

UNAMI Herald

Volume 11, Issue 4

July — August 2024



World Humanitarian Day commemorated in Iraq

Baghdad, 19 August 2024 - The United Nations in Iraq today commemorated the 21st anniversary of the Canal Hotel bombing in Baghdad, Iraq, which killed 22 UN staff members on 19 August 2003.

Here is the text of the remarks made by Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge at this ceremony:

“Dear colleagues, friends,

Today, on the anniversary of the Canal Hotel bombing, we are marking two international days designated by the General Assembly. One is World Humanitarian Day, designated specifically on the anniversary of that bombing. The other is 21st August, the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism.

I wish to use these solemn commemorations to honour all the humanitarian workers who lost their lives in the service of humanity, and all victims and survivors of terrorism. Colleagues,

2023 was the deadliest year on record for humanitarian workers, and 2024 is expected – sadly – to be even worse. Humanitarian workers from the UN alongside others from local and international NGOs are being killed, injured, abducted, together with the civilians they support and who, as always, bear the brunt of conflicts everywhere.

International humanitarian law is being trampled upon. More than ever before, atrocities are being documented, sometimes with pride by the very perpetrators, and yet, impunity prevails just about everywhere.

In our region, in Gaza, we have seen the highest number of UN staff killed in a single conflict. Among them are 207 of my former colleagues at UNRWA, killed together with over 40,000 Palestinians in a ferocious war in which all sides are violating international law, and it is a war that may yet escalate into a regional conflagration.



In the words of the Secretary-General, this is a failure of humanity, responsibility, and leadership.

But this grim reality should not be a cause for despondency. On World Humanitarian Day, we do not only celebrate the work of humanitarians and remember the victims and survivors.

Today we also demand that all parties to conflicts end attacks on humanitarian workers and on all civilians.

We demand that those who order or commit violations of international law be held to account.

We demand support for institutions such as the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, which exist to ensure accountability for states and individuals for the most egregious violations of international law.

Colleagues,

We of course have a particular reason to commemorate this day here in Baghdad. The memory and the wounds, some invisible, of the attack on the Canal Hotel are still raw. We lost 22 colleagues on that day in 2003, only five days after UNAMI was established by the Security Council. The then Special Representative of the Secretary-

General, Sérgio Vieira de Mello, was among those who lost their lives. More than 100 others were injured or impacted in other ways.

I am honoured that some of the survivors of the Canal Hotel bombing are with us today, still serving with the UN, working for their country. Please join me in paying a special tribute to them.

I also wish to extend our deepest sympathy to all those who have lost colleagues, family members and friends. A special thought goes to the families of those who lost their lives at the Canal Hotel and who cannot be here with us today.

We know that the attack of 19 August 2003 was followed by an increasing violent campaign by various terrorist groups which wreaked death and destruction across the country for years on end. Yesterday, at the Foreign Ministry, I participated in an event to mark the Yazidi genocide at the hands of Da'esh, and I paid tribute to the Yazidi and other victims and survivors of terrorism, including those killed at the Canal Hotel and in the attack on the building of the Foreign Ministry in 2009, also on 19 August.

Text continues on page 3

In this edition ...

Secretary-General appoints Mr. Mohamed Al Hassan of the Sultanate of Oman as Special Representative for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)

New York, 15 July 2024 - United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced today the appointment of Mohamed Al Hassan of the Sultanate of Oman as his new Special Representative for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). He succeeds Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert of the Netherlands, to whom the Secretary-General is grateful for her commitment and leadership of UNAMI.



Mr. Al Hassan brings to the position a broad range of diplomatic experience with a career spanning over thirty years working on preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding and development. Most recently, he has served as the Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations in New York (since 2019). Prior to that, he held various assignments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Muscat, including Acting Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs (2016), Chief of Staff (2015) and Head of the Minister's Department (2012).

Among various senior-level positions, Mr. Al Hassan served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Sultanate of Oman to the Russian Federation and concurrently as non-resident Ambassador to Belarus, Ukraine, Armenia and Moldova. Mr. Al Hassan also previously held the position of Deputy Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations in New York. Prior to this, he was Deputy Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations in Geneva.

Mr. Al Hassan holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Washington in Seattle, US, a Master of Science degree in International Relations from St. John's University in New York, US, and a PhD in Economics from Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics, and Informatics (MESI) in Moscow, Russia. He speaks Arabic, English, Norwegian and Russian.

Mr. Al Hassan holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Washington in Seattle, US, a Master of Science degree in International Relations from St. John's University in New York, US, and a PhD in Economics from Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics, and Informatics (MESI) in Moscow, Russia. He speaks Arabic, English, Norwegian and Russian.

Mageed Yahia delivered his accreditation credentials as WFP Iraq Representative and Country Director

Baghdad, 18 August 2024 - Mageed Yahia delivered his accreditation credentials as WFP Iraq Representative and Country Director to the Head of Protocol at the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ammar Dawwod.



WFP is committed to maintain its ongoing cooperation with the Iraqi Government to benefit the resilient people of Iraq.

Advancing Iraq's development agenda

Baghdad, 03 August 2024 - In a significant step toward advancing Iraq's development agenda, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), proudly announces the launch of Iraq's National Development Plan. *More on page 51.*

Nurturing resilience: UN efforts for a resilient Iraq

Baghdad, 02 July 2024 - Climate change and water scarcity pose significant threats to Iraq's stability, prosperity, and the well-being of its people. The environmental challenges facing the nation are complex and interconnected, requiring a comprehensive and coordinated response. In Iraq, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), under my leadership, has been at the forefront of addressing these critical issues, working tirelessly to build a more sustainable and resilient future for all Iraqis.

A blog by Mr. Ghulam Isaczi, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Iraq starts on page 84.

UNAMI Herald is published bi-monthly by the Strategic Communications and Public Information Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq.

SCPIO Director: Samir Ghattas

Editor-in-Chief: Ivan Djordjevic

Editorial Board: Samir Ghattas, Jean El-Alam, Ivan Djordjevic, Laila Shamji, Celia Thompson, Sarmad Al-Safy.

Photos: UNAMI SCPIO, UNHCR, UNCHR, UNICEF, IOM, OCHA, UNFPA, WHO, UNESCO, UNOPS, UN Habitat, UN Photo, UN Women, UNIDO, UNMAS, UNDP, WFP and as credited.

In the UNAMI Herald articles are sorted according to the topic and in a

World Humanitarian Day commemorated in Iraq *(continued)*



Colleagues,

Today we salute the courage of humanitarian workers. We celebrate their dedication to serve all people in need: no matter who, no matter where, no matter what.

We also recommit ourselves to confronting terrorism, and indeed all

ideologies preaching the supremacy of one group over others and fuelling intolerance and violence, whether in this region or elsewhere in the world. The best way to honour our humanitarian colleagues who were killed at the Canal Hotel, and since, is to keep on promoting the values of

humanity, justice and peace. UNAMI is on the exit path, but we will not forget their memory and their commitment to Iraq, and to a better world everywhere. This is their legacy, and our continuing inspiration.

And now, before giving the floor to our colleague Hazem Abdulbaqi who will speak on behalf of the Canal Hotel survivors, I would like to express our appreciation to them in Arabic.

Once again on this anniversary, I salute you for your courage. I wish to express our deep gratitude for your continuing contribution to the work of the UN in Iraq, and for your commitment to your country. We take pride in you just as you take pride in your work. I thank you on behalf of us all.

مرة أخرى في هذه الذكرى، أحبيكم على شجاعتكم. وأود أن أعرب عن عميق امتناننا لكم لمساهماتكم المستمرة في عمل الأمم المتحدة في العراق وعلى التزامكم تجاه بلدكم. نحن نفتخر بكم كما انتم تفتخرون بعملكم. أشكركم باسنا جميعا

Statement by the United Nations' Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Isaczai, on World Humanitarian Day

Baghdad, 19 August 2024 – Today, we join the global community in commemorating World Humanitarian Day, a time to honor and pay tribute to the selfless humanitarian workers who dedicate their lives to serving humanity.

This day also marks a somber anniversary for Iraq. Two decades ago, on 19 August 2003, the Canal Hotel bombing in Baghdad claimed the lives of 22 humanitarian aid workers and left many others injured. The United Nations and the larger humanitarian community in Iraq remained steadfast

in the face of this tragedy, reaffirming their commitment to peace, stability, and the well-being of the Iraqi people. Over the past 20 years, this dedication has played a crucial role in the country's journey toward sustainable solutions and progress. Our collective efforts with the Government of Iraq have significantly impacted the lives of the Iraqi people, particularly the internally displaced populations. Today, majority of the IDPs have returned to their homes, a testament to the resilience of the Iraqi people and the dedication of those who have

worked tirelessly to support them. We continue to work with our government partners to find durable solutions for the remaining IDPs and refugees.

While Iraq has emerged from some of its most challenging periods, we remain mindful of the broader regional and global security concerns that continue to affect the humanitarian landscape. However, the situation in Iraq today stands as a beacon of hope and resilience, demonstrating that even in the face of adversity, recovery and progress are possible.

On this World Humanitarian Day, we stand in unwavering solidarity with our fellow humanitarians and the countless victims of conflict and violence around the world. With rising levels of violence and frequent violations of international humanitarian law, 2024 has proven to be a particularly deadly year for humanitarian workers.

We honor the memory of those we have lost and urgently call on leaders to put an end to these violations and the impunity that surrounds them. The ongoing failure to address these issues represents a profound lapse in humanity, collective responsibility, and leadership that must not continue.

Let this day remind us of our shared responsibility to uphold the principles of humanity and international humanitarian law, ensuring that those who work to alleviate human suffering can do so safely and effectively.



On the occasion of the World Humanitarian Day, DSRSG Cordone visits the site of the former Canal Hotel together with Hazem Abdulbaqi, a colleague who survived the bombing

Baghdad, 19 August 2024 - On the 21st anniversary of the Canal Hotel bombing, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge, Claudio Cordone, visited the site of the former Canal Hotel together with Hazem Abdulbaqi, a colleague who survived the bombing. They paid respect to 22 UNAMI staff members who lost their lives on that day in Baghdad in the service of peace.

#ActForHumanity #NotATarget
#WorldHumanitarianDay



United Nations Mine Action Service in Iraq statement on World Humanitarian Day 2024

Baghdad, 19 August 2024 - World Humanitarian Day honours the brave humanitarian workers who risk their lives to serve others. It commemorates the 2003 bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad, a tragedy that underscored the dangers faced by those in the field and highlighted the urgent need to protect and support humanitarian workers operating in conflict zones and disaster areas.

On World Humanitarian Day 2024, we commemorate the unwavering dedication of the courageous women and men working in mine action in Iraq. Their diligent work, often in silence and unnoticed, is critical for the safety of humanitarians, IDPs and refugees as well, and effectively contributes to the stabilization, recovery, and reconstruction of communities affected by conflict.

Iraqi mine action professionals work tirelessly to clear explosive remnants of war, protect civilians, and restore safe access to land, infrastructure and resources while enabling safe and dignified returns for those displaced. Their efforts embody the very essence of humanitarianism: saving and protecting lives, providing the foundation for recovery, and empowering communities to rebuild their futures.

On 19 August, we honour the courage and resilience of those on the front lines of mine action. Despite the risks, they continue to operate in hazardous areas, striving to create a safer Iraq. Their work is not just about removing physical threats; it is about restoring hope to communities devastated by



conflict.

Since the programme inception in 2015, UNMAS Iraq has together with its implementing partners, surveyed close to 380 million square metres (sqm) and cleared over 25 million sqm of contaminated land. In doing so 700,000 items of explosive ordnance have been detected and removed, including a total of 2,600 improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), providing vulnerable communities with crucial life-saving messages, has been delivered to close to 1.5 million Iraqis, including 200,206 women, 493,767 girls, 564,614 boys and 198,574 men, through over 73,000 EORE sessions

across Iraq. UNMAS has also provided mine action related police training for 5,000 Iraqi police including 1,000 policewomen, and technical support and numerous training courses and workshops for Iraqi National Mine Action Authorities.

Today on this occasion, and every day, we reaffirm our commitment to the people of Iraq and to all who are affected by conflict. No matter the danger, the hardship, or the obstacles, we stand united in our mission to create a world where every person can live free from the fear of mines and explosive remnants of war.

#ActForHumanity.

DSRSG Cordone: “These recent events also show the need for the government to finalize and adopt the national strategy to counter hate speech.”



Baghdad, 18 August 2024 - Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge attended today a seminar on crimes by Da'esh at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Here is the text of his remarks at this event:

“Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished guests,

Let me start by recalling that tomorrow, 19 August, is the anniversary of two particularly murderous terrorist attacks. On 19 August 2003 the United Nations Headquarters at the Canal Hotel was blown up in Baghdad, five days after the Security Council established UNAMI. The attack killed 22 people, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Sergio Vieira de Mello. Six years later, exactly on the same day, another bombing targeted the Iraqi Foreign Ministry building, killing 46 people.

In this context, the General Assembly of the United Nations designated 19

August as World Humanitarian Day, and 21 August as the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. Today we take this opportunity to honour all the victims and survivors of terrorism.

As we all know, the killing campaign in Iraq by various terrorist groups escalated in 2014 into the Yazidi genocide at the hands of Da'esh. Unspeakable crimes were committed against the Yazidis, as well as against members of other components of Iraqi society. I wish to express my deep solidarity with all the victims and survivors. Today Da'esh has been largely defeated but it is still a danger both in Iraq and globally.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to highlight two areas where we can work together to defeat terrorism and extremist ideologies.

First, addressing hate speech. Recent statements on the anniversary of the Yazidi genocide have provoked tensions, as well as a spike in hate speech against the Yazidis, prompting fear of retaliation. Inflammatory language must be avoided, and

communities should not be blamed for the words or actions of individuals.

These recent events also show the need for the government to finalize and adopt the national strategy to counter hate speech. Among the aims of the strategy is to hold accountable those using hateful language. This of course is to be done while ensuring respect for freedom of expression. UNAMI will continue to support the government in developing the national strategy.

The second area where we can work together is in bringing to justice those responsible for crimes committed by Da'esh. We look forward to the adoption by the Council of Representatives of legislation that would allow the prosecution of crimes such as genocide and crimes against humanity. Individuals accused of such crimes should be tried in Iraq or in other countries through judicial cooperation. Fair trials will build trust among communities and promote peaceful coexistence.

The United Nations, through UNITAD, has supported Iraq in addressing the crimes of Da'esh. While the mandate of UNITAD ends next month, the documentation, tools and technical assistance delivered provide a strong foundation for the Iraqi authorities to continue UNITAD's work, with the support of the United Nations and the international community at large.

In conclusion, as we remember the victims and survivors of the crimes committed by Da'esh, we pledge to work together in building a society in which diversity is a source of richness and pride, not a threat or weakness, and in countering extremist ideologies by promoting human rights for all.

Thank you.”

UNHCR on X

Baghdad, 19 August 2024 - Today on #WorldHumanitarianDay, we honour the humanitarians who lost their lives while serving others. We are calling for the safety, dignity and protection of those in crisis and the people who serve them. #ActForHumanity

WFP on X

Baghdad, 19 August 2024 — On #WorldHumanitarianDay, we honour our fallen colleagues in the line of duty and remember their sacrifices.

FAO on X

On #WorldHumanitarianDay, we honor those who make a difference every day. Together, we create lasting change, supporting communities and livelihoods across Iraq, and helping rural communities adapt to climate change through sustainable agricultural practices.

UN senior official says Gaza war is pressuring Iraq into a conflict it wants to avoid

By Mina Aldroubi, The National

Baghdad, 19 August 2024 - The war in Gaza is pressuring Iraq to be drawn into a spiralling conflict it wishes to avoid, despite the government's efforts to remain detached, the top UN official in the country warned.

Claudio Cordone, the UN deputy special representative for Iraq, told The National that he believes Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al Sudani is determined to avoid tension after a long period of relative calm.

Mr Cordone was speaking before the anniversary of the deadly attack on the UN in Iraq on August 19, 2003, at the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, the UN's headquarters at the time. A lorry bomb exploded, killing 22 people, including Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN's senior envoy in Iraq, in one of the deadliest attacks against a UN mission.

"The Iraqi Prime Minister, in particular, is keen not to get dragged into this war while diplomatically and politically supporting the rights of the Palestinians," Mr Cordone told The National from the mission's headquarters in Baghdad's Green Zone.

"War is not a means to solve things, and there is a risk that things are only going to get worse."

Israel's war in Gaza against Hamas and other militant groups, which broke out last October, shows no signs of ending, and hopes for a possible ceasefire have diminished as the human toll continues to rise, exceeding 40,000 Palestinians last week, according to local health authorities.

The attack led by Hamas on October 7 last year killed 1,200 in southern Israel.

The conflict has prompted Iran-aligned groups, known collectively as the Axis of Resistance, to attack Israeli and US targets from Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Syria, since Hamas and Israel went to war.

Ain Al Asad airbase in western Iraq, home to American and foreign coalition forces, has been hit by dozens of attacks since the conflict began. Iran-backed Iraqi militias, which operate outside of Baghdad's control, have claimed responsibility for most of these.

Mr Cordone said he understands the difficulties Iraq faces but "we call on



everybody to de-escalate and, equally importantly, to stop this war and work towards a political solution".

In recent months, Baghdad and Washington have been in talks on a departure for American troops from Iraq. However, the talks have been progressing at a slower pace than demanded by the Iran-backed militias.

The groups have repeatedly said that if the Iraqi government fails to agree on the withdrawal of US troops, who lead an international training and advisory effort for the Iraqi army, the attacks will escalate, after an unofficial truce that has largely held despite sporadic incidents.

They also said that as long as the war in Gaza continues, attacks against Israel and its forces will go on.

Mr Cordone repeated UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres's call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, and that the world body seeks a political solution where Palestinians have their state, living in peace alongside the state of Israel.

His call came amid fears of further regional escalation. Israel assassinated Hezbollah commander Fouad Shukr in a strike on a densely populated area of Beirut on July 30, which also killed civilians. Hours later, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was killed in Tehran in an assassination blamed on Israel. Both Iran and Hezbollah promised retaliation, raising fears of a wider war.

"We sincerely hope that this escalation will not happen," said Mr Cordone.

UN's long mission in Iraq

The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (Unami) was established in 2003, after the US invasion of the country, to promote inclusive political dialogue and co-ordinate humanitarian and development aid. Its mandate is

scheduled to end in December 2025.

Unami was first led by Mr de Mello, who was appointed as the UN special representative for Iraq for a four-month term. His team established their offices in the Canal Hotel in Baghdad.

A lorry bomb rips through the UN headquarters in Baghdad on August 19, 2003, killing 22 staff, including envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello.

The August 19 attack, carried out by Al Qaeda, sent shockwaves around the world. That day is now commemorated as World Humanitarian Day.

"We will commemorate the attack that killed the special representative and 21 other colleagues in 2003," said Mr Cordone. "I'm glad the UN returned and has worked with the Iraqis since then. I'm proud of the work the colleagues have done over the last 21 years."

The mission's broad mandate was initially created to assist in developing Iraqi institutions, support political dialogue and elections, and promote human rights.

However, Mr Cordone noted that the mandate has now been limited at Baghdad's request, as the Iraqi government believes the mission is no longer necessary due to the country's significant progress towards stability.

The request was approved by the 15-member Security Council on May 31. Since the departure of former special representative and head of Unami, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, on June 1, Mr Cordone has been serving as the officer-in-charge of the mission until the new chief arrives. The next UN representative, Mohammad Al Hassan of Oman, is expected to assume the role soon.

"Every special representative has their own personality and so on, but we all operate within the framework of a mandate that we've been given

UN senior official says Gaza war is pressuring Iraq into a conflict it wants to avoid *(continued)*

by the Security Council," said Mr Cordone.

"We look forward to Mr Al Hassan starting and leading the mission towards its conclusion at the end of next year."

For Mr Cordone, Iraq is a vibrant political country with many parties ruling the government. He described it as "democracy at play".

"It would be perhaps wise to look for compromises than for divisions. But again, you know, people are free to pursue their own political agendas, and as long as this is done peacefully and through the institutional framework, then this is fine."

He affirmed that the UN considered the

last round of elections in 2021 to be credible, and expressed confidence that the next one, in 2025, will be just as successful. However, Iraq will first host elections in the northern Kurdistan Region, which are expected to be held on October 20.

"We think it's absolutely critical that these elections take place, otherwise it puts into question the legitimacy of all the institutions in the Kurdistan Region," said Mr Cordone.

"So, this is our immediate focus at the moment, which is to continue to work with the Independent High Electoral Commission to make sure that those elections take place."

The election was initially scheduled for

October 2022 but was delayed by disagreements, primarily between the two main parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

As a temporary solution, they agreed to extend the Kurdistan Parliament's term for a year to allow for more discussions on issues such as amending the election law and sharing tax and oil revenue.

Mr Cordone believes the Independent Commission has "significant experience in holding elections" and said the UN will assist in all technical ways.

"There is no reason to believe that Iraq is not able to hold those elections," he said.

UN commends number of women candidates in Kurdistan election

Erbil, 29 August 2024 - It is "very important" that hundreds of women are running in the Kurdistan Region's parliamentary elections, an official from the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) said on Wednesday.

"We have 1,193 candidates, of whom 350 [are] women, which is very important for us as a UN mission. We also have a mandate from the Security Council to facilitate the participation of women in the political process, including in the elections. So, so far, things are proceeding as they should," UNAMI Officer-in-Charge Claudio Cordone told Rudaw's Nwenar Fatih.

The election is scheduled for October 20, two years overdue. The election process has been marred by difficulties, including political tensions between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

Cordone said he was glad the vote is finally taking place and that the UN mission is supporting the electoral commission to make sure the vote is

held without problems.

"We have been meeting all the political parties precisely to also convey the message that the international community and the UN look very much forward to these elections," he said.

Stating that the elections have been delayed for "far too long," he warned that this "affects the perception of the legitimacy of the institutions in the Kurdistan Region."

The UN official also said that political parties have told the mission they will "fully" participate in the vote, "regardless of some reservations."

Cordone met with Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani in Erbil on August 21.

"The two sides discussed the objectives of the UN team during their remaining time in Iraq, as well as the upcoming parliamentary elections in the Kurdistan Region," according to a statement from the presidency.

UNAMI's mission will end in December 2025, after more than two decades.

+++

See this interview at <https://youtu.be/TJ-bwr2eUJw>

Courtesy of Rudaw Media Network



Electoral

UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance, with operational support from UNOPS, facilitated a consultative workshop for IHEC to review and finalize the Women Empowerment Report

Baghdad, 10 July 2024 - UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA), with operational support from UNOPS, facilitated a consultative workshop for IHEC to review and finalize the Women

Empowerment Report. The report highlights IHEC's efforts and achievements in supporting and empowering women in the electoral process in Iraq since 2021. 16 IHEC

employees (13 female/3 male) participated in the workshop. The women empowerment report is among the first of its kind being produced by IHEC since its establishment.



Baghdad, 11 August 2024 - UNAMI Principal Electoral Advisor and IHEC Chairman, accompanied by their respective teams, discussing preparations for Kurdistan parliamentary elections scheduled for 2024. The specific discussions included ballot lottery, Election Day staffing, result simulation and diplomatic briefing on international observation.



Erbil, 13 August 2024 - The Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq (IHEC), with technical support from the UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance, organized a briefing for the diplomatic community on the accreditation procedures for the international observers. The event also provided an opportunity for open interactions between the diplomatic community and IHEC commissioners and technical team on various issues related to electoral observation for the upcoming parliamentary elections in the Kurdistan Region, scheduled for 20 October 2024.

Social Cohesion

KR High Committee for drafting the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) strategy outlines its action plan

Erbil, 31 July 2024 - The High Committee responsible for drafting the Prevention of Violent Extremism Strategy for the Kurdistan region of Iraq met in Erbil for the 1st time to outline the action plan.

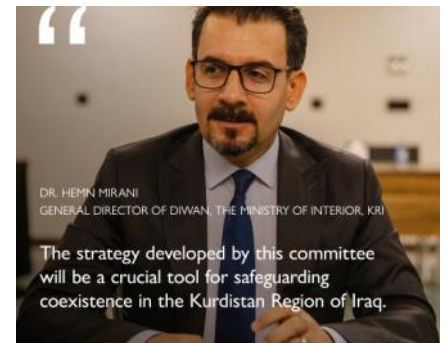
It's a crucial step in our collective peace building efforts.

"I'm pleased that we will be developing a strategy for the KRI that is specifically tailored to our region's unique context", said Colonel Dilshad Hassan, Head of High Committee for Drafting the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) strategy, from the Ministry of Interior, KRI.

"The strategy developed by this



committee will be crucial tool for safeguarding coexistence in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq", said Dr.



Dr. Hemn Mirani, General Director of Diwan, KRI Ministry of Interior. IOM Iraq supports this project.

Launching a new project to support over 18,000 vulnerable Iraqis

Baghdad, 19 August 2024 -UNDP Iraq and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in collaboration with the Government of Iraq, announced the launch of "The Road Back Home: Community Reconciliation and Reintegration of Iraqis Returning from Syria's Al-Hol Camp" (CRRISA). This flagship programme is slated to support thousands of Iraqi nationals returning from Al- Hol camp in northeast Syria. This initiative builds upon "One UN Plan for Supporting the Return of Iraqi Nationals from Northeast Syria mid-2023 to mid-2024", which outlines programmatic priorities, sectoral



budget estimates, and a coordination mechanism among involved actors, including UNDP in its capacity as a co-

chair of the Reintegration Taskforce, in partnership with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD).

Launching a new project to support over 18,000 vulnerable Iraqis (continued)

CRRISA promotes community stability and unity and will help reintegrate over 9,000 returnees as well as benefit 9,000 community members in the areas of return in the liberated governorates. This will guarantee a 1 to 1 ratio of support to ensure communities are not overwhelmed by the influx of returnees. "The CRRISA programme is a lifeline for the people of Iraq, fostering sustainable reintegration and community stability for those who have been displaced from their homes for years. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to our donors USAID, SIDA, and the EU, whose support makes this possible, as well as to the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration and the Office of the National Security Advisor for their active involvement and partnership with us," stated Mr. Auke Lootsma, UNDP Iraq Resident Representative.

"We call upon all stakeholders to join us in supporting these vital initiatives, as together we can build a more stable and cohesive Iraq for all its people." added Mr. Lootsma.

CRRISA will focus on creating an enabling environment for returnees, providing socio-economic support, and



addressing explosive ordnance contamination. This comprehensive approach aims to strengthen the social fabric of conflict-affected communities. The event was attended by key stakeholders from the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration, the Office of National Security Advisor, various provincial governors, mayors, and representatives from local and international organizations.

According to USAID/Iraq's Acting Mission Director, Erin-Mone Marquez, "The CRRISA program is a partnership between USAID, the Government of Iraq, and our partners at the UNDP. By supporting the sustainable

reintegration of over 18,000 vulnerable Iraqis, this inclusive initiative will help rebuild community stability and cohesion in the liberated areas. USAID is proud to be a part of this transformative effort that will improve the lives of so many and lay the groundwork for Iraq's long-term peace and prosperity."

The Iraqi Minister of Displacement and Migration, Ms. Evan Faeq Gabro, expressed strong support for CRRISA. "The reintegration and reconciliation of our people are paramount to the future of Iraq. We extend our gratitude to UNDP and our international partners for their unwavering commitment to being with us as we continue to rebuild our nation and uplift our communities. This partnership is a beacon of hope for all Iraqis."

These projects not only focus on individual returnees, but also aim to build a foundation for lasting peace and development in Iraq, ensuring the reintegration process is inclusive and addresses the multifaceted challenges faced by returnees and their communities.



Strengthening peace in Salahaddin and Diyala!

Erbil, 22 August 2024 - UNDP Iraq organized a two-day workshop in Erbil focused on building the capacity of civil society organizations to operationalize conflict sensitivity. Participants from the Salahaddin and Diyala governorates took part, with plans to extend this training to other governorates across Iraq, aiming to empower communities to navigate and mitigate conflicts effectively.

This initiative, under the UNDP Iraq's Social Cohesion Programme, is generously funded by the Government of Denmark and implemented by UNDP.

Together, we're building stronger, more united communities across Iraq.



On the path of transition



Baghdad, 12 August 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations UN Secretary-General

for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance and Officer-in-Charge of UNAMI, Mr. Claudio Cordone, and the

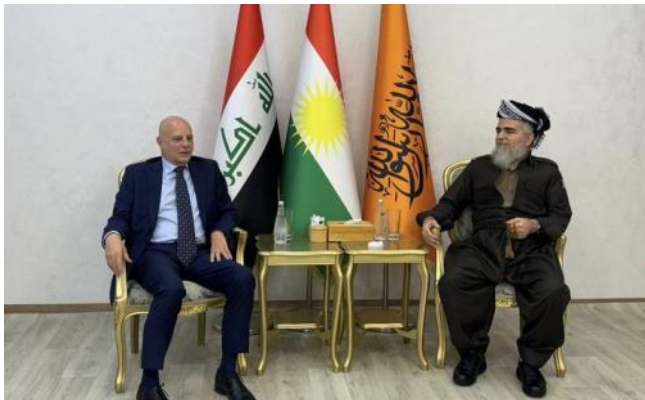
Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Isaccai, met on 11 August with the Government team, headed by Foreign Ministry Undersecretary for Bilateral Relations, Ambassador Mohammed Hussein Bahr Al Uloom, tasked with working with UNAMI on the Mission transition and liquidation plan.

According to UN Security Council resolution 2732 (2024), such a plan is to be presented to the Security Council at the end of 2024.

UNAMI's mandate will terminate at the end of December 2025.

The discussion focused on steps to ensure smooth transition of UNAMI and the future cooperation of Iraq with the UN Country Team.

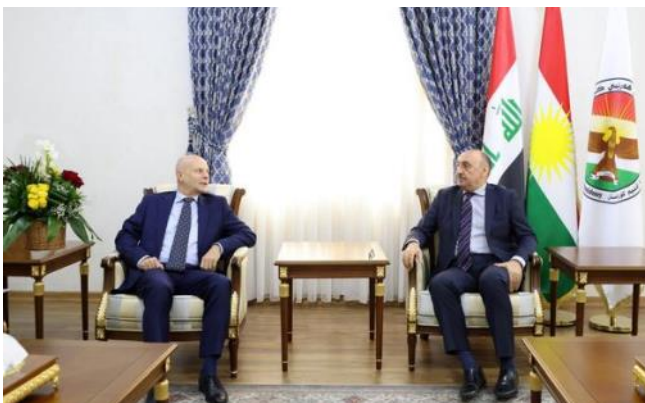
Political Consultations



Erbil, 10 July 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "Discussing Kurdistan Region-Iraq parliamentary elections next October with **Ali Bapir**, Head of the Kurdistan Justice Group, today in Erbil. Emphasized UNAMI's role in supporting fair and inclusive elections with a strong women's and minorities' participation."



