

URBAN BAGHDAD: IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON DAILY LIFE



IAU Inter-Agency
Information and
Analysis Unit



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UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the heavy burden of daily attacks, killings and damage to infrastructure, Baghdad has suffered the most intense effects of violence and internal conflict since 2006. Tens of thousands of people were killed and more than one tenth of the city's population of seven million was displaced. Families tended to move to areas where their religion or sect predominated, cementing social divides.

The most vulnerable displaced families live in public buildings, old military encampments or improvised squatter settlements. 136 camps have been identified containing at least 48,000 families who have limited or no access to basic services and decent housing. Access to employment and housing is of particular concern for internally displaced families.

Years of conflict and sanctions have caused problems with basic services throughout Baghdad. Housing shortages have led to overcrowding and less than a quarter of households have reliable access to drinking water. Prolonged power cuts further impact on living conditions. As the primary care-giver in the home, women are most affected by poor quality housing conditions.

Baghdad's youth and children have suffered from the conflict and the weak economy. 13% of youth have suffered harassment, threats or displacement. A quarter of youth are unemployed. Economic pressures within the family mean that 11% of children are forced to work.

Since 2003, the establishment of military-controlled zones, lengthy strips of T-walls, road-blocks and checkpoints has interrupted movement along arterial roads linking the different areas of Baghdad. These barriers have created widespread congestion and made routine journeys longer, meaning that local residents prefer to shop, work and socialize within their neighbourhood.

The lack of safe public spaces means that families have little respite from the pressures of daily life. Major recreation areas and facilities have been closed or off-limits since 2003. Open spaces normally used by families have become dumping sites or are filled with sewage and stagnant water.

Since the height of the violence in 2006-2007 conditions in Baghdad have improved. Nearly a third of those displaced have returned and conflict related deaths have dropped considerably. Improved security has allowed greater freedom of movement and recreation in daily life. Access to jobs and services remain a challenge.



Boy riding a bicycle beside a strip of T-walls *Baghdad, 2010 (Jamal Penjweny)*

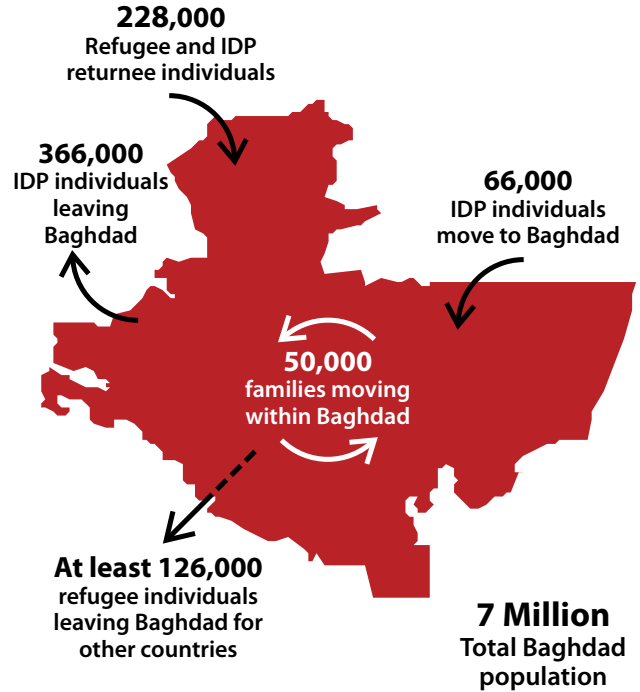
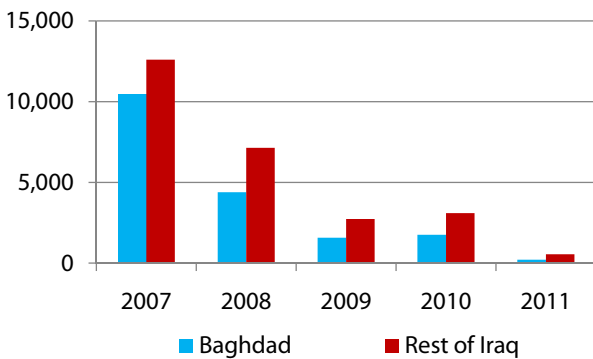
VIOLENCE AND DISPLACEMENT

