

Iraq 2014-15

John & Fiona Earle

In 2014 about one million refugees came into Iraq.

It is hard to envisage a million people. A crowd of fifty thousand may attend a major football match, and that is only one twentieth of a million. The figures for Iraq in 2015 (derived from the Iraq Strategic Research Plan) include 250,000 refugees and 2.7 million internally displaced people since January 2014. Altogether in Iraq there are 5.2 million people in need of humanitarian help. In addition 2.9 million people have moved into the Lebanon, where one person in four is a refugee.

These people have lost their homes, their possessions, and many have lost family members. Worst of all, many of them have lost hope.



Mostly the refugees and displaced people got to the refugee camps wearing the clothes they stood up in. That is all. They all need humanitarian aid. Unless the hygiene is satisfactory, water-borne diseases are inevitable.

Samara

Samara, a mother of two small children, was appalled by these figures, and has been working for a year now to help the refugees. She refers to them as our brothers and sisters in Christ. We have spoken with her on the phone. She is a warm-hearted Christian who thinks positively in spite of the difficulties. As

she wrote in her last email to us, we can show these refugees that we can do something practical to help and that we care. John spoke briefly in All Saints about the position last autumn and you provided good quality warm clothing that Fiona sorted and packed in banana boxes. Rosemary Bolton kindly took them up to a depot in Northampton. They were then taken by a lorry to Iraq. On behalf of the refugees, thank you for that contribution.



You can read more about this at <https://www.facebook.com/winterclothesappeal> - you do not need to be a facebook user to access this.



Now Samara is saying that before any churches or institutions, or individuals, start to collect for 'Samara's Aid Appeal', they should register as a collector through this link <http://www.samarasaidappeal.org/register-to-become-a-collector/>

At present, she is asking for good quality summer clothing, light cotton blankets and shoes; also 'Care packs' for particular groups (nursing mothers etc). For an autumn consignment, she will need warm winter clothing.

Knitting for the needy - she is asking knitting groups to make blankets and warm clothes

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to send in the autumn. (She will take delivery of these in the autumn).

It costs £6,000+ to send a lorry to Iraq. That sounds a lot, but it means that about £1.50 pays for clothing for one person. If people could give a small amount toward the cost of transport that would be helpful. The clothing will be distributed there by a local organisation, the Christian Aid Programme for Northern Iraq, CAPNI.

The next delivery dates for collections are likely to be between 18th and 22nd May, and between 26th and 30th May. (Samara will give more precise details later. We are writing this in mid-April).

We, Fiona and John, regret that we cannot do this May collection ourselves. Can anyone else help?

The money we take from the stall at the Soundbites Concerts will all go toward the transport costs to Iraq, and we hope to be able to do the autumn collection for winter clothing.