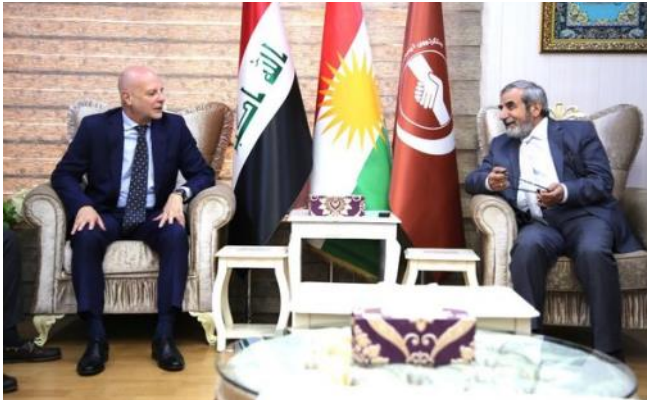
Erbil, 10 July 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "Meeting with **representatives of minority parties** at the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) office in Erbil. Encouraging participation in the Kurdistan Region-Iraq parliamentary elections despite reservations."



Erbil, 10 July 2024 - Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "Back in Erbil, meeting Kurdistan Region Presidency Chief of Staff **Fawzi Hariri**. Underlining the importance of Kurdistan Region-Iraq parliamentary elections in October. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) will support fair, transparent and inclusive elections working with Kurdistan Region-Iraq institutions and the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC)."



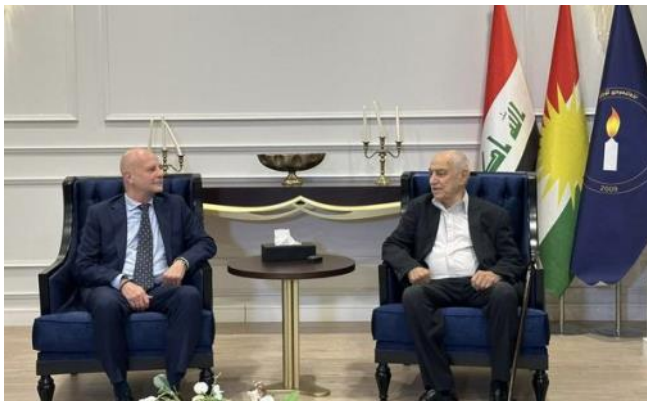
Erbil, 11 July 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "Meeting today in Erbil Minister **Rêber Ahmed** to discuss UNAMI's support for the Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections as well as human rights issues. UNAMI will continue good cooperation with KRG authorities."



Sulaymaniyah, 16 July 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "Meeting with Kurdistan Islamic Union SG **Salahaddin M Baha** today in Sulaymaniyah. Discussing UNAMI's continued support for timely, fair and inclusive Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections on 20 October and the role of women in political parties."



Sulaymaniyah, 16 July 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "Discussing UNAMI's support for timely, fair and inclusive Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections due on 20 October and other issues with PUK President **Bafel Talabani** in Sulaymaniyah today."



Sulaymaniyah, 16 July 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "In Sulaymaniyah today, to underline the importance of holding fair and inclusive Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections on 20 October with strong women participation. UNAMI will continue to support. Here with **Omar Sayed Ali**, Gorran Change interim General Coordinator."



Erbil, 25 July 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai**, today, met with KRG Minister of Interior, **Mr. Rêber Ahmed**, and stressed the UN's readiness to engage with the new committee established by the Government of Iraq supporting efforts to resolve displacement in Iraq through durable solutions.



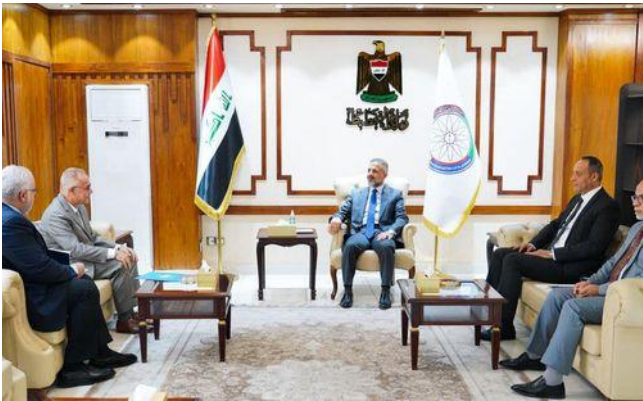
Baghdad, 31 July 2024 - UNAMI Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai**, met with Minister of Migration and Displacement, **Ms. Evan Faiq Jabro**. They discussed UN engagement with the new committee established under the Prime Minister's directives and highlighted the role of durable solutions roadmap in close collaboration with the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government.



Baghdad, 13 August 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, met with the President of the Supreme Judicial Council, **Judge Faiq Zidan**, and updated him about future collaboration in the context of the new UN Cooperation Framework (2025-2029).



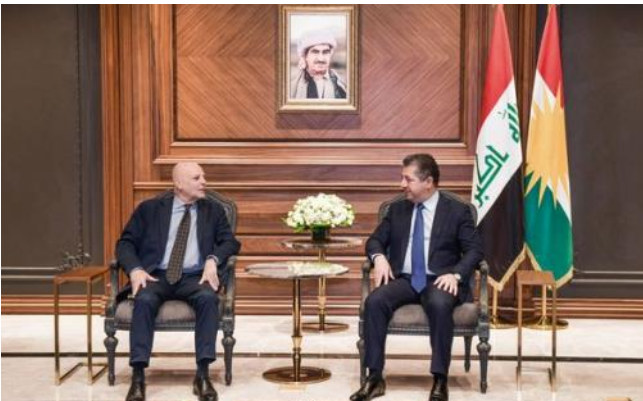
Baghdad, 05 August 2024 - Ghulam M. Isaczai, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator for Iraq, accompanied by the International Labor Organization Country Coordinator, **Maha Kattaa**, met with the President of the Iraqi Federation of Industries, **Abdel Ekab**, and the Board of Directors to discuss the challenges facing the private sector, especially the industrial sector, and the role that United Nations agencies can play in supporting the growing role of the private sector, especially in the field of providing decent job opportunities for youth and women, as well as the transition towards the green economy and digitalization.



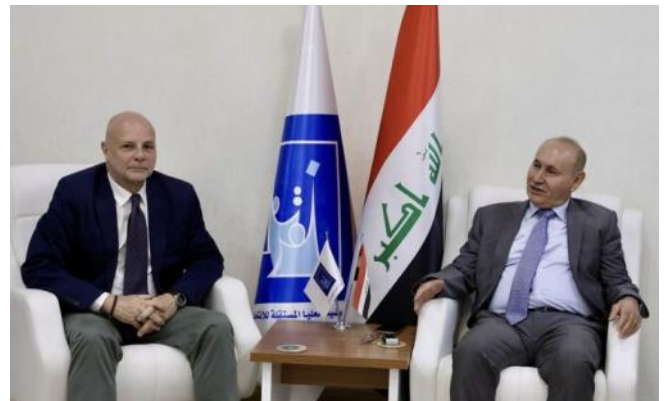
Baghdad, 15 August 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai**, met today in Baghdad with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning, **Dr. Mohammed Ali Tamim**, to discuss Iraq's participation in Summit of the Future at UN HQ in New York, progress made on the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) (2025-29) and its financing, and how to strengthen overall coordination between the UN system and the Ministry of Planning.



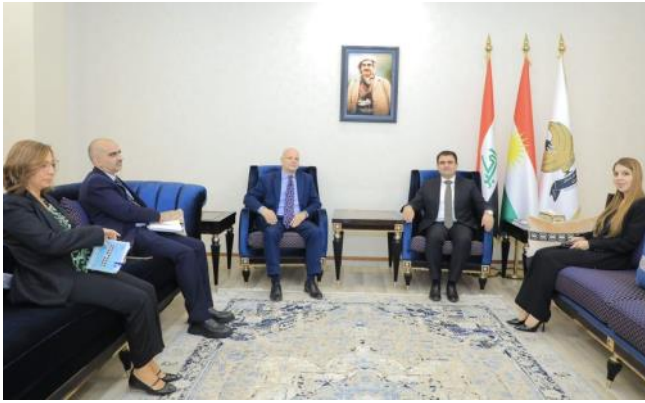
Erbil, 21 August 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge, **Claudio Cordone**, meeting today in Erbil with the Kurdistan Region (KR) President **Nechirvan Barzani**. They discussed the preparations for the Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections, critical for the legitimacy of the KR, and UNAMI's support role. Full steam ahead with fair and transparent elections on 20 October!



Erbil, 21 August 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge, **Claudio Cordone**, met today with the Kurdistan Region Prime Minister, **Masrour Barzani**. Both underlined the importance of holding timely, fair and transparent elections scheduled for 20 October. UNAMI reiterated its commitment to working with all relevant institutions to achieve this goal.



Baghdad, 22 August 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge, **Claudio Cordone**: "Following my visit to Erbil yesterday, I met today with IHEC Chair **Judge Omar Mohammed** to discuss progress on preparing the 20 October KRI parliamentary elections. UNAMI's electoral team continues its support work in Erbil and Baghdad."



Erbil, 27 August 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge, **Claudio Cordone**: "Also in Erbil today, meeting with **Dr Omed Sabah**, head of the KRG Council of Ministers' Diwan. Reviewing progress on preparations for the KR elections and discussing UNAMI's continuing support role."



Erbil, 27 August 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge, **Claudio Cordone**: "Meeting in Erbil today **Judge Amer al-Husseini**, head of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) Central Committee to supervise the Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections, and UNAMI's team at IHEC. Discussing preparations including facilitation of women participation and observers from diplomatic missions."



Erbil, 27 August 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge, **Claudio Cordone**: "Meeting today in Erbil with **Dr. Khanzad Ahmed**, Secretary-General of the High Council for Women and Development, with **Ajay Madiwale** of UN Women and UNAMI colleagues, to discuss UN support for women's full participation in upcoming Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections".



Mosul, 28 August 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge, **Claudio Cordone**: "Meeting in Mosul with Ninewah Governor **Abdul Qader Al-Dakhil**. Welcomed his commitment to pluralism among all components and his care for the returns of families from al-Hol camp. Thanked him for hosting UNAMI's office and reiterated UN continuing support."

UN DPPA: “Diplomacy Means Leaving No Stone Unturned”

New York, 01 July 2024 - On the occasion of “Women in Diplomacy Day”, marked on 24 June, Politically Speaking talked to Special Coordinator Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and Special Envoy Hanna Tetteh, who are leading diplomatic efforts in Lebanon and the Horn of Africa, respectively, to learn more about their work.

“The UN does not have a magic wand and we do not pretend to have a solution for every ill — be it here in Lebanon or anywhere else,” Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, newly appointed Special Coordinator for Lebanon, told Politically Speaking on the occasion of the International Day of Women in Diplomacy.

“At the end of the day, both conflict and

peace, poverty and prosperity hinge on the political will of the world’s states. But if we can make a difference in the lives of people, it is worth stepping up and continuing to try,” she added. Hennis-Plasschaert assumed her role as 1 June 2024, after serving almost 6 years as Special Representative and

head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

Access the full article at: <https://dppa.medium.com/diplomacy-means-leaving-no-stone-unturned-94bfc2c6c8b>

By United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs



When a woman acquires skills, she can support her family, contribute economically, and strengthen the entirety community



Baghdad, 04 July 2024 - In humanitarian settings, women are

learning more than just life skills — they are gaining the skills to become

resilient, independent, and influential in their communities. Through training in literacy, sewing, knitting, and other livelihood opportunities, women are not only finding means of economic empowerment but also nurturing their self-esteem and sense of purpose.

When a woman acquires these skills, she can support her family, contribute economically, and strengthen the entirety of her community.

Women empowerment is center to the mission of UNFPA, and with support from the U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, we are committed to helping women discover and learn various jobs through training programs and resources.

Construction completed of the new “Zaha Hadid” Women’s Center in Al-Mithaq neighborhood - Mosul city

Mosul, 17 July 2024 - Construction works on the new “Zaha Hadid” Women’s Center in Al-Mithaq neighborhood - Mosul city were completed recently. This center is considered the first of its kind in Nineveh Governorate in terms of targeting women's activities and developing the skills of young women from the local community.

The center's total area is approximately 500 square meters, and it contains facilities for training, social engagement, and women's sports . A playground with an area of 1,500 square meters was also prepared for outdoor sports. In addition, the center is an inclusive space for people with

disabilities and is equipped with safety and security systems.

The center was completed under the

ILO’s Prospect project with generous support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq.



UNFPA and partners launch a groundbreaking project aimed at empowering young women across the region

Baghdad, 15 August 2024 - UNFPA Iraq, with the generous support of the British Embassy Iraq and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in the Kurdistan Region, is excited to launch a groundbreaking project aimed at empowering young women across the region.

These project will focus on educating female students about the consequences of child marriage, covering the social, economic, and health impacts, as well as providing essential information on family planning and bodily autonomy. As part of this initiative, we are currently training social workers who, starting with the new school year, will facilitate



sessions in public schools.

This project marks a significant milestone for the Kurdistan Region, as we work together to raise awareness

and equip the next generation with the knowledge and tools they need to make informed choices about their lives and futures.

DSRSG Cordone: “I wish to reiterate the full commitment of the United Nations to supporting the Government, state institutions and civil society in protecting and promoting the rights of women and girls in Iraq.”

Baghdad, 10 August 2024 – Mr. Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge, attended today 16th Annual Conference to Address Violence Against Women and Girls organized by the Al-Hakim Foundation.

Here is the text of his speech at this event:

“Your Excellency, President of the Republic, Dr. Abdul Latif Rashid,
Your Excellency, Prime Minister, Mohammed Shia’ al-Sudani,
Your Excellency, President of Supreme Judicial Council, Dr. Faiq Zeidan

Your Excellency, Acting Council of Representative Speaker Mohsen al-Mandalawi

Your Eminence, Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim,

Distinguished participants,

I am honored to participate on behalf of the United Nations in this conference, marking the Islamic Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. I applaud the efforts of the al-Hakim Foundation, and specifically those of His Eminence Sayyid al-Hakim, for convening this yearly event. Allow me to start by commending the efforts of the Government for its commitment to combatting violence against women and supporting Iraqi women in general. I welcome the address of the Prime Minister to the High Council for Women Affairs on 25 July urging government entities to expedite the implementation of decisions concerning women.

I also welcome the role of the High Council in engaging with the Parliamentary Committee for Women, Family and Childhood as a positive example of how the expertise and experience of Iraqi women can inform the country’s legislative agenda, including the proposed amendments to the Personal Status Law. I urge political leaders to ensure that any proposed legislation protects the rights of women and children, in line with Iraq’s international human rights commitments.

Also with regard to legislation, I urge the Council of Representatives to adopt the long awaited law against domestic violence. I wish to highlight in particular the importance of the



establishment of shelters for persons at risk of such violence. We need to support the survivors, often forced to suffer in silence, and bring to justice the perpetrators. The law should also deter potential offenders, ultimately contributing to a safer family environment. Let’s not forget, not only women, but also children, the elderly and other family members are at risk of such violence and deserve to be fully protected by the law, in accordance with Iraq’s international commitments and the best Iraqi traditions, religious and cultural values.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Enhancing women’s political participation is another important goal of the government, and in this regard UNAMI continues to work closely with the High Committee to Support Women’s Political Participation and the Independent High Electoral Commission. In the Governorate Council elections last December women won 76 out of 285 seats, equal to 26.7 per cent of the total number of seats, thus surpassing the minimum 25 per cent quota. While that is an important achievement, it is regrettable that no women have been appointed as governors, deputy governors or chairs of governorate councils, which shows there is more work to do before women are integrated into the decision-making processes and structures. I look forward to more efforts being taken to promote women’s political participation, also by all political parties, for the forthcoming elections for the Kurdistan Region parliament, and later the elections for the Council of Representatives.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have recently commemorated the anniversary of the Yazidi genocide. We wish to stress the importance of supporting the survivors and bringing to justice through fair trials the members of Da’esh responsible for abhorrent crimes of sexual violence targeting women and girls from the Yazidi community, as well as from other communities. The United Nations welcomed the adoption of the 2021 Yazidi Survivors’ Law. We call for its implementation at greater speed, and for its expansion to cover victims from all communities, including women forced into marriage by Da’esh, as well as children born of rape. This would be in line with the 2016 Joint Communique of the Republic of Iraq and the United Nations on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, which includes commitments to support survivors and ensure accountability.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the full commitment of the United Nations to supporting the Government, state institutions and civil society in protecting and promoting the rights of women and girls in Iraq. UNAMI is doing so in compliance with its mandate which will terminate at the end of 2025, while the United Nations Country Team will continue to do so.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The road ahead is full of challenges but also great opportunities for women and girls in Iraq. In the end everyone will gain from promoting women’s rights, as Iraq continues to build its own path towards a fairer, more inclusive society. Thank you.”

The Women Multidimensional Poverty Index for Iraq captures the various deprivations women face in health, education, living standards, and participation



Baghdad, 16 August 2024 – UNDP is introducing the Women Multidimensional Poverty Index (WMPI) for Iraq. This comprehensive tool, developed in collaboration with UNDP, OPHI/Oxford, the National Directorate of Iraqi Women, and the Authority of Statistics and Geographic Information System, goes beyond traditional metrics. It captures the various deprivations women face in health, education, living standards, and participation.

What is WMPI ?

The Women Multidimensional Poverty Index (WMPI) for Iraq is designed to provide a comprehensive measurement of poverty beyond traditional income-based metrics, Its captures the various deprivations women face in areas such access to

health, education, their living standards, impact of climate change and so on.

Such data is critical to address women's poverty and be able to respond with the right policies.

In the past, poverty measurements were mostly focused on income as the single defining characteristic of poverty.

Multidimensional poverty measurements offer an opportunity to measure poverty also from other aspects.

Iraq is planning to update its Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) using updated data from the Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey (IHSES).

What is really exciting is that Iraq now also plans to develop an MPI from a women/inequality perspective that

sheds more light on poverty amongst women in Iraq

Now, what is the Purpose of the Women's MPI for Iraq ?

- It will monitor Women's Poverty
- It will guide Policy and Resource Allocation
- It will enhance Policy Coordination
- It will complement already existing data and programmes

What will the Women's MPI provide:

- A comprehensive understanding of the multidimensional nature of women's poverty in Iraq.
- Data-driven insights to inform women-sensitive policies and resource allocation.
- Enhanced coordination among ministries, governorates, and agencies in addressing women's poverty.
- A tool for monitoring progress towards the SDGs, particularly in reducing disparities and improving women's well-being

What will be the next step:

UNDP will support the development a policy paper focused on the priorities for women's empowerment. In this regard, we will provide strategic guidance on addressing the key issues identified in the report, proposing actionable solutions aimed at enhancing the socio-economic status of women in Iraq.

UN Women, JCC and HCWD strengthen collaboration to support women's role in crises response and humanitarian assistance

Erbil, 21 August 2024 - On Wednesday, UN Women Representative, Mr. Ajay Madiwale visited Ms. Srwa Rasul, General Director of the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC), along with Dr. Khanzad Ahmad, the Secretary General of the Iraqi High Council for Women and Development (HCWD) and Ms. Parwin Khan, an advisor at the HCWD.

The meeting, held at the JCC headquarters, commenced with a warm welcome from Ms. Rasul who provided an in-depth overview of the center's critical roles and activities. Ms. Rasul highlighted the ongoing humanitarian situation in the Kurdistan Region (KR),



emphasizing the challenges faced by women in humanitarian settings and during crises and disasters. She underscored the efforts of the

Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Ministry of Interior in advancing women's roles at regional, provincial, and local levels in responding to these

Statement from UNAMI on misinformation regarding the departure of SRSJ Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert

crises.

A significant focus of the discussion was on the process of national return of displaced persons, with Ms. Rasul noting that returning women, in particular, require additional support and assistance. She reaffirmed the JCC's commitment to providing comprehensive support, cooperation, and assistance for the projects implemented by UN Women in the region. On his part, Mr. Madiwale

expressed his gratitude for the facilitation and support provided by the JCC to UN Women and other UN agencies. He highlighted the crucial role of the JCC in the region and discussed ongoing and future activities, including strengthening collaboration with the HCWD. Mr. Madiwale emphasized the importance of Women, Peace and Security programmes within the regional National Action Plan and discussed the ongoing preparations for

the third phase of regional affairs. He reiterated UN Women's readiness to continue close cooperation with both the JCC and the HCWD.

This meeting marks a significant step forward in reinforcing the partnership between UN Women and the KRG, with a shared commitment to advancing women's roles in crisis response and supporting women in humanitarian contexts across the KR.

UN Women hosts strategic coordination meeting with NDIW and HCWD to bolster women's empowerment and security in Iraq

Erbil, 29 August 2024 - UN Women convened a high-level coordination meeting with the National Directorate for Iraqi Women (NDIW) and the High Council for Women and Development (HCWD), marking a pivotal moment in the ongoing efforts to advance women's empowerment and security throughout Iraq.

The meeting kickstarted with opening remarks by the Secretary – General of the HCWD, Dr. Khanzad Ahmad who began with a warm welcome to the NDIW delegation and a review of the current political landscape's impact on the status of women in Iraq. Dr. Khanzad acknowledged the need to strengthen

communication between NDIW and HCWD, emphasizing the importance of enhancing collaboration to achieve shared goals.

Dr. Yusra Al-Alaq, Director General of NDIW, delivered an inspiring address, expressing optimism about the strengthened coordination between the Erbil and Baghdad. She praised UN Women for its instrumental role in facilitating these efforts and reflected on key achievements, including the successful launch of the National Strategy for Iraqi Women for 2023 – 2030. Dr. Yusra further emphasized the strategic importance of HCWD as a vital partner in the Kurdistan Region, underscoring the

council's critical role in shaping the future of women's rights and development.

In his remarks, UN Women Representative, Mr. Ajay Madiwale, highlighted the organization's strategic interventions and notable accomplishments. He reaffirmed UN Women's unwavering commitment to support the Government of Iraq in Baghdad and Erbil, stressing the essential need to embed women's perspectives in governance and decision-making processes at all levels.

The meeting centered on strengthening communication and collaboration between national and regional entities, where participants reviewed key achievements and outlined ambitious initiatives for 2024 and beyond. These include the development of the Iraqi Women's Data Platform, the establishment of a Women's Institute for Security and Peace, and the creation of a localized plan for Dohuk Governorate, alongside preparations for the National Action Plan (NAP) III and a thorough evaluation of NAP II. The discussions highlighted the critical role of sustained collaboration, supported by UN Women, in driving transformative change and advancing the shared vision of equality and the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in Iraq.



Racial Discrimination

Experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) commend Iraq on its efforts to improve the national human rights institute, ask questions on action taken against hate speech and the situation of migrant workers

Geneva, 15 August 2024 - The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination today concluded its consideration of the combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic report of Iraq, with Committee Experts commending the State on its efforts to

improve the national human rights institute, and asking questions on action taken against hate speech and the situation of migrant workers.

One Committee Expert congratulated the progress made by the State party in improving its national human rights

institute. Would the State party allow the institute to recruit its own members directly?

Ibrahima Guisse, Committee Expert and Country Rapporteur, said the Criminal Code did not fully prohibit hate speech. What measures were in

Experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) commend Iraq on its efforts to improve the national human rights institute ... (continued)



place to achieve this? Another Expert noted that in its previous concluding observations, the Committee had called for information on action taken against public figures and politicians for hate speech. Had the State party taken any action in this regard?

One Committee Expert said migrant workers, including domestic workers, were subjected to low wages and long hours, including non-payment of overtime. How were migrant workers protected from exploitation? What remedies were available to exploited migrant workers?

Khalid Salam Saeed, Minister of Justice of Iraq and head of the delegation, said the report presented progress made in the implementation of the Convention at the national level and outlined national best practices and measures reflecting the implementation of human rights standards at the legislative, executive and judicial levels.

Abdul-Karim Hashim Mostafa, Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations Office at Geneva, said Iraq reaffirmed its commitments to its international obligations, including to the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination,

especially since Iraq was an ethnically diverse country.

The delegation said any citizen could apply to be a member of the national human rights institute. More than 3,000 persons had applied to be members of the institute. Over the coming months, the institute's board would be formed. The institute worked effectively.

There was a bill to criminalise hate speech that was currently with the Government Cabinet, the delegation said. The bill included definitions in line with article four of the Convention. The election law also banned extremist and racist discourse in the political process. Political candidates could be disqualified for using hate speech and a number of candidates had been disqualified in the past.

Concerning migrant and domestic workers, the delegation said that around 14,500 migrant workers with labour permits were registered with the State. Domestic workers with work permits were entitled to the minimum wage and social security. Inspection teams oversaw their situation. Complaints were filed against employers who failed to pay domestic workers. The State could

not monitor migrant workers who did not have work permits – such persons were illegal aliens.

In concluding remarks, Mr. Guisse said the dialogue had been constructive and the delegation's answers sincere. The Committee focused on facts, which allowed it to analyse whether progress had been made. Iraq had trod a hard path and the Committee was aware of the efforts made by the State to put the country back on course.

Michal Balcerzak, Committee Chair, in concluding remarks, expressed gratitude to the delegation for the efforts made to answer the Committee's questions and participate in the intensive dialogue.

Mr. Saeed, in concluding remarks, said Iraq looked forward to receiving the Committee's upcoming concluding observations, which it would examine carefully to develop national strategies and policies. He expressed Iraq's determination to promote and protect the human rights of all its citizens without discrimination.

The delegation of Iraq consisted of representatives of the State Council; General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers; Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; Supreme Judicial Council; Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research; Ministry of Immigration and Displacement; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Planning, Statistics and Geographic Systems Authority; Iraqi Cabinet; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Kurdistan Regional Government; and the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

Report

The Committee has before it the combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic report of Iraq (CERD/C/IRQ/26-27). https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FBLR%2F24-25&Lang=en

Access full meeting summary at <https://www.un Geneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2024/08/experts-committee-elimination-racial-discrimination-comment-1>



UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination publishes findings on Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, United Kingdom, and Venezuela

Geneva, Switzerland, 23 August 2024 – The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) today issued its findings on Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela after reviewing the seven States parties in its latest session.

The findings contain the Committee's main concerns and recommendations on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, as well as positive aspects. Key highlights include:

Iraq

The Committee was concerned about reports that the decision to close all camps for internally displaced persons (IDP) by the end of 2024 could lead to forced and involuntary return of IDPs

from ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups, warning that many of these individuals would have to return to areas severely damaged by armed conflict, with inadequate infrastructure. The Committee urged Iraq to ensure that returns or resettlements are safe and genuinely voluntary. It also recommended efforts to integrate IDPs, rebuild their communities, and restore essential services while combating stigmatization and guaranteeing equal access to education, healthcare, employment, and housing, as protected under the Convention.

The Committee stated its concern over delays in providing reparations to victims, particularly women who have suffered grave human rights violations, and highlighted the absence of a legislative framework for prosecuting war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide. The Committee urged the

State party to take swift action to support and adequately compensate women survivors, including speeding up the verification of pending applications under the Law on Yazidi female survivors and ensuring the process does not re-traumatise them. It also called for the prompt passage of a bill by the Council of Representatives to criminalise genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, and enable domestic courts to prosecute these crimes.

https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/un-committee-elimination-racial-discrimination-publishes-findings-belarus?fbclid=IwY2xjawFSlRleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHTNeMpnAd1QC0ID2ckwakY4iS70qhKXdnT2rhbtYakQX-PJcAb31Mrp_Q_aem_v6hSWmbw2a3oS5S6Bn0PXQ

Human Rights

UNODC in Iraq commemorates Nelson Mandela International Day

Baghdad, 18 July 2024 - On the occasion of Nelson Mandela International Day, Iraq reaffirms its commitment to promoting the application of Mandela Rules, the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. Watch as Mr. Ahmad Luaiby, General Director of Judicial Relations at the Ministry of Justice, highlights the significant

adaptations and improvements made with UNODC's support to enhance humane treatment and uphold human rights standards across closed settings in Iraq.

<https://www.facebook.com/UnitedNationsIraq/videos/1214180092831805>



UNAMI Human Rights Office organized a one-day workshop on “The Role of Civil Society on Climate Change and Human Rights in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq”

Erbil, 20 July 2024 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized one-day workshop on “The Role of Civil Society Organizations on Climate Change and Human Rights in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq”. The event was attended by 24 participants (10 female and 14 male) from Duhok, Erbil, Halabja and Sulaymaniyah. The workshop aimed at establishing a network among civil society organizations to advocate for the development of human rights-based climate change policies and legislation for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The

participants proposed concrete measures and an action plan to

mitigate the impact of climate change on human rights.



UNAMI Human Rights Office organizes a workshop on “Investigative Human Rights Techniques under International Human Rights Law” for security officers in Erbil

Dohuk, 22 July 2024 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized a workshop on “Investigative Human Rights Techniques under International Human Rights Law” for Law Enforcement officials (KRI

Security forces) from Dohuk governorate. A total of 24 participants benefitted from this training. Participants were briefed about general principles and concepts of international human rights law, including United Nations reporting and review

mechanisms and state obligations. It also addressed the rights of detainees under international conventions, the Constitution of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional law, and the role of investigators in protecting these rights, particularly during interrogation stage.

UNAMI HRO holds a training on trauma sensitive interviewing techniques



Kirkuk, 23 July 2024 – The Human Rights Office of the United Nations

Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized a one-day training workshop

for staff of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) in Kirkuk to enhance their capacity on trauma sensitive interviewing techniques. The event was attended by eight participants (seven men and one woman), enhancing their knowledge and capacity in conducting trauma-sensitive interviewing for victims of human rights violations. Participants benefited from examples on situations during interviewing victims subjected to traumatic experiences.

UNAMI HRO, in coordination with IHCHR, holds a roundtable with civil society organizations (CSOs) and representatives from the Iraqi Justice Network for Prisoners

Baghdad, 28 July 2024 - UNAMI Human Rights Office, in coordination with the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR), held a roundtable with civil society organizations (CSOs) and representatives from the Iraqi Justice Network for Prisoners. Twenty-seven (21 men and 6 women) participants attended the roundtable, which focused on the role of the CSOs in the protection and promotion of human

rights in places of detention as well as the Iraqi and international human rights law frameworks protecting the right of detainees. The roundtable also aimed at strengthening UNAMI’s relationship with CSOs working in correctional centers in Iraq with a view to setting up a coordination mechanism through which UNAMI, CSOs and IHCHR can exchange information on issues pertaining to detention and detainees’ rights.



UNAMI HRO, jointly with IHCHR, delivers a human rights training sessions for Iraqi Federal Police personnel in Baghdad

Baghdad, 31 July 2024 - UNAMI Human Rights Office, jointly with the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) Baghdad office, delivered the fourth and final session in series of human rights training sessions for Iraqi Federal Police personnel in Baghdad. The trainings, which included case studies and role-play exercises, were attended by 135 police personnel (115 men and 20 women) including field commanders, officers, teaching staff and cadets. The topics covered included an introduction

to international human rights law, international standards on the use of

force, including in public order policing, and the role of women in police work.



UNAMI on X

Baghdad, 22 August 2024 - Targeting populations because of their religion or beliefs constitutes a grave human rights violation.

Today is the International Day for Victims of Violence Based on Religion or Belief.



UNODC on X

Baghdad, 22 August 2024 - On today's International Day Commemorating Victims of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, UNODC reaffirms its commitment against terrorism driven by xenophobia, racism, intolerance, religion or belief by building capacities of member states.