During the height of the violence in Iraq in 2007, Baghdad suffered 45% of all casualties. In 2007 alone, there were 10,463 conflict-related deaths in Baghdad, a far higher number of deaths than the total number covering the period since then (7,907 from 2008 to March 2011).¹ 52% of people reported car bombings or suicide attacks in their local area as a serious concern and 68% of Baghdad residents described local security as “very bad”.²

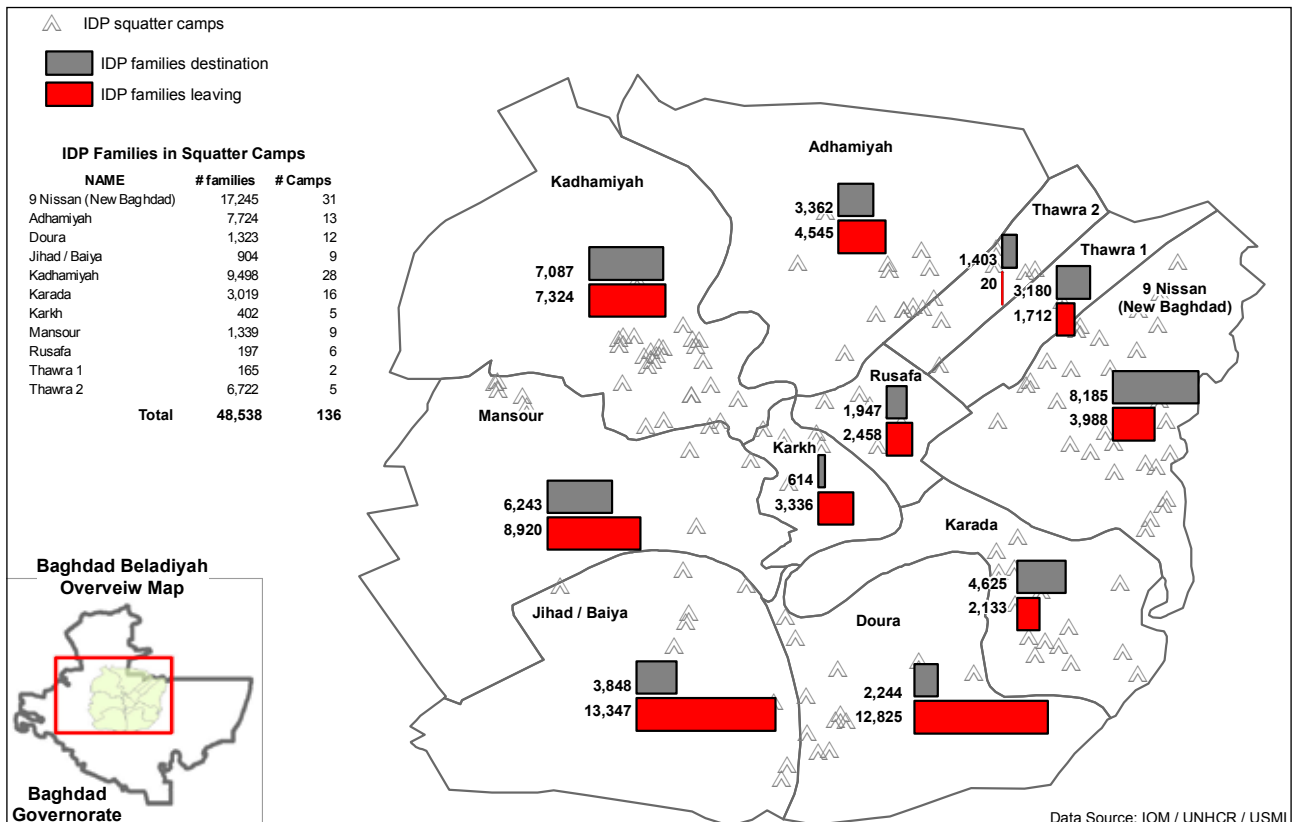
Over 10% of Baghdad’s population left the city or

moved within the city to areas where their religion or sect predominates. Over 111,000 families in Baghdad – almost 700,000 people – have been displaced within Iraq since 2006. An additional

