



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés
المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة لشؤون اللاجئين

SECOND IPSOS SURVEY ON IRAQI REFUGEES (31 October – 25 November 2007) FINAL RESULTS

Background Information

IPSOS market research agency carried out a second survey of Iraqi refugees (first completed in May 2007) over three weeks starting from 31 October 2007 until 25 November 2007.

754 interviews were conducted by a group of 15 interviewers.

These results cannot be generalized to all refugees registered with UNHCR, or to the remainder of the 1.5 million Iraqi refugees in Syria who have yet to be registered, because the survey was not a randomly selected, population-based assessment. These results are only representative of the sample of refugee families who registered or scheduled an appointment to register during the survey period.

Information on the following groups was obtained:

- Respondents (754 people)
- Respondents and their family in the household (3,553 people)
 - o Children under five (458 people)
 - o People with chronic diseases (601 people)
 - o People with disabilities (156 people)
 - o Children between 5 and 18 years old (1,109 children)
- Respondents and their family in their household before 2003 (4,080 people)

In addition to the standard data of the previous questionnaire, information on trauma and post-stress disorder were obtained. The methods used were the Hopkins checklist depression scale (HSCL-D) and the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (HTQ), including Post Traumatic and Stress Disorder (PTSD). The Centre for Disease Control (CDC) is supporting the interpretation of the trauma and post-stress disorder questionnaire.

Location of Interview within the Douma Registration Centre

- 51% of Iraqis interviewed were in the appointment request area.
- 49% of Iraqis interviewed were in the waiting area for registration interviews (appointments requested between 1 week and 4 months earlier)

Demographics

Gender

- 44% male
- 56% female

(a more balanced ratio than in May when 74% of interviewees were male).

Of the total 3,553 persons in the families of the respondents, 49% are male and 51% female.

Age of respondents

15- 20	4%
21- 25	10%
26- 35	28%
36- 45	31%
46- 55	17%
56- 65	9%
Over 65	1%

Age of respondents and family members living in Syria

10% under 6
12% between 6 and 10
11% between 11 and 15
11% between 16 and 20
10% between 21 and 25
16% between 26 and 35
14% between 36 and 45
9% between 46 and 55
5% between 56 and 65
2% over 65

Place of Origin

- 78% of those interviewed are from Baghdad
- 5% Basrah
- 4% Ninawa
- 4% Diyala
- 3% Salah ad-Din
- 3% Anbar
- 1% Dohuk
- 1% Qadeseh
- 1% Najaf
- 1% Karbalah

Arrival in Syria

30% of the respondents arrived in Syria in 2006; 12% between January and March 2007; 16% between April and June 2007; 34.5% between July and October 2007 and 7.5 % arrived prior to 2006.

40% had been living in Syria less than a year; 15% less than 3 months; 4% less than a month; while 13% had been in Syria for around one year and 19% for over a year.

Family Composition

64% of the total 3,553 are married.

Of the 754 people interviewed 82% are married.

Size of respondents' households in Syria:

- 7% live alone
- 9% live with one more person
- 14% have 3 family members in their household,
- 21% have four family members,
- 17% five family members
- 15% 6 family members
- 17% from 7 to 11 family members

64% of the Iraqis interviewed do not expect their extended family to come while 24% expect part of their extended family to come to Syria. These results are in sharp contrast with those of the first survey in which 73% of Iraqis interviewed expected family members to come to Syria.

Family Abroad

63% of the total of Iraqis interviewed have family abroad. Among those with family abroad, their relatives are in Sweden (28%), USA (18%), UK (10%), Egypt (2%), Norway (2%), Jordan (3%), France (2%), Holland (5%) Canada (7%), U.A.E. (4%), Australia (8%), Germany (9%), Denmark (1%) and others: Malaysia, Libya Switzerland, Finland, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, Yemen, Belgium, Russia, Indonesia (1%).

Remittances from Abroad (see Types of Assistance)

Place of Residence

96% of the respondents are currently living in Syria.

More than half of the Iraqis interviewed are concentrated in Saida Zeinab (16%), Jeremana (20%), Palestine Camp (Yarmuk) (9%) and Masaken Berzeh (5%), Duma and Dwela (2%) (all in Damascus).

Living Status

98% of the total rent a house and 2% own their home.

