



## **INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE**

### **Struggling to Survive: How is the IRC responding to the Iraqi refugee crisis?**

**Briefing from the Field: Wednesday, June 20, 2007  
1:00 PM to 1:45 PM (EST)  
Briefing and Q&A with phone audience**

**Bob Carey, IRC's Vice President of Resettlement; Denise Barrett, IRC's Regional Representative for the Middle East; and the moderator, Gideon Rose, Managing Editor of Foreign Affairs magazine discuss the IRC's efforts to address one of the most rapidly increasing refugee crises in the world.**

**Moderator: Janet Harris**

Janet Harris: Good day. I'd like to welcome everybody on this world refugee day to our briefing from the field call. As you know, our subject today is struggling to survive; how is the IRC responding to the Iraqi refugee crisis.

We'll be having a lively discussion with a group of folks here at the IRC, both from the field and here at our headquarters in New York, and after about 20 minutes we'd like to invite all of you to call in with your questions. We have about 50 people we're expecting on the line today from all over the country. Thank you so much for those of you who have called in with interest in this very important refugee crisis. We'll be discussing the plight of the displaced people within Iraq and IRC's role in advocating and assisting people for resettlement options here in the United States.

I wanted to say a brief thank-you to those of you who are supporters and donors of the IRC for your unrestricted support. There's no way that we could have launched this important program without your assistance, so thank you for your interest and your support for all that we do. We're

going to want to engage all of you in conversation, and after about 20 minutes we'll have a chance for you to ask your own questions. So let me just begin by introducing our interlocutor here.

Gideon Rose is the Managing Editor of "Foreign Affairs" magazine. He's going to be moderating our panel. He has been the Deputy Director of National Security Studies and the Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. He's also served as associate director for Near East and South Asian Affairs on the National Security Council and he's a longtime supporter of the IRC.

So, welcome, Gideon. Thank you so much for being with us.

Gideon Rose: Thank you.

Janet Harris: Gideon is going to be interviewing two of our staff members.

Bob Carey is the IRC's Vice President of Resettlement and has been for the past 11 years. He oversees IRC's refugee resettlement programs, our anti-trafficking programs, and those that deal with people seeking asylum here in the United States. We also have a program in Thailand where refugees are screened and prepared for admission into the United States.

So, welcome, Bob Carey.

And finally from Amman, Jordan, we have Denise Barrett joining us. Denise is IRC's Regional Representative in the Middle East. She's based in Amman and she's going to be talking to us about her observations and the IRC's programs in the region. We're working with both the Iraqi refugees who have gone over into the border – over the border into Jordan and as well as vulnerable and impoverished populations in the Amman area where the refugees are living.

Denise is new to the IRC but she has 20 years of experience in humanitarian aid including 13 years internationally.

So, welcome, Denise Barrett, Gideon Rose, and Bob Carey.

Male: Thank you very much

Denise Barrett: Thank you.

Gideon Rose: Welcome, everybody, to a discussion of a fascinating, if incredibly depressing, subject.

A few years ago when the initial situation in Iraq went south after the war and the Bush administration was attacked for its failure to do appropriate postwar planning, officials responded by saying that's not true, we did a lot of planning, it just so happened that some of the major crises that we planned for didn't really come about, and they used the movements of populations and refugee blows as a prime example of the kind of crisis they had been on the ball and were thinking about and planning for but that didn't actually materialize. So they pleaded for people to recognize that there were a lot of the good things that have happened, that we didn't see some of the problems that they had expected to see.

Well, in a kind of tragic irony as the situation in Iraq has deteriorated not just has a security situation and the political situation gone south but the result has been one might say inevitably that we've seen precisely the kind of large scale, massive humanitarian and refugee crisis that we hadn't necessarily seen earlier.

The IRC was involved in Iraq before and after the war in 2003 it had some programs there. When the population and refugee flows diminished somewhat and the situation wasn't in crisis and when the security situation went south the IRC left in 2004. Then, in recent years, as the

security situation and sectarian conflict on the ground spiraled out of control and the refugee flows and the flows of displaced people increased dramatically they started to look at the situation again much more seriously and then – that now required immediate crisis response. And in December of '06, the IRC sent an emergency assessment team to Amman to evaluate the situation and the result was that they launched a major program in Amman to help Iraqi refugees and have remained (fees) with what is now essentially the fastest – one of the fastest growing refugee crises in the world.