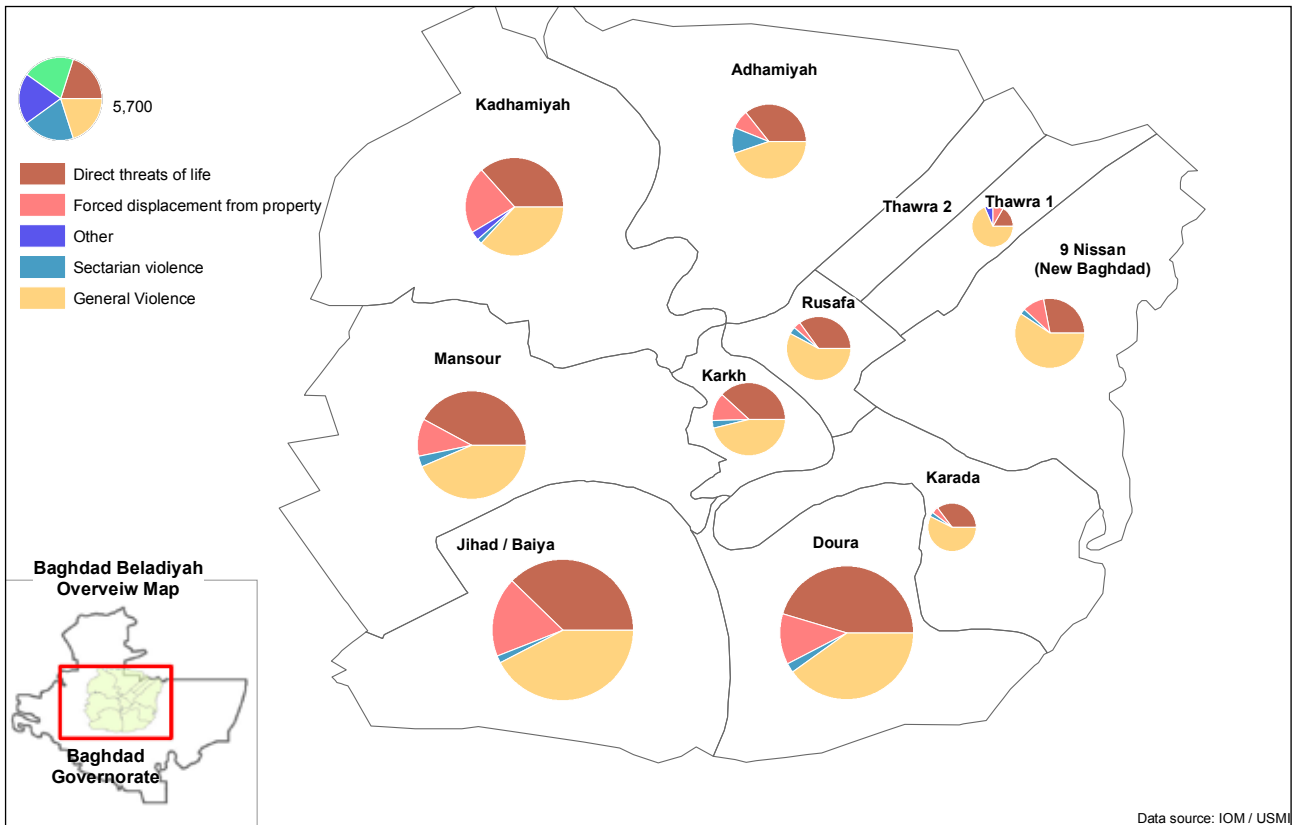
CASUALTIES



MAP 1: INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS LEAVING AND ARRIVING IN BAGHDAD BELADIYAH AREAS



MAP 2: REASONS DRIVING POPULATION TO MOVE OUT OF BAGHDAD



126,000 Iraqis left Baghdad for other countries.³ Most of those were displaced during the intense period of violence in 2006 and 2007 that followed the bombing of Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra. Almost half (45%) of IDPs remained in Baghdad, while the rest fled to other parts of the country.⁴ In addition, over this period, 11,000 families moved from other parts of the country to Baghdad. As a

result, the population of Baghdad shrank at the height of the violence. Since that time, about 38,000 families have returned to Baghdad.⁵