15% share their apartment with another family, down from the 23% who were sharing their apartment in May 2007.

71% are renting between 2-4 rooms, 23% are renting 1 room, 6% are renting 5-6 rooms.

Cost of Residence

Rent per month	Percentage of Respondents
5,000 SYP	6%
5,000-10,000 SYP	43%
11,000 and 15,000 SYP	36%
15,000-20,000 SYP	8%
20,000-25,000 SYP	5%
25,000 SYP	2%

Iraqi Refugees and UNHCR

Refugee Awareness of UNHCR

In a multiple response answer, 44% said they heard about the UNHCR program of assistance through friends; 36% through Iraqis in Syria and 23% heard about it through relatives. Only 2% through the communication efforts of UN agencies.

Reasons for approaching UNHCR

The respondents gave the following answers:

- To receive the UNHCR Refugee Certificate 40%
- Threats 23%
- Because I hope to be resettled to another country 15%
- To gain access to UNHCR programs of assistance 8%
- Because I do not have enough resources to manage 8%
- Because of a medical problem 5%
- To find out about my rights as a refugee in Syria 1%

Compared to the May survey, significantly fewer Iraqis are applying for UNHCR registration because they want to be resettled while many more want to receive the UNHCR refugee certificate.

Savings and Income

41% did not reveal what their income is.

Main source of income

37% of refugees answered that their household's main source of income are savings, 24% remittances, 24% salary, 12% pension.

Time income is expected to last

33% expect their money to last less than three months while 53% do not know how long this money will last.

Main income provider

35% said the main income provider is the male head of household, while 36% said the main income provider is the female head of household. 8.5% said the main income provider is their husband and 0.5% said the main income provider is their wife.

Main provider's monthly income is between 5,000 and 10,000 SYP (22%), 10,000 to 20,000 SYP (19%), 20,000-30,000 SYP (9%), less than 5,000 (5%). A significant 41% of respondents did not provide an answer to this question.

Assistance

Types of Assistance

69% of the respondents have not received any assistance from UNHCR or any other charity or organization. Money (78%) and food (18%) is the main assistance received. In a multiple response, from those who receive assistance, 11% receive assistance from SARC, 7% from UNHCR, 7% from Caritas. **74% have remittances from relatives who are mainly living in Iraq (71%), Syria (4%), the USA (6%) and Sweden (5%).**

71% of the respondents admit not knowing how long this assistance will last, while 14% expect the assistance to last up to three months, 9% from 6 months to a year and 9% expect it to last around a year.

Food Assistance

What type of food do you need the most?	(Multiple Response)	
Rice	18	86%
Lentils	8	38%
Oil	12	57%
Fruit & Vegetables	5	24%
Wheat Flour	10	48%
Sugar	13	62%
Milk	3	14%

How much do you spend per month on food?		
Less than 3000 SP	29	4%
Between 3000-5000 SP	117	16%
Between 5000-8000SP	140	19%
Between 8,000-11,000SP	153	20%
Between 11,000-15,000 SP	150	20%
More than 15,000SP	143	19%
15.000 - 20.000	4	1%
20.000 - 25.000	3	0%
25.000 - 30.000	10	1%
30.000 - 35.000	3	0%
35.000 - 40.000	2	0%

Education

Level of Education of Respondent

31% of the Iraqis interviewed have a university degree. Only 2% are illiterate and 1% uneducated.

- Illiterate 2%
- Uneducated 1%
- Elementary (5-11) 12%
- Preparatory (12-15) 25%
- Secondary (16-18) 11%
- Vocational training 14%
- Undergraduate Student 3%
- University Degree 23%
- Master's Degree 4.5%
- PhD 4.5%

Children and Education (between the ages of 5 and 18)

Statistics on 1,109 children were obtained.

32% of Iraqi children interviewed are not enrolled in Syrian schools, a much lower percentage than the 76% in May.

36% of those not registered do have the necessary documents to register in school.

33% of those enrolled have faced school difficulties.

Breakdown of school difficulties faced:

No space in schools (46%)

Lack of correct documents (33%)

Huge expenses (20%)

Getting the uniforms (1%)

Of those attending school, 94% of children are enrolled in public schools.

