

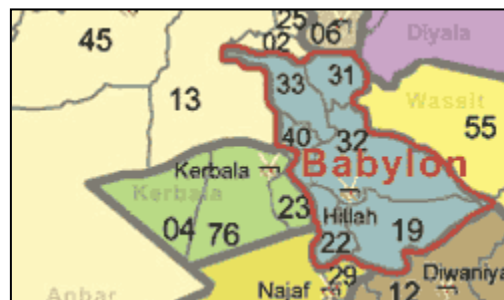
# BABYLON

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2005, PHASE II MONITORING



Governorate number: 6  
Capital: Hilla  
Districts: Hashimiya, Hilla, Al Mahawil, Al  
Musayab, Madain, Mahmudiya.  
Population: 1,753,348

*Please note that Mahmudiya and Madain are Baghdad administered districts.  
They are monitored under Babylon as the UN HIC maps outline them under  
Babylon.*



## PHASE II MONITORING

IOM's Phase II monitoring compliments Phase I monitoring, which was implemented from April 2004 to September 2005 through a network of NGO partners in each governorate. The main objective of Phase I was to identify varying Internally Displaced People (IDP) caseloads in Iraq, their locations, reasons for displacement, numbers, protection concerns and humanitarian needs. Based on experience from the first phase, the second phase monitoring was expanded to a more in-depth needs assessment and to identify the return intentions of those populations interviewed.

As with the first phase, the second phase implemented a group-level IDP recording form. The data collection and processing was simplified and the coverage focused on IDP categories (pre- and post-2003 conflict and, in some governorates, IDP returnees). The interviewing focused on identifying immediate needs in the areas of water, sanitation, health, education, food, access to legal documents, and income generation. The data collected through the Phase II monitoring will be used for planning community assistance projects and to better understand and address the needs of IDPs.

## GOVERNORATE OVERVIEW

Babylon is often considered among the best-known geographical locations in the world. It is the center of the Sumerian civilization that once upon a time was considered the best-developed society of the world. Babylon was famous for its irrigation system, beautiful gardens, palaces, fine art, wealth and prosperity of its citizens. Though commonly referred to as the "Cradle of Civilization" or "Umbilicus of the World", at present, Babylon suffers from a destroyed economy and high unemployment. Despite the above, indigenous communities of Babylon live in relative peace, supporting each other and vulnerable groups that try to find refuge inside of their homestead.

Due to its relative security and close proximity to Baghdad, Hilla, the capital of Babylon, has attracted numerous IDPs. Despite the good security level in Babylon governorate in general, roads have recently been blocked due to security issues and fear and suspicion among the IDP population remains high.

## INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS OVERVIEW

Post 2003	Pre 2003	Refugee Returnee	Others At Risk	Total
821*	654*	23**	977**	2,475

All figures are in families (on the basis of 6 persons per family)

\*Current monitoring figures combined with Phase I monitoring figures

\*\*Based on Phase I monitoring figures

The current estimated IDP population in Babylon is 1,475 families. Of these, 821 families have been displaced after the 2003 conflict, and 654 families were displaced before the conflict. Minor changes have occurred in some sites where few families leave their current site and move either to a new site where basic services are improved or return to their place of origin, especially those families who were temporarily displaced due to recent fighting that has ceased.

The pre-2003 IDPs primarily originated from Basrah, Missan, Thi-Qar, and Qadissiya due to the Iraq-Iran war, the 1991 conflict and political discriminations during the previous regime's rule.

The majority of these IDPs resides in mud huts in collective towns and are well integrated into the surrounding area.

Most recent IDP arrivals are due to sporadic acts of violence in Baghdad, mainly in Dora and Abu Graib districts, where insurgent activities and military offensives force families to leave.

Due to deteriorating security conditions in Al Madain district in Babylon, IDPs could not be interviewed in this district.

## CASELOADS

### **Post-2003 Conflict IDPs: 821 families**

Of a total of 821 post-2003 conflict IDP families, 798 are Arabs and 23 are Marsh Arabs. Those families were displaced within the capital Hillah due to the destruction of their homes during military operations in April 2003 and afterwards. Some of these families were evicted or left their homes in fear of retaliation from the local community due to accusations of collaboration with the previous regime. The majority have returned to their district of origin, living in collective settlements and public buildings in Hillah.

During the crisis of Fallujah and when armed conflicts spread to Najaf in April 2004, several hundred families from Kuffa arrived to the communities north from Najaf, seeking security and temporarily shelter. Most were accommodated by the host communities or in the three mosques on the road to Hilla: Zaid Ibn Ali, Rasheed Al-Heggrey and Al-Qassim mosques. By the end of May 2004 the majority of IDP families returned, though some remained in Al-Qassim, Hashimiya district of Babylon, citing insecurity as a primary concern.

IDP intentions: The majority of the post-2003 conflict IDPs plan on returning to their place of origin. About 20% wish to integrate with the community in their current location, and a small percentage wishes to resettle in a third location.