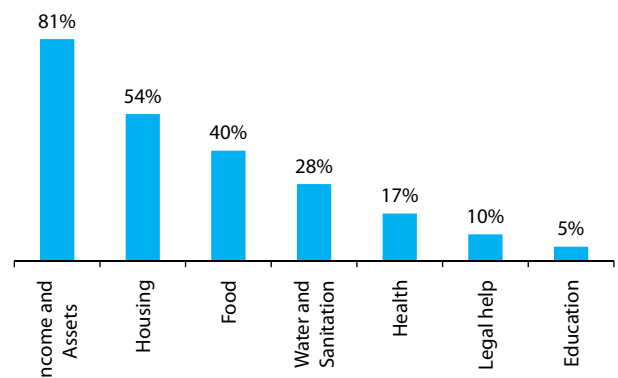
Within Baghdad, the net outflow of displaced people was greatest from Jihad/Baiya (57,000), Doura (63,500) and Mansour (16,000). 9 Nissan (New Baghdad) (25,000) and Thawra 1 (8,000) and Thawra 2 (8,300) areas saw the largest net inflows of displaced persons.

The most vulnerable displaced families live in

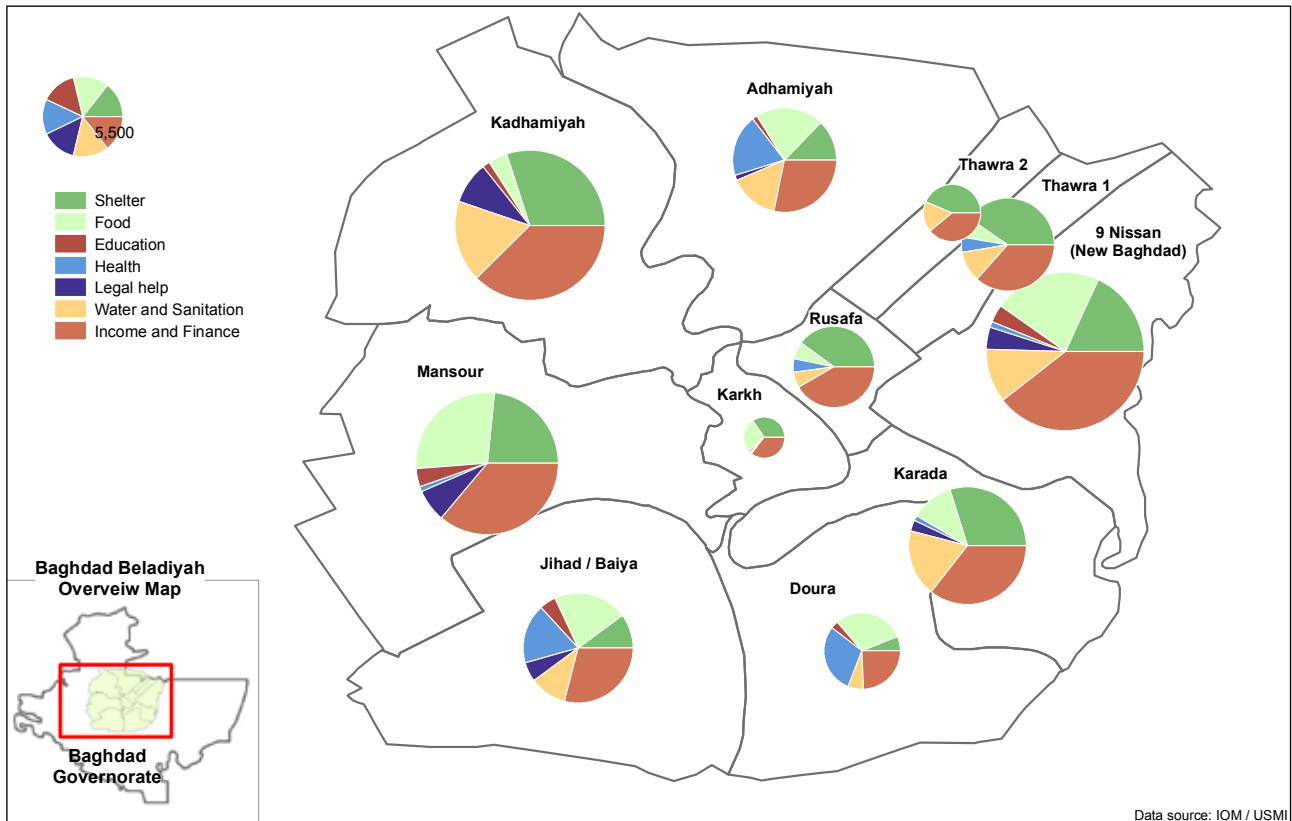


Boy in Resafa district (UNHCR / H. Caux)