Most Iraqi children (69%) are adapting to the Syrian curriculum well to moderately well, while 19% are not adapting so well and 12% are in need of educational assistance.

10% of school age children are working which is the same proportion as in May.

46% have dropped out of school (compared to 21% in May), and out of those who have dropped out of school, 19% are working.

The reasons for dropping out are:

- Lack of documents 50%
- Lack of resources 35%
- Psychosocial issues (bullying, discrimination) 13%
- Not having been accepted in school 8%
- Finish studies 7%
- Being married 3%
- Being disabled 5%
- Living in Iraq 2%
- The curriculum is difficult (2%)
- The schools are far away from home (1%)
- The child does not want to continue studying (1%)

Location of schools

Damascus	89%
Outside Damascus	11%

Health

Disabilities

4% of the Iraqis interviewed say they have a disabled family member or are disabled themselves. 2.1% of refugees registered with UNHCR from January to December 2007 are disabled.

The following disabilities were identified:

Physical (31%), mental (17%), amputee (4%), deaf (9%), dumb (2%), blind 5%), other mobility (25%), difficulty seeing even with glasses (13%), Down syndrome (1%).

The disabilities come under the following four categories:

injury (49%), since birth (30%), disease (16%), aging (4%).

In a breakdown of these four categories, the following results on injuries were identified in a multiple response:

- 29% injury since birth
- 18% bomb or grenade
- 13% disease
- 8% gunshot
- 7% falling down
- 6% injury through being hit or struck

- 5% car accident
- 5% injury through being stabbed or cut
- 2% as a result of fire
- 1% landmine or UXO
- 1% surgery
- 1% non-accidental injury
- 1% torture
- 1% fever

Amongst the injuries, 64% are a result of war or conflict related fighting, 12% are work related, 4% are the result of a traffic accident, 7% are a result of non-war related violence, 11% are a result of torture, 3% are a result of other (fever).

When was the person injured?

Since birth	24%
1968 until March 2003, but not during the wars listed	11%
During Iran- Iraq War, 1980- 1988	6%
During the Gulf War, 1990- 1991	6%
After the US intervention in 2003	46%
2006	2%
Don't Know	5%

Challenges facing disabled refugees

56% have difficulties washing and dressing by themselves, 28% of the disabled people have difficulty feeding themselves.

60% of the people disabled have not received medical attention for their disabilities. Amongst the main reasons for not receiving medical attention for their disabilities, 6% are afraid, 80% cannot afford it, 7% do not need it, 5% were denied admission to services, and in 1% of cases the disease has no cure.

Medical Assistance to Persons with Disabilities

Medical attention or financial assistance for their disabilities as follows:

Devices (21%), medicines (34%), therapy (13%), psychological support (5%), none (15%) other (24%).

The following devices have been received:

Crutches (41%), wheelchair (12%), artificial limb (6%), glasses (29%), hearing aid (6%), others (6%).

The assistance is provided by (more than one entity is possible):

Relatives (61%), friends (10%), religious charity (2%), SARC (2%), nobody (21%), Italian Red Cross (5%), Iraqi Ministry of Health (5%).

Chronic diseases

17% of people interviewed or someone in their family have been diagnosed with a chronic disease. 18.9% of refugees registered with UNHCR from January to December 2007 have a chronic or severe disease.

The following chronic diseases were identified:

High blood pressure (30%)
Diabetes (15%)
Asthma (8%)
Other respiratory disease (3%)
Gastrointestinal disease (5%)
Rheumatism (9%)
Heart problem (14%)
Cancer (2%)
Goiter (thyroid) (3%)
Disk (3%)
Cholesterol (1%)
Ulcer disease (1%)
Coagulopathy (1%)
Colitis (1%)
Chronic renal failure (3%)
Neuropathy (1%)

95% have had medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. 81% have taken medicine over the last month. Among those who have not taken their medicine, the main reasons for not doing so are: 4% because they are afraid, 79% cannot afford it, 12% do not need it, 2.5% were denied admission to services, 2.5% were too busy.

Children under five

4% of Iraqi children under five have not received any vaccination.

There are several reasons for the absence of vaccination: because the parents did not know about any need for vaccination (11%), because the parents could not afford it (33%), because the parents did not know where to go (56%), because their child was ill (11%), because they were rejected by health workers (6%).