UNAMI Human Rights Office organizes a workshop on “Strengthening Legislative and Institutional Measures to Mitigate the Impact of Climate Change on Human Rights”

Erbil, 28 August 2024 – The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized one-day workshop on “Strengthening Legislative and Institutional Measures to Mitigate the Impact of Climate Change on Human Rights” in collaboration with the Kurdistan Regional Government. The event was attended by 29 participants (11 females and 18 males) from KRG ministries, directorates, and relevant departments.

The workshop aimed at establishing a climate network between the authorities and civil society organizations to advocate for the development of human rights-based climate change policies and legislation for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The participants proposed concrete measures and an action plan to mitigate the impact of climate change on human rights.

Ms. Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, the KRG Prime Minister’s Senior Advisor for Foreign Relations and Climate Change, and the head of UNAMI Human Rights Office in Erbil, Mr.

Zafeer Ud Din, welcomed the joint efforts by UNAMI and the Kurdistan Regional Government to promote the protection of human rights from the impact of climate change.



Why ending corruption is so important for human rights? How are they connected?

Baghdad, 28 August 2024 – UNDP is together with the UN Human Rights Office and the Federal Commission of Integrity of Iraq to discuss why ending corruption is so important for human rights. How are they connected? Here’s how:

1. Corruption makes things unfair. It lets people with connections get jobs and services, while others miss out on their basic rights.
2. It weakens the justice system by letting money and power control court decisions, which leads to unfairness and violations of rights.
3. Corruption hits certain groups harder, like people with disabilities, women and girls, and refugees, making it harder for them to have equal rights and fair opportunities.

That’s why we must fight corruption by focusing on human rights. With

support from the European Union, our efforts to draft a law on access to information, monitor big corruption cases in courts, and empower media

and civil society are key to reducing corruption.

More information : <https://go.undp.org/4Kq>



DSRSG Cordone: “I welcome the initiative by Prime Minister Muhammad Shia al-Sudani to develop a national strategy to counter hate speech, while respecting freedom of expression.”

Karbala, 31 August 2024 - Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge, participated today at the Islam is Life Fifth International Conference, “Human Rights – Contemporary Challenges”.

Here is the text of his remarks:

“Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished audience,

It is a great honour for me to address this learned audience today. I am particularly pleased as I have written on the philosophical foundations of human rights and have worked on these issues for more than 30 years. During this time I learned the values of humility and of listening to those with different views than mine.

In this spirit of open dialogue, allow me today to briefly talk about the role of the United Nations on the protection and promotion of human rights globally, as well as some of the contemporary challenges, before offering some observations relating to Iraq.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you know, the key United Nations human rights document is the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document has opened the way to many important international treaties on this subject. I welcome the fact that Iraq today is a party to all core international human rights treaties.

The Universal Declaration has also inspired regional initiatives such as the 1990 Cairo declaration on human rights in Islam adopted by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Despite differences between them, the two declarations share common values such as the emphasis on the inherent dignity of all individuals – the right of every person regardless of who they are.

I wish to stress here that international human rights standards are not Western standards. Many have indeed



attained near-universal acceptance, as they reflect fundamental principles such as human dignity, fairness, compassion and non-discrimination that are rooted in many cultures and religious traditions, including Islam.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Among contemporary challenges is the poor record of implementation of the existing human rights treaties across the world. Take for example torture: just about every state condemns it, but it is still widespread.

Another example is the 1949 Geneva Conventions which set limits to the inhumanity of wars. Despite the universal ratification of these conventions, they are still violated with impunity in Gaza and other conflicts across the world.

A challenge that we face regularly is the double standards with which similar situations are treated differently, depending on whether perpetrators are allies or enemies.

And I want to mention the challenge of intolerance for diversity. We all remember the acts of burning the Holy Qur’an last year. His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres exchanged letters on this subject, condemning acts of religious hatred and appealing for peaceful coexistence.

I should underline that these were attacks on Muslims because of their very identity. One lesson is the importance of respect for diversity: no one should be targeted simply because of who they are.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me make a few final remarks about Iraq. Rich in history, culture, and pluralism, Iraq has suffered immensely from dictatorship, senseless wars and violent extremism.

In this context I welcome the initiative by Prime Minister Muhammad Shia al-Sudani to develop a national strategy to counter hate speech, while respecting freedom of expression.

Another important national priority which converges with the implementation of social, economic and cultural rights is the improvement of services and the standard of living.

There are areas, however, that are cause for concern. For example, the proposed amendments to the Personal Status Law, if adopted, may result in the contravention of a number of human rights treaties that Iraq is a party to. Here I call for an open, inclusive and respectful dialogue, which I believe would address misunderstandings and bridge many gaps.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to conclude with the words of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at the end of his visit to Iraq in August 2023, when he said: “Human rights must not be instrumentalized to divide us – human rights are what unites us, what brings us together as humanity, in dignity.”

Once again, I thank you for the honour of inviting me to this conference and I look forward to your discussions.

Thank you.”

UNAMI on X

Baghdad, 30 August 2024 - Enforced disappearance is a serious human rights violation that has frequently been used to spread terror. On today's International Day of Victims of Enforced Disappearances and every day, stand up for the rights of the disappeared.

Baghdad, 30 August 2024 - "Addressing the issue of enforced disappearances in Iraq requires a coordinated response by all stakeholders. I look forward to increased action, including the adoption of relevant legislation, to ensure redress and justice for the victims and families. This will also contribute to national unity." - Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge.

Remarkable athletes Najla Imad and Yiech Pur Biel participate at the panel on inclusiveness in and through sport



Geneva, 01 July 2024 - The OHCHR had the pleasure of organizing a panel discussion on inclusiveness in and through sport at the 56 Human Rights Council session, which is mandated by Human Rights Council Resolution 37/18. The panel was opened by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the President of the International Olympic Committee.

We were pleased to listen to remarkable athletes like Najla Imad and Yiech Pur Biel during the panel on inclusiveness in and through sport which we organized during the 56 session of the Human Rights Council. Najla lost three of her limbs in a car explosion in Iraq. Despite this, she competes in Table Tennis at the Paralympics. She is the top-ranked

player in Iraq and Asia, and second worldwide. She was the youngest Table Tennis player at the Tokyo Paralympics and will compete at the 2024 Paris Paralympics. Biel, a track and field athlete who competed in the 800m event as part of the first-ever Refugee Olympic Team at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. He lived for 10 years in a refugee camp after fleeing the war in South Sudan. Biel is a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and was elected to serve an eight-year term as a member of the International Olympic Committee, becoming the first UNHCR-recognized refugee to be elected to the body.

Najla and Biel are true human rights defenders who fought for their right to participate in sports and inspire many others.

Mr. Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: "Pleased to be with athletes Najla Imad [Iraq] and Yiech Pur Biel [South Sudan] who demonstrate every day commitment, determination and resilience. Together, we can help amplify the promise of human rights and sports to unite our human family and to promote a culture of peace."

ILO, IFI, AICS/ Italy, MOLSA, and key stakeholders launch the Iraqi Business and Disability Network

Baghdad, 09 July 2024 – The International Labour Organization (ILO), Iraqi Federation of Industries (IFI), the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), and key stakeholders collaborated to conduct a workshop to launch the Iraqi Business and Disability Network. This marks a crucial moment towards concrete steps to implement inclusive employment practices across Iraq.

Mr. Adel Akkab, President of the Iraqi Federation for Industries IFI, opened the workshop and stated in his speech, "Today represents a new step in the

IFI's journey aimed at promoting inclusive employment and empowering persons with disabilities in the Iraqi labor market. We are here today to embark together on the initiation of establishing the Iraqi National Business and Disability Network (IBDN). This initiative is a result of fruitful cooperation between the IFI and the ILO's project to promote green businesses, with support from Italy and various governmental and private entities. We will work side by side with the ILO and all partners to establish the IBDN and make it a key member of the Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN)."

Dr. Maha Kattaa, the ILO Country Coordinator, also mentioned in her opening speech, "Iraq has recently launched, with the support of the ILO, the National Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Inequality in the World of Work in Iraq for the period 2024-2028. This strategy focuses on vulnerable groups that suffer from inequality in the labor market, including PWDs. This strategy has outlined a comprehensive action plan to reduce the inequality these persons face, including providing incentives for the private sector to employ persons with disabilities. The formation of the IBDN is one of the pathways to integrate these persons into the labor market."

Mr. Raed Jabar, Director General of the Monitoring and Planning Department at the Commission of the Rights of PWDs and Special Needs, added during his presentation, "On behalf of the MOLSA, the Commission of the Rights of PWDs and Special Needs, we extend our thanks and appreciation to the ILO Iraq Office for their efforts in organizing a workshop in Baghdad in coordination with the IFI to highlight the importance of



ILO, IFI, AICS/ Italy, MOLSA, and key stakeholders collaborated to conduct a workshop ... (continued)

establishing the IBDN to emphasize the importance of finding decent employment opportunities for PWDs and integrating them into society while connecting it with networks established in other countries."

Ms. Monica Pisu, AICS's Iraq Development Programme Coordinator, conveyed a brief address at the opening of the workshop, highlighting the attention of the Italian Cooperation to the inclusion of PWDs in all humanitarian and development programming, as well as the importance of making accessible workplaces and in parallel building a mindset more open to inclusivity.

Mr. Jurgen Minz, Disability Inclusion

Specialist at the ILO in Geneva, participated in the workshop online. Through a presentation, he explained the importance, principles, and mechanism of establishing NBDN and their connection to the Global BDN.

Mr. Hatem Al-Asmari, representative of the Qaderoon NBDN from the KSA, shared their unique experience and success path in training and employing PWDs.

The workshop included a discussion session that hosted employers with successful experiences in employing PWDs and the head of PWDs Iraq Association, followed by presentations of some experiences from PWDs who have integrated into the labour market

through employment and establishing their own businesses.

The workshop concluded with a presentation by Ms. Amal Bani Awad outlining the roadmap for taking practical steps to establish and launch the IBDN.

The IBDN is poised to play a pivotal role in empowering PWDs, facilitating their entry into the labour market, and supporting their entrepreneurial ventures.

This BDN initiative is part of the project "Towards more and better employment through enhanced support to private sectors in southern Iraq – with a focus on green business."

Empowering all abilities: Iraq's first Forum for Disability Inclusion

Baghdad, 11 July 2024 - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), proudly announces the successful conclusion of the First National Forum for Empowering People with Disabilities. Held under the patronage of His Excellency the Prime Minister of Iraq, Eng. Mohammed Shiaa Al-Sudani, the forum was a significant step towards creating a more inclusive society in Iraq.

The event brought together diverse voices from government, private sector,

civil society, academia, and local communities. It provided a platform for discussing the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and exploring ways to enhance their vocational rehabilitation and economic empowerment.

"Our ministry is committed to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities through innovative initiatives and partnerships. This forum highlights our efforts and paves the way for new collaborations to further enhance the economic empowerment of people with disabilities in Iraq," said Ahmed Alasadi, Minister of Labour and Social

Affairs.

"This forum is a vital step in championing the rights and opportunities for people with disabilities in Iraq. By coming together, we hope to make this forum a turning point in our journey towards social and economic empowerment for all and leave no one behind." said Auke Lootsma, UNDP Iraq Resident Representative

The forum focused on key topics such as using modern technology in education and training, integrating individuals with disabilities into the labor market, and promoting social responsibility. Attendees learned from international and regional experiences and heard inspiring success stories from Iraqi youth with disabilities.

This event has set the stage for ongoing efforts to empower individuals with disabilities, ensuring their full participation in Iraq's economy and society. UNDP, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and USAID remain dedicated to turning challenges into opportunities and building a more inclusive Iraq.



Youth with vision impairments at Baghdad's Al-Sader school are gaining skills and opportunities

Baghdad, 14 July 2024 – With IOM Iraq support youth with vision impairments at Baghdad's Al-Sader school are gaining skills and opportunities. More than 20 students have benefited, improving their English skills for brighter futures.



Creative expressions: empowering children with disabilities in Baghdad

Baghdad, 08 August 2024 – “Yasin can’t stop talking about the artwork he made at this workshop,” shares Liqa, mother of 15-year-old Yasin, who has vision impairment. “He is so proud of what he did”. The mother-son duo participated in a workshop in Baghdad that brought together children with disabilities, and their parents, for a day filled with creative expression through art and English as a second language, and understanding how to provide emotional support during times of stress. Organized by the International Organization from Migration (IOM) in Iraq, the workshop is part of a broader program aimed at enhancing the social well-being of children with disabilities and equipping them with skills for future careers.

“He rarely goes out of the house; the environment is not very encouraging in our neighborhood” adds Liqa during a break between the activities. “But today, Yasin is happy”.

The workshop was a lively gathering where 22 children with disabilities and their caregivers engaged in creating art pieces with clay – a therapeutic way to express oneself in tactile way. Facilitators and trainers guided the children through their artistic endeavors, encouraging them to explore their imaginations and creativity.

Ruqaya, the mother of 18-year-old Zahra, who has vision impairment, expressed her gratitude for the activity: “Persons with disabilities also need some entertainment like this every now and then. We can’t expect them to study and stay at home all the time”.

Alongside crafting artwork, the workshop featured introductory sessions on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). Trainers introduced breathing exercises designed to relieve stress and conducted games that fostered better communication between the children and their caregivers. These activities were carefully crafted to create a

Goal!

Baghdad, 28 August 2024 - Nearly 30 young people with vision impairments took part in a football tournament organized by IOM, U.S. Embassy Baghdad and Iraqi Blind Football Federation in Baghdad.

Such after-school activities help create an inclusive space where students can pursue their passions and excel.



supportive environment where children and their parents could bond and develop essential social skills.

Zahra, who will enter university next year, was keen to engage with IOM staff specialized in providing mental health and psychosocial support services. She is passionate about psychology and wishes to study the field next year.

“I want to study psychology as many people suffer from mental issues, and there is little support they can get,” she shares after their chat. “I think it’s really rewarding when you can talk and help someone”.

The workshop also provided a platform for caregivers to share their experiences and challenges in raising children with disabilities. This open dialogue fostered a sense of community and mutual understanding as parents exchanged valuable insights and support.

The day’s activities are part of a comprehensive program by IOM Iraq

that focuses on improving the quality of life for children with disabilities in Iraq. By combining creative expression, psychosocial support, and skill development, IOM Iraq aims to empower these children and their families, helping them build a brighter future.

As the workshop concluded, the smiles on the children’s faces and the gratitude expressed by their parents were testaments to the initiative’s success. IOM remains committed to supporting children with disabilities in Iraq, recognizing their potential and the importance of their inclusion in society.

This activity was organized within the framework of IOM’s English Access Micro-Scholarship Programme for children and youth with visual impairments, with the support of the United States Government.

By Yad Abdulqader, Public Information Consultant, IOM



Comprehensive training for the protection of journalists and influencers in Iraq on “Enhancing Digital Rights and Freedom of Expression”

Baghdad, 10 July 2024 - Over two days, 35 journalists, media professionals, and social media influencers received training on tools, methods, and techniques designed to protect them from various risks in the field and beyond due to their work. UNESCO Iraq Office organized this event, in Baghdad gathering a select group alongside representatives from the judiciary, the Human Rights Commission, and civil society organizations. These participants were introduced to various techniques by a team of experts and trainers in legal, professional, and digital fields.

The training featured three female journalist trainers who led key sessions on advocacy, protection, and digital aspects of journalism and media, emphasizing digital rights and freedom of expression. This initiative is part of the "Breaking the Silence" project, funded by the Dutch Embassy in Iraq, aimed at enhancing government accountability and judicial measures to protect journalists.

UNESCO Iraq Office strives to establish a guiding framework for stakeholders involved in freedom of expression and press freedom,



addressing the increasing legal prosecutions faced by those in the field over the past two years. The training included geographical diversity, representing various Iraqi provinces, and provided female journalists and advocates for press freedom with opportunities equal to their male counterparts. Real-life cases of journalists who faced legal prosecutions and those seeking to prosecute their assailants were discussed.

UNESCO hosted several journalists who experienced legal actions and assaults resulting in physical and material damages. These cases were deliberated with representatives from

the Human Rights Commission and judicial authorities specializing in media and publishing courts.

The training established a joint working group to follow up with government bodies and the judiciary on cases filed against journalists and social media activists. The training concluded with a series of recommendations to be integrated into the action plan of UNESCO and the judiciary as part of the agreement on this project, aimed at supporting journalists in Iraq and enhancing capabilities within media and publishing courts to uphold standards of freedom of expression.

UNESCO trained specialized teams to mitigate threats, prosecutions, and press restrictions

Erbil, 26 July 2024 – As part of the "Breaking the Silence" project aimed at enhancing journalist safety, UNESCO organized a specialized training course for journalists and employees of the Human Rights Commission in the Kurdistan Region. Funded by the Dutch Embassy in Iraq, this initiative aimed to build the capacities of journalists and human rights workers in Kurdistan to form a field team that monitored journalists' cases amidst increasing legal prosecutions against freedom of expression, both online and offline.

Indicators of freedom of expression and legal safety for journalists in Iraq showed a rise in legal and judicial prosecutions against the press and digital media in recent times.

Through its international mandate in Iraq, UNESCO sought to promote freedom of expression via monitoring, advocacy, and reporting. The intensive three-day training in Erbil included the integration of artificial intelligence into the training curricula to assist



journalists and field teams in reporting harassment, threats, and assaults against the freedom of expression community in Erbil and Baghdad. This initiative aimed to support journalists in the region in reporting the challenges they faced, particularly legal

prosecutions.

UNESCO worked in clear partnership with the judiciary in Baghdad to reduce pressure on journalists and social media influencers, with the hope that the Kurdistan Regional Government would cooperate similarly.

UNESCO trains Iraqi trainers on ethics of Artificial Intelligence

Baghdad/Erbil, 11 August 2024 - UNESCO Iraq Office completed a series of specialized training course for a National Team of Trainers. The course started in Erbil and continued for three days in Baghdad, from July 4 to 6, 2024. The aim was to prepare trainers and empower them with the skills to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to monitor violations and abuses against journalists and influencers in the virtual and digital space.

During the course, trainees received instructions on monitoring, documentation, and reporting mechanisms, based on the "AI Journalism Teachers' Guide 2024" recently published by UNESCO in Paris. Iraq is the third country in the world to train its journalists on these modern technologies.

The course included training on leading daily smart applications through the "Digital Reporting Platform for Iraqi

Female Journalists," which expanded with funding from the Dutch Embassy to include monitoring freedom of expression indicators. This initiative was supported by the Belgian company "AI Horizon Touch."

Equipped with these AI competencies, the trainees are able to integrate the real and digital worlds to monitor, document, and report violations via the

UNESCO platform. UNESCO is awaiting the completion of linking the digital platform with advanced AI algorithms, which will enable it to process reports and convert them into informational data that feeds into the periodic, thematic, and emergency reports of the United Nations related to freedom of expression, journalist safety, and media development in Iraq.



UNESCO and the Iraqi Judiciary train freedom of expression judges on the use of Artificial Intelligence in judicial processes

Baghdad, 11 August 2024 - UNESCO Iraq Office concluded an intensive training course for judges of publication and media courts from Baghdad and other provinces, focusing on the ethical and legal use of artificial intelligence in Iraqi courts. The course was held at the Judicial Development Institute, with the participation of judges from various courts in Baghdad and the provinces, excluding the Kurdistan region.

This training is part of the "Breaking the Silence" project, which aims to enhance governmental accountability and judicial procedures to protect journalists and combat impunity in its second phase, funded by the Dutch Embassy in Iraq.

The training covered essential topics related to "smart courts," legal text analysis, crime prediction, decision-making, judicial management, and how these stages can be implemented using artificial intelligence. UNESCO also presented global models of courts that



rely on artificial intelligence, as well as examples of smart courts.

The training also included discussions on crimes committed using or with the help of artificial intelligence and how Iraqi courts could address them. Additionally, there was a dedicated session on freedom of expression standards and issues related to journalism and media, led by Judge Amer Hassan of the Baghdad Publication Court.

The course concluded with a set of recommendations to advance the Iraqi judiciary's path in the field of artificial intelligence, alongside promoting freedom of expression and the safety of journalists. The recommendations emphasized the prominent role expected to be played by the Iraqi Freedom of Expression Judges Council, which comprises 39 judges, positioning it as a leading model in the Arab region, North Africa, and East Asia.

UNESCO conducts a specialized workshop on mechanisms for defending journalists

Baghdad, 13 August 2024 - UNESCO, in collaboration with the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists and the National Task Force for the Defense of Journalists, conducted a workshop in Baghdad on the legal frameworks for defending journalists who face legal prosecutions due to their work.

The workshop included recommendations on frameworks and mechanisms for defense and how to activate these important channels to protect the rights of this group. The initiative by the Supreme Judicial Council to form a Council of Judges for Freedom of Expression was also discussed, along with how this judicial

formation can be utilized to educate journalists and alert them to the risks they may face due to lawsuits filed against them.

UNESCO continues its efforts to mobilize civil society and journalists to achieve legal safety and protection from all types of risks they may encounter.

The Stevie Awards recognizes joint UNFPA Iraq and Rudaw Media Network 'Basics of Journalism' project

“The recognition of the 'Basics of Journalism' project by the Stevie® Awards underscores the pivotal role of collaboration and joint partnerships in advancing media training and empowerment initiatives in Iraq. This project, a partnership between UNFPA Iraq and Rudaw Media Network, is a significant step towards equipping young Iraqi women with the skills and knowledge needed to engage in responsible journalism and advocate for critical societal issues. Such initiatives exemplify the collective efforts required to foster an inclusive and dynamic media landscape that supports the aspirations of Iraqi youth.”



Baghdad, 26 August 2024 - The recognition of the “Basics of Journalism” project by the Stevie Awards underscores the pivotal role of collaboration and joint partnerships in advancing media training and empowerment initiatives in Iraq. This project, a partnership between UNFPA Iraq and Rudaw Media Network, is a significant step towards equipping young Iraqi women with the skills and knowledge needed to engage in responsible journalism and advocate for critical societal issues. Such initiatives exemplify the collective efforts required to foster an inclusive and dynamic media landscape that supports the aspirations of Iraqi youth.”

“We thank Rudaw Media Network and UNFPA Iraq for their commendable work on this project.” UNFPA Iraq: “We are very excited that our joint journalism project with Rudaw Media Network [Kurdish] won The Stevie Awards! Thank you to the UK in Iraq for supporting empowering women in journalism!” Excerpt on UNFPA from Rudaw statement: The third Stevie Award for Rudaw is a Bronze Award for the joint project between Rudaw and the United Nations to train women journalists in Kurdistan and Iraq. The Stevie committee deemed this Rudaw program worthy of this international award saying: “It’s a huge step, as it’s the first joint project of its kind between a

Middle Eastern media and the United Nations.” The committee said it believes that “while many other media are busy producing content in the field of gender equality, Rudaw is taking on a huge challenge to eliminate this inequality within the media workforce. This insistence on social development and community empowerment is a sign of Rudaw’s great change towards taking social responsibility.” So far, 159 women have participated in the joint project between Rudaw and the United Nations to train women journalists. The project is ongoing and this year 300 women will participate.

Garik Hayrapetyan, UNFPA representative in Iraq, said that Rudaw winning the award “is a testament to the transformative power of partnerships in advancing women’s empowerment and sustainable development.” Regarding the continuation of the project, he said: “Through our collaboration with Rudaw Media Network, we are building the skills of women journalists and strengthening their voices to champion issues that matter most to society.” Su King, deputy director of the UK Foreign Office’s Development Office, congratulated Rudaw and said: “Winning this internationally recognised “Stevie® Award” is a testament to the quality, innovation, and effectiveness of this training, serving as a benchmark for outstanding performance and a real achievement for both Rudaw and UNFPA.”

Yazidis Genocide

Yazidi survivors shared their powerful stories before the French Senate

Paris, France, 09 July 2024 - As IOM reports, Yazidi survivors shared their powerful stories before the French Senate, highlighting the resilience and strength of their community. Their heartfelt testimonies push for justice and the official recognition of the Yazidi genocide nearly 10 years on.



2,744 Yazidis returned home this week through IOM Facilitated Voluntary Movement programme

Baghdad, 26 July 2024 - With U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration’s support, 2,744 Yazidis returned home

this week through IOM Facilitated Voluntary Movement programme. IOM will continue to ensure a safe, dignified return for displaced Yazidis

and advocate for stability, security, and reconstruction in Sinjar.



Survivors' Voices Network expresses recovery and hope through art, 10 years after Yazidi genocide

Duhok, 31 July 2024 - On August 3rd, 2014, Daesh invaded West Ninewa in Iraq, targeting thousands of Yazidis. In Sinjar, militants waged a genocidal campaign against the Yazidi community. Iraq's Yazidi, Shabak, Turkmen and Christian communities are still recovering from this and other atrocities 10 years later – calling for justice, reparations and support to rebuild their lives.

The Survivors' Voices Network (SVN) is a group of Yazidi and other minority women survivors, supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq, who advocate for themselves, their communities, and other women who are hesitant to speak up. Most notably, they aim to ensure meaningful, representative, and unified participation of survivors in the implementation of the Yazidi Survivors Law. Enacted in 2021, this reparations law allows survivors to apply for financial compensation and other

benefits.

Ahead of the ten-year commemoration of the Yazidi Genocide, SVN gathered in Duhok for an art-based intervention to express themselves and convey their recovery and advocacy messages through art. Artworks produced will be showcased at the Yazidi Genocide Memorial on 3 August, 2024, in Solagh,

Sinjar.

This activity was possible thanks to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of the Netherlands.

By Megan Giovannetti, Strategic Communications Officer, IOM



Ten years after the Sinjar attacks, UN Special Representative Patten calls the international community to ensure that the voices and plight of survivors are not forgotten and to redouble efforts for justice, accountability and continued support



New York, 2 August 2024 - A decade since Da'esh tried to wipe out the Yazidi people in the Sinjar region in northern Iraq, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC), Ms. Pramila Patten, calls on the international community to ensure that the plight of Yazidis and other affected minorities remains at the center of policy discussions. On 3 August 2014, Da'esh attacked Sinjar, massacred thousands of men, abducted 6,417 Yazidis and subjected women and girls to different forms of brutal sexual violence, including rape and sexual slavery. A decade later, survivors from the Yazidi and other communities in Iraq are still demanding

tailored support to heal and rebuild their lives, as well as justice, accountability for the perpetrators and guarantees of non-repetition.

To date, 2,847 Yazidi remain missing, in addition to an unknown number of missing persons from other communities. Many survivors are likely still held in captivity or detention and may not disclose their identity due to fears of retaliation and being separated from their children. There is also a grave concern that Yazidi children are among the missing and may not know or remember their identity because they were too young at the time of abduction, were forcibly separated from their families or were born as a result of sexual violence.

Due to prevailing insecurity, the lack of basic services and limited job opportunities in Sinjar, many survivors and their families are unable to return to their ancestral homeland in a safe and dignified way. However, in 2021, a major milestone for transitional justice was achieved in Iraq, with the adoption of the Law on Support to Female Yazidi Survivors. "The Yazidi Survivor's Law is a strong sign of progress and commitment by the Iraqi government to the plight of survivors from the Yazidi, Turkmen, Shabak and Christian communities", SRSG Patten said. To date, the law has allowed some 1,600 survivors to receive

monthly reparation payments, as well as for the allocation of 262 plots of land to survivors. But more needs to be done to address survivor's needs and rights. "The government and international community should scale-up efforts to rebuild survivor's homelands and ensure the availability of services, including trauma-sensitive mental health services, education, and income generation opportunities", Special Representative Patten added.

Survivors of sexual violence perpetrated by Da'esh are still also waiting to see justice and accountability. However, perpetrators continue to be tried only for their affiliation with this terrorist organization, rather than for the crimes committed. "The fight against impunity must be a priority to guarantee these crimes will never happen again", SRSG Patten commented. "There can be no meaningful peace without reconciliation, no reconciliation without justice and no justice without accountability. My Office stands ready to support the government of Iraq in these important efforts."

The extreme brutality waged by Da'esh against the Yazidi community represents a dark moment in Iraq's history and must never be forgotten. SRSG Patten continues to stand in solidarity with all survivors in their quest for justice, reintegration and healing.

Marking ten years on the Sinjar Attack: UNITAD commemorates the Yazidi Genocide and other international crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) against the Yazidi community

Baghdad, 03 August 2024 - UNITAD stands somberly beside the Yazidi community in Iraq and around the world today to commemorate ten years since the start of the Sinjar attack, and the genocide and other international crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in the hours, days, weeks and months that followed.

“As we remember the devastating atrocities inflicted on the Yazidi community of Iraq starting with the attack on Sinjar ten years ago, continuing the pursuit of justice is more important than ever. UNITAD has worked to support accountability for ISIL (Da'esh) crimes for six years, including through a dedicated investigation focused on the crimes committed against the Yazidi community. As we honour the memory of victims of these atrocities, we must also recognize the steadfastness and resilience of the Yazidi community in their quest for full truth and accountability, so that these heinous crimes may never happen again,” said Ana Peyro Llopis, Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD.

As legally established by UNITAD and announced in May 2021, the Investigative Team has concluded, based on clear and convincing evidence, that the crimes committed by ISIL

(Da'esh) against the Yazidis constitute genocide.

These factual and legal findings of the Team are part of a case assessment that will be shared with the competent Iraqi judicial authorities, along with the underlying evidence, prior to the conclusion of the mandate.

To develop its assessment, among other activities, the Team collected information from witnesses and supported the Iraqi authorities in the excavation of 37 mass graves linked to these crimes. This has led to the remains of 186 identified Yazidi victims being returned for dignified burial. Additionally, the Team has identified and assessed over 60 Yazidi cultural heritage sites damaged or destroyed by ISIL (Da'esh). UNITAD has released a video that synthesizes the underlying testimonial, documentary, digital and forensic evidence supporting these findings.

“These findings represent a leap forward on the path towards meaningful accountability, supporting prosecutions of ISIL (Da'esh) perpetrators for international crimes, including genocide, in Iraq as well as in third states, where perpetrators have been seeking to escape justice,” she added.

“We remain hopeful that the pursuit for

justice will continue after the closure of UNITAD. There are still stories to be told, survivors to be heard, and perpetrators to be held accountable”, said Acting Special Advisor Peyro Llopis. “The Government of Iraq has repeatedly expressed its commitment to move forward with that work, and the Team remains encouraged by this commitment. While UNITAD will not exist anymore, the national capacities it has supported and the substantial digital archive it has consolidated remain a powerful tool that we hope will be made accessible for accountability purposes in Iraq and globally,” she added.

Over the past six years, UNITAD has worked closely with Yazidi survivors, victim families and the Yazidi community. “I wish to acknowledge the extent of their support, and the contribution the Yazidi survivors have made by coming forward to give their accounts and share their horrific stories and painful memories. They are, in many ways, inseparable from the legacy of the Team, and represent the reason why accountability for the international crimes committed by Da'esh in Iraq must continue”, concluded Acting Special Adviser Peyro Llopis.

DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai: “The United Nations reaffirms its commitment to supporting Yazidi survivors with continuous protection and recovery services.”