### **Pre-2003 Conflict IDPs: 654 families**

Of 654 pre-2003 conflict IDP families, 474 are Arab, 167 are Marsh Arabs, and 13 are Kurds.

- 474 Arab families

IDPs in the area of Babylon arrived during different phases of civil unrest and regional-wars over the previous two decades. A majority Shia environment, Babylon is often considered a “safe haven” for people from the South. The first groups of pre-conflict IDPs arrived from the south in the early 1980s stemming from the Iraq-Iran war. Many of the IDP families still lack proper identification and food ration cards.

- 167 Marsh Arab families

Originally from the Marshes, these Shia families moved to the upper south region in the 1990s due to violations of human rights and the drainage of the marshes. Only a few families have expressed the wish to return.

IDP Intentions: Most of the IDPs displaced prior to 2003 wish to integrate into their current community, while a small minority expressed a wish to return to their place of origin.

### **Refugee Returnees: 23 families**

This group is a minor part of the vulnerable caseload in Babylon and is primarily composed of families that returned from Iran and Kuwait. Two-thirds are living in public buildings, and one-third is mixed with the host community. These families are currently concentrated in Mahmudiya district with a few in Madain, Hashimiya, and Al Mahawil. This caseload is reported originally from Baghdad, Babylon, Missan, Basrah and Qadissiya.

Needs: Legal assistance, education, health, water and sanitation.

### **Others at Risk: 977 families**

The majority of this category is urban and rural poor, persons who no longer have the ability to pay rent for houses due to a lack of sustainable income. Many occupy public lands previously planned for the construction of family housing. Such settlements are common in Babylon Governorate (two major ones are Al-Teen and Al-Sinae in Al-Qassim, Hashimiya District), but also in Mahmudiya District (Al-Askari) and Madain District (“Nahrawan City” and “Basmaya Camp”) of Baghdad. The majority of the ‘Others at risk’ are originally from Babylon. A small number of economic migrants come from Qadissiya, Missan and Baghdad.

Needs: Health, water and sanitation.

## **ASSISTANCE NEEDS**

### **Top Priority Needs:**

The IDPs in Babylon communicated that their top three priority needs are:

1. Improve shelter/housing
2. Provide opportunities of employment
3. Extension/Rehabilitation of water network

### **Priority Needs per Sector:**

#### Water & Sanitation:

Water:

1. Extension/Rehabilitation of water network
2. Compact unit
3. Training community on maintenance

Sanitation:

1. Construction of latrines

2. Garbage containers
3. Hygiene campaign

In the IDP locations, the water supply is considered the main problem due to a lack of basic services, including water networks. The families must bring water from long distances and which lack minimal standards for safely carrying and storing the water. This is best seen in Al Mahawil and Al Mahmoudiya districts where the families must bring water from long distances.

#### Health:

1. Provision of drugs/medicine
2. Increase the number of medical staff
3. Rehabilitation of the health center

Access to the health facilities is a primary concern the IDPs residing in the center of the governorate. However, for those who live in rural areas, there is a lack of hospitals and public health clinics. Those that do exist lack medicine, medical equipment and staff.

#### Education:

1. Rehabilitation of school
2. Increase number of teachers for the school
3. School furniture (desks, chairs, etc.)

Lack of access to education is not a concern for most IDPs in Babylon.

#### Food:

1. Adding items in PDS Ration
2. Fresh food
3. Assistance with transfer of the PDS Ration Card

In general, the IDP families in Babylon have access to food either from the monthly Public Distribution System food ration or through the market. However, many food items are missing in the monthly ration, which in turn increases the families' hardships.

#### Legal Assistance:

1. Legal/Information center
2. Assistance with filing claims with the Iraq Property Claims Commission - IPCC
3. Assistance registering children

#### Type of Information needs:

1. General public services
2. Employment opportunities
3. Increased security

#### Income Generation:

1. Carpentry/Construction
2. Sewing
3. Metal works

## CONSTRAINTS

Continuous visits to the locations without following-up with assistance is having a negative impact on the perception of the IDP families and arouses the suspicion that monitors are simply collecting data, or are even reporting figures to authorities should any evictions happen.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS

A reduction in the number of field visits and promoting more community participation is necessary. Monitoring should be followed up with assistance projects, which will communicate the concern of the organizations involved and confirm the purpose of the monitoring. In addition, monitors and humanitarian assistance organizations should reduce the number of field visits, submit specific reports in order to cover the situation during crises as required, improve reactivity to emergency and organize regular distributions in favor of the most vulnerable families in order to prove to the beneficiaries that monitoring aims at assistance, and prepare mid/long term assistance projects.

In addition, the Iraqi government, NGOs and international organizations assisting IDPs should coordinate with the relevant ministries for the eviction of IDPs from their sites and any human rights violations that might happen, advocate for a fair and timely property claims process, and advocate for a fair treatment of IDP and vulnerable populations.

*For further information on IDP displacement in Iraq, please contact the IOM Iraq IDP Program at +962 6 565 9660 or email Dana Graber, Monitoring and Reintegration Officer, at [dgraber@iom-iraq.net](mailto:dgraber@iom-iraq.net).*