At least 40,000 people each month are fleeing their homes in Iraq for fears of their personal safety and no hope for the future where they are. The European Commission on Humanitarian Aid ranks the situation currently as one of the 15 most severe humanitarian crises in the world today. There are estimated to be 1.8 million displaced people within Iraq and there are probably about a slightly larger number who have fled outside the country. The prime number are in Syria with about a million and there are about three quarters of a million in Jordan right now.

The result is that we have on our hands now a situation of extraordinary complexity with ramifications – with humanitarian ramifications, (ethical) ramifications, political, diplomatic, economic. Basically everything in this giant tender box is connected and we have – are very fortunate to have a couple of incredibly impressive people to help walk us through what is happening and what the IRC is doing about it.

Let me get right into it by asking Denise Barrett, who's the IRC's Regional Representative in the Middle East and is based in Amman who is working on programs with the Iraqi refugees there, to give us a little sense of the scope of the situation that she's seeing over there in Jordan right now and give us a sort of picture of the land there – Denise.

Denise Barrett: Thank you. Right now in Jordan, it's a very cool summer evening. The sun is setting, the call to prayers have just been made for the evening, and soon I expect to see some fireworks

because every night for the last week there's been fireworks as kids get out of school or graduate from school and people get married. It's sort of the summer rights of passage that we're seeing, but when you really look deeper into the very vast urban landscape, which is quite populated and dense, we have about two million people living in Amman, Jordan, five million in the whole country.

We have a refugee population that in the city at least is estimated at perhaps a couple hundred thousand to maybe 300,000. It's not a – it's not a homogenous population. You do have wealthy Iraqis that manage to come across the border, but at least 50 percent we believe are actually struggling to really make their ends meet, are very vulnerable. They've left a situation in Iraq in which they have lost loved ones to violence or kidnappings. They come with trauma, they come with whatever they have, and even if they do have some resources or assets they're dwindling.

If you'd like me to continue, it's a complex situation in which in Jordan because the government has not signed onto any refugee protocols they – or conventions, they actually are not obligated to recognize the refugees. Only 34,000 of them are actually registered by UNHCR and most of them are feeling very unsettled because they lack a legal status, and even when they do get a registration perhaps as a silent seeker, it doesn't really translate into a sense of well being and a sense of safety.

Men (and) – men (and male) ((inaudible)) are especially vulnerable at this time fearing deportation, and in the poorer families – there's the fireworks, if you heard that – but in the poorer families in east Amman, the men are basically hold up in the house, very frustrated while the women try to go out and seek assistance that may be available to the humanitarian community or through Jordan's resources. But there's very few kids that are in school so there's, you know, while other people here are celebrating graduations the Iraqis are wondering what the next generation of children will have ahead of them.

Gideon Rose: Is the group of Iraqis that you're seeing there (are) a set of rough profile of the Iraqi population more generally or is it skewed – is there – it is dominated by say Shi'a or Sunni or Kurds? Is it dominated from people from certain areas of the country? You know, what is a – what is the nature how would you characterize the population of the refugees that you're seeing there?

Denise Barrett: Sure. I mean, you know, one thing that has to be made clear is that there hasn't been a full assessment done in the country just because of the nature of the politics and the situation of, I guess, geopolitics. We know one thing though, that Jordan is predominantly Sunni but the population that's come across the border in the last few years is about 60 percent Shi'a by people's estimates and about 30 percent Sunni and 10 percent Druze and Christian.

There is naturally security concerns. You know, Jordan is not a country that's unfamiliar to refugee populations and so this is another refugee population coming across following on the footsteps of the Palestinians, who have been coming into the country as far back as 50 years ago. So the Jordanian government, the Jordanian people have extended a great deal of hospitality, but we're not sure how long that hospitality will last although we do see some openings for us as a humanitarian community to deliver more aid which is a positive sign.

Gideon Rose: How traumatized are the actual refugees? Are we talking about people who are literally sort of fleeing violence and not a – do they have nothing but the clothes on their backs, do they – are they actually wounded or suffering, or are they – are they broken up in family groups, or (was there) the opportunity for them to be able to leave with a certain degree of deliberation and keep their family units together, make plans, take things with them, and so forth?

