

Ottawa Journal: emergency relief supplies for Iraq

The situation in Iraq is tragic. 1.3 million people have been displaced by ongoing violence, an estimated 850,000 in the last two months alone, and many more are threatened. Canada is very concerned and is responding to the humanitarian crisis by sending emergency relief supplies. Providing food, water, and other essential supplies can mean the difference between life and death for people in desperate need.

Our Government strongly condemns the actions of ISIL in Northern Iraq, including the killing of innocent civilians and the targeted persecution of religious minorities. It is those actions that are responsible for the humanitarian crisis the region is now facing. Canadian officials are monitoring the situation and assessing how to respond to the humanitarian challenges. We have already allocated over \$21 million to support both Syrian refugees and Iraqis affected by the ongoing violence.

Canada has established a stockpile of relief supplies in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, which enables us to respond more quickly and efficiently to events in Africa and Asia. The dispatch of relief supplies to Iraq is the first time this new stockpile has been used. The stockpile, which also includes tents, blankets, and kitchen and hygiene kits, is managed by the Canadian Red Cross.

Canada continues to work with organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, Development and Peace, Save the Children Canada, and Mercy Corps. The need for assistance is clear and Canada is responding swiftly and generously.

In addition to providing supplies to those displaced by the violence, we are also providing medical supplies to health facilities and helping with emergency repairs to water and sanitation facilities.

We hope that the tragic situation in Iraq will one day soon be replaced by lasting peace and security. Until then, Canada will work with our international partners and aid organizations to help save lives in the region.

By David Tilson, M.P.