

PROVIDING RELIEF

TO SYRIAN REFUGEES IN IRAQ

IOM and its partner, the government of Japan, provide ongoing relief to Syrian refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan

JULY

2014



PARTNERING TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE

While IOM has been working day and night over the past three weeks to support thousands of people displaced by the recent surge of violence in Iraq, the Mission has continuously provided relief items to thousands of Syrian refugees living in camps throughout the Kurdish region of Iraq.

In the most recent distribution on June 26th, Syrian refugees living in Qushtapa Camp gathered outside the camp distribution center, eagerly waiting to receive their Non-Food Item (NFI) hygiene kits funded by the government of Japan. Over the course of a week, IOM Iraq distributed over 1,100 hygiene kits to families living in Qushtapa camp, benefiting an estimated 5,500 individuals.

Due to Japan's growing concern about the serious humanitarian situation facing Syrian refugees, the government of Japan provided IOM Iraq with 1.8 million USD in March 2014 to provide emergency assistance to Syrian refugees currently in Iraqi Kurdistan. Under this project line, IOM Iraq will continue to serve Syrian refugees through December 2014.

The NFI hygiene kits in this most recent contribution by the government of Japan contain essential domestic and hygiene items that will improve the difficult living conditions faced by refugee families living in the camps.

These distributions are a testament to the on-going partnership between IOM and the government of Japan to address the immediate needs of the vulnerable Syrian refugees fleeing the conflict in their country.

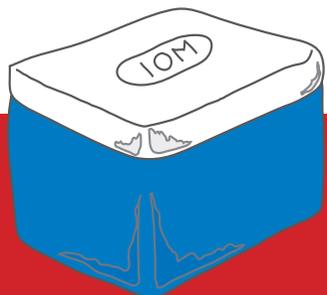
The government of Japan has funded several IOM Iraq projects in the past. In December 2013, the government of Japan provided 800 tents and 10,000 jerry cans to Syrian refugees in Iraq. In May 2013, the government of Japan funded the IOM distribution of NFI and hygiene kits in northern Iraq, addressing the needs of 3,500 vulnerable Syrian refugees and Iraqi returnees.

The government of Japan has also previously provided support for vulnerable Iraqi families through the initial funding for IOM's livelihood programmes.

The following stories and pictures document the experiences of Syrian refugees living in Kawergosik Camp who received NFI hygiene kits. During this distribution, IOM Iraq distributed over 2,000 hygiene kits, ensuring that every single family living in the camp received support and ultimately benefiting an estimated 10,625 individuals.

The project funded by the government of Japan has addressed the needs of almost **6,000** vulnerable families, reaching more than **30,000** individuals throughout **5** refugee camps in Iraqi Kurdistan.

A single NFI hygiene kit contains:



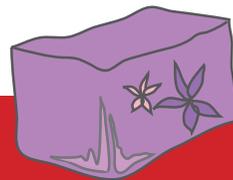
1 cool box, 40L



1 plastic mat



10 bars of soap



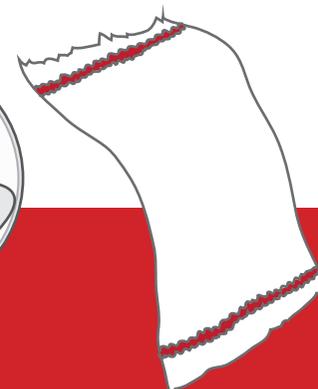
2 boxes of sanitary pads



1 bag of cleaning powder, 10 kg



1 rechargeable fan



5 bath towels

Hussein Mohammed Ali

65 years old
from Damascus
has lived in Kawergosik
for 10 months



“I was afraid that if we stayed, my family would be taken from me as well.

A few days before we left Damascus, I remember my wife and I were sitting at the table in our kitchen, drinking our morning coffee. Suddenly we heard the sounds of explosions. Before we knew what was happening, a rocket hit our apartment building.

The walls shook and lurched, and began to crumble. Luckily my wife and I were able to clamber out before the whole building collapsed. I remember I standing in front of the rubble that had been our house just moments before. In less than ten minutes, everything my family had worked for – the home we had lived in for over thirteen years and the life that we had built inside it – was gone.

Our entire neighborhood had been hit. I thank God every day because my sons and their families were able to escape their apartments before they collapsed. Only one was injured – a wall fell on and crushed my son’s leg.

We were homeless, we had nothing, just the clothes on our backs. Because my entire family had lost everything, we had no one else to turn to, and I could not protect my family or provide for them while living on the streets. We left immediately.

It is hard living in the camp. Only one of my sons is here with myself and my wife. One of my sons stayed with his family in Quamishli; the other went to Turkey. After so many years of living on the same street as my sons and being able to see their smiling faces every day, it is difficult to live apart.

We came here with nothing, so this package is everything to us. My wife and I have no money, so we cannot normally afford to buy soap, let alone a fan and an icebox. I am extremely grateful to the Japanese government for helping us. I don’t know what we would do without this support.

Although we are happy here and feel safe, I hope to return to Damascus, be reunited with my family, and live together as we did before.”



Jihan Bahazat Sulieman

28 years old
from Damascus
has lived in Kawergosik
for 10 months

“But then my worst fears came true. Hospitals began turning us away. They kept giving me the same answer: no one could help my son.

My husband and I have three beautiful children. My son, who is six years old, was born with sickle-cell disease. He has to take antibiotics and vitamins each day and receive blood transfusions each month.

In Damascus, my husband worked as a valet. As the violence worsened, the parking lot where he worked closed, and he could not find work. It became so hard to afford my son’s medicine. Many nights my husband and I went without dinner to save money.

