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The Syrian/Iraq Crisis

**Lebanon**  
Emergency Actions Since: May 2012

12+ million  
People directly affected by the Syrian crisis

**Jordan**  
Emergency Actions Since: May 2012

6.3+ million  
Internally displaced people in Syria

**Syria**  
Emergency Actions Since: January 2013

4.9 million  
Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR

**Iraq**  
Emergency Actions Since: May 2014

3.1 million  
Internally displaced people in Iraq

2.9+ million  
Syrian refugees in Turkey

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**Our Actions**

Rehabilitation sessions  
86,277 facilitated

Psychosocial support  
(individual and group sessions)  
20,295 beneficiaries

Mobility aids & adapted equipment  
97,833 distributed

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555,000+  
Individuals and families helped by Handicap International

400,000+  
people taught to spot and avoid explosive remnants of war

500+  
staff in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, & Iraq
Introduction

Ensuring the most vulnerable people are included in the humanitarian response

Handicap International’s emergency response mission in the Middle East is redoubling its efforts to help thousands of people affected by the fighting in Syria and in Iraq.

Our teams, which include physical therapists, social workers, and psychologists, are working with the most vulnerable people. These individuals have sought refuge in camps within their country of origin, or in neighboring countries, and include people with injuries, disabilities, as well as older and isolated people.

Our activities

Case-managing the injured

Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, & Iraq
SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE
Handicap International provides support to hospitals, clinics, and specialized care centers in Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon, providing post-operative physical and functional rehabilitation. Our staff fit individuals with orthopedic devices (artificial limbs and braces), distribute mobility aids (wheelchairs, walkers, etc.) and special equipment (toilet chairs, anti-sore mattresses, etc.).

We work to ensure people recover as much of their mobility as possible, and can take part in day-to-day life. Psychosocial support is also provided for the families of people with disabilities. This work is intended to help families offer long-term support to loved ones who are in disabling situations. Community support groups offer families the opportunity to share their experiences and to identify practical solutions to help them cope.

These services are essential for:
- Patients who have lost all or some of their mobility, and need to perform exercises to avoid developing permanent disabilities.
- Patients who have permanently lost some of their mobility and need rehabilitation care to avoid medical complications, enhance their comfort and—in many cases—move around autonomously again.

INCLUDING THE MOST VULNERABLE
Teams walk the camps, informing vulnerable people about available services, and offering access to very specific types of care. Staff then follow up with these people. Handicap International also helps other organizations ensure that the most vulnerable are included in the actions they implement.

GUARANTEEING ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CAMPS
Given the sheer scale of humanitarian needs, the most vulnerable people, in particular people with disabilities or injuries and older people, can easily be "forgotten" in the overall humanitarian response. To ensure this does not happen, Handicap International carries out awareness-raising work in Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon with humanitarian actors. Our experts explain how the other organizations can include the most vulnerable people, and how services and basic infrastructure can be made accessible.

Staff regularly assess key water, sanitation, and registration facilities, especially in the camps. Handicap International is also available to make technical recommendations, provide equipment (handrails, steps etc.), train the relevant members of staff, and take direct responsibility for adapting structures.

Disability and vulnerability focal points

**Jordan, Lebanon, & Iraq**

Handicap International set up “disability and vulnerability” focal points (DVFPs)—static and mobile—to supply aid to victims in Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon. Our teams visit camps, informal tented settlements, and communities to identify the most vulnerable people to determine their needs and to promote their access to basic services and infrastructures. If Handicap International is unable to meet their needs, these people are then referred to other INGOs.

Assistance provided to the most vulnerable includes
physical and functional rehabilitation sessions, the supply of orthopedic devices, mobility aids, and other specific equipment—wheelchairs, crutches, anti-sore mattresses—and psychological support sessions.

Helping the most vulnerable regain financial autonomy

Jordan & Lebanon

Three years ago, Handicap International broadened its assistance to refugees by providing them with financial assistance (monthly cash transfers) to enable families to meet their daily needs such as buying food, clothes, medication, and paying rent. This assistance is for extremely vulnerable families. Until November 2015, Handicap International assisted Syrian families who had recently taken refuge in Lebanon with financial assistance to protect them from the cold and provided them with essential household items, such as soap, mattresses and kitchen utensils.

In Lebanon, between November 2013 and November 2015, more than 35,000 people—6,900 families—received financial assistance to cope with their precarious living conditions and their specific needs through the winter. This has helped them cover the cost of their rent, water, and basic equipment for their homes, as well as costs relating to hygiene and the purchase of a stove and fuel.

In Jordan, between December 2013 and March 2015, 14,125 people—2,825 families—received financial assistance to cope with their precarious living conditions and their specific needs through the winter.