Denise Barrett: Well, what we're hearing is that the population that fled after the Samara bombing – the bombing of the mosque in Samara and the subsequent deterioration of security and sectarian violence and militias on the rise. So since about February 2006 that wave of population that's

coming to the country did flee overnight, or they may have left Baghdad for another area and then had to flee that area, or had to settle some issue related to a kidnapping and try to flee. And they're not necessarily whole families. They are split up. Some have landed in Syria while part of the family has landed in Jordan and some remained behind trying to hold onto perhaps some assets so that they can help support their families abroad and not lose everything that they own in Iraq.

Gideon Rose: And are they staying now generally in large camps separated from the rest of the population, or are they intermingling, or are they just homeless on the streets or what?

Denise Barrett: Yes, they're not homeless on the street. I'm sure that there must be some folks that are homeless. We don't see them every day but what I can tell you is there are no camps and that's probably a good thing. Camps make it easy for the humanitarian community to deliver aid, but in the long run that's not a durable solution or even a short-term mid solution really for people who really want to help empower them and to build their coping mechanisms. So they are blended into this urban landscape.

There's populations on the west side of town, there's populations on the east side of town. The west side is the wealthier side of town for Jordan – for Jordanians, and the east side is where, you know, poorer, more vulnerable people, let's say deteriorating infrastructure, or if there is (any) services. The east side of town was traditionally a place where the Palestinians would settle in. In fact, you go to parts of town there and they actually called it camp, but to us, it doesn't look any different than, you know, a set of, you know, buildings on a street – a whole set of buildings on streets. It really doesn't look like a camp.

So they're blended in and part of the reason is, is because they fear for their, you know, security. I mean, not that people are hunting them down. I really don't want to send that message. But it is a situation here when you don't have legal status that, whether it's real or imagined, you know,

people hide and they don't want to be recognized. And it's not only because they fear deportation, but although I don't think it's a huge problem, I think some of the tensions and sectarian violence is spilling over at least in terms of people fearing being identified ...

Gideon Rose: Well ...

Denise Barrett: ... for whatever – for whatever reason, yes.

Gideon Rose: Let's (stop) with that for a second.

The – are the sectarian conflicts that are currently (rolling) Iraq itself playing themselves out in the refugee community that you're seeing? Are there ...

Denise Barrett: Well, I ...

Gideon Rose: ((inaudible)).

Denise Barrett: ... really think ...

Gideon Rose: ... in the refugee community?

Denise Barrett: You know – I mean, Jordan is a – Jordan is a country with high security. I mean, there are, you know, there's – they're really going to tolerate any kind of sectarian violence in their country so I think they've managed to create – and it hasn't really changed much since I've come except I think it's gotten a little bit more stringent on the government's part because I think the border is – we've heard is closed and they are turning back Iraqis at the airport. But we feel that there's some sort of balance that struck.

You know, in other words, an agreement. It may not be a, you know, an overt agreement, but it's an agreement that goes under kind of the wire that, you know, as long as the Iraqis don't cause problems in Jordan, right now they're being tolerated. I think the government is really struggling to come up with what will be its final decision, its final determination and I think that they shouldn't be alone. I think this is an international crisis in which they need support, not only for humanitarian aid but also on the political level.

Gideon Rose: Given the delicate intercommunal issues within Jordan itself with the large Palestinian community and the Hashemite monarchy and so forth, is there a sense that the Iraqi refugees – that some of them might stay and might that affect the demographic balance within Jordan? Is this becoming a political issue within Jordan at all?

Denise Barrett: Well, I think it already has and I think that's why we don't have a determination yet for the Iraqis and, you know – I mean, I'm not sitting in the middle of a meeting with the government to be able to discuss these things, but I would assume that given that there hasn't been much movement except for the fact that, as I said earlier, there is more cooperation for the humanitarian community to support, especially what we've seen in – from the administrative education, that they will allow Iraqi children to go to school.

But there are laws on the books which say that if you don't have residency you won't be able to go to school. So there's a lot of sort of contradictions, and any given day we're not quite 100 percent sure what the – what the policy is and there could be from ministry to ministry conflicting policies.

Gideon Rose: Who are the main ...

Denise Barrett: An example ...

Gideon Rose: I'm sorry. Yes.

