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**For immediate release**

## **Vulnerable Iraqi refugees continue looking to Europe for resettlement**

**BRUSSELS, 11 May 2010—A new report presented by ICMC and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) today at the European Parliament draws attention to the still dire situation of vulnerable Iraqi refugees in the Middle East, and the critical role of European Member States in providing assistance and opportunities for resettlement.**

The new report entitled, *10,000 refugees from Iraq: A report on joint resettlement in the European Union*, offers an examination of how far EU Member States have come to meet the European Union's Council Decision of November 2008, which pledged to resettle up to 10,000 refugees from Iraq. It also describes how the resettlement of Iraqi refugees has been carried out in each of the countries involved in this first experience of joint resettlement in the European Union.

"ICMC and its members recognize the many opportunities that come with offering a safe, permanent home to the most vulnerable refugees, and have long partnered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and governments to make resettlement possible," notes ICMC Secretary General, Johan Ketelers. "We believe that this positive collaborative response has not only offered a new future to many Iraqi families, but also proved that this durable solution, once structurally embedded, opens an enriching future for Europe."

The report commends the increase in the admission of Iraqi refugees in response to the EU pledge, especially by those countries who have not traditionally engaged with resettlement programmes. Nonetheless, fewer than half of the 27 EU Member States have participated in the joint effort to resettle refugees from Iraq to date. The report underscores that more countries should consider resettling refugees, and that Iraqis and other asylum seekers whose cases have been denied should not be deported as long as security conditions remain uncondusive to return in their country of origin.

The report assessing the EU commitments "comes at a timely moment," according to ICMC Europe Programme Manager, Petra Hueck, who notes that the European Parliament will be voting next week on the proposal for the EU Resettlement Scheme and changes to funding for resettlement.

The report presents a number of recommendations to guide further steps by EU Member States, and the European Union as it develops its first Joint EU Resettlement Programme. Key recommendations include:

- Making the establishment of a significant number of resettlement places available in the EU for refugees from Iraq a part of the common EU priorities within the Joint EU Resettlement Programme;
- Expanding the use of multi-year quotas, to allow for appropriate planning by receiving countries and all of the involved actors;
- Better coordination of resettlement, humanitarian aid and other relevant EU policies and funding instruments in order to make strategic use of resettlement and increase the protection of refugees;
- Continuing EU focus on the humanitarian situation inside Iraq and in the region to ensure that the needs of vulnerable uprooted people, including refugees, are properly addressed; and

- Ensuring appropriate funding to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and to non-governmental organizations working to directly protect and assist Iraqis, and support the Iraq Humanitarian Action Plan (IHAP).

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