



IOM Participates in UN Airlift from Iraq to Syria

500 family hygiene kits delivered to hard-to-reach areas in northeastern Syria



February 16, 2013 - 500 family hygiene kits were airlifted from IOM Iraq's central warehouse in Erbil to Qamishli in northeast Syria, providing much needed supplies to families living in this difficult-to-access area. These IOM Non-Food Items (NFIs) were part of an interagency cargo organized by the Global Logistics Cluster, with the aircrafts contracted through the UN World Food Programme (WFP). The relief items delivered also included food and clothes provided by the WFP and the UN children's agency UNICEF. The IOM relief items occupied about 50% of the airplane cargo capacity. The airlift was free of charge to IOM and inter-mission cooperation was coordinated with the Syrian Response Team.

Each individual hygiene kit supplied by IOM Iraq contains 10 kg of cleaning powder, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, towels, and other basic sanitary items sufficient for one family. In the coming days IOM Syria will organize the distribution of these relief kits on the ground.

International agencies have repeatedly sounded the alarm about their inability to supply regular aid by road (logistically simpler and cheaper, but due to the fighting more dangerous) to the millions of Syrians who have been driven from their homes during nearly three years of conflict.

According to the UN, there are 230,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and 319,000 other vulnerable people in the Al Hasekeh governorate, where Qamishli is located.

The UN airlift of humanitarian supplies from Erbil began in December 2013 as a method of delivering assistance to populations in hard-to-reach areas through flexible aid modalities. This is the first time that IOM has taken part in such an operation.

Maria Rumman, IOM CoM Syria, commented, "The inter-mission cooperation between IOM Iraq and IOM Syria represents great effort to reach the needy population in Qamishli. It is crucial that we utilize the airlift operation initiated by the UN Syria Crisis Humanitarian team in coordination with the Syrian and Iraqi governments. We are very pleased that this airlift operation will provide relief items to affected populations. We will continue to use such modalities whenever possible to reach out to needy populations. Most importantly, we are hoping that the situation will improve quickly and that these areas will soon be reachable by road."

