



3 July 2014 - An estimated 225 women will give birth every day and approximately 1,000 pregnant women each month will encounter life-threatening complications in North and Western Iraq.

[UNFPA](#), the United Nations Population Fund, warns that about 250,000 women and girls, including nearly 60,000 pregnant women, are in need of urgent care in the region. As the conflict escalates and security worsens, the vulnerability of women and girls to gender-based violence and exploitation will increase.

According to estimates, 20,000 women and girls could face an increased risk of sexual violence. “We must act immediately to ensure that women and girls are protected from sexual violence.”

[said](#)

UNFPA’s Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin.

As a result of this increase in sexual exploitation and violence pregnancy rates in the region are rising, and since the beginning of the crisis the caseload in the Erbil Maternity Hospital has doubled. Women are facing an increasingly short supply of medical care and facilities. As health facilities are overstretched, UNFPA also expects that the number of unassisted childbirths may rise. Because of serious shortages in supplies, beds and staff, women who had delivered were being discharged from the maternity ward after just three hours.

In response to the crisis, UNFPA has provided the Erbil Maternity Hospital with reproductive health and delivery kits containing medical supplies to cater for emergency obstetric care for 1,200 deliveries. However, without additional resources, these kits will only meet needs for a few weeks.

“[...] given the potential enormity of this crisis, we would require financial assistance in order to be able to sustain and scale up our humanitarian activities and those of our partners.” said Dr. Osotimehin. UNFPA estimates they will need \$6.5 million to provide for the needs of over 200,000 women and girls affected by the crisis.

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