Erbil, 03 August 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC), Ghulam Isaczai, attended today in Erbil the 10th Commemoration of the Yazidi Genocide. Here is the text of his speech at this event:

“His Excellency President Nechirvan Barzani

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we gather with heavy hearts to commemorate and honor the memory of the victims of the Yazidi genocide.

We stand here in solidarity with the Yazidi families and survivors, recognizing their unimaginable loss and unwavering resilience.

Each life lost is a profound tragedy caused by heinous acts of ISIL terror, and it is

our duty to ensure their memories endure through our actions.

The United Nations reaffirms its commitment to supporting Yazidi survivors with continuous protection and recovery services.

We strongly advocate for justice and accountability, ensuring that perpetrators of these monstrous crimes are brought to justice.

Trials are not just about delivering justice; they are crucial to preserving the integrity of communities and avoiding collective blame.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, The safe, voluntary, dignified, and inclusive return of over 36,847 households displaced Yazidis in camps in KRI, in addition to informal sites in both KRI and Ninawa remains a priority.

This of course depends on conditions such as stability, security, provisions of services and robust reconstruction efforts for their return in Sinjar and beyond are in place.

DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai: “The United Nations reaffirms its commitment to supporting Yazidi survivors ... (continued)”

For the past decade, the UN has been a close partner of the Federal Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government, and local communities in Sinjar and areas of displacement to support the safe and dignified sustainable return of the displaced population through various programmes to bring back life and hope in Sinjar.

Allow me also to share with you an overview of some of those initiatives, including those jointly implemented with the Iraqi counterparts:

- **Livelihoods:** Since 2018, UN Agencies aided over 110,000 returnees to Sinjar, providing income generation tools and livelihood support.

- **Access to Shelter:** Over the last four years, UN-Habitat has reconstructed and rehabilitated over 3,830 shelters in Sinjar, in addition to 1,000 low-cost shelters in several villages, catering to the most vulnerable returnees.

- **Meanwhile,** they registered and processed more than 14,500 land ownership claims for the Yazidis in the district, leading to the issuance of over 14,500 land occupancy certificates.

While we strive for a durable solutions for Yazidi IDPs, we must not waver in our efforts to account for the 2600 missing Yazidi individuals.

Meanwhile, we stand together with the Iraqi authorities in their efforts in the timely provision of individual reparations and the coordination of other transitional justice measures to address the horrors of ISIL's genocide and crimes against humanity, as outlined in the Yazidi Survivors Law.

Additionally, central to our efforts is the principle of reparations: Over 1,830 survivors have already received support under the Yazidi Survivors' Law, a groundbreaking initiative aimed at recognizing the harm inflicted and aiding in rebuilding shattered lives.

Reparations and transitional justice are not only important as the official recognition of suffering of the Yazidi community, but also for the collective healing of the country.

This is in addition to support covering: access to Health and Medical Care, water and sanitation, education, infrastructure, and protection services.

The Yazidi community's resilience is nothing short of inspirational.

Their stories of courage and strength amidst adversity must be shared to foster greater understanding and solidarity.

By supporting their recovery, reconstruction, and healing, we uphold their dignity and contribute to global justice.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, as we reflect on the Yazidi genocide, we renew our pledge to preserve Yazidi culture and heritage.

Their rich traditions and history must be safeguarded for future generations. Let us also remember that the Yazidi genocide stands as a stark reminder of the need for global vigilance against atrocities of this magnitude.

Through awareness and international solidarity, we can strive towards a world where such horrors are never repeated.

In conclusion, let us stand together, honoring the memory of the Yazidi victims, supporting their families and survivors, and advocating for justice, recovery, and lasting peace.

Every voice counts in this journey towards healing and reconciliation.

Thank you.”

Gigauri: "We join the Yazidi community in Iraq, and around the world in your grief and remain committed in your journey of healing, recovery and fight for justice."

Solang, Iraq, 03 August 2024 - A statement by Giorgi Gigauri, IOM Iraq's Chief of Mission, on the commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of Yazidi Genocide:

“Ten years ago on August 3rd, 2014, the Yazidi community endured one of the worst atrocities committed against humanity. Your pain and grief remain in our collective mourning. On behalf of the International Organization for Migration, I offer our deepest

sympathies and condolences. We join the Yazidi community in Iraq, and around the world, in your grief and remain committed to supporting you in your journey of healing, recovery and fight for justice. We will advocate for an increase in access to public services, timely reparations, preservation of Yazidi cultural heritage and supporting the survivors. Together we can make a difference and work towards a future free from such atrocities.

I hope resilience and progress for you.”



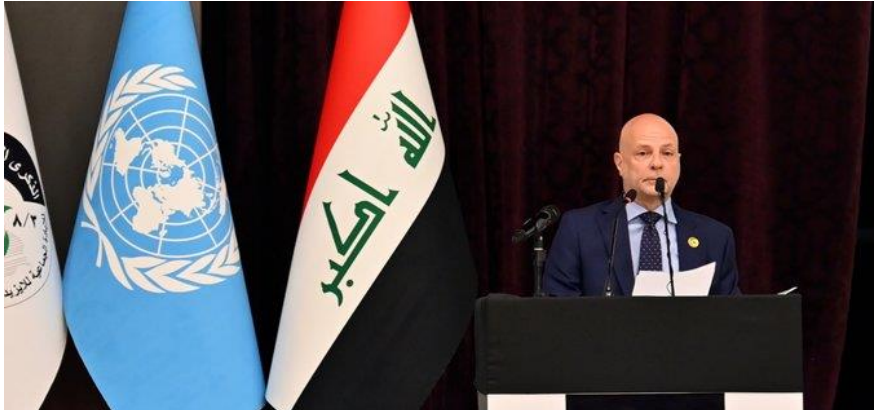
Joint efforts to promote the rights of Yazidis and other minorities through the Yazidi Survivors Law

Baghdad, 14 August 2024 - Italian Embassy in Iraq, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation and IOM joined forces to support the General Directorate for Survivors Affairs and national partners, in promoting the rights of Yazidis and other minorities through the Yazidi Survivors Law.

Supporting ongoing efforts, this new partnership will help improve survivors' access to: education, employment and protection services.



DSRSG Cordone: “Today we are renewing our commitment to healing the wounds that were opened in August 2014 and laying the foundations for a society in which such atrocities will not be repeated.”



Baghdad, 05 August 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and UNAMI Officer-in-Charge, Claudio Cordone, attended today the 10-Year Commemoration of the Yazidi Genocide in Baghdad.

Here is the text of his remarks at this event:

“Your Excellency, Prime Minister Muhammad Shia al-Sudani, Survivors and families of the victims of the Yazidi genocide, Distinguished participants, Thank you for the invitation to speak at this event.

Let me start by expressing the United Nations’ deep solidarity with all the victims of what has been one of the sickest and most dangerous ideologies in history. Da’esh focused on the Yazidis with particular ferocity, although other minorities were also targeted, as well as Shia and Sunnis. So many lives were lost, so many unspeakable atrocities were committed, and the crimes committed are still impacting the lives of survivors.

Among the Yazidis, there are still more than 2,600 missing. Mass graves have yet to be excavated. And more than 200,000 Yazidis remain displaced, many still living in camps in the Kurdistan Region. Others have returned, but without sufficient

support and services they need to live normal lives.

“This genocide is the latest of many more in our history” some Yazidis have told me, “we cannot look to the future with any hope”.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We need to restore hope in the future. Today we are renewing our commitment to healing the wounds that were opened in August 2014 and laying the foundations for a society in which such atrocities will not be repeated. I wish here to highlight three critical requirements for progressing in this direction.

First, reparations. This is key to assisting survivors in rebuilding their lives. In this context, the adoption of the 2021 Yazidi Survivors’ Law was an important initiative, and I welcome the fact that nearly 2,000 survivors are benefitting from it. But the law should be implemented at greater speed and expanded to all victims, including children born of rape.

Second, returns. In order to ensure safe, voluntary, dignified and inclusive returns, displaced Yazidis need political and administrative stability in Sinjar and elsewhere. They also need security forces they can trust. These conditions are also necessary for reconstruction to pick up pace. This is what will allow people to return and rebuild their homes as well as their

lives. This is also the right way to work towards the closure of displacement camps.

Third, justice. Efforts must continue to hold accountable those responsible for the crimes committed by Da’esh, by holding fair trials in Iraq, or in other countries through cooperation with the Iraqi judiciary. Trials are also important to identify the individual perpetrators, thus avoiding an entire community from being blamed. And just as we pursue those responsible for atrocities, we should recognize those who took risks to protect their Yazidi neighbours.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me a final word on the role of the United Nations. Next month, UNITAD will end its mission in Iraq. We appreciate their work in investigating the crimes committed by Da’esh members, and look forward to the work of UNITAD being continued by Iraqi institutions, the Council of Representatives and the judiciary. At the end of next year, UNAMI too will conclude its mission in Iraq. However, the United Nations Country Team will remain and continue to work with the Iraqi government, state institutions and civil society in fighting extremism and supporting its survivors.

In conclusion, let us remind ourselves that Da’esh, while largely defeated, is still a serious threat in Iraq and globally. Regrettably, other forms of extremism and intolerance are widespread across the world.

Here in Iraq we all have a responsibility to work in building a society in which diversity is a source of richness, not a threat. What is at stake is not only the future of the Yazidi community in Iraq, but also the future of Iraq as a pluralistic country in which the human rights of everyone are respected.

On this tenth anniversary, let us recommit ourselves to this goal. Thank you.”

When words fail, art speaks

Solagh, 12 August 2024 - Survivors of the Yazidi genocide expressed their journey of recovery and resilience through their artworks, which were featured at the Yazidi Genocide Memorial in Solagh, Sinjar at the 10-year commemoration.



Sinjar: challenges and resilience ten years after the Yazidi Genocide in Iraq

Copenhagen, Denmark, 22 August 2024 - Ten years after the Islamic State (IS) attacked and seized Sinjar in northern Iraq, initiating a genocidal campaign against Yazidis, over 200,000 Yazidis survivors are still displaced and living in camps across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq under precarious conditions, fearful of returning to a home in ruins.

The trauma of the genocide persists, especially as many family members are still missing.

"It is important for me that the perpetrators know that no matter what happened to us with the genocide, we will never give up and that we are ready to rebuild our communities from the rubble," said Hakeema Taha, a Yazidi survivor who attended a panel discussion at the UN City in Copenhagen on Tuesday organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Êzidi Cultural Association in Denmark on the 10th year commemoration of the attack.

The event, attended by approximately 250 visitors, aimed to honour the memory of the victims, recognize the resilience of the victims and promote a dialogue on the current challenges and opportunities for the Yazidi community. In addition to the screening of the documentary 'Mediha', participants were also able to visit the exhibition 'Breaking the Silence' promoted by the Danish NGO Mission East, displaying paintings created by Yazidi women and girls' survivors.

Since the attack on 3 August 2014, more than 5,500 Yazidis have been killed by IS forces, who perpetrated mass executions, forced conversions, abduction and enslavement, systematic



sexual violence and other heinous acts. "In 2014, about 6,300 Yazidi women and girls were abducted and subjected to sexual slavery; ten years later, more than 2,000 men and women remain in captivity," Bahzad A. Mourad, chairman of the Êzidi Cultural Association in Denmark pointed out. "We won't stop until the last member of our community is freed and reunited with their families."

In addition to the human toll, IS destroyed public infrastructure and homes in Sinjar, sabotaging irrigation canals and wells and destroying farming systems to make the land infertile.

Since 2014, IOM Iraq has collaborated closely with national partners to support the Yazidi community, focusing on immediate support to survivors, while facilitating longer-term solutions to a complex set of challenges. For example, IOM has assisted victims' families in seeking justice and access to compensation and reintegration services to survivors provided under the Yazidi Survivor Law, established by the Government of Iraq in 2021 to

support the recovery and reconstruction of communities affected by the violence. In November 2023, IOM and local actors inaugurated the Yazidi Genocide Memorial in Solagh, Sinjar, to honor the lives lost during the genocide, and to provide survivors a space for mourning.

Despite continuing hardship, the Yazidi community is working together to rebuild their homeland with remarkable achievements. However, to achieve durable solutions to displacement for Yazidis who have returned, and those who wish to do so, funding remains needed to address the lack of adequate housing and basic services, including running water, electricity, healthcare, psychosocial support and access to education.

"Ten years after the brutal attacks on the Yazidi community in northern Iraq, we remain committed to supporting Yazidis and other minorities in Iraq, and their sustainable recovery remains at the centre of IOM's work in Iraq and our global advocacy efforts," highlighted Caroline Hendersen, Deputy Chief of Mission at IOM Iraq.

Victims of Terrorism

International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism | 21 August

New York, 21 August 2024 - Memories | This exhibit aims to raise awareness about the human stories that lie at the heart of each victim and survivor of terrorism, as well as the long-lasting impact each terrorist attack has on its surviving victims. It also seeks to highlight the commonalities that connect victims across the world and to emphasize the importance of preventing terrorist attacks and the emergence of new victims.

This exhibit is organized by the Global Victims of Terrorism Support Programme of the Counter-Terrorism Center (UNCCT) of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), in connection with the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism (21 August).

Browse through the "Memories" exhibition: <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/memories-campaign-2022>



UNITAD supports an intensive training program focused on Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS)

Baghdad, 03 July 2024 - The Iraqi Medico-Legal Directorate (MLD), supported by UNITAD, has successfully concluded an intensive training program focused on Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS).

This training, which took place in Dresden, Germany, was organized by UNITAD's Forensic Science Unit (FSU), in cooperation with qualitytype GmbH. Seven national experts (3 females and 4 males) from the MLD Forensic DNA Laboratory in Baghdad took part in the training which aimed to enhance DNA testing and matching capabilities, to help expedite the identification of skeletal remains from

mass graves in Iraq.

The participants expressed their appreciation for the training, noting that the skills and knowledge acquired will significantly improve their forensic practices and contribute to the broader efforts of the MLD. They also stressed

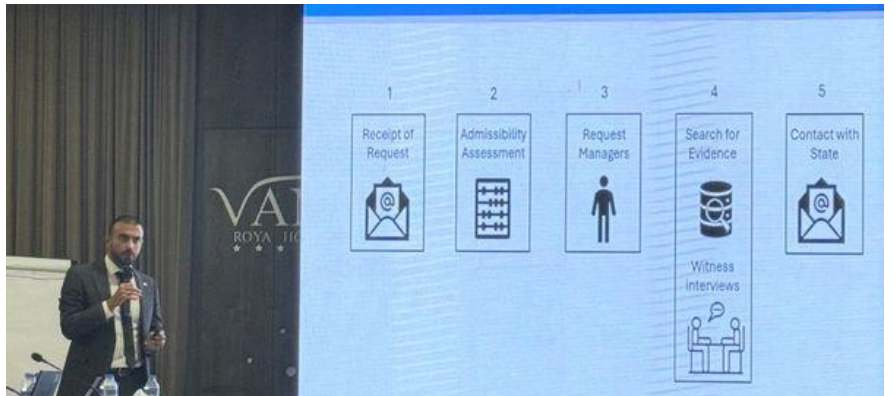
the importance of further advanced technical training in this field.

Over the past months UNITAD has intensified its capacity building initiatives to enhance national capabilities in Iraq, as the Team concludes its mandate in September.



UNITAD conducts a workshop on cooperation with 3rd States and responding to requests for legal assistance

Erbil, 28 July 2024 - UNITAD's Jurisdictional Support Unit conducted a 2-day workshop in Erbil for 30 members of the Judiciary of Federal Iraq and Kurdistan Region, and experts of the National Coordinating Committee (NCC), on cooperation with 3rd States and responding to requests for legal assistance. The training is a part of UNITAD's capacity building efforts for national specialists in close coordination with Iraq, and in line with the Team's drawdown as it prepares for an orderly closure by September 2024.



UNITAD and Iraqi Authorities conclude excavations of a complex mass grave site near Tel Afar



Baghdad, 08 August 2024 - The Iraqi Mass Graves Directorate (MGD), assisted by the Iraqi Medico-Legal Directorate (MLD) and the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), concluded the excavations of a mass grave site in Bir Alou Antar, near Tel Afar. UNITAD extended technical support to

the national teams onsite and provided essential equipment to prepare for the excavations, which started on 22 May 2024 and continued for almost 3 months. Initial analysis indicates that this complex site, a sinkhole, contains remains of ISIL (Da'esh) victims from the Yazidi and Shia communities. Victims were brought there to be executed on site or arrived already

dead, only for their bodies to be thrown in. The remains of 158 bodies and 39 body parts have been recovered so far and transported to the MLD facilities in Baghdad for identification.

As a sinkhole, the excavation was one of the most challenging and intensive excavations ever undertaken by MGD, MLD and UNITAD. It was classified as high-risk to the personnel undertaking it, who were faced with potential rock collapses, among several other challenges. To prepare for the excavations, UNITAD experts worked jointly with the MGD over the past 12 months, by conducting several missions to the site, and using cutting-edge digital forensic research and analysis to help assess and mitigate the risks.

Excavations of mass grave sites have been crucial for revealing the fate of thousands of Iraqi victims of ISIL

UNITAD and Iraqi Authorities conclude excavations of a complex mass grave site near Tel Afar *(continued)*

(Da'esh) atrocities. "This site is emblematic as it clearly shows the systematic and planned nature of the international crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq," said Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Ana Peyró Llopis, adding: "we hope that this

work will lead to the identification of more victims, offering their families some solace."

To maximize the number of identifications, the MLD previously conducted three antemortem campaigns, in addition to a fourth

campaign that was supported by UNITAD. Families are encouraged to take part in antemortem campaigns to support ongoing identification efforts. For more information on the excavation, watch the video at <https://youtu.be/jmEowio0tXs>

UNITAD delivers milestone results to the Supreme Judicial Council

Baghdad, 11 August 2024 - The Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Ms. Ana Peyró Llopis delivered on 11 August 2024 to H.E. Faiq Zaidan, President of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), information collected by the Team from the Iraqi authorities, notably the SJC, and open sources, which has been processed for legal review and formatted in a standardized e-discovery file format. The Team had previously delivered an original, unaltered version of some of this information to the SJC in March.

This structured version, which enhances searchability of the information through categorization and tagging, is what UNITAD has relied upon to rapidly identify materials relevant to its investigations and respond to requests from third States.

An analytical report produced by the Team on the crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) against women and children from the Shi'a Turkmen community was also delivered along with the underlying evidence originally collected by UNITAD in the field. Based on this information, the report concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that ISIL (Da'esh) committed international crimes through the criminal conduct of, among others, murder, imprisonment, torture, rape,



sexual slavery and persecution on religious grounds. Additionally, underlying evidence originally collected by UNITAD for an already published report ("Report on Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls Committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq") was delivered separately.

Finally, original copies of 55 forensic reports and other analytical products prepared by the Team were delivered with the aim of further contributing to the work of the Iraqi authorities on mass grave excavations and their related investigations. UNITAD and the Government of Iraq have excavated 68 mass grave sites across Iraq linked to the crimes of ISIL (Da'esh) since the beginning of the mandate, most

recently near Tal Afar, and have worked closely together on the identification and return of victim remains from these excavations.

The Acting Special Adviser noted that "these results are a milestone in our work and demonstrate delivery of our mandate in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 2379 (2017) and UNITAD's Terms of Reference." She added that "this structured version of the information is a major achievement that has supported the investigative work of the Team and resulted in reports like the ones delivered today. This powerful tool must continue to be used to advance ISIL (Da'esh) accountability efforts in Iraq and globally".

UNITAD and Nineveh Court of Appeal acknowledge close collaboration and successful completion of digitization project preserving millions of pages of ISIL-related evidence

Baghdad, 14 August 2024 - In the context of the conclusion of UNITAD's mandate, Acting Special Advisor Ana Peyró Llopis met with Honorable Judge Raed Hameed Al-Muslih, President of Nineveh Court of Appeal in Mosul, on 13 August 2024.

During the meeting, the Acting Special Adviser thanked Judge Raed Hameed Al-Muslih for his close collaboration and support, underscoring the successful completion of UNITAD's Digitization Project, as supported by

Iraqi counterparts and the European Union.

In the context of this project, over 18 million pages of documentary evidence, gathered by Iraqi authorities, have been digitized, ensuring the preservation and storage of these records for future use in investigations and prosecutions of ISIL (Da'esh) perpetrators.

UNITAD established a dedicated team and leveraged state-of-the-art technology and advanced equipment for

this project in 2020, which was reinforced by comprehensive specialized in-house training to the judiciary.

The collection in the Nineveh Court of Appeal now includes over 4 million pages of judicial and investigative documents related to ISIL (Da'esh)'s crimes, all processed. In addition, several hundred electronic devices previously utilized by ISIL (Da'esh) operatives have been submitted to the courts in Nineveh, where UNITAD's

UNITAD and Nineveh Court of Appeal acknowledge close collaboration ... *(continued)*

forensic expertise has been instrumental in extracting and analyzing digital evidence.

Judge Raed Hameed Al-Muslih expressed his gratitude to UNITAD for the collaboration over the past years and recognized the important role of the Team in supporting the Court to ensure swift and efficient access to both evidence and historical documents.

The close cooperation between UNITAD and Iraqi judicial authorities to support accountability efforts for ISIL (Da'esh) crimes, in Iraq and third States, was also highlighted during the meeting.



Sustaining UNITAD's witness protection and support efforts in Iraq

Baghdad, 22 August 2024 - As UNITAD concludes its mandate, the Team highlights the important role that the UNITAD Witness Protection and Support Unit (WPSU) has played by ensuring the safety and well-being of witnesses involved in documenting ISIL (Da'esh)'s atrocities committed in Iraq. Over the years, UNITAD has developed and implemented a comprehensive witness protection and support strategy that has provided crucial services to those who have come forward to share their stories with the Team.

Through a series of capacity-building initiatives, UNITAD has also contributed to strengthen Iraq's capacity to protect and support witnesses, ensuring that these critical efforts will continue to benefit the country long after UNITAD's mandate concludes on 17 September 2024. Key

achievements include the enhancement of national mental health and protection practitioners' skills through targeted capacity-building programs, which have significantly bolstered Iraq's ability to manage the psychosocial needs of witnesses.

In particular, from January to August 2024, UNITAD's WPSU conducted 12 training courses, spanning 31 days and reaching 155 participants. These sessions, tailored to the specific needs of service providers, took place in key governorates such as Baghdad, Ninawa, Dohuk, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah. These trainings ensured that 18 partners are now equipped to provide essential services to witnesses.

Partnerships with local authorities, national institutions, and both national and international civil society organizations have been central to

UNITAD's approach. A notable achievement has been the development of a close working relationship with the Iraq Witness Protection Unit (IWPU). UNITAD's WPSU delivered a bespoke training package to 11 members of the newly established IWPU in Baghdad, focusing on both protection skills and coping mechanisms for survivors. This training was reinforced by a refresher course in July 2024, ensuring that the skills and knowledge gained were retained and effectively applied. The Team also extended similar support and training to the competent authorities in the Kurdistan Region.

UNITAD's capacity-building efforts intend to ensure the sustainability in Iraq of the Team's work after the conclusion of its mandate so that witnesses are protected, and psychosocial concerns are addressed.

UNITAD on X

Baghdad, 22 August 2024 - On this International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, we recall the targeted manner in which ISIL attacked and tore apart communities of different religions and beliefs across Iraq a decade ago, forcing those they captured to convert to their interpretation of Islam. As the Investigative Team concludes its mandate, it recognizes the brave and indelible contribution made by the survivors, witnesses and communities of these attacks to its work and the accountability process. The legacy of their contribution will continue to serve as a beacon of hope for all who have been targeted because of their religion or belief.



Baghdad, 26 August 2024 - Acting Special Adviser Ana Peyró Llopis met Dr. Zeidan Khalaf, Chair of the National Coordination Committee, to continue discussions on the conclusion of UNITAD activities by 17 September. The A/SA thanked the NCC for its cooperation in ensuring an orderly closure.

UNITAD delivers processed information to Kurdistan Regional Government

Erbil, 25 August 2024 – On 25 August 2024, the Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Ms. Ana Peyró Llopis, delivered processed information held by the Team to Dr. Dindar Zebari, Coordinator for International Advocacy, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

This information, received from judicial and non-judicial authorities in the Kurdistan Region in support of the UNITAD mandate, was enhanced by the Team through categorization and tagging, and analyzed for legal review. It represents an important step forward towards facilitating the rapid identification and handling of information that may be relevant to investigations when used in conjunction with appropriate e-discovery software and remains critical for accountability efforts in Iraq and beyond.

Ms. Peyró Llopis emphasized the importance of this delivery, noting that “the structured version of this information represents a major step



forward in our efforts to support the Kurdistan Region's investigative processes. This information is crucial for advancing accountability for the crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh), both within Iraq and globally.” She also reiterated UNITAD's gratitude to the KRG for the constructive engagement

over the years.

Another version of this information, in its original, unaltered state as created and stored digitally when collected by the Team, was delivered on 11 July 2024 to the KRG. This was done to protect its use and integrity in judicial proceedings.

UNITAD delivers four investigative reports on crimes committed by Da'esh (ISIL) to the Supreme Judicial Council

Baghdad, 26 August 2024 - On behalf of UNITAD, Ms. Defne Akça, Chief of Investigations, delivered four reports presenting the findings of investigations into acts committed by ISIL (Da'esh) that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), along with a package of underlying evidence for each, including evidence originally collected by UNITAD.

The reports present findings of atrocities committed by Da'esh (ISIL) against victims from wide-ranging communities of Iraqi society, during the

terrorist group's occupation of large parts of Iraq between 2014 and 2017. In addition to internal analytical work products on the military structure of ISIL (Da'esh) and its Delegated Committee, the delivered reports detail acts which UNITAD has reasonable grounds to believe amount to international crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) against the Christians of Iraq, as well as victims in Tikrit, al-Alam, al-Dour and al-Dhuluiya.

Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Ms. Ana Peyró Llopis, noted in a statement that “The reports and underlying evidence delivered today

underscore that crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq affected various Iraqi communities. The delivery of UNITAD's factual and legal assessments and underlying evidence collected by UNITAD is a critical contribution towards domestic efforts to hold ISIL (Da'esh) accountable. Today we have taken another step towards fulfilling our mandate in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 2379 (2017) and UNITAD's Terms of Reference, before its closure on 17 September 2024.”

UNITAD archive delivered to the United Nations Secretariat

New York, 30 August 2024 – On 28 August 2024, the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL, led by Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Ms. Ana Peyró Llopis, delivered its archive to the United Nations Secretariat. This archive totals 52.62 terabytes of material collected from a diverse range of sources, including from the Iraqi authorities and other information

providers, as well as work products originally produced by the Team. A copy of both original and processed versions of the materials are included in the archive.

The Team has delivered a significant amount of materials from this archive to the relevant Iraqi authorities as part of its mandate in line with Security Council resolutions 2379 (2017) and 2697 (2023), as well as its Terms of Reference (S/2018/118, Annex) and the

Report of the Secretary General (S/2024/20). In August 2024, the Team delivered a structured version of these materials, enriched by UNITAD through categorization and tagging and organized in a manner that facilitates the rapid identification of information relevant to investigations for accountability purposes. Original, unaltered versions of these materials were returned for preservation purposes in March, June and July

UNITAD archive delivered to the United Nations Secretariat *(continued)*

2024. Materials from open sources, collected by the Team to support its investigations, have been delivered as well. The Team has already delivered twelve (12) case assessments and analytical reports focused on acts by ISIL (Da'esh) that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide as well as underlying witness interviews originally collected by UNITAD in the field, and forensic reports and other forensic work products. At least seven (7) additional case assessments and analytical reports are planned for delivery to the Iraqi authorities prior to closure on 17 September 2024. These materials are being delivered in line with UNITAD's Terms of Reference which underline, among others, that the Team "obtain from witnesses and other sources their informed consent for the Investigative Team to share evidence with Iraqi and other domestic investigative, prosecutorial and judicial authorities". The archive delivered to the United Nations Secretariat contains a copy of the materials delivered to the Iraqi authorities, which will be kept by the United Nations as part of its records and archives, together with other materials originally collected by the Team. These other materials, which will be stored with the United Nations,



include witness interviews; screening notes taken by investigative units during their engagement with impacted communities and other relevant individuals; other work products produced by the Team, such as forensic, investigative and analytical reports; and materials from third States, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, and individuals.

The Acting Special Adviser noted that "the delivery of a comprehensive and structured archive is an important achievement for accountability purposes. The processed version of UNITAD's archive has supported the

investigative work of the Team and facilitated the provision of assistance for investigations in Iraq and for prosecutions in third States. This powerful tool must continue to be used to advance ISIL (Da'esh) accountability efforts in Iraq and globally".

Following the delivery of the archive, the Acting Special Adviser updated United Nations Security Council members at the expert level on the implementation of mandated activities by the Team and the progress being made in its drawdown and liquidation since the final mandated report and briefing to the United Nations Security Council in June.

Migrations

Switzerland bolsters support for displaced people in Iraq with USD 1 Million donation

Baghdad, 15 July 2024 - UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, welcomes the recent donation of 940,000 Swiss Francs (approximately one million US dollars) from the Government of Switzerland. This funding will strengthen UNHCR's programmes supporting refugees, internally displaced Iraqis and individuals at risk of statelessness in Iraq.

In particular, Switzerland's contribution will enable UNHCR to maintain its core protection activities – including registration and legal assistance – while also strengthening national systems that support refugees on par with Iraqi nationals. It will also support UNHCR's efforts to address the remaining needs for civil documentation among vulnerable displaced Iraqis. Since 2019, together with the Iraqi government, UNHCR has helped over 200,000 Iraqis obtain

vital documents enabling them to access their most basic rights.

"Switzerland is dedicated to safeguarding human rights and supporting conflict-affected communities in Iraq. Through our partnership with UNHCR, we strive to empower refugees and achieve sustainable solutions for displaced populations," said H.E. Emilija Georgieva, the Swiss Ambassador to Iraq based in Jordan, Amman.

The majority of refugees in Iraq are Syrians residing in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). Most already have access to quality education and public health services, and also have opportunities to develop their livelihoods, mainly in the informal sector. Iraqi authorities have demonstrated a strong commitment to assume more responsibility towards Syrian and other refugees, however,

continued donor support is crucial to ensure national structures are strengthened and able to service refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

"The partnership with Switzerland has been instrumental in helping UNHCR support long-term solutions for displaced populations in Iraq by further capacitating relevant authorities to deliver national IDs," said Pauline Fresneau, UNHCR's Acting



Switzerland bolsters support for displaced people in Iraq with USD 1 Million donation *(continued)*

Representative in Iraq. UNHCR deeply appreciates Switzerland's continued commitment to international protection, which remains a priority in Iraq as an integral part of solutions for displacement." Switzerland remains one of UNHCR's key governmental partners, both globally and in Iraq. Flexible and predictable support from Switzerland has ensured that vital resources are available for the most pressing needs, as well as to help build the capacity of

authorities and strengthen public services to facilitate refugee inclusion. Iraq generously hosts about 300,000 refugees. While the majority reside within towns, villages and cities alongside Iraqi communities, about 32 percent reside in nine refugee camps in the KR-I. Refugees have limited prospects to return to their country given the ongoing insecurity and human rights and humanitarian law violations and abuse, and thus require continued support to become self-

reliant and active members of their communities. There are also over 1 million Iraqis remain internally displaced with some 150,000 living in 21 IDP camps in the KR-I and for whom we will continue to work with the authorities to find dignified and sustainable solutions, including safe and voluntary return to areas of origin, relocation to other areas within the country, and local inclusion.