PRIORITY NEEDS OF BAGHDAD'S IDPs



MAP 3: NEEDS OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN BAGHDAD



public buildings, old military encampments or crude group squatter settlements with hand-built houses located on publicly or privately owned land. 136 camps have been identified with at least 48,000 families resident. People living in camps and public buildings have limited or no access to decent housing structures, water, sanitation, electricity, clinics or hospitals. As a result, these IDP families - particularly children and elderly people - are at risk of serious health problems and chronic illnesses. They are also at risk of being evicted at any time, creating constant stress. UNHCR field teams report that families' most urgent needs include access to food, education and a reliable income. In addition, while fleeing many IDPs lost documents which are crucial to enjoying certain rights and accessing services.

Families cited direct threats to life and general violence (armed conflict and an atmosphere of insecurity) as the most common reasons for leaving their homes. Families tended to flee to areas where their religion or sect predominates, where they felt safer. This process has cemented social divides and created city neighbourhoods spatially fragmented along religious and sectarian divisions.

PRESSURE ON BASIC SERVICES

Wars, sanctions and internal conflict have led to the deterioration of infrastructure and basic services throughout Baghdad. These include shortages of housing units and high levels of overcrowding. 68% of Baghdad households say they have insufficient rooms.⁶ Just 22% of households report having a reliable water supply, particularly during the summer months.⁷ Electricity supplies have failed to keep up with rapidly increasing demand.⁸ 60% of households in Baghdad were experiencing more than 11 hours of power cuts per day in 2007, and the situation is reported to have deteriorated further since.⁹ Running diesel generators has become common place to keep basic lighting, electrical appliances and refrigeration working in the home during power cuts.

For families displaced to or within Baghdad the situation is worse than for the general population. Many struggle to find jobs and have difficulty paying for rent and food: two thirds (67%) of displaced families cite access to work as a priority need, and housing (61%) and food rations (57%) are also a priority.¹⁰ Those who have returned face problems, with families citing food rations (75%),

water (44%) and health (37%) as priority needs.¹¹ The scale of need is the greatest in 9 Nissan (New Baghdad), Mansour and Karada. In these locations, employment and finance are by far the biggest needs.¹²

YOUNG PEOPLE AND WOMEN

Baghdad's youth have suffered as a result of conflict and the weak economy. 13% of Baghdadi youth have received threats, or suffered harassment or displacement due to their religious or sectarian affiliation, the highest in Iraq.¹³ Young men and women have experienced sectarian and religious divisions in different ways: 15% of young men have been harassed or threatened, compared to just 4% of young women.¹⁴ 23% of youth are unemployed. Economic pressures within the family mean that approximately 11% of children in Baghdad are forced to work.¹⁵

Women continue to face more barriers to education than men. Across the city, women are more likely than men to lack a primary education.¹⁶ Although primary school enrollment rates are now comparable, only 32% of girls aged 12-14 years