Weapons clearance and risk education

Syria & Iraq

TRAINING ON THE DANGER OF MINES AND EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR

On a daily basis, our teams care for new victims of injuries caused by firearms or explosions. The number of weapons and explosive ordnance is increasing daily in Syria and Iraq. The explosive remnants of war (ERW) remain present and dangerous long after conflicts have ended.

Handicap International has conducted prevention activities in Syria since October 2013 and in Iraq since December 2014, building on our extensive experience neutralizing mines and ERW, and victim assistance. Risk education teams visit refugees and displaced persons in the camps and urban areas. They inform them of the dangers linked to the presence of explosive remnants of war on the roads and in houses. Staff explain to families, and in particular to children, how to identify dangerous ordnance, and to stay far away from the weapons they find.

These life-saving messages have reached more than 400,000 individuals in Iraq and Syria since 2014.

WEAPONS CLEARANCE

Between 2015 and 2016, Handicap International also implemented risk education and weapons clearance activities in Kobanî (northern Syria). Learn more about Kobanî.

In Iraq, Handicap International is demining in the
governorates of Kirkuk and Diyala. Ordnance experts had previously conducted non-technical surveys, resulting in mapped and marked areas contaminated by explosive remnant of war and improvised explosive devices.

Assisting families in highly exposed areas

Syria & Iraq

In Syria, Handicap International distributes essential household items to families in areas under siege or in areas that are difficult to reach. Nearly 250,000 people in Syria have benefited from this type of assistance.

People in Iraq fleeing IS-occupied territories face considerable difficulties to reach safe places within the government-controlled territories. Once they managed to leave their town or village, they are subject to extensive security screening by the military’s authorities before being able to leave the land where they were stranded for weeks. Handicap International assists those people, and facilitates the contact with the authorities, allowing the security screening to take place in camps where families can have access to basic services such as water, hygiene, shelter, and primary health care.

Voices from the field

“I’ve had a lot of very powerful experiences since I joined Handicap International. One person who particularly stood out was a little girl named, Reem, who I met in Zaatari camp. She had been injured in a bomb attack. The first time we met her, she was really sad and sullen and didn’t want to talk. Over time, she became comfortable with me and we grew really close. I also remember an 18-year-old boy, who really motivated me. He had been injured in Syria, too. As soon as he arrived in the camp, he took language courses, and asked to become a volunteer, for us and for other organizations. He was simply driven by the desire to help, despite what had happened to him. His determination paid off and he now works in Sweden, for an organization that helps Syrian refugees. I share those stories because it says a lot about our work. People tend to see humanitarian aid as something that is set in time. But our assistance goes well beyond donations or rehabilitation sessions. We think a lot about the future of the people we meet and what’s going to happen to their families. Our aim is not simply to help them now, but to think about their future and to help them get the most out of life.”

– IBA’A, SOCIAL WORKER (AMMAN, JORDAN)

“Our teams go from tent to tent in the camps to make sure no one is left behind. In addition to our physical therapy and psychological support activities, we launched risk education sessions on mines and explosive remnants of war for displaced people from Mosul in October 2016.”

– MAUD, FIELD COORDINATOR (MOSUL EMERGENCY RESPONSE, IRAQ)

“I was sent on various missions with Handicap International and, no matter where I was in the world, I have always been motivated by the idea of providing assistance to the most vulnerable, which is
also the organization’s main goal. The Syrian crisis is one of the worst of our time and I cannot just sit and watch it happen. Being here, it’s also doing my part to help the victims of this conflict.”

– INGRID, OPERATIONS SUPPORT OFFICER (BEIRUT, LEBANON)

Other resources

QASEF: ESCAPING THE BOMBING (SEPT 2016)

VICTIM ASSISTANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE USE OF EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS (AUG 2016)

SYRIA, A MUTILATED FUTURE (JUNE 2016)

SYRIA: EQUAL ACCESS MONITOR EXAMINES DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR SYRIANS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS (WITH HELPAGE) (SEPT 2015)

KOBANI: A CITY OF RUBBLE AND UNEXPLODED DEVICES (MAY 2015)

THE USE OF EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN SYRIA: A TIME BOMB IN THE MAKING (MAY 2015)

SYRIA: CAUSES AND TYPES OF INJURIES (2014)


ARMED VIOLENCE AND DISABILITY: THE UNTOLD STORY (2012)

Handicap International’s actions have been or are currently supported by:

- EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO)
- Directorate General Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid
- UK Aid - Department for International Development (DFID)
- U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM)
- Directorate-general Development Cooperation (DGD - Belgium)
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development Crisis and Support Centre (CDCS - France)
- Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (SDC)
- OCHA – Emergency Response Fund (ERF)
- Global Affairs Canada (GAC - Canada)
- Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- UNICEF
- UNMAS
- Private donations