Kurdistan introduces the new Administrative Instructions for asylum-seekers, establishing a clear legal and procedural framework

Erbil, 10 July 2024 - Kurdistan has introduced the new Administrative Instructions for asylum-seekers, establishing a clear legal and procedural framework. "This framework aims at safeguarding the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in Kurdistan Region of Iraq" said His

Excellency Masrour Barzani, the Prime Minister of Kurdistan Regional Government. UNHCR Iraq is committed to supporting the Kurdistan Regional Government in implementing these vital guidelines. Together, we are making a difference!



IOM hosts consultations in Baghdad on return, readmission, and reintegration of migrants and displaced Iraqis

Baghdad, 22 July 2024 - IOM hosted consultations in Baghdad on return, readmission, and reintegration of migrants and displaced Iraqis. Representatives from the Ministry of Migration and Displaced and other key stakeholders discussed enhancing coordination among relevant actors at various stages. "Iraq has made significant progress in migration governance. We hope for further developments in the field of migration data management and support in addressing migration-related issues", said Ismail Khalil Dahash, Director of the Organizations and International Cooperation

Department, the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displaced. "With the improved security situation in Iraq, voluntary returns have progressed. However, challenges remain in supporting returnees from abroad, particularly in ensuring

necessary economic services and reintegration", said Dr. Ahmed Miran, International Criminal law specialist, The Judicial Council, KRI. This activity was supported by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Baghdad.



IOM upgrades a women's shelter in Sulaymaniyah

Sulaymaniyah, 08 August 2024 - To enhance access to protection services for victims of violence and trafficking in Sulaymaniyah, IOM has upgraded a women's shelter. It now offers a safer and more welcoming environment for those seeking counseling, accommodation, mental health, medical or legal support.



On World Day against Trafficking in Persons 2024, UN Network on Migration in Iraq calls for stepped up efforts to combat the crime

Iraq, 30 July 2024 - Despite the stability and security the country is enjoying today after years of challenges, Iraq remains exposed to the crime of human trafficking. And although much progress has been made since Iraq ratified the UN "Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children", much more is needed to combat this flagrant violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Iraq, both a source and destination country for victims of trafficking, is especially vulnerable to the threat of human trafficking. The majority of trafficked persons are women and children. Yet, perpetrators continue to operate with impunity, exploiting new technologies, social media and the dark web to evade detection and to both ensnare potential victims and to attract potential customers for their human commodity.

Significant efforts have been made to counter human trafficking in Iraq. But there is still a long road ahead to address gaps in the prevention and protection of victims of trafficking in Iraq, and the prosecution of perpetrators.

With robust government action, combined with the support of the United Nations, further progress can be made.

Today, on World Day against Trafficking in Persons, the United Nations Network on Migration

(UNNM) in Iraq calls for joint action to end human trafficking, especially for all child victims of trafficking, keeping the needs of survivors at the heart of our prevention and response plans.

"It is of the greatest urgency that all such children are identified, removed from the exploitative situation, and given adequate care and support as soon as possible", said Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq. "With strong advocacy and sincere action by all stakeholders, Iraq can achieve results in combating trafficking in persons."

This year's global campaign to "leave no child behind in the fight against human trafficking" aims to accelerate action by addressing the root causes such as poverty, inadequate support for unaccompanied children during migration and refugee flows; in addition to strengthening child protection systems, implementing child-sensitive justice mechanisms to hold perpetrators, particularly traffickers, accountable.

In 2022, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) established the Trafficking in Persons (TiP) working group under the UN Network on Migration (UNNM) in Iraq, to advocate for the rights of all victims of trafficking,

ensuring their protection and adequate provision of services. The TiP working group supports the Government of Iraq to eliminate human trafficking by implementing the international TiP framework, also known as the 4Ps Paradigm: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership.

The UNNM group advocates for the Government of Iraq to strengthen its law on Trafficking in Persons (No.28 of 2012) to guarantee that the rights of victims of trafficking are respected. More specifically, more work needs to be done to ensure:

1. Access to shelter is an unconditional right of a victim of trafficking, including for male and minor victims.
2. Victims of trafficking are not criminalized under other laws (such as the Residency Law or Prostitution Law).
3. Government mechanisms and local actors are better equipped to identify, investigate, and respond to potential TiP cases.
4. Child trafficking factors are analyzed, understood and fully addressed.

The UN Network on Migration renews its support for Iraq in combating this crime. On World Day against Trafficking in Persons, let us work together to tackle this file for the benefit of all Iraqis.



IOM on X

Baghdad, 30 July 2024 - On World Day of Trafficking in Persons, IOM reaffirms its commitment to supporting our national partners in Iraq in combating and preventing human trafficking.

We should ensure that we do not overlook the most vulnerable, including women and children.

#EndHumanTrafficking



Humanitarian

More ID cards for displaced and returnee Iraqis to be issued, aiding the government's transition to electronic services

Kirkuk, 23 June 2024 - IOM and U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration provided logistical support to the National Unified ID Card Directorates in Al-Riyadh and Al-Abbasi sub-districts in Kirkuk. It will help them issue more ID cards for displaced and returnee Iraqis, aiding the government's transition to electronic services.



The Joint Coordination Forum in Anbar, meets in Ramadi with UN agencies and NGOs

Ramadi, 27 June 2024 - The Joint Coordination Forum in Anbar, co-chaired by Anbar local government representatives and IOM, met in Ramadi with UN agencies and NGOs. They discussed the return of displaced persons, service provision, and area rehabilitation, with a focus on access constraints in western Anbar.



2024 Humanitarian Transition Overview: Iraq's journey towards sustainable solutions

Baghdad, 30 June 2024 – On behalf of the Humanitarian Country Team, the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Iraq has published the Humanitarian Transition Overview (HTO) for 2024. The overview provides an in-depth summary of Iraq's humanitarian efforts throughout 2023, highlighting significant advancements in the country's journey towards sustainable solutions.

Under the leadership of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, the HTO was developed through extensive consultations with Humanitarian actors and the government of Iraq to identify critical humanitarian gaps and challenges that require continuing attention. It emphasizes achievements under the Durable Solutions framework, showcasing notable progress in enhancing local capacity and governance within humanitarian sectors.

In 2023, the focus shifted towards

transferring humanitarian operations and coordination responsibilities to Iraq's line ministries and the Kurdistan Regional Government. This transition began with the deactivation of the Humanitarian Cluster system in December 2022 and has since evolved into sector coordination and working groups jointly led with relevant ministries. At the sub-national level, Joint Coordination Forums have been established in five conflict affected governorates to facilitate interactions between humanitarian/development entities and local government.

"The transition underscores Iraq's increasing leadership in humanitarian sectors which is supported by UN technical guidance and NGO expertise—all geared towards finding durable solutions to humanitarian challenges," remarked Ghulam M. Isaczai, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq.

The UN and partners reaffirm their commitment to addressing remaining

humanitarian needs and ensuring dignified, safe, and voluntary solutions for displaced people.

Download the report here: <https://bit.ly/3zpDStg>



USAID funds WFP assistance to displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees in northern Iraq

Baghdad, 07 August 2024 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a generous contribution of US\$2.2 million from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) to support internally displaced Iraqis, as well as Syrian refugees, living in camps in northern Iraq.

The funds will allow WFP to provide food assistance for 41,000 people living in camps in northern Iraq, who have little to no sources of income and rely on WFP's monthly assistance for their food needs.

A recent WFP survey at the Al Ja'ada camp for refugees and internally



displaced people – known as Al Jada'a 1 – found that 60 percent of the center's residents have to resort to coping strategies that may compromise their long-term well-being.

"We must not forget that even now, in 2024, there are still those living in camps and unable to return to their homes for a myriad of reasons," said WFP Deputy Country Director Ekram

USAID funds WFP assistance to displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees in northern Iraq *(continued)*

El-Huni. “Despite the great reductions in funding brought about by an unfortunate increase in humanitarian crises globally, WFP will continue to help those most vulnerable families.”

Across Iraq, WFP has made significant advances in transitioning from crisis response to development and resilience-building activities. This has enabled thousands of families returning to liberated areas to create and sustain livelihoods and improve their food security status.

USAID/Iraq’s Acting Mission Director,

Ms. Erin Mone-Marquez emphasized: “We stand united in our commitment to internally displaced persons and refugees in camps. We strive to provide essential support for their well-being and security including food assistance and opportunities for new livelihoods. By fostering safe returns, we not only rebuild shattered lives but also pave the way for a more stable and harmonious Iraq.”

Without the timely support of USAID and other donor partners like Austria, Canada, the EU, Japan, and

multilateral donors, thousands of vulnerable families would be unable to cope with the severe lack of food.

WFP remains a key partner to the Government of Iraq and is currently implementing long-term sustainable development programmes. These interventions aim to address the root causes of food insecurity through practical, achievable and scalable solutions to the adverse effects of climate change and displacement.



Beyond displacement: how art empowers a new generation



Dohuk, 13 August 2024 - Amid the dust and uncertainty that often define life in a displacement camp, moments of hope and creativity break through the clouds of despair. One such moment was when the International Organization for Migration (IOM) organized a unique art workshop called “Homebound Creativity: Exploring Art Amidst Adversity.” Led by the Kurdish diaspora artist Avan Anwar, the workshop brought together 16 women from displaced and host communities, including Sara, a young woman from Sinjar, living in the Qadia camp.

Sara, one of the workshop’s standout participants, had long buried her love for drawing under the weight of daily responsibilities. “This workshop was like a breath of fresh air. It allowed me to reconnect with my art and pour out everything I had been holding inside onto a canvas.”

During the workshop, Sara created two paintings that she especially loved. Her first piece, a reflection of her inner turmoil and resilience, depicts a figure made of broken glass reassembled into something beautiful. “Being upset at home felt like the shattered glass, but coming here, I was able to piece myself back together.”

The artwork drew attention before it was displayed: on Sara’s way to the exhibition, a taxi driver was ready to buy the art piece on the spot. But for Sara, her art is priceless. “I worked so hard on that painting,” she said, showing the cuts on her hands from working with the glass. “I can’t put a price on it. I want as many people as possible to see and enjoy my art.”

Her second painting speaks to the strength and potential of women, symbolized by a butterfly. “No matter how broken we may be, we can always emerge from our shells, reborn and ready to take on the world.”

The workshop concluded with an art exhibition – a display of talent, celebration of resilience and creativity, and a powerful reminder of the importance of mental well-being and self-expression in the face of adversity.

Avan Anwar, the workshop facilitator, has a personal connection to the themes of displacement and resilience that were explored during the workshop. Originally from Halabja, Iraq, Avan was forced to leave her homeland after a bomb blast left her with a hearing impairment. She now lives in Australia, where she has built a successful career as an artist known for

her works, symbolizing life and optimism.

“We created such a beautiful exhibition,” Avan said, reflecting on the experience. “During our workshop, we formed a deep connection because we all have something missing in our lives. It could be a home, a memory, or the experience of displacement. This connection was expressed through the art we created together.”

Over five days, the workshop became a platform for those women to express their personal stories and experiences through art, helping them reclaim a sense of identity and hope amidst the chaos of their lives.

After the exhibition, Avan, joined by Sara and other participants, continued with art workshops for children in the camps for internally displaced people (IDPs).

For Sara, this opportunity to engage with the children in her community was incredibly fulfilling. “I want to give strength and paint a better future for ourselves.” Inspired by her experience she sees art in everything around her.

On International Youth Day, Sara’s story reminds us of the resilience, creativity, and strength of young people, especially those who have faced the challenges of displacement. Her art, much like her spirit, is unbreakable. She represents the hopes and dreams of a generation that refuses to be defined by the hardships it has endured.

Through initiatives like this, and with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), IOM supports and empowers young people like Sara, providing them with the tools and opportunities they need to build a better future.

By Ahmed Kaka, Senior Communications Assistant, IOM

The Ninewa Joint Coordination Forum discusses government plans, budgets, existing gaps, and needs in IDP return areas

Mosul, 27 June 2024 - The Ninewa Joint Coordination Forum - co-chaired by local authorities and UNICEF - convened in Mosul representatives of the Government of Iraq, UN Agencies, and NGOs to discuss government plans, budgets, existing gaps, and needs in IDP return areas. The meeting underscored the critical need for shelter and livelihood projects as main obstacles preventing IDPs from returning to their areas of origin. The outcome of interagency needs assessment for Safiyah Village was also discussed.



The Kirkuk Joint Coordination Forum discusses the needs of IDPs in the Sharikat Tariq informal settlements

Kirkuk, 27 June 2024 - The Kirkuk Joint Coordination Forum, co-chaired by local authorities and the IRC, held a meeting that brought together representatives of the Iraqi government, UN agencies, and NGOs to discuss the needs of IDPs in the Sharikat Tariq informal settlements.



Water flows again in Al-Zawiya village in Haditha, Anbar province!

Anbar, 03 July 2024 - This initiative, implemented by UNDP and supported by USAID, helped rehabilitate Al-Zawiya water complex, a vital water source for citizens. Fluctuating water levels near Haditha Dam pose significant challenges, affecting water flow and causing Al-Zawiya water complex to adjust water levels to meet increasing demand constantly. To address this issue, we rehabilitated the intake station and installed three

pipe stations. This ensures an uninterrupted water supply to Al-Zawiya.

Today, with clean water flowing again, over 1,000 Iraqis will benefit from improved access to water, thus helping improve their quality of life.

UNDP and USAID are working together to improve infrastructure sustainability and provide clean water for all Iraqis.



ITC's SAAVI Agri-business Alliances are an innovative business model

Baghdad, 08 July 2024 - ITC's SAAVI Agri-business Alliances are an innovative business model that aims to transform Iraq's agricultural sector through building mutually beneficial long-term partnership between farmers and retailers/consumers. A win-win partnership allows every value chain participant to secure higher revenue and the consumer access locally produced healthy nutritious food at a competitive price. The European Union-funded "Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-food Value Chain and Improving trade policy in Iraq"



(SAAVI) project aims to contribute to inclusive economic growth and job creation, particularly for youth, by

improving Iraq's agriculture competitiveness and supporting trade development.

Project management and trade analysis skills to support Iraqi trade



Baghdad, 5 July 2024 - (ITC News) A tailored training programme provided in-depth insights and practical tools for policymakers who are working to grow the country's trade in high-potential products.

The training, specifically designed for them by the International Trade Centre (ITC), focused on project management and value chain analysis. The programme provided in-depth insights and practical tools for policymakers who are working to grow the country's trade in high-potential products.

Participants learned to screen markets, analyze trade indicators, and prioritize products with the most trade potential while taking into account competitiveness issues.

They also gained skills to analyze the work of everyone along the value chain, looking for new market opportunities and for entry points to make trade more inclusive of women and youth.

In the project management component, the programme included sessions on activity and resource planning, and the development of robust project proposals. These sessions showed how

to plan and execute projects successfully.

The training came through the EU-funded SAAVI initiative, which stands for Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain & Improving Trade Policy in Iraq.

Participants were selected from the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), and Ministry of Trade (MoT).

The programme featured both international and national experts from diverse fields, ensuring a sturdy mix of theory and practical application. A notable component of the training took place in Amman, Jordan, where participants engaged with regional agribusinesses to explore opportunities and potential solutions.

Participants benefitted from training sessions and field visits in collaboration with development consultancy Eco-Consult. This hands-on experience demonstrated advanced techniques and strategic thinking from neighbouring countries.

'The training touched on many topics related to the policy, strategies, and value chain,' said Lujain Mustafaa,

Head of International Relations at the Ministry of Planning (MoP). 'As we work with the MoP, this type of training allows us to witness the strategic thinking of other countries. The field visit demonstrated how next-door countries have advanced techniques, that we aspire to implement in Iraq. It highlighted how economic growth can be driven by the agriculture value chain.'

'This training was different and practical for the Ministry of Trade. The group work, where we brainstormed with representatives from various ministries, was particularly engaging. It was a valuable experience,' added Rasha Saleh, from the World Trade Organization (WTO) department at the MoT.

Participants were awarded ITC certificates at the concluding session held in May 2024 in Baghdad. Through this initiative, Iraqi officials acquired valuable knowledge and tools for effective policymaking, planning, and execution of agricultural and trade-related projects, ultimately contributing to the country's economic growth and sustainability.

Over three years, the SAAVI project has diligently worked on strategy design, building commercial value chain alliances, enhancing youth employment skills, and improving Iraq's trade policy to support the country's WTO accession process.

The International Trade Centre's SAAVI project is funded by the European Union and implemented under the leadership of the Government of Iraq in partnership with the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Trade.

UNFPA and Iraqi Government sign key Memorandum of Understanding on population and housing census in Iraq



Baghdad, 10 July 2024 – The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and

the Government of Iraq have formalized a significant agreement to

enhance joint cooperation in conducting the 2024 Population and Housing Census of Iraq, a pivotal step toward informed development planning and achieving sustainable development goals. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 2 July 2024 by His Excellency, Dr. Muhammad Ali Tamim, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning for Iraq, and Mr. Nestor Owomuhangi, UNFPA Representative in Iraq.

This MoU symbolizes a strengthened partnership aimed at advancing population-related initiatives. His Excellency, Dr. Tamim emphasized the importance of this collaboration,

UNFPA and Iraqi Government sign key Memorandum of Understanding on population and housing census in Iraq *(continued)*

stating, “This memorandum reflects our commitment to enhancing joint efforts with UNFPA, focusing on population issues and paving the way toward sustainable development in Iraq.”

UNFPA's engagement in this initiative highlights its dedication to providing comprehensive support for the 2024 census, which marks a critical milestone in Iraq's history of population data collection. Mr. Owomuhangi expressed his appreciation for the trust and financial support from the Iraqi government, adding, “UNFPA is always grateful when governments request its support for census activities. In the case of Iraq, UNFPA deeply values the government's trust and, even more so,

the financial support provided for the upcoming census. This demonstrates the government's strong commitment to conducting the census, which is crucial for informed development planning, especially after decades of anticipation.”

Dr. Dhiaa Khadum, President of the Authority of Statistics and Geographic Information System in Iraq, highlighted the importance of the MoU in renewing commitments from the 2020 agreement. He noted that the upcoming census, which will be conducted electronically for the first time, necessitates the support and collaboration of international organizations like UNFPA to guarantee international recognition and the

credibility of the results. “The renewed agreement underscores the need for enhanced support and advocacy for the census process, leveraging UNFPA's advanced expertise in census operations,” said Dr. Khadum.

In alignment with this collaboration, UNFPA will mobilize resources from various international development partners to complement the Government of Iraq's funding, facilitating the successful execution of the census. Contributing to the 2024 census plays a crucial role in equipping Iraq with accurate demographic information, facilitating effective policymaking, and promoting inclusive growth.

Harmonizing Iraq's trade regime: a 20-year milestone achieved

Baghdad, 11 July 2024 - (ITC News) Iraq accelerates its World Trade Organization (WTO) accession process by unifying tariff rates with Kurdistan region of Iraq.

For the past 20 years, Iraq's trade has operated under a dual customs regime, with different tariff rates in Federal Iraq and Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). This dual system has led to varying administrative and economic customs policies, creating complications for trade, and challenges in the way of ensuring a transparent and predictable business environment.

The process of Iraq's journey to join the WTO, began in 2004 and recently gained new momentum. A key requirement for WTO membership is the implementation of consistent policies nationwide, including aligning tariff rates, customs procedures, and regulatory practices across all regions. The differences in tariff structures between Federal Iraq and the KRI have been seen as a barrier to achieving the necessary coherence and transparency for WTO accession.

Recognising this, Iraq decided to harmonise the two customs regimes in 2019. However, the implementation was delayed for several years. In 2024, with the support of the International Trade Centre (ITC) through the “Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy (SAAVI)” project funded by the European Union, this harmonisation was finally undertaken. As the first step, the tariff regime in Federal Iraq was updated to comply with the World Customs Organization's



Harmonised System Code of 2017. The process then extended to KRI, involving detailed reviews and multiple joint workshops, with customs offices from Baghdad, Erbil and ITC experts.

Together, they examined over 15,000 tariff lines to ensure compliance with international standards and to create a unified structure. The unified tariff framework was formally approved by the Ministry of Finance and published in the Official Iraqi Gazette on 5th February 2024 (No. 4758).

Acknowledging the efforts, Mr. Hakkam Anttar, Senior Manager, Customs Valuation Office, General Commission of Customs, said: “The ITC through the SAAVI Project, in coordination with The Ministry of Trade has been providing expert technical support since the very beginning, in expediting the process of modernising and unifying Iraq's Tariff structure based on 2017 Harmonized System. ITC, has played a vital role in developing an action plan with concepts and requirements.”

Resolving the dual customs regime issue marks a significant milestone in Iraq's WTO accession process and underscores Iraq's commitment to the multilateral trading system.

This achievement is part of a series of interventions undertaken by ITC to support the Government of Iraq, including substantial revisions to domestic reforms, alongside widespread capacity building and awareness-raising on WTO and trade policy.



United Nations Country Team in Iraq releases 2023 Annual Results Report

Baghdad, 12 July 2024 – The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is pleased to announce the publication of its 2023 Annual Results Report. This report showcases the collective activities of 23 UN entities achieved in partnership with the Government of Iraq, local communities, and international partners under the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, 2020-2024.

In 2023, the UNCT in Iraq focused on five strategic priorities, making substantial progress in each area:

In the area of social protection, significant strides were made in enhancing access to education and essential services for vulnerable children and individuals. Efforts expanded social safety nets and provided cash assistance to vulnerable populations, particularly internally displaced persons (IDPs).

To support economic growth, the Employment-Intensive Investment Programme created numerous jobs, benefiting IDPs and refugees. The launch of the Iraq National Education Strategy addressed challenges in the education sector, paving the way for

improved learning outcomes.

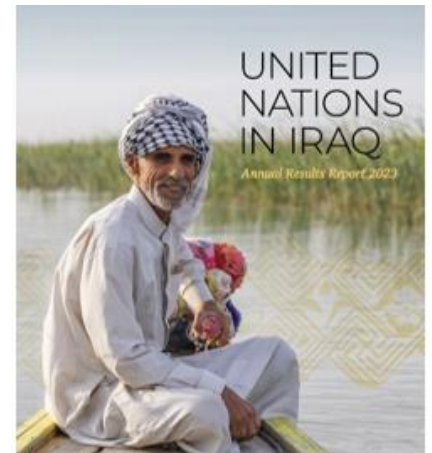
Contributing to sustainable environmental actions, the UNCT supported the revision of Iraq's Renewable Energy Law and the establishment of the Energy Transition Framework, underscoring Iraq's commitment to climate action. UN efforts also provided access to safe drinking water to local population in Basra.

Moreover, the implementation of the Educational Management Information System enhanced educational planning and resource allocation. Collaborative efforts with the Government of Iraq cleared contaminated land of landmines, ensuring safe returns of displaced families.

Ghulam Isaczai, the UN Resident Coordinator in Iraq expressed his deep appreciation to the Government of Iraq and all partners for their unwavering support and collaboration to realize the above results. "The achievements documented in this report underscore our commitment to supporting national priorities and plans and Iraq's journey towards a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable future," said Mr. Isaczai.

Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond, the UNCT in Iraq remains dedicated to help the Government of Iraq fast-track achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The focus will continue to be on fostering economic growth, enhancing social inclusion, and promoting environmental sustainability.

For more information and to read the full 2023 Annual Results Report, please visit: <https://iraq.un.org/en/273692-united-nations-iraq-annual-results-report-2023>



A 1,326-meter drainage network will benefit 19,800 residents in Sinjar

Sinjar, 09 August 2024 - UN-Habitat Iraq recently completed a 1,326-meter drainage network that will benefit 19,800 residents in the Al Yarmouk, Al Qadsiyah, Al Shuhada, Azadi, and Roz Halat neighbourhoods in Sinjar.

This network provides efficient wastewater management, reduces the risk of flooding during the rainy season, prevents water source and soil contamination, and enhances the quality of life and health for the people, who now have access to basic sanitation infrastructure.

With the support of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), UN-Habitat Iraq supports the Government of Iraq and local authorities, such as the Ninewa Governorate and Municipality of Sinjar, to develop the country in alignment with sustainable practices.

While addressing the unique needs of each territory and community, it also advances progress across multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



The second workshop on "Solutions for Urban Informal Settlements in Iraq: Law of Addressing Informal Settlements" was held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 21 July 2024 - In coordination with relevant ministries and sectoral agencies, the second workshop on "Solutions for Urban Informal Settlements in Iraq: Law of Addressing Informal Settlements" was held on 21 July in Baghdad, led by UN-Habitat with the support of the European Union.



UNIDO in collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Industry and Minerals, conducted the Food Safety and Hygiene Training for Small and Medium Enterprises



Bardarash, Iraq, 12 August 2024 -

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Industry and Minerals, conducted the Food Safety and Hygiene Training for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Bardarash. This training was a pivotal element of the "Emergency Livelihood Support to Mitigate the Food Insecurity Crisis among Vulnerable Peoples in Iraq" project, funded by the Japanese government. Held from 8 to 11 July 2024, the training capitalized on seasoned trainers from the Ministries of Health, and Industry and Minerals in Iraq who completed the training of trainers implemented under the project. The ministries' active involvement highlights the concerted effort to promote and advance the SMEs sector, acknowledging its crucial role in fostering economic growth and development.

The Food Safety and Hygiene Training for SMEs stands as an intensive programme aimed at equipping local businesses with the essential knowledge and skills necessary to ensure workplace safety, maintain hygiene standards, and thrive in a competitive business landscape. The program is also expected to ease the critical food insecurity crisis affecting Iraq's most vulnerable communities.

The training brought together 27 participants from ten different family-owned yogurt, tahini (sesame paste), and pickle factories in Bardarash. The programme has successfully united a diverse array of SMEs contributing to the rich economic tapestry of the area.

The training programme is committed to promoting inclusivity and gender diversity among its participants. Out of the 27 participants, five were women, and 22 were men, including seven internally displaced persons (IDPs).

This mix reflects UNIDO's dedication to extending inclusivity to marginalized communities, ensuring that the benefits of the training reach a broad spectrum of the local population.

The topics covered during the training were meticulously designed to address the specific needs of the participating businesses. These included raw material specifications and alternatives, food safety, and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), workshop layout and design, spoilage and the role of microorganisms in food safety, conditions that promote or inhibit microbial growth, personal hygiene and safe food handling to prevent cross-contamination, minimizing risks from foreign objects, pests, and chemicals, consistent product quality through rigorous control measures, techniques to extend the shelf life of products, efficient storage solutions and waste management practices, and protecting products through effective packaging strategies.

Mr. Muhamed Jasim, who works in a small family-owned yogurt-producing factory, highlighted the invaluable insights gained from the training. He stated that he learned essential storage and food handling practices, crucial for preventing cross-contamination and ensuring the safety of dairy products. Mr. Jasim emphasized the importance of understanding the correct temperatures for storing different types of food and the specific risks associated with dairy. This knowledge has equipped him to implement best practices effectively, enhancing overall food safety in his operations. He stated, "We will leverage this training to enhance our product development processes, ensuring that our offerings meet the highest standards of quality and innovation."

Ms. Chinar Abdulsalam, working in a

small pickling factory, pointed out the significant gap between traditional practices and modern scientific knowledge. Integrating these insights is crucial for improving overall standards. The training covered every aspect of their production process, focusing on health and temperature standards, and understanding chemical reactions and acids. This comprehensive understanding ensures compliance with regulatory requirements and enhances product integrity and safety. Ms. Abdulsalam found the training exceptionally well-structured and engaging, making it easy for participants to grasp and apply the concepts effectively.

A trainer, Mr. Raad Hadi, a staff member from the Ministry of Health in Baghdad and a member of the Food Safety Advisory Board in Iraq, observed that trainees responded positively to the training sessions, engaging actively in discussions and showing a keen interest in food safety and hygiene practices. He noted that many participants had prior knowledge of the materials, enriching the discussions and indicating a high level of awareness and interest in ensuring safety standards. Mr. Hadi highlighted that continuous training is essential for SMEs in Iraq. "By keeping workers updated with the latest information and knowledge, the training enhances the skills and expertise of the workforce," he explained. This improvement will significantly impact product quality and standards, elevating the reputation and competitiveness of individual businesses and contributing to the overall development of the local industry. "Regular training fosters innovation, improves operational efficiency, and helps SMEs meet international standards, vital for expanding market reach and driving economic growth," he stated.

Another trainer, Ms. Ramina Athnael Yousif, Assistant Director of the Project Development Division at Iraq's Ministry of Industry and Minerals, Department of Industrial Development and Organization, and overseer of the Department of Small Projects, noted that trainees frequently voiced concerns regarding the availability and cost of local raw materials, which significantly impacts product pricing. The fluctuating prices of these materials pose challenges in

UNIDO in collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Industry and Minerals, conducted the Food Safety and Hygiene Training ... (continued)

maintaining competitive product costs. Additionally, there is ongoing apprehension about competing against imported goods, which often offer lower prices. This competition is compounded by customer preference for price over quality, often leading to higher demand for imported products despite potential quality differences with locally produced materials. These factors collectively underscore the complexities faced by the trainees in navigating market dynamics and ensuring competitive positioning in the industry. Ms. Yousif also emphasized that “programmes like this training are invaluable to SMEs, as they enhance the knowledge and awareness of their staff regarding food safety and hygiene practices.” By equipping employees with essential skills, these initiatives effectively reduce health hazards and potential accidents in the workplace. Moreover, heightened awareness contributes to improved production efficiency and decreased operational losses. “This not only enhances overall

productivity but also lowers costs associated with health-related incidents among staff, playing a pivotal role in fostering a safer and more efficient working environment for SMEs,” she added.

Improving hygiene and safety practices leads to higher product quality, fostering greater customer trust. This boost in trust can increase production, create more job opportunities, and enhance purchases from local farmers, benefiting the local economy. As the entire value chain improves, the overall community experiences growth and development. Prioritizing these practices not only ensures better health and safety standards but also contributes to a more robust and sustainable economic ecosystem.

The Food Safety and Hygiene Training for SMEs in Bardarash has proven to be a significant step towards enhancing food safety and hygiene practices among local businesses. The programme's comprehensive approach, inclusivity, and focus on practical

applications have equipped participants with the necessary tools to improve their operations and contribute to the local economy's growth and development. By investing in continuous training, SMEs in Iraq can foster a sustainable development cycle, positioning themselves as key players in the market.

The commitment of UNIDO and the Government of Japan to empowering the food processing industry in Iraq through their partnership with the Ministry of Industry and Minerals is evident in their ongoing efforts to drive positive change and economic prosperity. By providing targeted training to underprivileged businesses, it aims to elevate the standards of food safety and quality, ensuring that even the most vulnerable communities benefit from improved practices. This dedication to upskilling SMEs not only helps to mitigate the food insecurity crisis but also strengthens the economic fabric of Iraq, paving the way for a more prosperous and resilient future.

DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai tours Hasar Org project

Erbil, 25 July 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai, toured today Hasar Org project supported by UNICEF Iraq, providing a water recycling system irrigating oak trees in Erbil. This partnership preserves underground water, setting a scalable model for enhancing climate resilience.



Solar energy brings a huge difference to business, increasing profits and reducing operating costs to just 5%

Sinjar, 08 August 2024 - "Thanks to UNDP support, we were able to switch to solar energy. This has made a huge difference to our business, increasing our profits and reducing our operating costs to just 5%," said Qawal Ismail.

Meet Qawal from Sinjar, who, through the proper use of the grant, was able to make their farms fruitful again with figs.

They achieved this through drip irrigation systems, water tanks, and using solar energy to power pumps for water extraction. Over 698 farmers and SMEs in the agricultural sector are provided with support like Qawal.

The SMEs in the agricultural sector



was implemented by UNDP's Building Resilience through Employment Promotion (BREP) project with WHH Iraq - Welthungerhilfe in Iraq with

funding from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) provided through #KfW Development Bank.

Stakeholders discuss the National Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Development Policy for Iraq

Erbil, 29 July 2024 - The International Labour Organization (ILO), the Ministry of Planning (MOP), and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) have partnered with key stakeholders and UN agencies to bolster the role of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Iraq's economic development. A two-day conference aims to Discuss the National Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises development Policy for Iraq by bringing together government entities, international organizations, employer and worker groups, and financial institutions to collaboratively advance MSME development in Iraq.

The conference began with a welcoming address by Mr. Sabah Jundi Mansour, Director General of the Economic Policy Department at the Ministry of Planning, and Maha Kattaa, ILO Country Coordinator in Iraq.

Mr. Mansour emphasized the critical role of MSMEs in driving economic growth and job creation in Iraq, stating: "MSMEs are essential for our economic development and job creation. Unified efforts are necessary to support these enterprises effectively." And presented the ministry's ongoing initiatives aimed at supporting MSMEs. His presentation detailed strategic plans and policies, including regulatory reforms and capacity-building programs designed to create a more conducive environment for MSMEs. He underscored the ministry's commitment to reducing bureaucratic barriers and facilitating easier access to resources for MSMEs.

Dr. Kattaa highlighted the ILO's commitment to fostering sustainable enterprise development and promoting decent work through MSME support, noting: "The ILO is dedicated to supporting MSMEs and ensuring that they contribute to sustainable economic development and decent employment opportunities."

A key presentation by Mr. Ammar Khalaf, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Iraq, highlighted the Central Bank's initiatives to support MSMEs and introduced the National Banking Lending Strategy launched in May 2024. This strategy addresses the critical challenge of access to finance, which remains a significant barrier for MSMEs. Mr. Khalaf outlined the strategy's core components, which include low-interest loans, financial literacy programs, and collaborations with microfinance institutions to



enhance financial inclusion.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs highlighted its efforts to promote entrepreneurship, particularly among youth and women, through comprehensive support programs for MSMEs. These programs include various loan schemes, technical assistance, and vocational training aimed at enhancing the skills and capabilities of MSME operators.

The ILO presented and discussed the results of a comprehensive assessment of the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises (ESEE) in Iraq, focusing on those led by women, which highlighted the challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs and advocated for inclusive policies to support women's participation in the labor market and promote equality in entrepreneurship. The ESEE framework, established by the ILO at the International Labour Conference in 2007, outlines 17 pillars necessary for fostering sustainable enterprises, emphasizing the integration of profit with human dignity, environmental sustainability, and decent work, and has since been applied globally, including in fragile contexts, to promote economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction through comprehensive policy and program support.

Representatives from international organizations, including the ILO, UNDP, IOM, WFP, ITC, GIZ, IFAD, and UNIDO, shared their experiences and best practices in supporting MSMEs in Iraq. They presented ongoing and planned projects that align with sustainable development goals, emphasizing the importance of green initiatives.

A panel discussion in the conference featured representatives from the Iraqi Microfinance Network (IMN), Iraq Company for Banking Guarantees (ICBG), KAPITA, the First Finance Company (FFC), and the Station, who

discussed the diverse range of support services available to MSMEs, both financial and non-financial. Panelists emphasized the challenges faced by their institutions and the importance of integrated support mechanisms, including mentorship, business development services, and access to technology, to ensure the sustainability and growth of MSMEs.

On the second day of the conference, more than 100 participants will continue their discussions, focusing on women's participation in the Iraqi labor market, particularly in entrepreneurship. They will work towards formulating practical recommendations for a cohesive national policy to support MSMEs in Iraq.

The ILO, Ministry of Planning, AICS/Italy, and other stakeholders are collaborating to create a sustainable and inclusive economic environment that empowers MSMEs and fosters overall development in Iraq.

The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation is thrilled to announce its endorsement of a new initiative that aligns seamlessly with the goals of the Team Europe Initiative for Iraq. AICS remains unwavering in its dedication to cultivating a diverse and inclusive workforce. It is at the forefront of advocating for the empowerment of groups often sidelined, including women and individuals with disabilities. This pledge highlights AICS's acknowledgment of the significant contributions that various perspectives bring to the organization.

"Revitalizing Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) isn't just a strategy; it's a cornerstone for Iraq's economic resurgence," declared Roxane Weber, the Regional Director of AICS. "It's about more than just business growth; it's about creating a harmonious environment where every individual, regardless of background, is granted a fair chance to prosper. This

UNAMI HumanStakeholders discuss the National Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises development Policy for Iraq *(continued)*

isn't just an initiative; it's a promise to the people of Iraq that we see them, we hear them, and we are committed to their success."

This initiative falls under the "Towards more and better employment through

enhanced support to private sectors in southern Iraq – with a focus on green business" project, implemented by the ILO with the support of Italy. The project is part of broader efforts under the Iraq Decent Work Country

Programme, a collaborative initiative signed by the Government, employers' and workers' organizations and the ILO to promote employment opportunities and decent work.

The Iraq Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the World Food Programme in Iraq signed a Letter of Cooperation

Baghdad, 29 July 2024 - The Iraq Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the World Food Programme in Iraq signed a Letter of Cooperation to establish a framework for the Economic Empowerment Pathway Project, aiming to provide fair access to social protection, focusing on unemployed youth and women. With generous support from the European Union, the World Food Programme will provide technical assistance, and establish a platform to connect Social Safety Net recipients with economic empowerment workstreams to help Iraqis become more resilient and food secure.



Government of Iraq and UN Iraq Convene Joint Technical Committee meeting on the cooperation framework 2025-2029

Baghdad, 30 July 2024 – The Government of Iraq and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Iraq convened a meeting of the Joint Technical Committee on the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2025-2029) at the Ministry of Planning in Baghdad today. Senior officials and technical experts from UN agencies, funds, and programmes joined officials from the Ministry of Planning, relevant ministries, and national institutions for a detailed briefing outlining the structure and content of the UNSDCF, including its strategic priorities and outcome indicators. The meeting reviewed the progress made in designing the framework and included detailed discussions that provided further input to the document and determined the way forward. The UNSDCF will chart the partnership between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations in Iraq from 2025 to 2029.

Resident Coordinator, Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai, welcomed the convening of the second JTC meeting to review the progress of the UNSDCF (2025-2029) process, which is aligned with the priorities stipulated by the National Development Plan. He further



commended "the partnership between the UNCT in Iraq with government institutions, civil society and international development partners in developing the Cooperation Framework," adding that "this is crucial in addressing Iraq's development objectives and moving towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."

Dr. Maher Hamad Johan, the Deputy of the Ministry of Planning for Technical Affairs, said: "The purpose of the cooperation framework with the United Nations is to serve as a high-level, multi-year strategic planning

framework to guide the collective work of UN organizations. It also aims to establish a comprehensive partnership between the government and the United Nations, clarifying the mechanism of support provided for the priorities of the national development plan by focusing on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals."

Such engagement is significant as the feedback on the document strengthens the UN partnership with the Government, reflects Iraq's priorities and aspirations, and informs international development partners.

Advancing Iraq's development agenda

Baghdad, 03 August 2024 – In a significant step toward advancing Iraq's development agenda, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), proudly announces the launch of Iraq's National Development Plan.

This landmark initiative underscores USAID and UNDP's commitment to supporting Iraq's sustainable development goals, setting a strategic direction for Iraq's growth over the coming years. The plan aims to boost the economy, improve infrastructure, and enhance social services. It also advances environmental conservation and sustainable resource management.

"Today, the National Development Plan 2024-2028 comes to establish a developmental path based on a different vision that relies on utilizing the available capabilities of the state and the private sector, acquiring knowledge in its technical and scientific development, and building a social market economy system while adopting permanent reform policies and enhancing international cooperation paths," says Dr. Muhammad Ali

Tamim, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning.

"We extend our sincere gratitude to our international partners for their unlimited support, especially the United Nations Development Program and the United States Agency for International Development, as well as representatives of civil society organizations and the private sector," adds Dr. Tamim.

"The launch of the National Development Plan is a testament to the collaborative spirit of our partnership with the Ministry of Planning and USAID. This plan will serve as a blueprint for Iraq's future, and we are committed to supporting the Iraqi government in achieving these

ambitious goals and ensuring a better future for all Iraqis," says Auke Lootsma, UNDP Iraq Resident Representative.

"USAID is proud to support the development and implementation of Iraq's National Development Plan. Our partnership with the Ministry of Planning and UNDP is vital in driving these efforts forward to ensure that the benefits reach every corner of Iraq," says Erin Mone-Marquez USAID/Iraq's Acting Mission Director.

The partnership between the Ministry of Planning, UNDP, and USAID demonstrates a unified commitment not only to drive immediate progress, but also to lay the foundation for long-term prosperity and stability in Iraq.

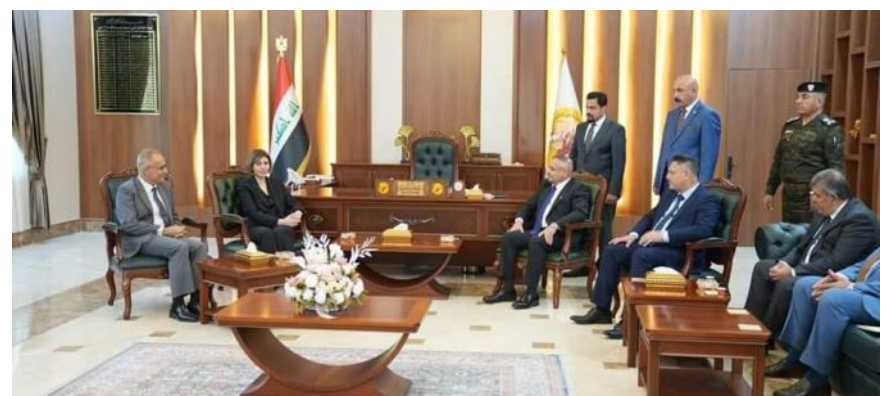


Launch of the Salah Al-Din Joint Coordination Forum area-based response plan: an initiative to support the IDP returnees from Sulaymaniyah Camps to the southern areas of the Governorate

Tikrit, 08 August 2024 – Today, H.E. Ms. Ivan Faeq Jabro, Minister of Migration and Displaced (MoMD), Mr. Badr Al-Fahl, Governor of Salah Al-Din and Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) launched the Salah Al-Din Joint Coordination Forum Area-based Response Plan in Tikrit.

The Area-Based Plan reflects the Durable Solutions Roadmap derived from the Government of Iraq's National Plan for facilitating durable solutions for IDPs. It ensures alignment with the government priorities and the Prime Minister's vision on the IDP file in Iraq, while ensuring compliance with the United Nations Secretary General Action Agenda on Internal Displacement.

"This plan is an important initiative to address the pressing, intermediate, and long-term needs of IDP returning from the Sulaymaniyah camps to the



southern areas of Salah al-Din. It is a success story that we hope to replicate in other regions and a testament to the tireless efforts of the JCF," stated Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai. "The realization of the plan's objectives will rely on the full commitment and support of both federal and local governments."

Her Excellency Ms. Ivan Jabro highlighted the role of United Nations organizations and the JCF, stating: "The Plan is a result of close

cooperation and joint work among various stakeholders, including the local government of Salah Al-Din, United Nations and NGO partners". She further emphasized the role of international donor partners to support the success of the Plan.

Meanwhile, H.E. Mr. Badr Al-Fahl stated that the JCF members "exerted tremendous efforts to assess the needs of the returnee families and develop a strategic response plan addressing their expectations."

Life is sweet in Sinuni: bee cultivation and honey production in Iraq



Sinuni, Iraq, 21 August 2024 - Not everyone knows about Iraq's honey producing abilities, but in Sinuni, northern Iraq, life is just a little bit sweeter.

Salem and his brother Issa own an apiary in their hometown of Sinuni, producing enough honey to cover all their living expenses. Salem explains, "I also sell new hives to my fellow beekeepers. We divide our existing hives into new ones every year and the hives continue to grow."

We sat with Salem and Issa in their home as they told us their story. He watches the cascade of gold being poured onto a plate, and Issa offers us some bread to taste this "liquid gold".

"The honey produced in my apiary is different from other types. I am keen to provide the local market with the finest and best types used for treatment, especially in medical prescriptions for skin infections, ulcers, and other diseases," says Salem Qasim.

Honey production in danger

In the heart of Iraq's rural communities, the rhythm of life has long been intertwined with the buzzing of bees. Honey production, once a symbol of abundance and tradition, is now facing a steep decline, affecting not just the livelihood of beekeepers but also the cultural fabric of these communities. The challenges are many, with climate change and the spread of diseases due to nearby agricultural practices taking a heavy toll on apiaries. The use of chemicals on farms and frequent insect attacks have exacerbated the situation, leading to a noticeable drop in honey production.

The lack of vegetation cover in many regions has further strained the beekeeping industry, as it directly impacts the availability of natural resources needed for bees to thrive. This has resulted in a scarcity of honey in local markets, with the quality of what is available also suffering. Each

year, beekeepers face an uphill battle, trying to adapt to these ever-changing conditions.

Beekeepers, known for their resilience and creativity, continue to search for solutions. However, one of the most pressing challenges they face is providing sufficient food for their bees during the lean seasons. The purchase of machinery to produce bee food has become essential for many, as it ensures the survival of their colonies and the continuous flow of honey that sustains both their families and the local economy.

The situation worsened during the dark days of ISIS control, which brought devastation to the region. The insurgents' occupation led to the destruction of most apiaries and the near-complete disappearance of bees, especially in areas under siege for extended periods. For two years, beekeeping came to a standstill, and with it, a way of life was nearly lost.

Yet, amidst these challenges, the beekeepers of Iraq continue to persevere, determined to restore their hives and their livelihoods. Their story is not just about the decline in honey production; it is a testament to the strength and resilience of communities who refuse to let their traditions fade away.

BREP preserves the tradition of honey-making in Iraq

UNDP's Building Resilience through Employment Promotion (BREP) project with Welthungerhilfe (WHH) in Iraq with funding from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) provided through KfW Development Bank actively kept Salem and Issa's honey-making operation alive through BREP.

The BREP project was developed after areas were liberated from ISIL control, and displaced people began returning to their homes, often to a community with few facilities and job

opportunities. The program aims to support small and medium enterprises, such as small agricultural projects like vegetable farms and beekeeping, providing returning families opportunities to earn income, produce food supplies, and empower individuals, contributing to local food supplies.

To date, over 1181 small and medium enterprises are supported with training, coaching, in-kind support, or grants like Salem.

With the liberation of Iraq's regions and the support of international aid, life is gradually returning to communities devastated by ISIS. Salem, a beekeeper, is one of many who benefited from these efforts. He received training and a grant to purchase a machine that produces food for his bees, ensuring a steady supply of high-quality honey to the local market.

Salem and his brother Issa also gained skills in business management and marketing, helping them rebuild their livelihoods. These support projects prioritize vulnerable families, including returnees and displaced people, ensuring they have the tools needed for a decent living and a fresh start.

Finding sustainable solutions

Bees still need food, even in their off season, which is during the months of August till March. Salem, an expert in beekeeping, sought to solve the food problem he was facing during this recession period to ensure his bees were fed enough in order to produce honey. Thanks to BREP, he received the funding and purchased the equipment to produce his own "bee food", a mixture of pollen, vitamins, protein and the bees' own honey. With this, he is now able to meet the needs of other surrounding apiaries, including his own, ensuring continuous honey production in the local market. Before BREP's intervention, the beekeepers bought food from Baghdad at high prices, but now they can get it easily in Sinuni at lower prices and higher quality.

Salem's Honey – social media sensation

Today, in the greenery-covered Sinuni in Nineveh Governorate, bees continue their vital work, producing honey from wildflowers rather than relying on farm crops. Salem, a local beekeeper, shares how his honey finds its way to customers: "In our small community, everyone knows where to get the best honey. I simply take calls from neighbors and sell directly to them."

Recently, Salem expanded his reach by

Life is sweet in Sinuni: bee cultivation and honey production in Iraq (continued)

creating a social media page to sell honey, where he also shares insights into beekeeping and the honey-making process. This has attracted customers from different regions, not just for the honey but also for bees from his thriving apiary.

Salem concludes with a simple yet powerful truth: "Our honey sells well

because it has a delicious taste. The best way to market it is to offer excellent quality. Everyone knows where to buy the best honey, and now, through my social media page, I can reach even more customers."

The Future of Beekeeping in Iraq

Beekeepers involved in this project

continue to thrive, steadily increasing the number of bee colonies and boosting their income. While many still operate on a small, local scale, the reach of social media has allowed them to expand their customer base. With growing interest and technical expertise, the future of beekeeping in Iraq looks promising.

The Joint Coordination Forum in Anbar discusses the UN Agencies support to develop the capacity of local NGOs, National Census updates and UNFPA contribution to the process

Anbar, 20 August 2024 - The Joint Coordination Forum in Anbar, co-chaired by local gov and IOM, met in Ramadi with UN agencies and international and National NGOs. They discussed the UN Agencies support to develop the capacity of local NGOs, National Census updates and UNFPA

contribution to the process, local DGs, International and National NGOs engagement and improving the quality of the Aid workers reports to better reflect the needs in both Humanitarian and Development aspects. The issue of IPDs and Returnees with no legal documentation was also highlighted.



The Kirkuk Joint Coordination Forum (JCF) addresses the implications of climate change in Al Rashad Subdistrict

Kirkuk, 20 August 2024 - With representatives from government departments, UN agencies, and NGOs in attendance, the Kirkuk Joint Coordination Forum (JCF) held productive discussions today. Co-chaired by local authorities and the IRC, the forum addressed the

implications of climate change in Al Rashad Subdistrict, south of Kirkuk, and the challenges facing the return of IDPs in Dabes District. Additionally, an overview of the activities of the JCF's UN and NGO partners was presented.



Agriculture

4 Tons of Tomatoes!

Erbil, 28 June 2024 - Last week, the Diglat Al Khair Alliance of the European Union-funded SAAVI project successfully delivered an impressive 4 tons of tomatoes to Carrefour in Erbil.

This achievement showcases the dedication and hard work of our Alliances in meeting quality standards and improving every step of the production process.

The Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy (SAAVI) project aims to support stabilization and governance through building the capacities of key Iraqi institutions to deliver public services, as well as sustainable job creation through the development of human capital and the enhancement of private sector's competitiveness. This EU-funded project focuses on the development and implementation of

sector strategies for high-potential products, as well as on defining more market-oriented policies to improve predictability and efficiency in the business environment. SAAVI also provides assistance to enhance Iraq's trade policy and supports the country in its WTO accession process.

SAAVI is implemented under the leadership of the Government of Iraq through the Ministry of Planning,

Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Trade.

The project forms part of the overall European Union Special measure for supporting employment creation and improving economic governance in Iraq. As such, SAAVI is fully aligned with the activities of FAO, IOM, ILO, UNESCO and GIZ in the domain of private sector engagement and agricultural development.



FAO conducts field training for farmers on the importance of bagging date palm fruits in Basra



Basra, 03 July 2024 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) conducted field training

for farmers on the importance of bagging date palm fruits in Basra, Abu Al-Khaseeb district, as part of the

European Union funded project to develop the date palm value chain. Benefits of the date palm fruit bagging process include: preserving the bunches from high temperatures, protecting the fruits from pest damage and birds and facilitating the harvesting process. This is a crucial step in enhancing the fruit's quality and improving marketing opportunities. Date palm is a priority crop in Iraq from both economic and nutritional perspectives. FAO Iraq, in collaboration with its partners, continues its efforts to develop the date palm value chain in Iraq.

Small and Medium Enterprises Carnival organized by the Directorate of Agriculture in Nineveh and the Northern Technical University

Nineveh, 04 July 2024 – FAO is proud of the outstanding attendance of The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq and the European Union delegation in Iraq project partners', implemented in collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), at the Small and Medium Enterprises Carnival organized by the Directorate of Agriculture in Nineveh and the Northern Technical University.

FAO Iraq representative, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, was also present to encourage participants and follow up on their progress despite the end of the project in Nineveh.

FAO partners showcased dairy products that they were trained to produce throughout the project using modern techniques and tools.

This enabled them to develop dairy and

other major crop value chains and improve the manufacturing process in terms of quantity and products quality. The distinctive dairy products received great interest and admiration from visitors, and the participating delegation provided an overview of the

project and its interventions.

FAO Iraq and MoA reaffirm their continuous commitment to supporting project partners and the agricultural sector across Iraq to further empower and improve the livelihoods of agricultural communities.



FAO continues its efforts to enhance sustainable water management and implement climate-smart agricultural practice

Najaf, 06 July 2024 - From Najaf, we continue our efforts to enhance sustainable water management and implement climate-smart agricultural practices.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq, in collaboration with Al Najaf directorate of Agriculture, support of the Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources and local government with Sida - Styrelsen för Internationellt Utvecklingssamarbete funding, is applying a package of technologies including mechanical seedlings for rice cultivation

Under the patronage of His Excellency Minister of Agriculture, the event was



attended by Deputy of Minister of Water Resources, FAO Iraq representative Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, the Head of Agriculture and Water Resources Committee in Najaf

Governorate, The General Director of horticulture and agricultural extension departments, Directors of agriculture and water resources in the governorate, the Head of Farmers Union, and a

FAO continues its efforts to enhance sustainable water management and implement climate-smart agricultural practice *(continued)*

group of experts and farmers .

The activities began with an introduction to the importance of mechanical seedling, including water conservation, cost savings on agricultural inputs such as seeds, pesticides, and labor, as well as pollution reduction, with the

contribution of the agricultural specialist from Al Mishkhab Agriculture Division.

Participants then visited a field prepared for rice cultivation, comparing mechanical seedlings with traditional methods, using equipment provided by the Ministry of Agriculture.

The event concluded with a discussion on various aspects and mechanisms to expand the adoption of these technologies. An agreement was reached to hold a meeting in Najaf Governorate involving all stakeholders to develop proposals for the next steps. Together towards a sustainable Iraq!

Pioneering initiative to promote sustainable agriculture using mechanical rice transplanters in Najaf

Najaf, 07 July 2024 - Under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Abbas Jabr Al-Maliki, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with the Najaf Directorate of Agriculture and with support from the Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Najaf Governorate Council, organized a field event for rice planting using a package of technologies including mechanical transplanting in Al-Mishkhab district.

These activities are part of the Project "Enhance climate resilience of vulnerable agriculture households in Southern Iraq through the promotion of climate smart water management and good agriculture practices in selected value chains" funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The project aims to rationalize water use and improve productivity to adapt to conditions of water scarcity and climate change.

The event was attended by the Deputy Minister of Water Resources, FAO Iraq Representative Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan and the FAO Project team, General Directors of Horticulture and Agricultural Extension Departments at the Ministry of Agriculture, Governor's Advisor for Agricultural Affairs, the President of the Union of Agricultural Associations, and many rice farmers.

The event aimed to highlight the benefits and advantages of the



mechanical transplanting approach, most notably water saving and cost-effectiveness of agricultural inputs such as seeds, pesticides, and labor costs, in addition to reducing pollution. Compared to traditional planting methods entailing the use of relatively large amounts of water and seeds, mechanical transplanting achieves numerous benefits. These include saving approximately 25% of irrigation water, reducing seed usage by at least 75%, pesticide usage by 95%, and herbicide usage by 80%. Additionally, it reduces labor costs and ensures high uniformity in growth, which enhances productivity, and provides high flexibility to adapt to weather fluctuations at the start of the planting season.

In this context, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan stated, "This initiative represents an important step towards

promoting sustainable agricultural practices in Iraq. The use of mechanical transplanting will significantly contribute to saving water and agricultural resources, thereby enhancing farmers' ability to adapt to climate change." The representative of the Ministry of Agriculture added, "We are committed to supporting modern agricultural technologies such as mechanical transplanting through our cooperation with the FAO, as they provide practical solutions to the challenges facing agriculture in Iraq, especially concerning water scarcity."

The partners have finally agreed on the importance of establishing appropriate mechanisms to utilize the transplanters available from the Ministry of Agriculture to expand the use of these agricultural technologies. This agreement aims to ensure the continuity and sustainability of using mechanical transplanters, contributing to improved agricultural productivity and reduced resources consumption.

This initiative supports several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 2: Zero Hunger, by enhancing food production efficiency; SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, through the sustainable use of water resources; and SDG 13: Climate Action, by promoting practices that help farmers adapt to climate change impacts.



FAO and MoA team conducted a field inspection to palm stations in Karbala and Babil governorates

Baghdad, 16 July 2024 - Within the date palm chain development program led by FAO Iraq in cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the European Union funding, a joint FAO and MoA team conducted a field inspection to palm stations in Karbala and Babil governorates to evaluate and apply good agricultural practices.

During the visit, they observed improper date palm handling, bunch lowering failure to cover date palm bunches, and high salinity affecting date palm growth and fruit quality.

The team demonstrated correct techniques for bunch lowering and Bunche cluster distribution, on the



head of the tree also irrigation, scheduling and increased water quantities to mitigate salinity damage. They also advised to conduct soil and water analysis to address stunted date palm growth at the Razzaza station

and the tissue culture date palm offshoots project.

FAO has also allocated 19,000 bunches covering bags to the Horticulture Division for distribution across various governorates.

FAO Iraq team conducts a field mission to Sulaymaniyah

Sulaymaniyah, 21 July 2024 - FAO Iraq team, led by representative Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, recently conducted a field mission to Sulaymaniyah, and had productive meetings with several high-level officials. Meeting with Dr. Haval Abubaker Hussein, Sulaymaniyah Governor, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan gave an update on the progress of FAO projects, including:

- Seed Bank establishment funded by the European Union
- Strengthening Iraq Veterinary Legislation and Expanding Animal Health Delivery Services project
- Value chain development of beekeeping and honey production
- New potential engagement related to youth and women capacity development and wastewater

reuse.

Meeting with President of Sulaymaniyah Municipality, Mrs. Layla Ali, to follow up on FAO Iraq's projects in the governorate, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan discussed new potential engagements, including:

- Water recycling
- Pilot site for training
- Nursery seedling production

Meeting with the General Director and Deputy General Director of Agriculture in Sulaymaniyah to discuss ongoing FAO Iraq activities and scaling up capacities of technicians and farmers under the FAO FFS initiative.

The FAO Iraq team also visited Hawari Shar Park to follow up on the site where the Seed Bank is in the process of establishment.



Iraqi Parliament honors FAO and pioneering rural women

Baghdad, 24 July 2024 - Under the auspices of the Acting Speaker of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, Mr. Mohsen Al-Mandlawi, the Parliamentary Committee of Women, Family, and Childhood held a ceremony to honor The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the pioneering rural women involved in the dairy value chain development program, funded by the European Union (EU) in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). Key attendees included Dr. Safwan Bashir al-Jarjari, Parliament General Secretary; MP Donia Al-Shamri, Head of the Women, Family, and Childhood Committee; MP Faleh al-Khazali, Head of the Agriculture, Water, and Marshes

Committee; Dr. Mithaq Al Khafaji, MoA's Technical Deputy; Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative; various parliamentarians; project partners; and representatives from NGOs.

"Today, we honor distinguished Iraqi women engaged in small-scale agricultural and livestock production projects. We acknowledge the efforts of FAO, MoA, and the EU in supporting rural women and look forward to



Iraqi Parliament honored FAO and pioneering rural women (continued)

further cooperation to empower more women across Iraqi governorates," said MP Donia Al-Shamri, Head of the Women, Family, and Childhood Committee.

FAO Iraq representative, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, provided an overview of the organization's interventions in supporting the dairy value chain and empowering rural women. He highlighted the profound impact on their livelihoods and communities and shared updates on other ongoing projects.

He stated: "We thank the Presidency of the Parliament and the Women, Family, and Childhood Committee for this acknowledgment of FAO's efforts and those of these remarkable women. We also, greatly value our partnership with national and international partners. The dedication and efforts of these women are truly commendable, and the necessity to scale up these projects to reach more women across more governorates cannot be overstated. Together, we can build a brighter future for all, and we look forward to more cooperation with the Iraqi parliament and government to

further advance the agricultural sector and empower women in Iraq."

Project partners shared their success stories, underscoring the invaluable support received from FAO, the EU, and the MoA. Their testimonies highlighted the project's positive impact on their lives and communities. The participated women also called for granting Iraqi women in this field opportunities equal to those in other professions.

The celebration also showcased a variety of high-quality dairy products crafted by women groups benefited from the support of FAO through the EU funded project in collaboration with MoA.

Shields of Excellence and Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to the EU delegation in Iraq, MoA, FAO team, and the rural women by the members of the Women, Family and Childhood committee.

During a bilateral meeting, that followed the ceremony, the Parliament's General Secretary, Dr. Safwan Bashir al-Jarjari, appreciated the organization's efforts in supporting the agricultural sector in Iraq and

empowering rural women. He presented recognition certificates to the FAO representative and team, as well as the EU Delegation in Iraq, reaffirming Parliament's commitment to supporting FAO's projects in Iraq.

FAO remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing the agricultural sector and empowering rural women across Iraq, in collaboration with national and international partners.

This initiative aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), and Goal 5 (Gender Equality), by enhancing livelihoods, ensuring food security, and promoting gender equality.



FAO in Iraq continues its capacities building programme for youth and women in beekeeping and honey production

Dohuk, 28 July 2024 - In Dohuk, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq continues its capacities building programme for youth and women in beekeeping and honey production. Trained beekeepers from previous workshop, now leading the training in presence of FAO Iraq Representative Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, General Secretary of the Council of Representatives, Head of NGOs at Dohuk Governorate and Head of Dohuk Beekeepers Association.

This FAO initiative aimed at empowering number of national team across Iraq, to contribute on improving the local capacities, and improvement of the value chain of beekeeping and honey production. FAO Iraq Representative Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan emphasized in his opening speech "we are committed with the government entities and stakeholders to fostering a sustainable beekeeping industry, highlighting its importance on food security and livelihoods."

"Empowering local communities through beekeeping not only strengthens economic growth, but also promotes environmental



sustainability," said the General Secretary of the Council of Representatives, while acknowledge FAO efforts towards more sustainable beekeeping.

The three-day training workshop for women and young beekeepers wrapped up successfully with 52 participants, over 50% of whom were attending a beekeeping training for the first time. Participants received certificates of completion and are eager to continue honing their skills, seeing beekeeping as a tremendous opportunity with vast potential.

