



# Relief Beyond Immediate Needs

IOM Responds to the Syrian Crisis in Iraq



July 2013





# Contents

## **Alleviating the Harsh Iraqi Summer:**

IOM partners with PRM to provide summerization NFI packages to refugees in Domiz Camp

## **In this Tent We Call Home:**

Shaha's story

## **Outside and Underserved:**

IOM partners with PRM and the Government of Japan to address the needs of Syrians living outside camps

## **Finding Something to Smile About:**

Maqbula's Story

## **Navigating a New Life:**

IOM Iraq implements livelihood program to help Syrian refugees in Domiz Camp and Erbil

## **Old Friends with New Skills:**

Lava and Gilan's story

## **Looking Forward:**

IOM continues its tireless efforts to serve Syrian refugees in Iraq

**More stories** depicting IOM's response to the Syrian crisis are available at IOM Iraq's Youtube channel: [www.youtube.com/user/IOMIraq](http://www.youtube.com/user/IOMIraq)



# Alleviating the Harsh Iraqi Summer

IOM partners with PRM to provide summerization NFI packages to refugees in Domiz Camp



The summer heat weighs heavily on residents of Domiz Camp, where over 100,000 Syrian refugees have sought refuge after war forced them from their homes.

On 2 July 2013, IOM and the U.S. State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) partnered to provide some relief to these families through distribution of 250 Non-Food Item (NFI) packages in Domiz Camp. This distribution is part of IOM's NFI summerization project, which began in June 2013 under a 2 million dollar PRM fund.

With this support, IOM is providing 4,000 families with NFI packages that address their basic needs and help alleviate the pressures of the summer. Each package contains approximately 10 items, including a fan, cool box, food containers, cooking materials, and hygienic items.

Domiz Camp is home to great need – need that grows every day as more refugees seek safety and assistance. As of the end of June, over 18,000 families have been registered within the camp.

After fleeing civil war in search of security, these families still struggle to survive day to day; the problems of overcrowding and scarce resources are amplified in the harsh summer environment.

As IOM staff observed ruefully, everyone in the camp is vulnerable; everyone in the camp needs help.

Together IOM and PRM are alleviating a piece of this vast need. In these NFI distributions, IOM has targeted the most vulnerable of the vulnerable: newly arrived families, female-headed households, large families, and those who have not received an NFI before.

IOM previously partnered with PRM to implement a NFI winterization response benefitting 3,000 families in Domiz Camp as well as 200 families in Al Qaim Camp and the larger Anbar governorate. In those distributions, families received kerosene heaters, rechargeable lights, mattresses, blankets, and food containers. This summerization distribution builds off the successful winterization projects, and will continue until the end of July.

These NFI distributions are essential in providing relief to families, yet remain a drop in the ocean compared to the vast needs of the nearly 160,000 Syrian refugees inside and outside camps in Iraq.

IOM will continue its tireless efforts in service of these populations; by the end of its PRM-funded distributions, IOM will have reached approximately 25,000 Syrian refugees through this project.



NFI Distributions in Domiz Camp

# In this Tent We Call Home



## Shaha's Story

Shaha grimaces as she looks across Domiz Camp and begins her story. She fled Damascus with her family of six and her son's family last December, bringing nothing but the clothes on her back. Widowed for many years, Shaha is no stranger to adversity and yet, life in Domiz Camp has tested her will.

"Back home, Damascus was getting worse and worse. Every night before bed my family and I would pray just to wake up again and live another day. We were all scared, but our life was there; I didn't want to leave. Yet finally, the war came to our doorstep - one night, shelling completely destroyed our home. Thank God none of our family was hurt, but we couldn't wait any longer.

We escaped to Iraq only with our lives, moving here at the beginning of January. My family and I started the new year in Domiz Camp.

Here, I don't own my own tent. We are guests; the 10 of us live with another family in an old tent that barely holds up against this weather. We have nothing here. We sit on plastic sheets and wonder what tomorrow will bring.

Before today I didn't even have a fan. This summer has often been over 40 degrees Celsius; how can we sit in a tent and cope in this heat? Now IOM has given us a fan, and many other things. This is my first time receiving items from IOM, and I am so thankful. I don't have the money to buy such things myself, a fan, soap, and hygienic items. Until now, IOM was my only hope to provide them to my family.