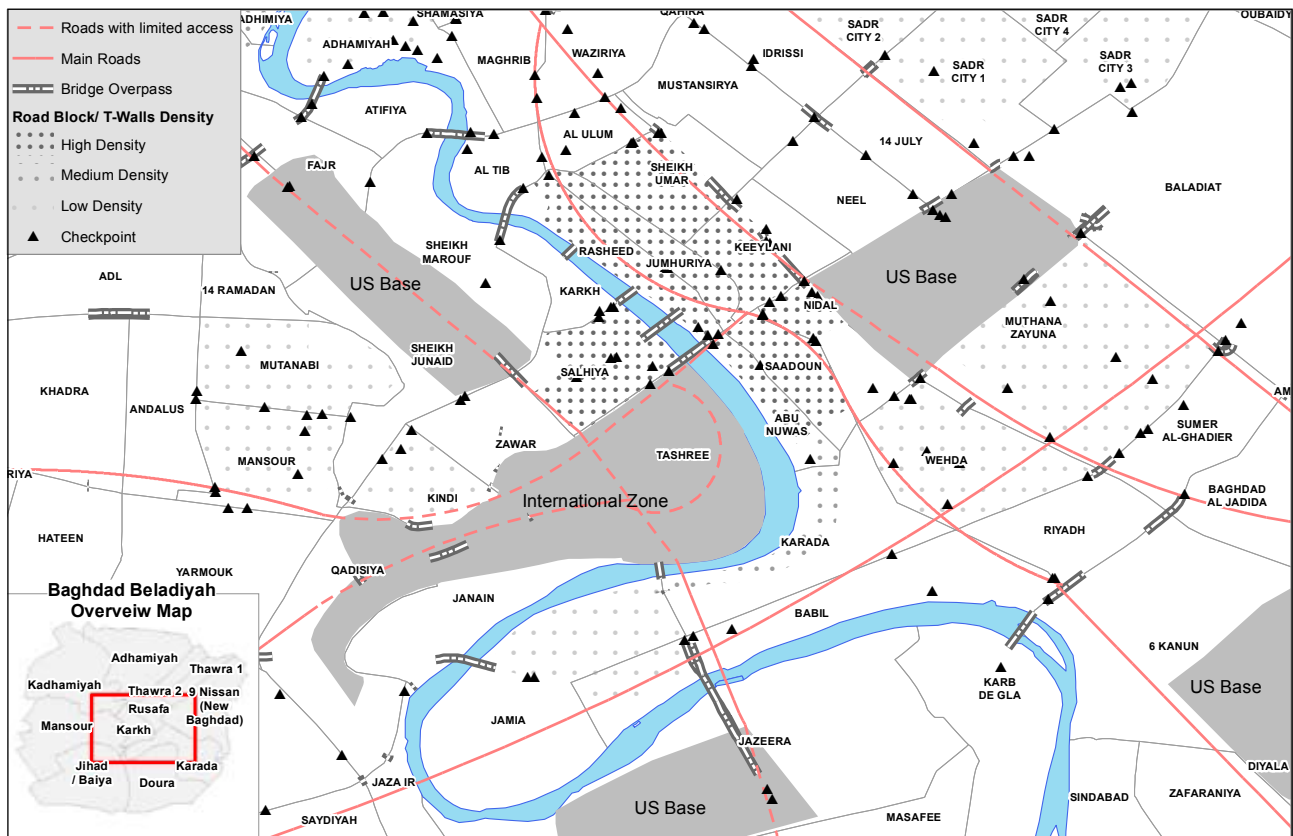
old are enrolled in intermediate school, compared to 54% of boys.¹⁷

As the primary care-giver in the home, women are most affected by poor quality housing and lack of water and waste collection services as the time and effort involved in routine domestic work and childcare increases. The lack of education beyond primary level and prevailing cultural norms mean that women are under-represented in the workplace. 24% of Baghdadi women participate in the labour force, compared to 78% of men.¹⁸ The limited participation of women outside the home is reflected in the high proportion (44%) of young women who do not have friends from other religions or sects, compared to 17% of young men.¹⁹

CONGESTION AND REDUCED MOBILITY

Before 2003, a network of arterial roads crossed the city linking neighbourhoods located in the north and south, and on the west and east bank of the Tigris. Cars and buses moved freely allowing people easy access to places of work, education and recreation. Since 2003, the establishment

MAP 4: ROADS INTERRUPTED BY PHYSICAL OBSTACLES



of secure military-controlled zones and bases, including the International Zone, has interrupted these main routes. As a security measure to control movements in and out of neighborhoods experiencing sectarian violence, lengthy runs of T-wall and road blocks prevent access for vehicles from the secondary roads onto the main roads.

