

MAG UPDATE:

Syria response

Around 40,000 Syrians have fled to northern Iraq over the past week, in one of the biggest waves of refugees since the conflict in Syria began.

The exodus has created desperate conditions. Temporary camps cannot be built quickly enough: sheltering some 7,000+ Syrians on Monday, the Kawergost site in Erbil governorate now hosts 15,000.

With the arrival and transit of thousands more anticipated, safeguarding people against the region's extensive landmine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination will be key to the relief effort.

HOW IS MAG HELPING?

On the border

- As more refugees arrive, MAG will be delivering Risk Education (RE) at the Shilikye crossing in Dohuk governorate, which runs by a known minefield. MAG's work here has already benefited 55,000 Syrian men, women and children since April 2012.
- It is anticipated that RE activities will need to be significantly stepped up as the emergency unfolds.

At the camps

- Since March 2012, MAG has cleared 90 football pitches worth of land for the development of the Domiz refugee camp, built on the site of a former military base in Dohuk.
- MAG's RE sessions at the camp have already benefited more than 20,000 Syrians. Additionally, a Training of Trainers initiative has seen 245 teachers trained to deliver RE within the schools in Domiz, equipping them with the knowledge to ensure RE can continue on refugees' return to Syria.
- More camps are planned in Erbil, Dohuk and Sulimaniyah governorates, some of which are in areas of suspected contamination. MAG is coordinating with the local authorities and UN agencies to assess need and response. This includes survey of a site in Erbil governorate, located near to a former military fort, and the clearance at a planned camp in Dohuk governorate.

FUTURE PLANS

With established programmes in Iraq and Lebanon, and emergency staff deployed in the region, MAG is well-placed to help meet the needs of tens of thousands of refugees. MAG is actively seeking funding to develop the following programmes:

- Development of a coordinated emergency Risk Education response, including RE campaigns utilising mass media.
- The establishment of an emergency response capacity for assessment, clearance and disposal activities, to reduce the risk to Syrians posed by explosive remnants of war.
- The establishment of an emergency response capacity to enable humanitarian actors to operate effectively, given the threats posed by explosive weapons.

23 August 2013

KEY NUMBERS

50%

Estimated percentage of the refugee population who are children

10,000

Number of refugees who entered the country in a single day in August

90

Wembley-sized football pitches worth of land cleared by MAG to enable the development of Domiz refugee camp

15

Number of months MAG has been working to help safeguard those escaping the conflict in Syria

20,000+

Number of people living in the Domiz camp who have benefited from MAG's Risk Education

55,000+

Number of people crossing the border who have benefited from MAG's Risk Education



Syrian refugees crossing into Iraq at the Peshkhabour border, Dohuk governorate in August 2013. [UNHCR / G. Gubaeva]

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