FAO Iraq Representative, Dr. Salah El

Hajj Hassan, and the team received heartfelt recognition and honors from Dohuk Beekeeping Association, Agriculture Directorate of Dohuk, and Duhok University for their unwavering support. They reaffirmed their commitment to advancing beekeeping and supporting beekeepers.

On the second day of the training, trained Master beekeepers led practical training for women and young beekeepers at the College of Agriculture, Duhok University - introducing modern beekeeping techniques, sharing best practices, and advising on what to avoid.

The second meeting of the Legislative Drafting Committee for the project 'Enhancing Veterinary Legislation in Iraq' implemented by FAO Iraq and its partners, was held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 31 July 2024 - The second meeting of the Legislative Drafting Committee for the project 'Enhancing Veterinary Legislation in Iraq,' implemented by FAO Iraq and its partners, was held today in the presence of the organization's team and representatives from key ministries and stakeholders. The discussions focused on key amendments to the Iraqi legislative framework on animal

health, ensuring robust animal and public health systems in Iraq. Outcomes from the meeting include strengthened collaboration between the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Environment, and alignment with the Kurdistan Region. The importance of public-private partnerships and regulatory frameworks to effectively manage zoonotic diseases in Iraq were also emphasized.



The Iraqi government in partnership with FAO in Iraq: a large campaign to support buffalo breeders in the south



Baghdad, 01 August 2024 - The Iraqi government, in response to the call made by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to the Iraqi government and national and international partners to support buffalo breeders suffering from the effects of climate change and water scarcity in southern Iraq, and based on the success of the activities carried out by the Organization in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and with funding from the European Union, issued a royal order to support and assist these breeders.

A significant milestone was reached as the Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with FAO, launched, a major feed distribution campaign (Molasses and Bran) to support affected buffalo breeders who were considering few months ago migrating to other areas.

This first distribution campaign took place in Muthanna, marking a key step

in the government's initiative and will extend to several other southern governorates in the upcoming months, aiming to address the pressing needs of buffalo breeders in the region and to improve their livelihoods.

The event was held under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Abbas Jaber Al-Maliki, and attended by the Technical Deputy of the Ministry, Dr. Mithaq Al Khafaji, Muthan Governor Mr. Muhannad Al-Attabi, and other local government officials, FAO Iraq representative, Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan and large number of livestock farmers of the region.

"The support we are providing today exemplifies the strength of our collaboration and the positive impact of our joint efforts to assist the agricultural community in southern Iraq," said Dr. Abbas Jaber Al-Maliki, Minister of Agriculture. "We are dedicated to continuing our partnership

with FAO and other stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of buffalo breeders facing climate challenges."

Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Iraq Representative, added: "Today's event reflects the strong collaboration and the positive impact of our collective efforts to support the agricultural community in southern Iraq. We thank, acknowledge and commend the Iraqi government's proactive efforts in supporting buffalo breeders while we also highly acknowledge EU support as well. FAO Iraq remains committed to providing unwavering support to the Iraqi government and breeders through our expertise and resources, ensuring sustainable solutions for their challenges."

Prior to this event, FAO Iraq's team, in collaboration with agricultural extension services, conducted extensive trainings for Ministry of Agriculture extension officers on the effective use of the good practices of using the feed.

This initiative not only addresses urgent needs but also contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 13 (Climate Action), and Goal 15 (Life on Land). By supporting sustainable agricultural practices and improving livelihoods, the initiative helps foster resilience and food security in the region.

High level delegation undertakes a field visit to the Missan-Hawiza marshes

Baghdad, 21 August 2024 - A delegation led by the Prime Minister's Agricultural Advisor, the Technical Undersecretary of the Ministry of Water Resources, General Directors from Ministries of Agriculture, Water Resources, Environment, along with

UN FAO Iraq Representative, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, and the FAO team, recently visited Missan-Hawiza Marshes. They met with local officials, environmental activists, area residents, and stakeholders. The meeting was followed by a field visit to the marshes

to examine the causes of the fish die-off. A set of recommendations was agreed upon to mitigate current situation and prevent future occurrences, preserving the fish and animal wealth and ecological diversity of the marshes.

FAO and partners launch Summer Crops planting

Basra, 13 August 2024 – United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), along with the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water, and local governments of Thi Qar and Al-Muthana, launched Summer Crops planting under the GEF-funded SLM project in southern Iraq (6-13 August 2024).

This initiative aims to stop land degradation and promote sustainable land and water management.

Targeting 1,500 farmers, we're promoting Conservation Agriculture principles to boost soil health and crop productivity.

Follow our progress in transforming sustainable food systems and restoring degraded lands in Iraq. This initiative promotes landscapes and

agroecosystems that thrive both economically and environmentally, contributing to food security and livelihood restoration.



Empowering Farmers in Kurdistan!

Erbil, 27 August 2024 - UNDP is happy to share that UNDP Iraq and USAID, in partnership with the KRG Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, recently hosted a two-day Agricultural Extension and Marketing Training for Ministry staff in Sulaymaniyah and Erbil.

With generous support from USAID Iraq, UNDP equipped the "extension services and marketing department" staff with the tools and knowledge to: expand market opportunities for local farmers, increase income for farmers and agricultural businesses, and diversify the economy through sustainable agriculture.

The Funding Facility for Economic Reform project supports the

Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to advance reforms to diversify and promote a green economy and support Iraqi farmers.

By strengthening the agricultural

sector, we're creating a brighter future for rural communities in Iraq's Kurdistan Region.

Together, we're paving the way for a more resilient and prosperous economic growth.



FAO-WaPOR II project continues to develop capacities and increase technical follow-up

Baghdad, 29 August 2024 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq, in partnership with the Ministry of Water Resources, held the second steering committee meeting for the Land and Water Productivity Monitoring using Remote Sensing (WaPOR II) project funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the Ministry's premises in Baghdad.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Hatem Hamid Hussein, Director General of the Planning and Follow-up Department at the Ministry of Water Resources, Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, and attended by representatives from Ministries of Agriculture, Planning, Environment, Higher Education and Scientific Research, Agriculture and



Water Resources and planning in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and international partners from the IHE Delft Water Education Institute and the International Water Resources Management Institute (IWMI).

Dr. Hussein praised the importance of the data provided by the WaPOR platform, (the FAO Water Productivity

Open-access portal), saying that the Ministry's technicians have actually used this data to extract indicators and prepare reports that were approved by governmental decision-makers.

FAO representative stressed the importance of benefiting from the data of this platform, which allows comparing land and water productivity

FAO-WaPOR II project continues to develop capacities and increase technical follow-up *(continued)*

and other indicators spatially and temporally in different parts, such as irrigation project areas or at the river basin level, to assess the impacts of interventions and improve irrigation system operations and resource use efficiency.

The WaPOR project aims to help partner countries develop their capacities to monitor and improve water and agricultural land productivity, and thus respond to the challenges imposed by the increasing pressure on freshwater resources and the need to sustain agricultural production to ensure food security in the face of climate change.

FAO and project partners: IHE DELFT

and IWMI, reviewed the activities carried out during 2023-2024 regarding capacity development to assess irrigation performance in the study areas of the West Gharraf Irrigation Project (Wasit and Thi Qar) and the Shamamuk Project in Erbil. The challenges facing the irrigation sector in Iraq and the added value provided by the project were also discussed, especially in increasing water efficiency use in the agricultural sector.

The SC concluded its meeting by emphasizing the sustainability of capacity building interventions and increasing the technical follow-up for the trained teams. The SC stressed also on technical team members'

commitment to the training programs to enable them to manage the WaPOR tool that will be hosted by the Ministry of Water Resources to monitor irrigation performance in the West Gharraf Irrigation Project area and the WaPOR tool that will be hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources in the Kurdistan Regional Government to monitor groundwater abstraction for agricultural purposes in the Shamamuk Irrigation Basin.

The training programs will also provide team members with the required ability to widely transfer knowledge, in addition to discussing the opportunities to expand the project framework of the two study areas.

Labour Issues

Towards developing a national action plan to promote green business and create better and more job opportunities in Iraq: International MSMEs Day Event

Baghdad, 27 June 2024 - (ILO News) – In a successful collaboration, the Iraqi Ministry of Environment (MOEN), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) co-organized an interactive event titled "Towards developing a national action plan to promote green business in Iraq and create better and more job opportunities" on June 27, 2024, in recognition of International MSMEs Day.

The event brought together over 60 participants, including government representatives, industry leaders, civil society organizations, green MSME entrepreneurs, and young climate change advocates. This diverse group engaged in fruitful exchange of ideas, paving the way for a national action plan to support green businesses in Iraq, with a particular focus on empowering women entrepreneurs.

The event featured two discussion panels. The first panel included key government stakeholders, focusing on policy frameworks and regulatory support for green business initiatives. The second panel comprised representatives from the private sector, employer organizations, and financial institutions, who discussed strategies, opportunities, and financial mechanisms to advance green business practices in Iraq.

The event was inaugurated by the Prime Minister's Advisor for

Investment and the CEO of the Development Fund of Iraq, who stated "The Iraqi Fund for Development was created to address a number of economic and environmental challenges facing Iraq and transform them into investment opportunities. The Fund also seeks to create incentives to support small and medium-sized companies by focusing on green businesses, as these projects have great potential for progress and development."

Spearheading Iraq's transition to a greener future, the MOEN actively promotes sustainable practices and empowers stakeholders to contribute to environmental well-being. Recognizing the critical role of green businesses and women's leadership, MOEN played a

pivotal role in co-organising the World MSME Day event.

"The MOEN's participation in this event is an important step in promoting and supporting green projects in Iraq. These projects contribute to preserving the environment, creating job opportunities, and stimulating economic growth. Furthermore, The MOEN enhances efforts in both the governmental and private sectors, particularly the project to promote green business in southern Iraq. In this project, the Ministry cooperates with the ILO and the AICS, reflecting a significant direction in supporting such initiatives". said Dr. Iktfaa Al-Hassnawi, Administrative and Financial Deputy for MOEN.

The ILO plays a vital role in promoting



Towards developing a national action plan to promote green business ... (continued)

decent work opportunities in Iraq through its Decent Work Country Programme. Recognizing the potential of the green economy to create sustainable and well-paying jobs, the ILO has made green job creation a significant focus. This commitment extends to supporting training programs, fostering worker rights within the green sector, and advocating for policies that incentivize green business development.

“Currently, the International Labor Organization is implementing several projects across various governorates in Iraq, aimed at supporting small and medium enterprises and helping them access financing by enhancing the efficiency of entrepreneurs. Special importance is given to women, youth, and people with disabilities. We are also working to evaluate the business environment to implement thoughtful initiatives that will facilitate the development of a sustainable business environment. Additionally, we are building the capabilities of banks and

financial institutions to design financial green products suitable for different groups and sectors. We train and certify trainers from various backgrounds on the well-established International Labor Organization tools for business management and financial education, so that they, in turn, can train potential entrepreneurs to ensure the continuity of programs even after the projects are completed”.

The International MSMEs Day event yielded a significant outcome: the initial framework for a national action plan to support green businesses in Iraq. This plan tackles challenges head-on by identifying bottlenecks like access to finance and expertise through collaborative workshops. It fosters open communication between workers, employers, and government to develop cost-effective green policies that incentivize private sector investment. Finally, the plan will be refined based on stakeholder consultations to create a supportive environment. This includes streamlining regulations, promoting

public awareness about green products and services, and fostering stronger collaboration between government, private sector, and civil society, paving the way for a greener future in Iraq.

The event concluded with a sense of shared purpose and a commitment to continued collaboration. The Ministry of Environment, ILO, AICS, and other stakeholders are determined to build upon this momentum to empower green MSMEs, with a special focus on women entrepreneurs. Together, they aim to pave the way for a more sustainable and inclusive future for Iraq.

This initiative falls under the “Towards more and better employment through enhanced support to private sectors in southern Iraq – with a focus on green business” project, implemented by the ILO with the support of Italy. The project is part of broader efforts under the Iraq Decent Work Country Programme signed by the Government, employers’ and workers’ organizations and the ILO to promote employment opportunities and decent work.

ILO holds a consultative meeting with the MOLSA to discuss the challenges and opportunities in implementing the Workers’ Retirement and Social Security Law No. 18 of 2023

Baghdad, 03 July 2024 - The International Labour Organization held a high-level consultative meeting with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to discuss the challenges and opportunities in implementing the Workers’ Retirement and Social Security Law No. 18 of 2023. The Deputy Minister of Labour, Dr. Khaled Amjad Muhammad, headed the ministerial team, including the key social security staff, labour and vocational training directorates, legal advisors, and national experts from the National Centre of Occupational Safety and Health.

The participants reviewed and discussed follow up on recommendations that ILO issued in August 2023 regarding institutional reforms in the Department of Retirement and Social Security (DRSS) under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) in order to implement the new law passed in 2023. The ministerial team presented steps taken by DRSS to enforce the law as well as opportunities for institutional cooperation between the ministry’s directorates to support the implementation of the law. In particular, mechanisms for



coordination and exchanging data on inspection and monitoring of work-related injuries and establishing referral mechanisms for injured and sick workers between the National Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, and DRSS were discussed. Participants highlighted the importance of preparing a national system for monitoring and documenting work-related injuries and occupational diseases. Likewise, participants discussed the need to improve the effectiveness of the complaints system related to rights at work and social

security. Finally, participants agreed with the need to develop a national programme led by MoLSA to enforce the new social security law in cooperation with workers’ and employers’ organizations.

The Deputy Minister of MoLSA confirmed that the Ministry intends to take effective steps to strengthen joint institutional work among its directors to optimize enforcement of the law. Mr. Steven De Vriendt, the Social Protection Program Manager at the European Union Delegation to Iraq, highlighted the importance of

ILO holds a consultative meeting with the MOLSA to discuss the challenges and opportunities ... *(continued)*

reforming the social security system in order to become more efficient and reach those in need. Mr. Igor Bosc, Chief Technical Adviser of the ILO on Social Protection, highlighted various specific procedural reforms that could be undertaken to expand coverage and quality of services.

At the closing of the meeting MoLSA and ILO agreed to hold a series of follow-up thematic workshops aimed at

strengthening the institutional capabilities of the various departments of DRSS, as well as to support Iraq's efforts in developing national strategies and programmes and in particular expand social security coverage in Iraq's private sector to include the informal economy. Finally, ILO reiterated the importance of these reforms in view of Iraq's transition from social assistance to a

comprehensive social protection floor.

This high-level consultative meeting was part of a wider initiative carried out by the ILO to support national efforts in strengthening social security for workers in Iraq in the context of the ILO, UNICEF and WFP joint Social Protection Programme for Iraq: Leveraging Effective Response and Accelerating Reform, funded by the European Union.

EU-funded BEIT Project fosters decent work opportunities through transformative affordable green housing and improved business environment



Baghdad, 10 July 2024 - The EU-funded Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT) Project implemented by three partnering UN agencies, aims to create a tangible model of how future sustainable development best practices can bolster housing, employment, and private sector development.

BEIT is a key project in the EU's cooperation with Iraq, implemented by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the International Trade Centre (ITC). It aims to stimulate decent work opportunities for young women and men while addressing the urgent need for affordable housing, especially for lower-income and vulnerable people in Iraq. BEIT also aims to improve the business environment, by bolstering the construction and housing sector value chains, and boosting trade and services.

On June 12th, coinciding with the World Day Against Child Labour, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs hosted an introductory meeting for the BEIT project, which was attended by representatives from the EU Delegation to Iraq, the three partner UN agencies, key officials from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Planning.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Ali Al-

Naseri, the Programme Manager at the Delegation of the European Union to Iraq, highlighted that the EU commends the increasing interest of the Government of Iraq in addressing the need for housing. He emphasized the EU's commitment to making a positive impact in the housing domain through collaboration with UN-Habitat, ILO, and ITC. He further noted that the BEIT initiative promotes integrated approaches to affordable green housing in pilot areas, aiming to create jobs, empower SMEs, and mitigate climate change impacts in housing. Regarding the BEIT project's objective of promoting decent work and job creation, Mr. Ali outlined the significance of MoLSA's efforts in reducing and combating child labour and emphasized its crucial role in improving the business environment through social dialogue. This will be achieved through supporting the implementation of relevant, green solution-driven vocational training to bridge the gaps between youth skills and labour market demands which will also be aligned with the public work program.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, represented by Mr. Osama Al-Khafagi, the Director General of the Labour and Vocational Training Directorate, emphasized that providing support to Iraq in designing and implementing construction sector

focused public works programs which also increases the supply of affordable green housing is a groundbreaking initiative in Iraq that the ministry is eagerly willing to support. Mr. Osama Al-Khafagi appreciated the opportunities provided by the project and stressed that the BEIT project will be a significant step in creating decent job opportunities and enhancing workers' skills in green housing while also enhancing coverage of legal protections according to the national and international labour laws.

During the meeting, the United Nations partner agencies presented the project objectives and cooperation mechanisms with the Iraqi government and social partners. The BEIT programme partners presented the scope of interventions during which Dr. Maha Kattaa, on behalf of the UN implementing agencies (UN-HABITAT, ILO, and ITC), assured the meeting participants that the BEIT programme will improve the alignment of national policies and regulations with international labour standards in the housing sector, including eliminating child labour. Meeting participants were briefed on how the programme will also focus on increasing affordable green housing, addressing climate change through climate-smart green solutions and jobs, creating an enabling environment through regulatory reforms and support for MSMEs, and enhancing the influence of workers' and employers' organizations through social dialogue.

The Director Generals of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Mr. Osama Al-Khafagi, Mr. Mushreq Al Asadi, Mr. Mohammad Abdul Razaq and Mr. Raed Jabar Bahidh stressed that BEIT provides an opportunity to develop solid frameworks and guidelines for occupational safety and health, as well

EU-funded BEIT Project fosters decent work opportunities through transformative affordable green housing ... (continued)

as labour inspection tools to enforce labour laws, which can be rolled out to support additional economic activities beyond the construction sector. The need to consider and include People with Disabilities (PWDs) in different programmatic aspects, when designing policies, and other interventions, was

highlighted during the meeting. Participants also emphasized the importance of relying on the MoLSA Database to link job seekers with BEIT project job opportunities. They also emphasised the need to take into account the importance of employing women and people with disabilities to ensure their

effective participation in the labour market. It was noted that the project would consider the various concerns, and that it would work closely with partners to achieve the project's objectives of increasing affordable and sustainable housing, creating decent employment and stimulating private sector development.



Erbil, 15 July 2024 - The Deputy Minister of Planning for the Kurdistan Government, **Mr. Sirwan Muhammad**, met with **Ms. Maha Kattaa**, the Country Coordinator of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Iraq. The meeting included ministry officials and focused on the development of the new Decent Work Country Programme DWCP 2025-2029 as well as the ILO's proposed national employment policy. Key topics were enhancing the private sector, governmental support, and addressing climate change's impact on job opportunities. The discussions highlighted the needs of the Kurdistan Region and emphasized building capacities and coordinating priorities.



Erbil, 15 July 2024 - The Minister of Labour and Social affairs (MoLSA) **Ms. Kwistan Mohamed**, the Deputy Minister **Ms. Zakia Saleh** and MoLSA team in Kurdistan Region-Iraq met with the ILO Country Coordinator **Dr. Maha Kattaa** and her team to discuss the progress of the implementation of the ILO projects in KRI as well as the first steps to develop the new Decent Work Country Programme for 2025- 2029. Ms. Maha Kattaa, Country Coordinator at International Labour Organization in Iraq: "Very productive meeting with the Minister of MoLSA in KRI Ms Kwistan Mohammed and team to discuss progress of ILO programme in Iraq including in Kurdistan Region and the preparation for the new Decent Work Country Programme 2025-2029."

More than 40 villages and 3,000 local farmers in Duhok governorate benefit from the irrigation channels rehabilitation

Duhok, 16 July 2024 - Under Prospects Programme, more than 40 villages and 3,000 local farmers in Duhok governorate benefited from the irrigation channels rehabilitation through the ILO Employment Intensive Investment Programme EIIP approaches. These interventions created more than 15,000 worker days equivalent to 400 jobs for local community and refugees

in Duhok. The rehabilitation was completed with

generous support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq.



ILO celebrates the milestone of the successful completion of the Job Search Club JSC in Duhok and Ninawa!

Baghdad, 17 July 2024 - ILO celebrates the milestone of the successful completion of the Job Search Club JSC in Duhok and Ninawa! Twenty-four facilitators have been trained in the JSC methodology, leading to the implementation of 10 clubs targeting 200 young people, including 63% women. We are proud to report that 30% of participants found jobs within a month of completing the program. This activity was completed under the

ILO's Prospect project with generous support of the Embassy of the

Netherlands in Iraq and Caritas Czech Republic in Iraq.



ILO kickstarts development of a comprehensive National Policy for occupational safety and health and social security for the agriculture sector in the Republic of Iraq



Erbil, 17 July 2024 (News from ILO) – The International Labour Organization (ILO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, held a national sectoral workshop from 15-17 July 2024 to discuss ways to support Iraq's efforts in developing a comprehensive national policy for occupational safety and health and social security for the agricultural sector, with the participation of a wide spectrum of Iraqi ministries at both the federal level and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, as well as worker organizations, employer organizations, and the Union of Agricultural Associations.

In the opening session of the workshop, Mr. Khalid Amjad, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, emphasized that the workshop laid the foundation for enhancing occupational safety and health and social security in the agriculture sector by proposing the establishment of a national legal framework, occupational health and safety systems and a robust inspection system. In addition, he highlighted the importance of social security benefits for worker in the agriculture sector –

an important step towards formalisation of the agricultural sector. Participants of the workshop reviewed international labour standards related to social security, particularly the Social Security (Minimum Standards) ILO Convention No. 102 of 1952, which Iraq ratified in 2022 and which came into force in March 2023. They also reviewed the Safety and Health in Agriculture ILO Convention No. 184 of 2001, which Iraq ratified as the first Arab country in 2020 and which came into force in May 2022.

Dr. Maha Kattaa, the ILO Country Coordinator in Iraq, highlighted the importance of having a national policy for occupational safety and health and social security for the agriculture sector, as this sector is classified among the three sectors with the highest occupational hazards and work-related injuries globally and among the least covered by social security. Dr. Kattaa stressed that enhancing protections against occupational risks and extending social security benefits to workers in the agricultural sector is one of the most important measures to address decent work gaps within this

sector.

The workshop included an initial analysis of the national legislative frameworks for occupational safety and health as outlined in labour legislation and examined the extent of coverage of social security in Iraq for agricultural workers, especially following the issuance of Law No. 18 of 2023 on Retirement and Social Security, which expanded the benefits covered by the law's provisions, particularly the self-employed and workers in the informal economy. The workshop revealed the need for developing this policy, updating existing legislation, and enhancing sectoral coordination between ministries, agencies, worker organizations, employer organizations, and farmers' cooperative associations in Iraq to draft and adopt the policy and implement it through feasible national programmes. These programmes will aim to boost the implementation of occupational safety and health standards in the sector, monitor and analyze work-related injuries and occupational diseases, ensure that workers are covered by social security benefits, and establish a referral system for injured and sick workers to social security, including them in the health guarantees provided by the law. This, in turn, will increase coverage rates of agricultural workers under the social security system in Iraq.

This workshop is part of a broader ILO initiative to support national efforts to improve social protection for workers in Iraq within the context of a joint social protection program in Iraq including ILO, UNICEF, and the World Food Programme: "Leveraging Effective Response and Accelerating Reform," funded by the European Union.

120 youths secure jobs and 8 start businesses

Karbala, 18 July 2024 - The Job Matching project is a partnership between UNDP, Karbala's local government, and various entities and private sector companies, aimed at empowering youth by connecting them with private sector jobs or helping them launch their own ventures. Through specialized training, the project has equipped over 400 participants with essential skills. This led to 120 youths securing jobs and 8 starting businesses, while fostering partnerships with private companies to boost local economic growth.



Under Iraq Prospects ILO Programme, a group of young entrepreneurs obtains loans to support small and medium-sized enterprises

Baghdad, 24 July 2024 - Under Iraq Prospects ILO Programme, a group of young entrepreneurs have obtained loans through an initiative of the International Labour Organization in cooperation with the Central Bank of Iraq and the Microfinance Institution (Al-Theqa) to support small and medium-sized enterprises. This project has effectively contributed to providing significant financial support to the equivalent of 1027 existing and start-up businesses from the host community, displaced persons, and refugees. This has enabled them to expand and create 910 new jobs with 30% for women in the Dohuk and Ninawa governorates. ILO Coordinator in Iraq, Dr. Maha Kattaa, met with some beneficiaries who shared their appreciation to this initiative.



Potential for transitioning to green jobs through enhanced policies for easy loans and low interest rates

Baghdad, 07 August 2024 - In a collaboration between the Ministry of Planning and the International Labour Organization (ILO), a workshop on "Green Jobs in Iraq" was held today, Wednesday. Experts and officials from both sides attended the workshop, which included presentations by representatives of both sides. The workshop discussed the potential for transitioning to green jobs through enhanced policies for easy loans and low interest rates, defining green jobs according to the ILO, and the importance of the green economy in improving human well-being, social justice, and reducing environmental risks. Participants recommended transitioning to a low-carbon economy while maintaining Iraq's economic interests and promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in this field.



IOM has extensive global expertise in camp management and camp coordination (CCCM)

Baghdad, 29 August 2024 - Last week in Baghdad, IOM brought together stakeholders to share our knowledge and enhance on-the-ground emergency preparedness and CCCM processes, all in line with protection principles. U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration supported this project.



Graduation ceremony of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Trainers' on ILO's "Start and Improve Your Business" Program



Baghdad, 08 August 2024 - The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), organized a graduation ceremony for the newly certified trainers, attended by His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Jassim Al-Asadi, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Mrs. Shahba'a Ahmed, Advisor to the Prime Minister, and a group of representatives from various ministries, banks, and ILO partners in Iraq, along with the certified trainers from different Iraqi provinces.

The ceremony was opened with a speech by His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Jassim Al-Asadi, who stated, "Today we celebrate the culmination of their continuous efforts in enhancing skills and knowledge, contributing to building a better future for the coming generations." The Minister emphasized the importance of youth, who represent the majority in Iraqi society, and their role in building the nation's economy. He highlighted the significance of investing in their ideas and energy for a better future, adding, "Your efforts in training and the efforts of the trainers

are the foundation we need to launch thousands of our youth into promising projects and towards an advanced economy."

Dr. Maha Kattaa, the ILO Country Coordinator, also addressed the gathering, emphasizing the importance of the program, which she noted as one of the largest global programs in the field of entrepreneurship. "The 'Start and Improve Your Business' program is one of the largest global initiatives in the field of entrepreneurship and is an essential part of our strategic efforts to support the private sector in Iraq. The success of the certified trainers reflects the strength of capacity building in transforming ideas into sustainable projects, contributing to economic growth and creating new job opportunities," she added.

The certification program involved the accreditation of Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs trainers across 10 training centers and business incubators in 8 Iraqi provinces. These certified trainers have worked to develop their skills in training, planning, and execution, aiming to

enhance the efficiency of training centers that help transform ideas into successful and sustainable projects.

The ceremony also featured a detailed presentation on the program's scope and history. The "Start and Improve Your Business" program, launched by the ILO in cooperation with 4,900 partners worldwide, is present in over 100 countries and has been translated into more than 40 languages and dialects to cater to targeted regions. The event also highlighted success stories from program beneficiaries, with 461 individuals benefiting from this cycle, 92% of whom developed business plans and ideas during and after the training. Zahra, one of the beneficiaries of the program, stated, "My sales increased by 60% just two months after the program began, as it helped me understand the importance of promotion techniques in improving my sales and developing my communication skills with customers." After the ceremony, certificates were distributed to the trainers by His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Jassim Al-Asadi and Dr. Maha Kattaa, to those who completed all the training hours and adhered to all the program's guidelines. A total of 27 participants attended the training, 19 of them completed all training stages. They obtained 130 new project ideas, 79 implementation plans and 152 project improvement plans, to help pioneering project owners improve and develop their projects.

This intervention is funded by the Netherland as part of PROSPECTS program which is a global partnership brings together the ILO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and the World Bank (WB).

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the ILO discuss the preparatory steps for launching the national campaign to raise awareness about social security in Iraq

Erbil, 13 August 2024 - In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the International Labour Organization (ILO) organized a workshop in Erbil on the 12th and 13th of August to discuss the preparatory steps for launching the national campaign to raise awareness about social security in Iraq. The workshop was attended by representatives from the Supreme

Council for Youth, the National Women's Directorate in the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, workers' and employers' organizations, as well as a wide range of civil society organizations active in the field of workers' rights and social security across Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region.

The workshop focused on analyzing communication strategies suitable for

workers and employers in Iraq, as well as defining the campaign's slogan, objectives, available resources, and methods of coordination with various governmental entities, including ministries, agencies, workers' organizations, employers' organizations, civil society organizations, and different media platforms.

This workshop was preceded by a

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the ILO discuss the preparatory steps ... (continued)



strategic planning meeting on Sunday, August 11, 2024, with the ministerial team assigned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs the conference aimed to coordinate campaign activities with the ILO and its partners. During the meeting, the

priorities and needs of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, particularly the Directorate of Workers' Pension and Social Security, were identified, along with the roles and responsibilities of the ministerial team in expanding the campaign's scope in

collaboration with the aforementioned entities.

The ILO continues to provide technical support to the Republic of Iraq in developing and implementing labour legislation, particularly the Workers' Pension and Social Security Law No. 18 of 2023. The organization is working to promote social security awareness in Iraq through a national media campaign currently under preparation. This workshop and the national campaign to enhance social security awareness in Iraq are part of a broader initiative supported by the ILO, within the framework of the Joint Social Protection Program in Iraq, in cooperation with UNICEF and the World Food Programme, funded by the European Union. The goal is to strengthen social guarantees and accelerate reforms in Iraq.

Security Sector Reform

UNODC participates in the 2nd Baghdad International Conference on Countering Narcotics and presents the report "Drug Trafficking Dynamics across Iraq and the Middle East (2019-2023)"

Baghdad, 22 July 2024 – Today marked an important moment in Iraq's road towards addressing drug trafficking through international cooperation with the holding of the 2nd Baghdad International Conference on Countering Narcotics, in the presence of UNODC, and the presentation of the report "Drug Trafficking Dynamics across Iraq and the Middle East (2019-2023): Trends and Responses." The Conference was opened in the presence of H.E. Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani, Prime Minister of Iraq, H.E. Abdul Amir al-Shammari, Minister of Interior, H.E. Mohammad Bin Ali Kuman, Secretary General of the Arab Interior Ministers Council (AIMC), Ms. Cristina Albertin, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa, and Mr. Ali El Bereir, Senior Programme Coordinator and Head of the UNODC Office in Iraq. The event was also attended by representatives of Ministers of Interior from the region and neighboring countries affected by drug trafficking. The Baghdad International Conference on Countering Narcotics aims to bring together relevant authorities and experts from countries neighboring Iraq as well as regional and key international players to find concrete

solutions and recommendations to challenges faced by authorities in countering drug trafficking in the region.