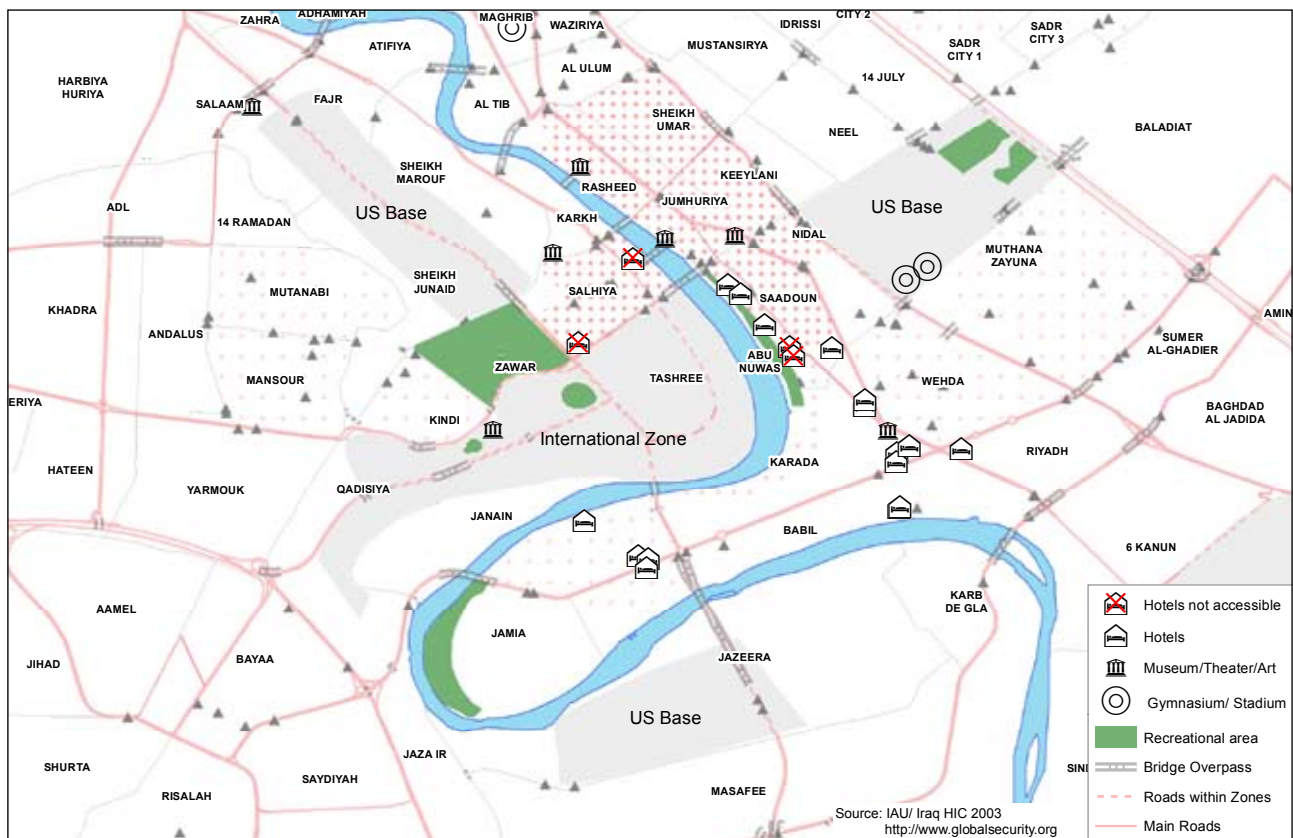
All these barriers and diversions have created widespread congestion and made regular journeys longer in time and distance. Added to which, lengthy waits at road blocks and checkpoints and the removal of parking areas at destination points further discourage people, particularly during the summer months, from making unnecessary journeys. Over time, the congestion and inconvenience has reduced the number and length of journeys people take, preferring instead to shop, work and socialize within their local neighbourhood.

REDUCED ACCESS TO RECREATION FACILITIES AND SPACES

Nearly half the population of Baghdad cited poor quality environment as one of the key problems they have faced since 2003. They complain of leaking sewers, stagnant water, uncollected garbage and foul odours.²⁰

Recreation space has an important role in urban life particularly where housing is overcrowded and lacks outside space. Many local open spaces, where families would have commonly walked or children played, have become dumping sites for garbage or in winter months collection areas for sewerage and stagnant water. Recreation places such as city parks and the stadium, and activities such as walking along or boating on the Tigris have been either closed or off limits since 2003. Four of the centrally located hotels used in the past for business, weddings and celebrations are now closed or used as safe areas for foreign businesses and media.

MAP 5: RECREATIONAL AREAS & ESTABLISHMENTS IMPACTED BY SECURITY MEASURES



PHYSICAL OBSTACLES TO MOVEMENT



Baghdad, 2010 (Jamal Penjweny)

Checkpoint: a physical obstacle on a main road manned by security personnel and designed to monitor movement.



Baghdad, 2010 (Jamal Penjweny)

Road block: is an unmanned low concrete barrier restricting movement along a road.



Baghdad, 2010 (Jamal Penjweny)

T-wall: an unmanned concrete slab 10-15 feet high, sometimes used in Iraq for blast protection. When placed alongside other similar slabs, it creates a wall physically blocking access.