Denise Barrett: I was going to give you an example of that, and the example would be, for example, if the Ministry of Education says, you know, fine, international and local partners go ahead and support, you know, as much as you can increasing the access of children to our schools, help us with, you know, double-shifting of our teachers, help us with programs, but at the same instance, there may be from the Ministry of Interior, you know, issues around security. And we don't – and sometimes those issues of security when they come up against the humanitarian mandates one has to say that sometimes the security mandate wins.

Gideon Rose: Who are the major governmental – intergovernmental or international players and how are they addressing the situation?

Denise Barrett: Well, UNHRC has been here for quite some time and ...

Gideon Rose: The UN high commissioner for refugees.

Denise Barrett: Yes, sorry. Yes, UN high commissioner for refugees. They have increased their staff probably 20fold. (Since) February, they changed. Actually also in the last six weeks their resident representative, he is a gentleman from Pakistan, a Moslem, and they'd shifted their mandate also from refugee registration to actually looking to expand their humanitarian assistance program here in Jordan. You also have UNICEF, which we're very pleased in the last month has really stepped up to the plate in engaging with the Ministry of Education.

We are seeing more and more international NGO's like IRC but perhaps not taking the same approach as IRC, and there's increased coordination, so we're really on the precipice of an expansion of humanitarian assistance and other forms of support for both Iraqis in vulnerable populations of Jordanians. The position of the government is really it's fine for you to come, don't

really focus on the Iraqis, focus on the fact that we also have 30-percent poverty in our population, and if you're going to serve the Iraqis you've got to be sensitive to serve the local community, and that's exactly the position ((inaudible)) approach that IRC is taking.

Gideon Rose: Well, talk a little bit about this: what exactly is the IRC doing, what's the scope of its operations, what are the goals of its operations, and what kind of success you're having and what kind of challenges do you still face?

Denise Barrett: Sure. I mean, I arrived in mid March and my mandate is really to start the operation, to open an office to register IRC and to hire staff and to get a program into place. Some of the things are quicker to do than others. We are still waiting for registration, but have confidence that in the next couple of weeks we will be awarded our registration to work here, and we have put together an office and have started to hire staff.

My current colleagues are about three plus a driver so we are working very arduously to develop a program and the program is really designed to have a twofold approach. It's designed to deliver humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable, both Iraqis but also Jordanians and others living in the community, and this humanitarian assistance will be based on the actual needs. It could – it could include some material assistance, let's say something that people need in their homes. It could also include cash assistance if they need to help put their kids through school – tuition or books.

And then there's also a whole area we call psychosocial services and this is really to respond to those issues of people not really feeling very settled, having trauma, having a lot of stress so that we designed programs that could be educational, that could also just basically tries to help any kind of activity to develop that could bring a sense of normalcy in this very abnormal environment for people.

On the other side of the coin, we're very much an organization that believes in building partnerships and leaving behind a strong local organization. So part of our strategy is also to develop local partners both their organizational capacity and also their technical capacity to deliver social services, and also to engage with the wider community in a process of helping to enhance what we call social capital, and that means the relationships.

You know, a lot of the refugees who are here have relied on the Jordanian community that they live in to help them so this is an opportunity for us to support activities that would give back to the community, for example, any kind of, you know, community project that might, you know, bring community together a cultural festival, or something more permanent like a community center; those kinds of things we can also support through this program.

Gideon Rose: Great. We're also fortunate to have here Bob Carey, who's the IRC's Vice President of Resettlement and has overseen the IRC's programs in a whole variety of areas for 11 years.

Bob, put this in perspective and context for us: how is this situation in Iraq and its related areas as it compared to other challenges the IRC has dealt with, how is it similar, how is it different?

Bob Carey: I think clearly, Gideon, the scale is enormous, and from a resettlement perspective, which is what I look at from in many regards, it's the challenges that we will face when people are finally admitted to the US are considerable but nothing other refugees cannot overcome or have not overcome in the past.

We expect that there will need to be psychosocial services provided because the level of traumas in these references is pretty much universal. Everyone in the population, at least everyone we've met, and from Denise and others who are in the field is – confirms that have either had a direct experience of violence or have been witness to it. So the level of trauma is an important factor.

The scale (is) huge and I think the lack of resolution compounds that each day there's no future resettlement offer or there's that the social service programs are deferred in Jordan itself.

Gideon Rose: What efforts is the IRC making to try to effect US policy? What would it like to see the United States government do either over there or over here?