Of those being vaccinated, 56% of children have been vaccinated in Iraq, 18% have been vaccinated in Syria, 25% have been vaccinated in both Iraq and Syria and 1% do not know.

34% of the parents have a vaccination card for their child. 65% do not have a vaccination card and 1% do not know.

Percentage of Iraqi children vaccinated against:

- MMR (against measles), 88% vaccinated; 11% not vaccinated; 1% do not know.
- DPT (to prevent tetanus, whooping and diphtheria): 11% vaccinated, 63% not vaccinated; 26% do not know.
- Polio: 69% vaccinated, 10% not vaccinated; 21% do not know.

- BCG (against tuberculosis): 12% vaccinated, 64% not vaccinated; 24% do not know.

19% of the children have had diarrhoea in the two weeks prior to being interviewed, 72% have not, and 9% of the parents do not know.

The following was taken in order to treat the diarrhoea:

Fluid from ORS packet: (24%)
 Recommended homemade fluid (38%)
 ORS made by homemade fluids (25%)
 Yogurt (5%)
 Banana (1%)
 Other medicines (7%)
 Nothing (4%)

23% of children under five have had an illness in the two weeks prior the interview.

The following illnesses have been identified:

Cough (8%), tonsils infection (12%), stomach infection (8%), flu (42%), lung infection (8%), urinal tract infection (2%), asthma (2%), fever (3%), ear infection (2%), anaemia (1%), hepatitis A (1%), do not know (11%).

22% did not seek advice concerning the illness

Main reasons for not seeking advice for their treatment:

Did not know where to go (9%)
 The child was not seriously ill (39%)
 The parents were worried about the cost (48%)
 The parents were busy (4%).

From the 78% who sought advice, 7% went to a private hospital/clinic, 17% went to a public hospital, 7% went to a government health centre, 60% went to a private physician, 5% went to a SARC clinic, 6% went to a private pharmacy.

13% did not buy medicine to treat the illness.

Among the main reasons for not buying the medicine:

79% had the same medicine at home.
 21% do not know.

77% of Iraqi children did not receive the polio vaccination during the house-to-house September vaccination campaign 2007.

Among the reasons for not receiving it (multiple answers):

- they did not want it (3%)
- they had not been offered it (18%)
- they did not know (76%)
- they were asked to pay for it (2%)
- they were not at home (4%)
- the child had already been vaccinated (1%).

96% of children under five do not attend preschool for the following reasons:

- The parents have no money (69%)
- The parents consider the child is too young (23%)
- The mother takes care of them (13%)
- The child is disabled (1%)
- The parents have fear the child can be harmed (1%)
- For residency issues (1%)

CHANGES WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD SINCE 2003

The 754 respondents provided information about 4,080 people living in their household before 2003, as opposed to the 3,553 living in their household nowadays.

52% were male while 48% were female.

When asking the respondents where their members were on the day of the survey:

- 73% alive and living in the household
- 22% living elsewhere
- 4% dead
- 1% missing

For those currently missing or dead, 54% died or were missing in 2007, 22% in 2006, 8% in 2005, 7% in 2004, 5% in 2003 and 6% do not know.

For those who died, the causes of death were:

- Murder (78%)
- Natural death (4%)
- Disease (11%)
- Explosion (6%)
- Fire (1%)

Those murdered were killed by:

- Militia (62%)
- War fighting (4%)
- al-Qaeda (2%)
- Unknown (28%)
- Other (4%)

Of those alive and currently living in Syria:

- 57% have received a direct threat
- 53% are survivors of bombings
- 11% have been assaulted
- 6% have been kidnapped

Mental Health and Traumatic Events Results

A convenience sample survey, conducted by The United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), has found that among Iraqi refugees registering with UNHCR between 31 October and 25 November 2007, the prevalence of depression and anxiety was high, 89% and 82% (n=384) respectively. Every survey respondent reported experiencing at least one traumatic event, as defined by the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire, and the prevalence of post traumatic stress disorder was extremely high (67%, n=754).

These results cannot be generalized to all refugees registered with UNHCR, or to the remainder of the 1.5 million Iraqi refugees in Syria who have yet to be registered, because the survey was not a randomly selected, population-based assessment. These results are only representative of the sample of refugee families who registered or scheduled an appointment to register during the survey period.