(US Mission in Iraq)

The International Zone: a heavily-guarded diplomatic / government area in central Baghdad.

UN RESPONSE

As part of the UN's response plan in Iraq, a Sub-Priority Working Group on Housing has been established where government, UN and NGOs plan strategies and projects to address housing needs, including among IDPs and the most vulnerable. This Group is co-chaired by HABITAT and UNHCR.

UN-HABITAT works with Ministries of the Government of Iraq, the Provincial Councils and Baghdad Municipality on urban planning, water and sanitation, housing and land issues in the city, particularly focusing on long term solutions to improving living conditions for internally displaced people and the urban poor.

IOM is continuing to assist vulnerable families by supporting their return and reintegration, developing their livelihoods, and building the capacity of the local and national authorities. In 2010, the Programme for Human Security and Stabilization continued to assist the unemployed, under-employed, disadvantaged and returnee communities in Adhamiyah, Karkh, Mada'in and Rusafa. IOM provided small business grants to female-headed households. Community Assistance Projects addressed needs for health care and potable water in Kadhamiyah and Mada'in. IOM monitors carried out in-depth needs assessments in several locations in Baghdad and as a result made emergency assistance was distributed to Adhamiyah, Kadhamiyah, Karkh, Mada'in, Rusafa and Thawra to address the basic humanitarian needs of IDP, returnee and host communities.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Baghdad Provincial Strategic Plan (2008-12) sets out plans for improved management of urban services in the city. Priority is given to reconstructing infrastructure and basic services, promoting economic development, improving the security situation, promoting social development and improving the environmental status. These steps

will be further strengthened by incorporating the following recommendations:

1. Formulating a city development strategy addressing economic, environmental and spatial development. This strategy should address chronic housing shortages, city transport linkages and the potential for public transport, poor environmental practices among civil society and the rehabilitation and development of public spaces that are accessible for women, youth and children. Stimulation of sustainable employment creation in the private sector is required to address high youth unemployment. Gol efforts to improve the security situation will be key to ensuring that long-term development is successful.
2. Addressing disparities in access to services. Taking into account population shifts, the Gol should work to improve quality and access to basic services, particularly among vulnerable groups and geographical areas. At the same time, the Gol should engage with civil society to encourage efficient water and energy usage.
3. Integration of long-term solutions for IDPs and upgrading squatter settlements. This should take into account the desire of IDPs and squatters either to integrate into the local community, return home or find a third location in which to settle. Solutions should extend beyond shelter requirements to the need for sustainable incomes and access to basic services and legal assistance.
4. City governance: building effectiveness in the city's political system and the capacity of local politicians to represent their constituents and demonstrate leadership in directing Baghdad's future.

ENDNOTES

1. This information was collated from various sources around the country. UNAMI SSI cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information. It does not represent the official views of the Organisation, but provides a snapshot of information available at this time. The information is provided to humanitarian security managers in the interests of our mutual safety and all decisions made on the basis of, or with consideration to, such information remains the responsibility of respective organizations.
2. ABC NEWS/BBC/NHK Poll – Iraq: Where Things Stand, September 2007
3. UNHCR Monthly statistical updates on return
4. IOM, Baghdad Governorate Profile (November 2010)
5. IOM, Baghdad Governorate Profile (November 2010)
6. World Bank/COSIT/KRSO Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey (IHSES) 2007
7. MICS 2006
8. IAU, UNDP, Electricity in Iraq Factsheet (August 2010)
9. WFP/COSIT/KRSO Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis Survey (CFSVA) 2007; UNDP Iraq
10. IOM, Baghdad Governorate Profile (November 2010)
11. IOM, Baghdad Governorate Profile (November 2010)
12. IOM, Baghdad Governorate Profile (November 2010)
13. UNFPA/COSIT/KRSO/Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) Iraq National Youth Survey 2009
14. UNFPA/COSIT/KRSO/MoYS Iraq National Youth Survey 2009
15. COSIT/KRSO Labour Force Survey 2008; UNICEF/COSIT/KRSO/Ministry of Health Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006. Child labour is defined as children aged 5-14 employed or doing more than 28 hours of housework per week.
16. CFSVA 2007
17. IHSES 2007
18. COSIT/KRSO Labour Force Survey 2008
19. UNFPA/COSIT/KRSO/MoYS Iraq National Youth Survey 2009
20. IHSES 2007