One day the medical center where I took my son for treatment told us that they had no medicine and no blood for transfusions. Even though it was dangerous to travel, I took my son to every medical center in Damascus trying to get him the treatment he needed, but could not find anything.

We left immediately. My son would not survive if we stayed in Damascus. We travelled to Hasaka and then Quamishli, but could never stay for long because the conflict followed us. While we were in Hasaka, my husband’s cousin was killed in crossfire. My husband was arrested twice at checkpoints. Thankfully he was released. I don’t know what I would have done without him.

As the violence increased in Hasaka and Quamishli, the hospitals shut down, just like in Damascus. I felt helpless. My son experiences attacks of intense pain if he does not take his medication. That was the reason why we left, to find help for my boy.

Life here in the camp is much better because my son can get antibiotics from the clinic here. We are still trying to find a way for him to receive blood transfusions.

We are really grateful for this package, especially the fan. The hot summer makes us feel like we are boiling whenever we are inside our tent. I get so worried about how the heat affects my children.”



Amer Ali Ali

34 years old
from Derak
has lived in Kawergosik
for 11 months



"I remember walking back from the store when I saw the first tank rolling down the streets in my neighborhood. Rumors of random killings and sounds of explosions and gunfire became normal.

Before the conflict began, I was a daily wage worker for construction projects in Nabuk village in Damascus, where I lived with my wife, son, and daughter. As the violence increased, construction sites were abandoned. You cannot build when there is no electricity or water, or when workers are afraid to leave the house because the streets are too dangerous. I remember feeling scared as each day passed without me finding a job. I had no other way to support my family.

One day, a bomb was dropped so close to our house that the pressure from the explosion caused the glass in all of our windows to shatter. Thankfully none of us were hurt, but I remember my children's cries and the fear in my wife's eyes.

A month after our windows shattered, my uncle was shot and killed by a sniper close to our house. It was in that moment that I realized just how vulnerable we were staying in Damascus. Anything could happen – I had no way to protect any of my family. We left the very next day to Chalaga, my hometown, in Derak.

The situation in Chalaga was not much better than in Damascus. There were no jobs, no food, nothing. Various different groups began to pressure me into fighting. I did not want to fight anyone. My family is the most important thing in the world to me, and I never want to leave them without support or protection. I knew we had to leave.

We didn't have any of these items before we received this package. Thanks to the Japanese people and IOM, my family and I can now do basic things like washing our clothes – things that I used to take for granted. I hope to go back if the situation improves, but if it does not, I want to rebuild my life here. These items will help us live a little more like we did before the conflict."



Zeinab Amal Ismai

60 years old
from Hasaka
has lived in Kawergosik
for 10 months

“My husband died one year after the war began. He needed medical treatment almost daily. Finding the medicine he needed and a hospital to treat him became more and more difficult, until it was impossible.

Four years ago, my husband had a cardiac stroke, which paralyzed half of his body. We were shocked. My husband was a good man, the heart and soul of our family. We could not believe that it happened.

We have five boys and five girls. My children who were old enough to work helped support us, and my children still in school helped me take care of him after they finished their studies each day. Neighbors and relatives also helped, and we had money saved. We managed.

After his death, my family lost hope. I could not work because of my age, and I did not want to pressure my relatives for support because I knew

they were having trouble making ends meet too. The day our savings ran out, my three sons who were still in school told me they would drop out and find work. I never learned how to read or write, and I know how important having an education is. It broke my heart that my sons could not finish their schooling.

My sons looked for work, but could find nothing. There was no food, no money, nothing to help us survive except the roof over our heads. We were able to scrape enough together to get by for some time – but then bombing started in our area. At that point I knew that being anywhere else would be better than being here. That day we just locked our front door and left. I am not sure if our house is still there, but I hope one day to return home.

This package is a great help for us. Up to this point, I have only been able to wash this dress – the only one I have here – with water because we could not afford soap. You never realize how much you depend on basic things like soap or a refrigerator until you have to try to live without them.”

SCOPE OF DISTRIBUTIONS

DOHUK



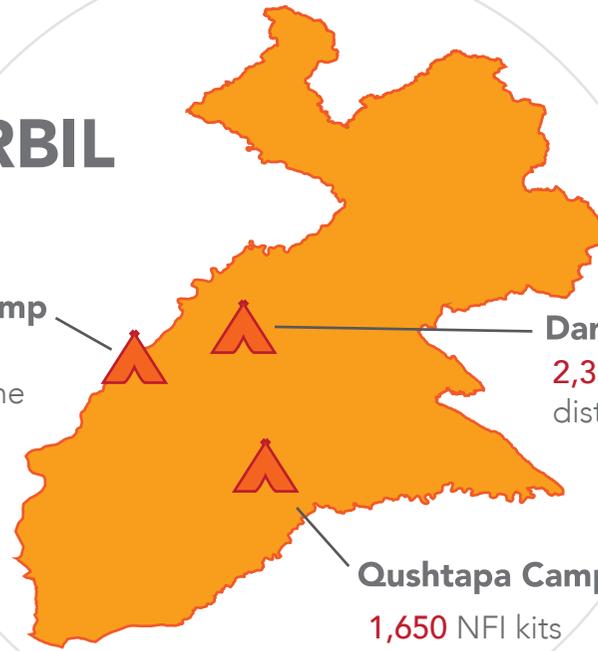
Akre Camp

322 NFI kits distributed in May

Gawilan Camp

485 NFI kits distributed in May

ERBIL



Kawergosik Camp

2,125 NFI kits distributed in June

Darashakran Camp

2,350 NFI kits distributed in June

Qushtapa Camp

1,650 NFI kits distributed in June and July

IRAQ



According to UNHCR Statistics, to date, there are

225,475 Syrian refugees in Iraq.

This figure grows daily.

