

LOGISTICS AND RELIEF COMMODITIES SECTOR UPDATE



In Kuwait, a USAID/OFDA logistics officer supervises the loading of relief supplies destined for Iraq.
Photo by Kelly Bradley/USAID

Protecting Displaced Populations in Iraq from Winter's Chill

The protracted crisis in Iraq—resulting from the advance of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) across northern and central Iraq beginning in early 2014—has left more than 10 million people, including internally displaced persons, host community members, and other vulnerable populations, in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, according to the UN.

During Iraq's winter months, temperatures can fall below freezing, particularly in the north. In preparation for the 2015/2016 winter season, the U.S. Government (USG) worked with humanitarian partners to identify and procure critical relief items that would help conflict-affected Iraqis cope with the hardship of the winter months. Between November 2015 and January 2016, the Logistics Unit of USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) mounted a multi-country operation to coordinate and facilitate the movement of an estimated 2 million emergency relief items from Kuwait and Turkey into Iraq. More than 1,000 trucks transported seasonally appropriate commodities, such as winter clothing kits, kerosene heaters, and blankets, to the capital of Baghdad in central Iraq and the city of Erbil in the northern Iraqi Kurdistan Region. The trucks also carried other emergency relief items, including hygiene kits, towels, solar lights, and water storage containers.

The procurement and transportation of these supplies, supported by the USG's nearly \$70 million contribution and the work of USAID/OFDA's Logistics Unit, benefited hundreds of thousands of vulnerable Iraqis, helping them to endure the brunt of the cold weather during winter.

Sector Overview

As part of its efforts to ensure a rapid response to humanitarian emergencies around the world, USAID/OFDA stores emergency relief supplies, such as kitchen sets, water containers, hygiene kits, blankets, and plastic sheeting for emergency shelter, at strategically located warehouses in Pisa, Italy; Subang, Malaysia; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; and Miami, United States.

In addition to stockpiling emergency relief items, USAID/OFDA deploys logistics personnel to assist directly with USG response efforts when a disaster strikes. With support from colleagues in Washington, D.C., the deployed logistics personnel manage the transport and consignment of relief commodities to USAID/OFDA partners operating in disaster-affected areas. USAID/OFDA's Logistics Unit also provides technical assistance to non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, and host government counterparts in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and supports disaster risk reduction efforts to mitigate the impact of future disasters.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, through grants and in-kind contributions to humanitarian partners, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$186 million for emergency relief commodities and associated transport, as well as for other logistical support.



USAID/OFDA stockpiles of emergency relief items at four warehouses around the world are ready for use when disaster strikes.
Photo by Robert Demeranville/USAID



Participants discuss fleet management at a USAID/OFDA-supported Fleet Excellence Training held in Kinshasa in June 2016. *Courtesy of Fleet Forum*

Building Local Capacity for Vehicle Fleet Management

Since 2013, USAID/OFDA has supported the Fleet Forum and its partner humanitarian organizations to increase field staff's knowledge and skills in the area of vehicle fleet management and safety. With USAID/OFDA funding, the Fleet Forum implemented two training and capacity-building programs during FY 2016.

The first program, Fleet Excellence Training, focuses on developing the capacity of local staff responsible for vehicle fleet operations, increasing their skills to handle fleet management in both emergency and non-emergency settings. The comprehensive training includes e-learning modules, a three-day in-person session, and 10 months of post-class follow up for participants and their managers conducted by Fleet Forum staff. Fleet Excellence Training sessions took place in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in June 2016 and in Goma, DRC, and Juba, South Sudan, in September 2016. Future trainings are planned for the Central African Republic, Jordan, and Nepal.

The second USAID/OFDA-supported, Fleet Forum-implemented initiative aims to create a Fleet Management in Emergencies training suite that consists of an e-learning module, classroom training, and a written guide. In 2016, Fleet Forum hosted a series of workshops, including in Nepal and South Sudan in June, to gather input for the new training program, which Fleet Forum plans to integrate into its existing training suites following a pilot period.

Responding Rapidly to Acute Needs After Ecuador's Earthquake

On April 16, 2016, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck off the coast of northwestern Ecuador, severely impacting six of the country's 24 provinces. The earthquake caused more than 600 deaths and affected more than 240,000 people, according to the Government of Ecuador. The earthquake also damaged or destroyed nearly 30,000 houses, in addition to hospitals, schools, and other infrastructure.

As part of USG response efforts, USAID/OFDA's Logistics Unit organized an airlift of emergency relief commodities, including some from the USAID/OFDA stockpile in the U.S. city of Miami, to address the acute humanitarian needs of earthquake-affected populations. The supplies—valued at nearly \$500,000—consisted of 1,000 rolls of heavy-duty plastic sheeting for the construction of transitional shelters, nearly 3,500 kitchen sets, approximately 20,400 water containers, and five 10,000-liter portable water storage and distribution units. With financial support from USAID/OFDA, the American Red Cross and the Ecuadorian Red Cross distributed the airlifted emergency relief items to an estimated 50,000 beneficiaries in hard-hit Esmeraldas and Manabí provinces over the days and weeks following the commodities' arrival in Ecuador's capital of Quito on April 24.

To facilitate reception, transport, and consignment of the cargo, the Logistics Unit deployed a logistics officer to Quito to oversee the process, in coordination with USAID/OFDA logisticians in Washington, D.C. The deployed logistics officer also worked with local and international humanitarian actors, taking part in damage assessments and providing general logistics support.



Members of the Ecuadorian Red Cross unload supplies provided by USAID/OFDA in preparation for a distribution of emergency relief items. *Photo by Michael Canchong/USAID*

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