of humanitarian needs and influx of Internally Displaced People (IDP), additional logistical support is required to assist humanitarian organisations responding to the crisis.

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

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The major constraints on the ability of humanitarian organisations to respond to the people affected by the Mosul operations are the lack of access due to insecurity, a rapidly changing security situation, agency capacity vis-a-vis the increase of humanitarian needs for potentially over one million IDPs. Specifically, the following logistics gaps have been identified:

- Limited storage capacity for prepositioning and contingency stocks in rural areas close to the new emergency site locations.
- Increasing needs for logistics coordination and information, due to an unpredictable security situation and the movement of IDPs to hard-to-reach locations throughout several Governorates with different structures and authorities.
- Potential restrictions on 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.
- Potential lack of transport capacity and/or increased transport costs to reach certain operational areas.

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• Potential lack of airport capacity (i.e. Erbil Airport) for additional incoming cargo flights, clearance and temporary storage.

• Delays in customs and clearance procedures with a potentially increased level of bureaucratic impediments for incoming and in-country commodities. Potential delays at key entry points (Khalil-Ibrahim border, Erbil airport) should there be a significant increase on the amount of supplies being brought in country.

• Coordination and circulation of logistics information.

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:

• Regular and ad hoc Logistics Cluster coordination meetings held in Erbil, Dahuk and Baghdad.

• Coordination and facilitation of inter-agency humanitarian convoys and airlifts, when needed and depending on access constraints, prevailing security restrictions and required approvals.

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

• Deploy specialised staff in the areas most likely to be affected and at major entry points (border crossings and airports) for facilitation of timely delivery and avoidance of major bottlenecks.

• Should there be a significant increase of humanitarian flights and a lack of capacity at the receiving airport, facilitate the establishment of a humanitarian staging at the airport in Erbil and Baghdad. This includes the potential provision of additional handling equipment (if required) to avoid congestion and delays.

• Deploy an expert to coordinate with OCHA, humanitarian partners, and the governments of GOI and KRI for simplified customs and clearance procedures and set up of potential one-stop shops (a dedicated office focused on customs clearance facilitation) in Erbil and Baghdad to support timely delivery of humanitarian items.
• Deploy a Civ/Mil Coordination Officer should additional support be required in facilitating humanitarian convoys.

• Coordination with other clusters and agencies, including through participation to inter-cluster working group and Humanitarian Country Team, for incoming commodities and pipeline information for planning and scheduling.

2. Information Management (IM):

Information Management will include the following:

• A dedicated Information Management Unit responsible for consolidation and sharing of updated operational information, including Meeting Minutes, Access Constraints Maps, Customs Snapshots, Situation Updates, Monthly Overviews 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.

• A dedicated Skype group (logcluster.iraq) to enhance communication and exchange information among humanitarian actors.

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, partners have reported that there are no issues in securing storage in Erbil and Dahuk. However, as a contingency, the Logistics Cluster will scale up the current warehouse capacity in Erbil to 5,400 m². The Logistics Cluster now has storage capacity in Dahuk/Batel equivalent to 2,773 m² and in Tikrit equivalent to 2,400 m², two warehouses in Erbil with a total capacity of 1,800 m² and a logistics hub in Baghdad with a 2,000 m² of storage space. The Logistics Cluster will continue to monitor these major hubs and scale up if/when required.

• Procure and preposition additional Mobile Storage Units (MSUs).

• Establish additional key strategic forward operating bases in or in close vicinity to the 13 newly identified emergency site locations where stocks will be stored for distribution only (see Annex 1). The majority of prepositioning will be in Erbil while the forward operating bases will be regularly topped up based on distribution plans.

• MSUs will be made available on loan to organisations requesting additional storage space outside the strategic hubs and if supplies permit.
• Organisations requesting storage services must complete a Service Request Form (SRF) available at: http://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, facilitate inter-agency humanitarian convoys (dependant on access and security).
• Should there be a need, establish a cargo consolidation mechanism to ensure swift movement of humanitarian cargo to the identified locations (see Annex 1).
• If partners are facing issues in terms of road deliveries, facilitate initial road transport for incoming emergency humanitarian supplies into the emergency site and camp locations.
• If required, a daily ‘window of opportunity’ will be established through OCHA CMCoord for trucks to pass congested bridges/checkpoints.
• Adopt all necessary preparedness actions to activate a “last resort” provision of transport services from Erbil to the emergency sites and camps should the situation on the ground require it.

Air Transport:
• In case of emergency gaps in available stocks in-country, facilitate air-bridge services for priority items, coordinate airport cargo services, and liaise with airport authorities and humanitarian actors.


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.
Annex 1

**Logistics Cluster Response for the Identified Emergency Sites**

1. The Logistics Cluster will augment current warehouse capacity in Erbil as a contingency to the storage requirement of partners who are now not reporting any gaps.
2. Erbil and Dohuk will be the key hub/dispatch locations.
3. Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) will be deployed and erected for the storage of both NFIs and food at each of the 13 emergency sites, or in some instances, several MSUs will be erected in a single location to serve multiple sites. It is envisioned that the MSUs at each location will have the capacity to hold stocks for 2,000 people at any given time.
4. The MSUs will continuously be re-supplied from Erbil or Dahuk based on the daily stock reports reflecting items distributed that day.
5. The Logistics Cluster will establish a cargo consolidation mechanism to facilitate the swift transport of cargo to both the screening sites and emergency sites.
6. Should there be bottlenecks in terms of road transport, the Logistics Cluster will facilitate convoy movements and identify an assembly point outside of Erbil for trucks and work with CMCoord to establish a daily ‘window of opportunity’ for trucks to pass congested trucks/checkpoints.
7. The Logistics Cluster will avail trucking capacity during the first wave of displacement should partners need support in road transport.
8. The Logistics Cluster will circulate an SOP to partners advising what steps to follow to join the convoys.
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