Bob Carey: Well, we have been calling for, and I also refer people to our Web site where there's a detailed action item that people can sign up for and participate as advocates themselves, is that there be a comprehensive humanitarian response for the region, which, you know, echoes at least to some degree in scale the military response because they certainly are linked.

We also feel that some people in this enormous population of two million simply cannot be protected in the region and for those – some of the most vulnerable resettlement in a third country and to some in the US should be an option, and we have been advocating that that be done in a timely basis because people are at risk now, they're vulnerable.

As Denise has stated, you know, access to social services is minimal or nonexistent, people are going hungry, their children don't have access to education, and the long-term implications of that are really grim with both the potential to destabilize the region and just the effect that has compounded the trauma that these people have experienced both in Iraq and in flight.

Gideon Rose: The IRC's a nonpolitical organization and would treat people on the basis of need rather than any other criteria, obviously, but when it comes to question like resettlement some of the population in question might have differential prospects let's say back in Iraq or in the region depending on their previous involvement with the United States. Would the IRC favor something like special protection for people who work with the US during the early stage of the operation?

Bob Carey: Certainly we have suggested to the US State Department criteria that could be used and actually the UNHCR has its own criteria of those who would be considered appropriate candidates for resettlement in the United States. And I think it's also important to recognize there is a large Iraqi American population here in the United States estimated at over 300,000 so many of the people who we're talking about have strong family links and then many have been placed at risk because of their US association. They've received death threats because they worked as translators or technicians, or in some other capacity or linked with the efforts, so that is in part the basis of their vulnerability.

Bit, if I may, I'd just like to briefly mention one individual case because I think that's – it does give a voice and a face to the – faceless numbers, which I think inevitably become somewhat depersonalized and, you know, but a woman with whom I met when we were there in February her name is (Julia). I think she illustrates what we often saw people have multiple areas of vulnerability. She's a religious minority; in this case Christian. She worked as a translator for the military from the Titan Corporation and then for the US Embassy in Iraq.

She and her family were as a result threatened with death. One of her children, a 14-year-old daughter, was burned in a bombing accident, which resulted in serious physical and psychological injury. The close relatives have suffered death and injuries from mortar attacks on their houses, and due to the threats that she was receiving she had to move around multiple times within Iraq. She's a single mother, widowed, and ultimately, she fled to Jordan. And she's been waiting an interview with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees for a determination on her case and has been told that the earliest appointment she can get will probably be January of next year. Her parents are US citizens, as are some of her siblings, so clearly there is a strong link on many levels, and she's the type of individual who we think should be afforded protection in the United States.

Gideon Rose: There are so many different aspects of this subject we could go on for literally hours and still not tap them all, but we have a limited amount of time so I'm going to ask one more question (myself) before turning it over to our listening audience so that they can get in this as well.

And my final one would be a bit of a curve ball. I said before this is ranked one of the 15 most severe humanitarian crises in the world today (yet) there are 14 others that are equally severe. Do we have special responsibilities to Iraq because we helped create this one? Is the IRC's position – I mean, (the) America, you know, it's an American organization or – but is it – do we have some kind of obligation here that we might not have (are) they organizationally or as a country to deal with this one because this came about as the product of our own actions?

Bob, Denise, either one.

Bob Carey: Well ...

Denise Barrett: ... Bob.

Bob Carey: Oh, well, thank you, Denise, for handing me (that).

Denise Barrett: Seniority.

Bob Carey: The perks. You know, I do think without being overly political – but I think there is clearly a strong US obligation to some of these people. They are at risk or at danger because in many instances they were – they put their lives in danger protecting US troops or interests, and they, you know, literally or figuratively took a bullet in many instances. We met people who were – who were injured, who'd lost family members, who'd lost children because of their US association, and I think historically we have felt and should continue to feel a particular obligation to those people because of what they have done and what they have risked on behalf of the US.

Gideon Rose: OK. With that, let's turn it over ...

Denise Barrett: ((inaudible)).

Gideon Rose: ... to some of your questions and comments. You can ask your question by pressing star one on your phone and you'll be put in a line. We have a good group out there so let's have at it. You can direct it to Bob or to Denise or to the room in general.

Operator: Our first question is from ...