I still want for many things, especially for my children. My kids have skills and degrees, but they can't find work and it is expensive to travel outside the camp. My oldest daughter is nurse; she was at her best when serving patients back in Syria. It breaks my heart to watch her sit idly, in this tent we call home. Thank God my oldest son started working, but he isn't making enough to support all of us.

I don't own anything except my clothes and some plastic sheets. Back in Syria we weren't rich, but it was much better than here. I still picture the ruins of my home; sometimes when I sleep, I dream we're back and living our old life. I am grateful to IOM for helping us hold on until that dream can be realized."

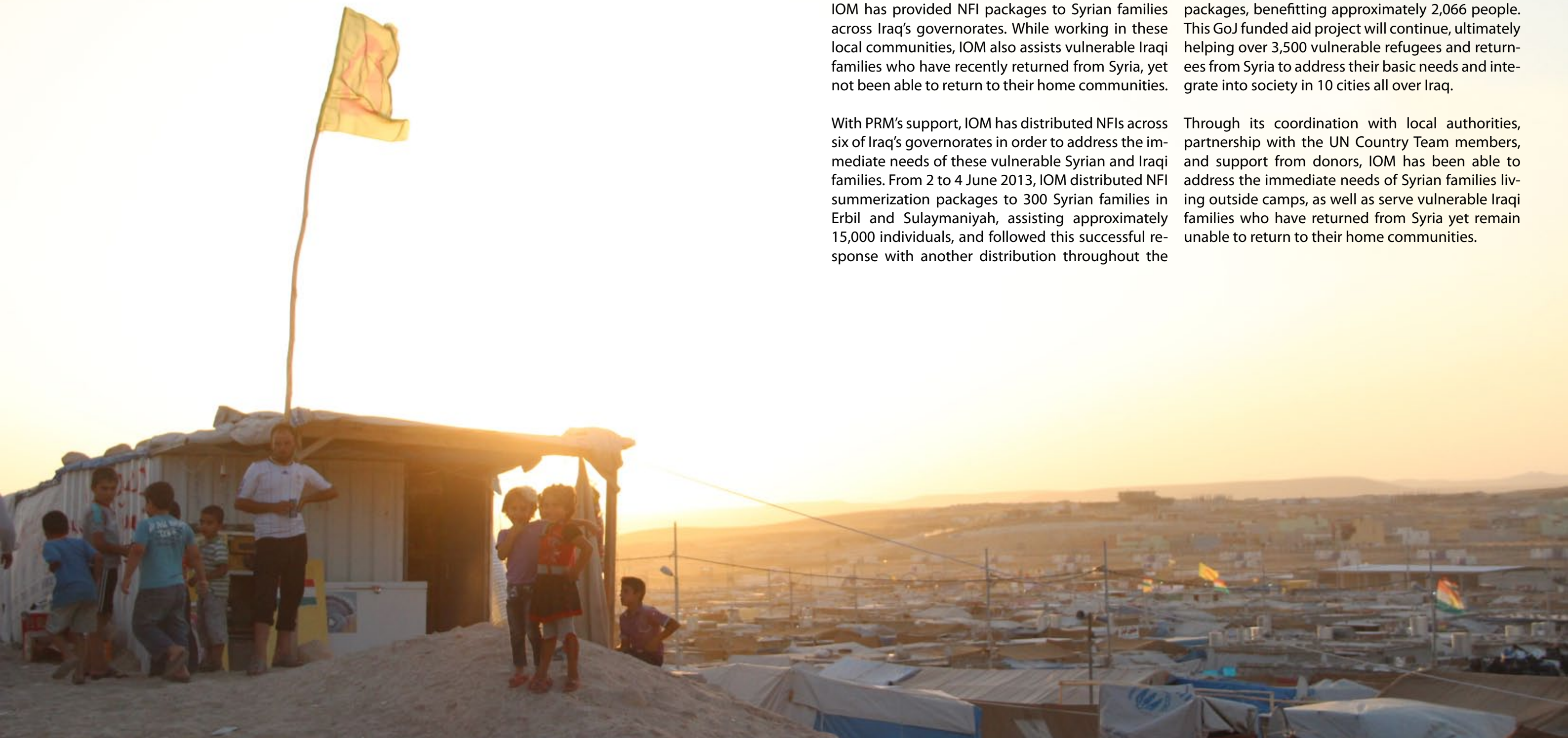
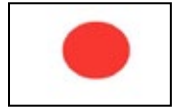






# Outside and Underserved

IOM partners with PRM and the Government of Japan to address the needs of Syrians living outside camps



The need is not limited to refugee camps. On the contrary, it is estimated that nearly 70% percent of Syrian refugees are living outside the camps in Iraq's local communities.

