

Explanation of Accounts Funding Critical Humanitarian & Human Rights Concerns



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Overview of Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA)

The Department of State's Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account helps the United States meet its domestic and international obligations to protect and assist refugees and host communities. It is funded through the State, Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. The two major line-items within MRA are overseas refugee assistance and U.S. refugee admissions. MRA funds for overseas assistance are used to support UN agencies, the ICRC, and international NGOs to provide protection and direct assistance to refugees. The Refugee Admissions portion of MRA provides funding to identify, admit, and provide initial reception and placement services for refugees admitted to the United States. Resettlement serves as a durable solution for individual refugees and demonstrates responsibility-sharing to encourage countries of "first asylum" to keep their doors open to refugees in need of protection. **In order to address the unmet and growing needs of Iraqi refugees and conflict victims, at least \$125 million in Supplemental funding for MRA is needed**, in addition to the resources appropriated through the FY08 omnibus. In view of the United States' special responsibility to Iraqi refugees and the slow international response to the displacement crisis, the U.S. should be prepared to fund at least 50% of the international organizations' appeals and increase resources available to NGOs. **To address the total worldwide needs, the MRA account should be granted an additional \$345 million in the FY08 Supplemental.**

Overview of International Disaster Assistance Account (IDA)

IDA helps address the needs of a wide range of civilians displaced or otherwise affected by conflict or other disasters. It is funded through the State, Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. **Congress should ensure that a total of \$185 million is appropriated for IDA in the FY08 Supplemental for urgent humanitarian needs inside Iraq.**¹ This will allow for increased support to non-governmental organizations assisting vulnerable Iraqis and for a robust U.S. response to the needs identified in the U.N. Consolidated Appeal for Iraq. **At a global level, the IDA account requires an additional \$335 million to meet identified needs.**

Overview of Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA)

ERMA is an account that the President may draw on at any time to meet "unexpected urgent refugee needs." Appropriations for ERMA are provided each year through the State, Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. ERMA funds are used to respond to breaks in the food pipeline, unanticipated new emergencies or unforeseen escalations

¹ The \$185 million does not take into account omnibus IDA funding for Iraq, because it is still unclear exactly how much money will be allocated for Iraq through IDA in the omnibus. The total IDA need for Iraq for FY08 is \$185 million.

in existing crises. **The ERMA account should be fully funded at its authorized level of \$100 million.**

Overview of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)

The Refugee Act of 1980 established the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Department of Health and Human Services. ORR's mission is to assist refugees and other special populations in obtaining economic and social self-sufficiency in the United States. ORR funds a variety of programs that offer employment services, English language skills training, citizenship classes, cash and medical assistance, and aid for victims of torture and trafficking. **At least \$68 million in additional funding is needed to help recently arrived and anticipated Special Immigrant Visa holders from Iraq.**

Torture Victim Healing Services (ORR)

ORR is responsible for certain services to victims of torture. Funding for torture rehabilitation has remained static for several years. The result has been a demand for services that far exceeds resources, and several programs have closed or drastically scaled back services to survivors. All these programs worked in areas with a significant refugee population. In addition, a number of sources have indicated that the percentage of torture victims within the Iraqi refugee population will be considerably higher than that of other recent refugee flows². **At least \$10 million is needed for the Torture Victims Fund of ORR to meet the needs of Iraqis.**

Overview of Economic Support Fund (ESF)

In the region, ESF funding to governments hosting Iraqis helps mitigate the impact of refugee populations on host countries' infrastructure, services and local communities. **Up to \$900 million in ESF funding should be made available to Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt.** Funding should be allocated in proportion to the size and impact of the Iraqi refugee population in each country. **At least \$120 million is necessary to support USAID's Iraq Community Action Program**, which is implemented by an alliance of U.S. based NGOs and is funded through the ESF account. This program works with Iraqi communities to identify their own needs and implement sustainable rehabilitation projects by promoting citizen-government engagement and local economic development.

² For more information, see UNHCR's recent report on the incidence of severe trauma among Iraqi refugees in Syria: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/NEWS/479616762.html>