Question 1: Yes, great idea to do this call. Could you talk about what the IRC is doing with regards to IDP's in Iraq and whether there is any kind of a continuing process of dealing with these people as they move from IDP to refugee? Or if they are simply stuck in Iraq who's working on these issues?

Gideon Rose: Those are internally displaced people, the IDP's. Denise, you want to take that one?

Denise Barrett: Yes, I can feel that one. Well, we are – we are in the process of making a determination of how we actually can work in Iraq, and one of the steps that we have taken so far in the last couple of months is to develop – in the process of developing a proposal – a program designed, as it were, with an Iraqi organization that works inside of Iraq itself and we're targeting – we'll be targeting populations who have been displaced from Baghdad into two areas in the north in areas about 50 kilometers and 70 kilometers respectively north of Baghdad.

One is a – has received Sunni and the other has received Shi'a displaced people, and our aim would be if we can have security secured for our own partner because we probably wouldn't be able to go in ourselves but to remotely manage a program through our partner because they have

agreements with local groups, militia and others, to be able to operate securely in these two areas, to be able to deliver for – to meet basic needs, for example, for perhaps food, water, shelter, although we may not be – we will look for other donors to actually participate with us.

And then other kinds of support that we would have on a – after the basic needs are ((inaudible)) to be met to look at youth empowerment. We understand that there's an estimate that 15 percent of youth have been drawn into militia or violent kind of activity and that at least 40 percent of youth are at risk of being drawn into violent activities so we'd like to be able to contribute to reversing that trend.

Gideon Rose: Again, you can join the queue by putting – pushing star one on your phone and I think we have another caller now.

Operator: Yes.

Question2 : Yes, this is a question for Mr. Carey. Does the IRC assist in asylum applications for Iraqis seeking admission to the US, and if so, what kind of legal help do you have from US law firms?

Bob Carey: Well, there's a bit of a difference. Asylum in US legal terms is an application that's filed for essentially refugee status by someone who is already within the US borders. We do not do that. We provide legal assistance and guidance and we refer people out to other organizations or entities.

Unfortunately, very few Iraqis are able to gain admittance to the US to apply for asylum so what we are hoping and advocating for is that people will get refugee status, and that is ((inaudible)) the process of applying for asylum in the US from outside the border.

So refugees in Jordan or Syria who apply to the – come to the US under the same legal standard, they have to demonstrate that they have a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of race or religion or political affiliation. They go through numerous security checks, background checks, medical checks, and that's the program that we are primarily advocating for.

And we are having – we have 22 offices around the US that assist in the resettlement process, and what we are seeing daily is that desperate relatives are walking into those offices telling stories of – and asking for assistance for their relatives who are struck – stuck in Jordan or Syria or Lebanon or elsewhere and that's what we are advocating, you know, where they be assisted.

Gideon Rose: Once again, you can join – ask a question by pressing star one on your phone.

Bob, let me follow up on that.

There is currently a giant debate going on in the country here about immigration policy, legal immigrants, illegal immigrants, and so forth. Are questions of refugee numbers and admittance's in any way tied up in or affected by the major immigration debates, or (is this an) entirely separate category that plays out in its own terms separate from the regular legislation on immigration?

Bob Carey: They are occasionally linked. In the current debate there's very little that is linked because the US refugee program is a separate and very small program I think. You know, the estimates on illegal immigration are in the millions every year. The number of legally admitted refugees hovers around 50,000, which we think is, you know, given that the worldwide refugee population is estimated at over 18 million, it's a miniscule portion and it's a program that reflects the best humanitarian tradition of the country of assisting the most vulnerable, and one where we feel that it's important for us to raise consciousness and put a – illustrate who these people and why they're coming because I think when people in the United States hear that, our experience has

been that there are generally responsive, generous, and that they feel that that it is an important program and it be continued.

Gideon Rose: OK. We have another caller.

Operator: Yes, and it is from...

Question 3: Yes, if someone wanted to volunteer with the resettlement effort in the US or help on the ground in Jordan how would they go about doing that?

Bob Carey: Well, for the resettlement program in the US, IRC certainly welcomes volunteers through any one of our resettlement offices and you can find those on our Web site, which can – has contact information and volunteer information.

I would like to point out that while the rhetoric from the US government has been improving with regard to resettlement, they've announced that 7,500 would be admitted thus far this year, and we are into the federal fiscal year. It begins in October. Fewer than 70 have been admitted and only one Iraqi in the last two months so the rhetoric has not yet translated into the kind of program we feel is needed, but, you know – so – but you can find information on volunteering at [www.theIRC.org](http://www.theIRC.org).