IOM assessments identified this population as particularly vulnerable; these families, a high number of whom are female-headed, struggle to obtain basic necessities and make ends meet day to day. While living in host communities, Syrian families are underserved and in dire need of assistance.

IOM has also reached these Syrian refugees through their summerization response. Working with local authorities, PRM, and the Government of Japan, IOM has provided NFI packages to Syrian families across Iraq's governorates. While working in these local communities, IOM also assists vulnerable Iraqi families who have recently returned from Syria, yet not been able to return to their home communities.

With PRM's support, IOM has distributed NFIs across six of Iraq's governorates in order to address the immediate needs of these vulnerable Syrian and Iraqi families. From 2 to 4 June 2013, IOM distributed NFI summerization packages to 300 Syrian families in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, assisting approximately 15,000 individuals, and followed this successful response with another distribution throughout the

week of 30 June 2013. With this distribution, IOM served 153 Syrian families as well as 183 Iraqi returnee families in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Baghdad, Karbala, and Ninewa.

IOM also implemented distributions in partnership with the Government of Japan (GoJ) to address the needs of these vulnerable populations. With GoJ support, IOM distributed 50 NFI packages in Dahuk Region on 26 May 2013, serving 50 Syrian families living outside Domiz Camp.

IOM continued this project in Anbar governorate, where from 4 to 18 June 2013 IOM provided 413 Syrian refugee and Iraqi returnee families with NFI packages, benefitting approximately 2,066 people. This GoJ funded aid project will continue, ultimately helping over 3,500 vulnerable refugees and returnees from Syria to address their basic needs and integrate into society in 10 cities all over Iraq.

Through its coordination with local authorities, partnership with the UN Country Team members, and support from donors, IOM has been able to address the immediate needs of Syrian families living outside camps, as well as serve vulnerable Iraqi families who have returned from Syria yet remain unable to return to their home communities.



# Finding Something to Smile About

Maqbula Sidu smiles as her four young children, from ages 3 to 7, race around organizing their NFI package, provided by IOM in partnership with the Japanese government.

Looking over their five new mattresses, fan, water cooler, stove, cleaning products, and hygienic supplies, Maqblua and her family can't help but beam brightly. It hasn't been an easy life, leaving Syria to live in a shared one-bedroom apartment outside Domiz Camp, but finally there is a bright spot.

"In Syria, I worked as a seamstress and my husband was an electrician. We were poor, but much better off than we are here. Life was much better in Syria, until the violence started.

After the situation worsened, we went months without electricity and water - we had to catch rainwater to drink. My children didn't understand what was happening; why is there gunfire? Finally the security situation became so bad that we had no choice but to leave. We had to protect our children. We left Syria in February and moved to Iraq.

We initially went to the camp, but stayed only one month. We didn't have a tent, so we were living with relatives - twelve people in one tent. How could we live like that? After a month, we moved outside.

At first, we were three families in this small apartment. Now, two families live here. My husband tries to work as a day laborer but it's not enough. Some-

times he waits twenty days just to work one day. We are barely able to pay our share of the rent.

The place is not safe, and we all feel sick. The problem is that we can't afford anywhere else - we only get by here because the rent is 150 dollars monthly, and we share the expense. Since the place is so old, there are many problems with the electricity and water. Sometimes we have it, sometimes we don't.

Back home in Syria, my two oldest girls were in first and second grade. Now, they don't attend because when we came the timing of the school terms wasn't right. Hopefully, they will go in August but we are not sure. School supplies and transportation are expensive. So often it feels like we're barely living half of a life.

We are so thankful today though. IOM has remembered us; they are the only organization that has helped us after we left the camp. Now, we have a fan, mattresses, and new supplies - we can sleep; we can keep our water cool. Before getting these items, we were just sitting on plain carpet on the stone, we couldn't even cook.

Sometimes, I wonder what would have happened if we remained in Syria. Maybe life would have been easier, but I couldn't take that risk for my children.

I still wonder what the future holds, but these items from IOM and the Government of Japan help us cope. It has brought smiles back onto our faces."

