

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 10, 2008

His Excellency Nouri al-Maliki  
Prime Minister of Iraq  
Baghdad, Iraq

Dear Prime Minister Maliki:

We write to you today to express concern about the plight of Iraqi refugees and displaced persons. As you know, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (“UNHCR”) estimates that more than 4.5 million Iraqis are currently displaced from their homes, including roughly 2.5 million inside Iraq and 2 million more who fled Iraq for neighboring countries. Syria plays host to an estimated 1.5 million, with roughly half a million more located in Jordan. Several other countries in the region have allowed Iraqi refugees to stay and Sweden has generously offered permanent homes to 40,000 refugees since 2003.

We believe that the United States clearly has a moral responsibility to assist those affected by the violence pervasive in Iraq since the U.S. invasion. A number of us have expressed concern about the conditions under which the refugees live and will continue to advocate for greater aid to the refugees. Yet, we believe that the Government of Iraq likewise has a vital role to play.

The Government of Iraq’s budget contained \$6 million to help internally displaced persons (“IDPs”) in 2007 and \$13 million in 2008. We also note the Government’s decision in 2007 to contribute \$25 million to neighboring countries to offset a small part of the burden they have assumed by hosting such large numbers of Iraqis. We respectfully suggest, however, that your Government could significantly augment its contribution to efforts on behalf of this population.

We realize that your fiscal year is identical to the calendar year and we understand that the Iraqi Government ended 2007 with carry-over funds of \$13.5 billion. When the Government developed its 2008 budget, it only forecasted \$35 billion in revenues. With the \$13.5 billion carry-over, it developed a \$48.5 billion budget for 2008. But with oil prices skyrocketing from \$57 per barrel in early 2007 to over \$100 today, your Government’s revenues have seen a dramatic increase.

Many analysts are projecting that the Iraqi Government could conservatively generate \$60 billion in revenues in 2008, leading to an estimated \$25 billion budgetary surplus. We understand that in June, your Parliament will consider the Government’s proposal on how to spend this unallocated surplus. We respectfully request that \$1 billion, a mere 4 percent of that surplus, be dedicated to help Iraqi IDPs and refugees.

Such action would demonstrate to the world that the Iraqi Government is committed to repatriating those who fled the violence and promoting reconciliation among all Iraqi ethnic and religious communities. Allocating such funds to the UNHCR and other international organizations would also ease the significant burden placed on neighboring countries by such a large influx of people. It also would have a positive economic effect in reversing the exodus of educated Iraqis, the very people essential for Iraqi reconstruction.

This amount would represent but a small portion of your expected surplus. Yet, it would make an immeasurable difference in the services that could be provided to this distressed community, many of whom lack adequate shelter, food and clean water.

We know you share our hope that the suffering of Iraqi refugees and IDPs could be ameliorated. Let us join forces in committing more resources to achieving this worthy goal.

Respectfully yours,



BILL DELAHUNT



GARY L. ACKERMAN



ROSA L. DELAURO



HOWARD L. BERMAN



FRANK R. WOLF



CHRISTOPHER SHAYS



JOSEPH R. PITTS



ZOE LOFGREN



ALCEE L. HASTINGS



JANE HARMAN



BOB INGLIS