Gideon Rose: Is there – is the IRC doing advocacy work to increase the large numbers – the numbers of refugee admittance's so that that pool of 50,000 – obviously, it's going to be like Sophie's Choice given the number of refugees out there who deserve it, so is expanded the pool or trying to get those numbers raised in total a priority of the organization?

Bob Carey: Absolutely, you know, and we are advocating at every level. We are both talking to community groups through our offices in the US, engaging our volunteers, our donors. You

know, as I – once again, I'll direct you to our Web site where we have a take-action item because we feel there's legislation that's been out there which we feel is critical and should be supported, which would mandate a more robust resettlement program, and there certainly is – there's actually funding and slots in the current program which are going unused, which is tragic when you consider the lives of that are at risk now.

Gideon Rose: Why are they going unused?

Bob Carey: Because the mechanisms have really not been put in place yet to move people, interview them, and put them through the processes, so it's really at this point bureaucratic impediments that are keeping people from being saved, so ...

Gideon Rose: OK. We're almost at the end here so you have one last chance to ask your question of our folks here. Star one if you want.

The tension given to the Sudanese refugees or to the lost – the child soldiers or the ((inaudible)), does that help effect the perception refugees, or the profile the issue gets, or the IRC's efforts in general over here?

Bob Carey: I think it absolutely does because I think there's a universality to the refugee experience, not to diminish the horrors (that an) individual experiences, but, you know, the – both in terms of what people have gone through, the resilience of the human spirit, and the humanitarian need, I think that the stories all to often are fairly common to the individuals and I think it does engage people in a positive way.

Gideon Rose: ... before I finish off here, the scale of resources we're talking about for the IRC's program in Jordan and dealing with the Iraqi issue more generally? I think numbers or scale or sense, if people wanted to support this or get a sense of how much is being devoted to what kind of

resources, how large a fraction of the IRC's overall operations is being affected, how could somebody – how big a difference could somebody make if they wanted to actually play in this area?

Bob Carey: Well, I think, at this point, it's a – it's a \$10-million program which you – anyone can do the math given the scale of the – of the crisis with two million displaced outside of Iraq and another two million internally displaced, obviously any resources that are ...

Gideon Rose: Come on, that's a nickel each.

Bob Carey: Yes, it's – so, obviously, the resources that will be available or additional resources can be put to very good use at a critical time and that would be very much welcomed both in the US and in the region.

Gideon Rose: OK. Well, we'll let you all go, but I just wanted to end on that because we have obviously people here trying very hard to do a really good job with limited resources in a horrible situation that even the best efforts going not be a drop in the bucket. So there's lots of stuff that we can do. We all want to help. We can help by contributing to the IRC, but it's also important to note that the advocacy efforts that will effect the treatment and the priority of refugee issues in general is almost as important as the monetary support to the IRC and its programs. So we would – I encourage you all to help out and thank you very much for taking part.

Janet Harris: And this is Janet Harris again. I just want to thank our conversation participants here: Denise Barrett calling in from Amman, Jordan, Bob Carey our vice president of resettlement programs here in the United States, and our moderator, Gideon Rose. And thank all of you calling from across the country with a vital interest in this critical, critical refugee problem, and we appreciate your unrestricted support and your support for the programs for t he Iraqi refugees.

What can you do to help? I'm going to give you some suggestions. First of all, visit our Web site, [www.theIRC.org](http://www.theIRC.org), learn more about what the IRC is doing to assist Iraqi refugees as well as many other refugee problems around the world in 25 countries and in our 22 cities in the United States. Go on our homepage and you'll see a take-action item. We'd ask you to help to sign a petition that will urge that the United States make a top priority, the vulnerable Iraqi refugees that we would like admitted into the United States.

That petition is directed towards congress to allow more Iraqi refugees to find safety in the United States, to provide greater protection for them, and to increase the humanitarian assistance for people fleeing within the region and within Iraq. You can forward that onto your friends and other people that you feel might be interested in this particular program and other programs that the IRC runs.

Again, thank you to all of you for participating in the conversation and joining us today for our briefing from the field. Thank you so much.

Bob, Gideon and Denise: Thank you.

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