## Maqbula's Story







Domiz Camp



# Navigating a New Life

IOM implements livelihood program in partnership with UNHCR to help Syrian refugees in Domiz Camp and Erbil



IOM provides more than just immediate relief in its service of Syrian refugees in Iraq. In partnership with UNHCR, IOM Iraq is operating a livelihood program to help Syrian refugees develop skills and attain employment while trying to cope with a challenging new life.

In this program, IOM provides vocational training, on-the-job training, and business development services. IOM partnered with a local NGO, Barzani, who carry out the vocational trainings on skills such as baking, carpentry, computer maintenance and IT, hairdressing and barbering, and sewing.

After beginning in June 2012 for refugees living in Domiz Camp, the program has continued; it is currently ongoing through the end of 2013 for refugees both in Domiz Camp and Erbil. Thus far, 132 men and 104 women have received vocational training through Barzani.

Barzani employs skilled trainers from the camp itself to run these two month long courses, which culminate in a certification of completion and assistance in finding a job or opening a small business. IOM also enrolled these trainees in business development courses.

IOM has provided 132 men and 91 women from this program with in-kind grants to use their skills and start their own businesses, giving these refugees a new source of income and a new source of pride.

IOM also works with local companies to provide on-the-job trainings to refugees. Over the past year, 25 men and 3 women have trained at grocery stores, managed internet cafes and arcades, learned smithery skills, and worked in the hospitality sector.

Through this program, IOM is working with refugees to provide the means to a brighter economic future.

## A Brighter Future





# Old Friends with New Skills

Smiling from behind a sewing machine while working at Joytar clothing factory, Lava Tahar and Gilan Abdulassis laugh and interrupt each other as they relay their stories. Cousins and best friends, the two girls are always together. This was true throughout their childhood in Damascus, and remains the case here in their new home: Domiz Camp.

Lava and Gilan arrived to Domiz one year ago with their families. Now they are working together at Joytar, a clothing factory in Dahuk City, after gaining new skills and employment placement from IOM's Vocational Training Program.

Gilan: "Back in Syria, we were in the ninth grade. After moving to the camp, we stopped going to school because the requirements are different here. I didn't like having so much time empty - neither of us did. We were sitting outside our tents, talking like any other day, when the IOM staff member approached us. He asked if we wanted to learn a new skill, and definitely we did."

IOM provided the girls with a month long Vocational Training course on sewing, where they learned how to make different pieces of clothing. After the training, IOM gave the girls certification and connected them with a local employer at Joytar factory. IOM has helped four beneficiaries gain employment at this factory, which provides a good wage and transportation to and from the camp. Now, with new skills and motivation, Lava and Gilan earn a steady income that supports their families.

Lava: "Before, my father and brother provided for the family by working in construction. Yet, the work wasn't continuous and it was hard to make ends meet. Now in my job, I have a regular salary of nearly \$200. This consistent income makes a big difference to my family. We used to worry a lot; we wondered whether or not we would have money to provide for another day. I am proud to be able to work and help my family.

In the factory, most of us are Syrian. I feel like I am at home- it feels like I have a community again. Without this training, I would have had no chance. Now Gilan and I will go home, someday, to Syria with new skills for a better future."

## Lava and Gilan's Story





IOM beneficiary's shop, Domiz Camp





# Looking Forward

IOM continues its tireless efforts to serve Syrian refugees in Iraq

As the Syrian crisis continues to worsen, IOM remains steadfast in its response to the needs of Syrian refugee populations, inside and outside of the camps, in Iraq. With the number of refugees in Iraq growing daily, IOM has provided technical assistance to develop a new camp, al Kasek, in Ninewa governorate and implemented camp infrastructure projects, including a community technology resource center and 21,000 liter water tank in Domiz Camp as well as a 45,000 liter water tank in al Kasek Camp.

Presently, IOM is working with partners to implement transportation assistance from the border crossings to these camps.

Throughout its response, IOM has partnered with local authorities, humanitarian partners, and various donors to serve vulnerable Syrian refugees. IOM continues its emergency assistance and NFI distribution, providing immediate help to Syrian refugees as need grows day after day.

As these vulnerable families struggle to navigate a new and trying life outside their homes, IOM also continues to address longer-term needs of the community through its vocational training and livelihood assistance. With its partners, IOM Iraq remains committed to service of Syrian refugees and maintains its tireless efforts to ensure their dignity.



Committed to service





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