Findings

These findings were drawn from the mental health and trauma sections of a larger survey of Iraqi refugees conducted by UNHCR. These mental health and trauma data were analyzed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), based in Atlanta.

Among respondents, 77% reported being affected by air bombardments and shelling or rocket attacks and 80% reported being witness to a shooting. Sixty eight percent reported interrogation or harassment by militias or other groups with threats to life, while 22% had been beaten by militias or other groups. Results also showed that 23% had been kidnapped, 72% had been eye witnesses to a car bombing, and 75% knew someone close to them who had been killed or murdered.

Although respondents were asked questions about any exposure to such events in the previous ten years, virtually all reported events dated from 2003 to the present. All the reported events took place within Iraq itself.

Respondents were also specifically asked about torture. Of the 120 (16% surveyed) persons who reported being tortured (a finding similar to the figure reported in the UNHCR database of 135,000 refugees), the majority reported being beaten with fists or other objects (61% and 58% respectively). Additionally, 22 (18%) reported being given electric shocks, six (5%) had objects placed under their nails, and seven (6%) had burns inflicted. Six persons (3%) reported being raped of which five (3%) occurred between 2003 and the present, and seven (6%) reported having seen a family member raped (all occurred in 2006 and 2007).

These data suggest that refugees registered or given appointments to register by UNHCR between 31 October and 25 November 2007 had undergone a considerable array of traumatic events resulting in very high levels of post traumatic stress disorder and high levels of depression and anxiety. Until a population-based survey is conducted, it will be impossible to determine if these registering refugees have been exposed to a higher number of traumatic events compared with those Iraqi refugees who have not registered. Programs are urgently needed to address these mental health issues and a population-based survey is needed to determine the prevalence of these conditions among all 1.5

million Iraqi refugees in Syria. Advocacy is needed among all groups within Iraq itself to end deliberate torture and the numerous other horrific events that this group has experienced.

Methodology

The UNHCR surveyed Iraqi refugees who registered or scheduled a registration between 31 October and 25 November 2007. Statistically those surveyed are considered a convenience sample and the results provided cannot be inferred to represent the experiences of all Iraqi refugees registered with UNHCR or all Iraqi refugees in general.

At the time that the survey was conducted, UNHCR had registered more than 135,000 Iraqi refugees, with around one in five refugees being classified as being survivors of violence and torture in Iraq.

In this survey, two standard assessment tools, the Hopkins Symptom Checklist (HSC) and the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (HTQ), were used to evaluate the morbidity of mental health and the prevalence of traumatic events experienced by respondents. Only respondents who were completing full registration were given the HSC (n=384), while all respondents answered questions from the HTQ (n=754). One question was inadvertently dropped from the Hopkins Symptom Checklist.

The HSC asks about symptoms of depression and anxiety, while the HTQ asks about specific traumatic events and symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder. Both instruments have been used in other international conflict settings, notably Kosovo and Afghanistan. These other studies used random population based methods and therefore are representative of the surveyed groups, unlike the current study. Results from these other international conflict settings are provided in the table below for comparison.

Previous studies using Hopkins Symptom Checklist and Harvard Trauma Questionnaire in conflict or post-conflict settings, with displaced populations.

	Survey Type	N	Depression	Anxiety	PTSD	Traumatic Events
Kosovo 2000 (JAMA)	Population Based Survey	1358			17.1% Mean score (11.1)	48.9%
Kosovo 2003 (ISTSS) (1 yr after end of war)	Population Based Survey	1399			25%	8.9%
Afghanistan 2004 (JAMA)	Population Based Survey	1011	38.5%	51.8%	20.4%	43.7% (8-10 traumatic events)
Afghanistan 2004 (JAMA)	Population Based Survey	799	67.7%	72.2%	42.1%	62.0% at least 4 traumatic events
Afghanistan 2005 (Women's Health)	Population Based Survey	? females ? males	73% females 59% males	84% females 59% males	48% females 32% males	
Afghan Somali/Iranian Refugees in Netherlands	Population Based Survey	410	55.6% (depression or anxiety)		20.6%	
Iraqis in Syria	Convenience sample of UNHCR registrants	754	89.5% (n=384)	81.6% (n=384)	67.6% (n=754)	91.5% at least 4 traumatic events

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