H.E. Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani, Prime Minister of Iraq affirmed in the opening of the Conference that "Combating drugs is a responsibility that the state must bear with all its agencies and entities, as well as our societies... Drugs and psychotropic substances are a primary factor in the instability of the region. The threat of drugs not only harms our youth but endangers our entire future. By unifying efforts and enhancing joint coordination, we can achieve the desired goal of drug-free societies."

The "Drug Trafficking Dynamics across Iraq and the Middle East (2019-2023): Trends and Responses" report was presented today at the Conference to provide an analysis of the main drug trafficking trends in Iraq and the Near and Middle East. In addition to posing a diagnostic of the concerning drug situation, the report provides a roadmap to assist national, regional, and international authorities in accelerating collaboration and better coordination to counter-narcotics.

The report reveals that countries in the region have experienced an escalation in both the scale and sophistication of drug trafficking over the past 10 years. This poses important destabilizing



UNODC participates in the 2nd Baghdad International Conference on Countering Narcotics ... (continued)

risks and is a regional and global concern. Of particular concern are the rising production, trafficking, and consumption of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), especially tablets of "Captagon," and methamphetamine.

Ms. Cristina Albertin, UNODC Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa stated that "the Government of Iraq and its partners have stressed the need for collective responses to tackle the security, social, and economic ramifications of drug trafficking across the Near and Middle

East. As seen in different regional contexts, the persistence – and potential reactivation – of armed groups across the region poses a significant threat, not least given their potential involvement in drug production and trafficking. Data and analysis like those provided by this report are necessary for evidence and data-driven national, regional, and global responses to this problem."

Over the past two years, the Iraqi Government has taken bold steps in combatting drugs, by reorganizing the

relevant departments of the Ministry of Interior, a better-coordinated approach internally and with other Member States, and expansion of the treatment facilities. The Conference and the Report are additional contributions towards this holistic approach and will together provide a base for a series of recommendations to be adopted by participating countries and implemented to address the threats of drug trafficking.

UNODC Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa concludes a mission to Iraq (21-25 July 2024), focusing on collaborative efforts to counter drug trafficking

Baghdad, 28 July 2024 - Ms. Cristina Albertin, the Regional Representative for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA) conducted an official mission to Iraq from 21 to 25 July 2024. Her mission aimed to participate in the 2nd Baghdad International Conference on Countering Narcotics on 22 July, hosted by the H.E. Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani, Prime Minister of Iraq, with the participation of eight countries affected by the growing drug trafficking in the region, particularly of "captagon" and methamphetamine.

During the conference, Ms. Cristina Albertin, UNODC Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa highlighted the findings of the first-ever UNODC research on drug trafficking in Iraq and the region. The study focuses on drug trafficking trends in Iraq and neighboring countries, the increasing seizures along the three drug trafficking routes crossing Iraq, the enablers of drug trafficking, and the increasing response by the Iraqi authorities, particularly the Anti-Narcotics Directorate. It also presents recommended future actions at national and regional levels.

Ms. Albertin recognized the strong political commitment expressed in H.E. Prime Minister of Iraq, Mohammed



Shia' Al Sudani's opening speech at the 2nd Baghdad International Conference on Countering Narcotics and his leadership in addressing this challenge. Furthermore, Ms. Albertin acknowledged the leadership exhibited by H.E. Abdul Amir al-Shammari, the Minister of Interior, in revitalizing the campaign against illicit drug trafficking. Subsequently, during her visit to the Anti-Narcotics Directorate at the Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ms. Albertin was briefed by Mr. Ahmed Al-Zarkani, the Director General. Ms. Albertin highly appreciated the Directorate's ongoing investment and efforts in countering trafficking in Iraq. In part, this success can be attributed to the use of enhanced strategic planning, which has led to improved operational effectiveness.

As highlighted in the UNODC research report, UNODC believes that the Iraqi Government's efforts, supported by specialized investigation techniques, have resulted in a substantive increase in the seizures of drugs, particularly methamphetamine, and "captagon," and

the arrests of suspected drug traffickers. These efforts have been further complemented by improved regional agreements and cooperation, leading to increased cross-border law enforcement operations and the additional disruption of illicit narcotic trafficking networks operating in the region.

Ms. Albertin's mission in Iraq continued with the visit of the treatment center for sentenced drug offenders, operated by MoI since 2023. The UNODC Regional Representative for MENA recognized the Ministry's excellent efforts in addressing the health needs of drug offenders with drug use disorders. The establishment of 15 such centers within a few months reflects a strong commitment to the right to health of inmates as well as an effort to implement the holistic approach advocated by UNODC in compliance with the United Nations Drug Control Conventions.

During her mission, Ms. Albertin discussed ongoing and potential future UNODC cooperation programmes in drug control, countering money

UNODC Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa concludes a mission to Iraq ... (continued)

laundering, and corruption with national partners and stakeholders. She positively noted the outcomes of her meetings with Mr. Ali Mohsen Al-Alag, Governor of the Central Bank of Iraq, and Judge Haidar Hanon, Head of the Federal Commission of Integrity. These discussions focused on enhancing the partnership between Iraq and UNODC in anti-money laundering, countering corruption, and financing of terrorism.

UNODC currently collaborates closely with the Ministry of Interior, especially with its Anti-Narcotics Directorate in capacity-building and provision of equipment to enhance capabilities in detecting, dismantling, investigating,

and prosecuting drug trafficking networks and associated individuals. This includes specific long-term training in specialized investigation techniques such as Narcotic Investigations, Human Source and Information Management, Foot and Mobile Surveillance Techniques, and Surveillance Support, which are essential for supporting the controlled deliveries of suspected illicit drugs.

The mission also included a visit to Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where Ms. Albertin and her team held a meeting with Mr. Dindar Zebari, the KRG Coordinator for International Advocacy, to discuss the impact of drug

trafficking and potential cooperation with UNODC to prevent and counter drugs comprehensively with the rollout of a new UNODC project supported by the Government of Canada.

UNODC ROMENA Report is available at: <https://bit.ly/3WeS6Fb>



Empowering financial integrity in Iraq through ToT: Learn – Teach – Apply!

Erbil, 21 July 2024 - In Erbil, Iraq, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) concluded a vital 4-day Train-the-Trainers Course aimed at countering against money laundering and terrorist financing. This intensive workshop equipped judiciary, law enforcement, and financial intelligence leaders with advanced tools and techniques essential for identifying, tracking, and disrupting illicit financial flows.



Iraq: Trade and government revenue gets boost from digital customs

Baghdad, 30 July 2024 - Backed by UN Trade and Development, customs automation helps improve compliance and ease trade in the country, benefitting businesses, the government and people.

As war-scarred Iraq continues efforts to revive its economy, there's newfound vigour in trade.

In October 2023, the country launched ASYCUDAWorld – a premier customs automation software supported by UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to digitalize customs clearance processes, reduce fraud risks and ease cross-border commerce.

The software, in compliance with international standards, aims to replace Iraq's manual, paper-based customs clearance processes, enabling traders to complete all necessary paperwork online for time and cost savings.

Baghdad International Airport, where ASYCUDAWorld debuted in Iraq, saw customs revenue grow by more than 215% between January and May 2024, compared to the same period a year



earlier.

Between January and March, import transactions at the airport were up 120% from the first quarter of 2023, reaching their highest levels in a decade.

The business community also responded effectively to comply with new procedures and regulations. Since October 2023, over 2,800 declarants have submitted around 65,600 declarations to customs through ASYCUDAWorld.

Currently, the software is up and running in Iraq's nine largest customs

offices which combined account for 81% of the nation's international trade by volume.

These include customs operations located on the borders with neighbouring Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, as well as at the port of Umm Qasr which leads to the Persian Gulf.

Taif Sami, Iraq's finance minister, praised ASYCUDAWorld for helping her country "achieve financial discipline, reduce errors, enhance the efficiency of government resources and provide accurate information."

Iraq: Trade and government revenue gets boost from digital customs *(continued)*

Long-term partnership with topline political backing

The agreement to roll out ASYCUDAWorld was envisaged in May 2021, as part of Iraq's partnership with the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) programme – the largest technical cooperation project run by UN Trade and Development across over 100 countries.

The collaboration enjoys the full support and solid commitment of the highest level of the Iraqi government, including the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance and the Director-General of Customs.

“The active involvement of these and other government departments, including the General Commission for Customs, has been critical in ensuring the project’s success to date,” says Shamika N. Sirimanne, director of technology and logistics at UN Trade and Development.

“ASYCUDA’s work in Iraq is ongoing but, even at this stage, we are already seeing the volumes traded increase and government revenues boosted,” Ms Sirimanne says.

Director General Hassan Hammoud Al-Oukaily of Iraq Customs adds: “The [ASYCUDA] system unifies the customs procedures at all crossings and ports and standardizes the collection of fees. It provides accurate information to policymakers about imports and exports, control over currency movements, and the exchange of dollars between Iraq and other nations.”

National stakeholders empowered to take the lead

The ASYCUDA work brings together in Iraq six staff of UN Trade and Development along with a national project team, comprising IT and customs experts.

Together, the operation customized and installed the ASYCUDAWorld prototype and tailored it to adhere to Iraqi laws and regulations.

Additionally, ASYCUDA staff trained the national team to use and independently maintain the system, including sessions held in Baghdad and a field visit to customs offices in Jordan to learn from their experiences.

Afterwards, the Iraqi national team in

turn trained the Iraq-based ASYCUDAWorld users, helping key stakeholders such as logistics carriers, declarants and customs officers to become familiar with the new system.

In June 2024, ASYCUDAWorld had two more launches – in Arar (which borders Saudi Arabia) and Trebil (which connects Iraq to Jordan) – largely led by the Iraqi national team, with ASYCUDA international experts back-stopping on remote.

Future endeavours

The Iraqi government is seeking to get ASYCUDAWorld live in all customs sites across the country by mid-2025.

After that, work will focus on modernizing customs control and building an electronic “single window” for trade based on ASYCUDA technology.

That one-stop platform connecting multiple government agencies involved in goods clearance is expected to further automate customs processes and enhance logistic efficiency and trade competitiveness for Iraq.



Refining Iraq's Draft Law on Arbitration

Erbil, 17 August 2024 - At a workshop in Erbil, UNDP is partnering with the Council of Representatives and the National Investment Commission to refine Iraq's Draft Law on Arbitration.

This collaborative effort, conducted through UNDP's EU-financed Anti-Corruption and Arbitration Initiatives, is crucial in aligning the draft law with international standards, including the UNCITRAL Model Law.

By working closely with MPs, their advisors UNDP experts Dr. Ismail Selim, Director of the Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial

Arbitration, and Sophie Tkemaladze, Team Lead on Arbitration at UNDP, we are paving the way for stronger national and foreign investments in

Iraq. This initiative is not only about legal reform; it's about fostering an environment that supports economic development and protects investments.



The UNDP and the Ministry of Interior hosted an open house at the Sinjar Police Station

Sinjar, 29 August 2024 - The UNDP and the Ministry of Interior hosted an open house at the Sinjar Police Station, bringing together community members, including women, to discuss security concerns. The station commander stressed the importance of strong partnerships to address Sinjar's challenges and highlighted the need for comprehensive development.

The discussions centered on enhancing women's access to justice, resulting in

the formation of a local council that includes representatives from various community groups. Emphasis was placed on the importance of training female officers, particularly for handling domestic violence cases. The UNDP pledged to support the Sinjar Police and consider the possibility of transforming the police station into a model station.

This event marked the beginning of a new chapter for Sinjar, where

community and police work hand in hand to pave the way for a safer, more stable future.



UNDP unveils comprehensive report on grand corruption cases in the Kurdistan Region



Erbil, 17 August 2024 - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has released the Trial Monitoring Report on grand corruption cases across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, marking a significant milestone in curbing corruption in Iraq. The report highlights substantial progress by the Kurdistan Regional Government in combating corruption and offers deep insights into the region's judicial proceedings through comprehensive analysis, while setting forth a number of recommendations to bolster the efforts in achieving transparency and integrity within the judicial system.

Key Findings Reveal Corruption-Prone Sectors and Judicial Improvements

The report, which covers court hearings in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Duhok, is based on the monitoring of over 100 cases from November 2022 to December 2023, along with 50 verdicts issued between 2016 and 2022. The focus of the report is on major corruption cases, including those involving high monetary thresholds, high-ranking officials, and cases of public interest or those against informants and Anti-Corruption advocates.

Key findings of the report indicate that the Ministry of Finance (25%), the Ministry of Electricity (18%), and the Municipal Councils (17%) are among the most affected government sectors by grand corruption. The analysis reveals an increase in convictions compared to acquittals, though the rate of high-level defendants remains low, with few senior government officials being charged.

A significant progress is reported with the exclusion of corruption-related cases from the general amnesty regime. It also notes a notable reduction in trials conducted in absentia and a rise

in felonies related to intentional damage through abuse of public office, reflecting the judiciary's progress in anti-corruption efforts. However, it highlights a concerning lack of civil society organizations (CSOs) attending trials as third parties, despite legal provisions allowing their presence.

A cornerstone to bolster the progress

Being a corner stone of UNDP's Anti-Corruption and Arbitration Initiatives financed by the European Union; the report was published in collaboration with the Judicial Council of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). Speaking at the launching event Auke Lootsma, Representative of UNDP, emphasized the importance of the report for the unified efforts for curbing corruption, 'This critical report, the culmination of our joint efforts, represents a significant milestone in our collective quest for enhanced transparency and justice. We stand ready to collaborate to address the recommendations of the report' he said. Sending a video message, Thomas Seiler, the European Union Ambassador to Iraq has stated, 'The Trial Monitoring report offers a very deep insight into how investigations are led and how trials are conducted. Its recommendations will guide us in refining our strategies and enhancing anti-corruption measures.'

Judge Abdel Gabar Aziz Hassan, the head of Judicial Council of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq stated the important role of the report for the judiciary reforms in the region, 'While proving our dedication against corruption, the report also provides us with an opportunity to advance our

committed practices towards a more transparent and accountable judiciary system,' he said.

Reforms Recommended

The report urges the Government of the Kurdistan Region, the Judicial Council, the Bar Association, and Civil Society and International Community to implement proposed anti-corruption reforms. These include the establishment of specialized courts for major corruption cases, the modernization of the penal code to address current issues such as private sector bribery, and the enactment of legislation to protect whistleblowers and victims. The report also calls for limiting institutional discretion in withdrawing damage claims and strengthening oversight in corruption-affected sectors.

Further recommendations include reforms to criminal procedures to enhance investigative capabilities, the implementation of an electronic case management system, and the standardization of sentencing. Additionally, the report highlights the importance of reinforcing the financial independence of the Public Prosecutor's Office and supporting civil society in anti-corruption initiatives.

Access to the report:

EN:

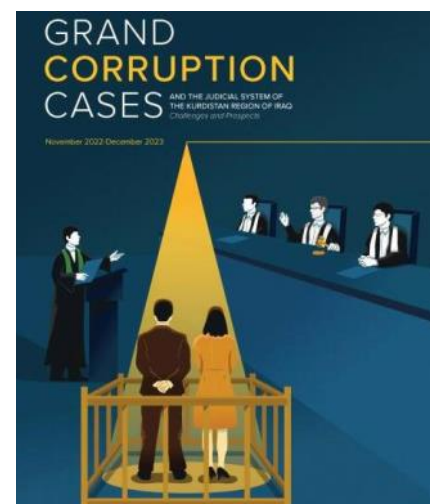
<https://www.undp.org/iraq/publications/trial-monitoring-first-report-nov-2022-dec-2023>

AR:

<https://www.undp.org/ar/iraq/publications/trial-monitoring-first-report-nov-2022-dec-2023>

KU:

<https://www.undp.org/ku/iraq/publications/trial-monitoring-first-report-nov-2022-dec-2023>



UNODC wraps up a workshop in Erbil on financial investigations in anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism

Erbil, 31 August 2024 - UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime wrapped up a 5-day workshop in Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, on financial investigations in anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT). 37 Iraqi officials from the Financial Intelligence Unit, Counter Drugs Directorate, Intelligence, Counterterrorism, Ministry of the Interior, and Kurdistan Regional Government sharpened their skills in detecting illicit financial flows and enhanced inter-agency cooperation.



Mine Action



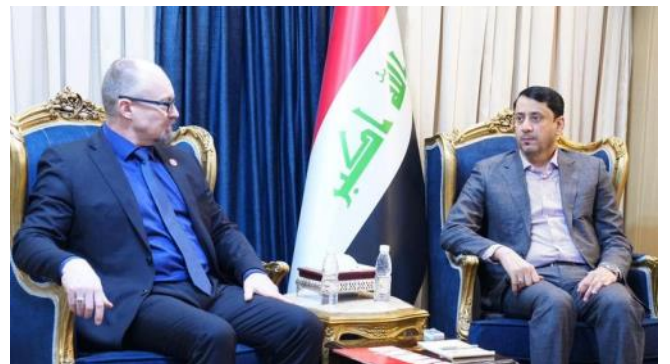
Baghdad, 25 June 2024 - UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, Mr. **Pehr Lodhammar**, met with the Charge d'affairs, **Mr. Maximilian Rasch**, at the Embassy of Germany in Baghdad. Discussions covered an update on UNMAS Iraq operations and various mine action challenges, as well as support to national mine action partners. Lodhammar touched on the mine action roles in enabling the safe and dignified return of IDPs, especially to the Sinjar area. UNMAS Iraq would like to take this opportunity to express its deepest appreciation and gratitude to the government of Germany for its long-standing support to the mine action sector and consequently enabling durable solutions in Iraq.



Baghdad, 25 June 2024 - Mr. **Pehr Lodhammar**, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, met with **Mr. Brendan Hodgson**, Charge d'affairs a.i. of the Embassy of Australia in Baghdad. Lodhammar and Mr. Hodgson discussed mine action efforts in Iraq, including progress and challenges. Australia was one of the first donors financially contributing to UNMAS Iraq activities. Australia is also one of the donors who has supported UNMAS Iraq's efforts regarding 'justice between women and men'. Thanks to Australia and other UNMAS Iraq donors, approximately 30 percent of staff members with UNMAS Iraq partner organizations are now women, including technical roles. UNMAS Iraq will continue to support women's participation in the Iraqi mine action sector. UNMAS Iraq would like to thank the Government of Australia for their generous contributions.



Baghdad, 27 June 2024 - Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, met with His Excellency, **Hans Sandee**, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Iraq, at the Dutch embassy in Baghdad. Lodhammar handed over the book 'My Sinjar Reflections', with stories from the UNMAS deminers who first started clearance in Sinjar. During the meeting, Lodhammar and His Excellency Sandee discussed mine action operations in Iraq and the various challenges the sector is facing in Iraq. Pehr Lodhammar expressed his gratitude to the Kingdom of Netherlands for their cooperation and interest in supporting the Iraqi mine action sector.



Baghdad, 30 June 2024 - Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, met with **Dr. Hameed Al-Ghazi**, Secretary General for the Council of Minister Secretariat (COMSEC) in Baghdad, Iraq. Lodhammar updated on ongoing mine action activities in Iraq and discussed the various challenges as well as future collaboration. UNMAS Iraq is grateful for the ongoing support from the Government of Iraq and anticipates further cooperation until Iraq is safe from explosive ordnance, enabling its people to live safely and prosperously.

14 Iraqi police officers from the Ministry of Interior trained on using metal detectors to find explosive ordnance

Baghdad, 05 July 2024 - 14 more Iraqi police officers from the Government of Iraq Ministry of Interior were recently trained on using metal detectors to find explosive ordnance. The police officers graduated from the UNMAS Iraq supported “Metal Detector Training Course” at the Ministry of Interior Salman Pak Explosive Ordnance Disposal Training Center outside of Baghdad on 27 June. For eight years, UNMAS Iraq has worked closely with the Ministry of Interior, providing training and mentorship in support of the country’s efforts to make Iraq a free country from IEDs, UXOs and landmines. Pehr



Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, emphasized the critical role of Iraqi police officers in supporting the clearance efforts, and

conveyed his respect and gratitude to all women and men police officers who selflessly dedicate themselves to clearance operations in Iraq.

The Government of Belgium provides additional contribution to UNMAS in support of the Iraqi Mine Action Sector

Baghdad, 01 July 2024 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes a new contribution of EUR 750,000 (approximately USD 813,075) from the Government of Belgium, in support of humanitarian mine action endeavors in Iraq. Belgium has been a consistent supporter of UNMAS Iraq activities in support of sustainable and efficient explosive hazard management as well as technical and advisory support for Iraqi national mine action authorities. This is the sixth consecutive annual contribution from Belgium bringing the total contribution to EUR 7,000,000 (approximately USD 7,400,000).

Iraq is one of the most explosive ordnance contaminated countries in the world. According to data from the national mine action authorities, more than 2,700 square kilometers are contaminated with landmines, cluster munitions, improvised explosive devices, and other types of explosive remnants of war across Iraq (federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq). Explosive ordnance poses a concern to public safety and restricts access to livelihood opportunities and infrastructure.

The additional funding from the

Government of Belgium will support the continuation clearance of explosive ordnance in the areas liberated from ISIL through its national mine action operators. Survey and clearance operations will contribute to enabling the safe and dignified return of internally displaced people, and will allow for development efforts to go forward. Furthermore, this contribution will support explosive ordnance risk education efforts delivered to raise awareness and protect civilians. The new contribution will also support UNMAS Iraq’s technical advisory and support to the national mine action authorities.

Remarking on the contribution, Mr. Serge Dickschen, Ambassador of Belgium, stated “Belgium is pleased to continue its long-standing support to UNMAS in Iraq. Despite significant progress, contamination from landmines and other explosive remnants continue having an impact not only on the immediate safety of children, women and men, but also on their access to services and livelihood, on reconstruction and on sustainable development (education, health care, etc.). Mine action therefore also remains



crucial to ensure the safe and dignified return of internally displaced people. Belgium particularly welcomes UNMAS commitment to strengthening the capacities of local organizations and authorities, with the aim for mine action to be more sustainable and efficient. In addition, the integration of women into mine action and UNMAS's management structure is very much valued for its benefits on the entire community”

Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq, Chief Mine Action Programme, expressed his gratitude: “UNMAS Iraq deeply appreciates the generous contribution from the Government of Belgium. This support enables us to continue assisting the Government of Iraq and national operators in creating a safe environment free from explosive hazards for all Iraqis.”

The Government of Sweden extends its support to explosive hazards management and national mine action capability enhancement activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 02 July 2024 - The Government of Sweden has recently contributed an additional 10 million Swedish Krona (SEK) (USD 952,560.54) to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq in

support of humanitarian mine action initiatives, to reduce the threat from explosive ordnance (EO) contamination and to protect Iraq's most vulnerable communities. Since 2018, the Government of Sweden, through the

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), has contributed SEK 145 million (approximately USD 13.7 million) to protect explosive ordnance affected communities, and support

The Government of Sweden extends its support to explosive hazards management ... (continued)



humanitarian and stabilization efforts in Iraq.

Iraq is one of the most EO contaminated countries in the world. According to data from the national mine action authorities, more than 2,700 square kilometers are contaminated with landmines, cluster munitions, improvised explosive devices, and other types of explosive remnants of war. Explosive ordnance poses a concern to public safety and restricts access to livelihood

opportunities and infrastructure.

UNMAS Iraq works in close coordination with the Government of Iraq mine action authorities to alleviate the impact of explosive ordnance and enable access to productive land. Furthermore, UNMAS Iraq contributes to building sustainable national capacity to implement survey and clearance operations. The additional funding, will allow UNMAS to implement survey and clearance of explosive hazards left from the war with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and deliver explosive ordnance risk education to children and vulnerable communities in Ninewa Governorate. Operations are led by Iraqi mine action teams trained during the last three years to conduct mine action activities independently.

“The demining work in Iraq continues to be a priority for improving safety

and development. The efforts of UNMAS continue to support the return of displaced people to their homes, and at the same time increases the awareness of the risks and danger of explosive ordnance” says Ms. Petra Smitmanis Dry, Head of the Iraq Unit at Sida.

“UNMAS Iraq would like to thank the Government of Sweden for its consistent and longstanding support to mine action in Iraq. With this additional funding, the endeavors to protect Iraqis from unexploded ordnance will continue, allowing for safe and dignified returns and safe access to agricultural areas. Furthermore, UNMAS will continue to support Iraqi mine action stakeholders to ensure, and promote a sustainable and localized mine action response” stated Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme.

UNMAS team visits a clearance site in Tal Afar

Tal Afar, 05 July 2024 - In early July, Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, together with a team from UNMAS, visited a clearance site in Tal Afar, Sinjar, where UNMAS Iraq’s national partner organization, Shareteah Humanitarian Organization (SHO) are clearing explosive ordnance (EO) under the scorching sun and temperatures reaching over 50 degrees. The team received a brief on the SHO operational achievements and challenges and had an opportunity to interact with the brave women and men clearing the

area from EO.

With thanks to the UNMAS Iraq donors for your support, UNMAS Iraq has promoted women’s participation in

the mine action sector. Currently, approximately 40 % of UNMAS Iraq’s partner organizations’ technical staff, are women.



Baghdad, 12 July 2024 - Recently, Pehr Lodhammar, Chief Mine Action Programme at UNMAS Iraq, met with His Excellency Maurizio Greganti, the Italian Ambassador to Iraq, at the Italian Embassy in Baghdad. Lodhammar presented an update on UNMAS Iraq’s ongoing mine action operations, focusing on clearance operations in the liberated areas of Iraq aimed at facilitating the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons. UNMAS Iraq appreciates the longstanding support from the Government of Italy and acknowledges their generous contributions over the years. We look forward to continued collaboration in the future!



Baghdad, 07 August 2024 - Recently, Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, met with the Turkish Ambassador to Iraq, His Excellency Mr. Anil İnan, at the Embassy of Turkey in Baghdad. Discussions covered an update on UNMAS Iraq operations and the various mine action challenges, as well as highlighting main achievements including enabling safe and dignified returns of IDPs to their places of origin.

Canadian Ambassador to Iraq visits the UNMAS Iraq clearance site in Sinjar

Sinjar, 14 July 2024—In July 2024, the Canadian Ambassador to Iraq H.E. Kathy Bunka visited the UNMAS Iraq clearance site in Sinjar and met with operators of Shareteah Humanitarian Organization, UNMAS Iraq national implementing partner. The Ambassador had the opportunity to interact with the women deminers and thanked them for their bravery and commitment to clear the area.

UNMAS Iraq has enjoyed support from the Government of Canada for several years. UNMAS Iraq has always prioritized making the traditionally male dominated mine action sector available to women. Thanks to Canada and other donor countries, 35.4 % of

UNMAS Iraq partner organizations' staff are now women. UNMAS Iraq would like to thank the Government of

Canada for the support as we continue the efforts to ensure sustainable mine action response in Iraq.



The Government of Denmark provides additional contribution to UNMAS in support of the Mine Action Sector in Iraq

Baghdad, 24 July 2024 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of DKK 22,000,000 (approximately USD 3,173,170) from the Government of Denmark, which will contribute to support the Government of Iraq (GoI) to protect civilians from the threat of explosive ordnance (EO) and will enable humanitarian, socio-economic, and reconstruction efforts. Since 2015, the Government of Denmark has contributed over USD 38,000,000 to the UNMAS Iraq programme.

Iraq is one of the most explosive ordnance contaminated countries in the world. According to data from the national mine action authorities, more than 2,700 square kilometers are contaminated with landmines, cluster munitions, improvised explosive devices, and other types of explosive remnants of war. EO poses a concern to public safety and restricts access to livelihood opportunities and

infrastructure.

The generous contribution from the Government of Denmark will enable UNMAS Iraq to continue the support to national mine action operators and the GoI towards building a sustainable and well-coordinated mine action sector in Iraq. UNMAS Iraq works to support the nationalization of mine action response in implementing and managing survey and clearance operations, as well as explosive ordnance risk education activities in the most devastated and vulnerable locations in Iraq.

Furthermore, through this contribution, UNMAS Iraq will continue to support GoI national authorities in strengthening the federal response to EO contamination in the areas liberated from ISIL through technical and advisory support to effectively lead and coordinate the mine action sector.

“UNMAS Iraq is grateful for the generous contribution from the



Government of Denmark. This additional funding will allow UNMAS to continue to support the Government of Iraq mine action authorities and national partners to operate autonomously and independently, as part of a strong and well coordinated mine action sector. In addition, it will allow UNMAS to support safe and dignified returns for IDPs.” said Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Chief Mine Action Programme.

Eleven policewomen successfully graduate from training course ‘Awareness course on Danger of Explosive Devices’

Baghdad, 25 July 2024 - Today, UNMAS Iraq proudly participated in the graduation ceremony of the ‘Awareness course on Danger of Explosive Devices’ delivered by UNMAS Iraq in collaboration with the Government of Iraq Ministry of Interior at the Women's Training Institute. Eleven policewomen successfully graduated from this training course

aiming to provide them with additional knowledge to sharpen their capacity to protect Iraqi communities.

This initiative aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 (Gender Equality), by promoting gender equality.



UNMAS Iraq conducts an Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) session for 22 humanitarian workers in Mosul

Mosul, 24 July 2024 - Today, UNMAS Iraq conducted an Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) session for 22 humanitarian workers in Mosul. Since its inception, UNMAS Iraq has been delivering EORE sessions to workers in the humanitarian sector. This training aims to equip personnel with the essential knowledge and skills to prevent accidents, injuries, and fatalities, thereby enhancing operational efficiency and effectiveness in humanitarian settings.

UNMAS Iraq, in collaboration with its implementing partner, Shareteah Humanitarian Organization (SHO), utilized virtual reality (VR) technology



to provide participants with a heightened understanding of explosive ordnance threats, risk mitigation strategies, and emergency response procedures.

On this occasion, UNMAS Iraq expressed its gratitude to the donors who have supported mine action activities in Iraq through their generous contributions over the years.

British Ambassador to Iraq visits UNMAS Iraq clearance operations at Al Amal Hospital, Mosul

Mosul, 04 August 2024 - British Ambassador H.E. Mr. Stephen Hitchen visited UNMAS Iraq clearance operations at Al Amal Hospital, Al Shifa Hospital Complex, Mosul. H.E. Hitchen met with the teams and observed the clearance efforts that will allow for safe rehabilitation and return to service for the people of Mosul.



UNMAS hosts a high level delegation visit to a clearance site at Al Amal Hospital, Al Shifa Hospital Complex, Mosul

Mosul, 14 August 2024 - Last week, UNMAS Iraq accompanied the European Union Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Thomas Seiler, UNAMI Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, and the Iraq Directorate for Mine Action Director to a clearance site at Al Amal Hospital, Al Shifa Hospital Complex, Mosul. The clearance efforts allow for rehabilitation and return to service.



UNMAS Iraq concludes a training course on the use of drones in operations

Baghdad, 31 August 2024 - Since 2019, UNMAS Iraq has been at the forefront of introducing and supporting innovative technologies for Iraqi police. Recently, UNMAS Iraq concluded a training course on the use of drones in operations to safely and efficiently survey areas and minimize explosive

ordnance risks to operators. Access the video at <https://bit.ly/4g4nCP9>





Baghdad, 07 August 2024 - Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, recently met with Mr. **Jean-Christophe Paris**, the Deputy Head of Mission to Iraq at the Embassy of France in Baghdad. Pehr Lodhammar discussed UNMAS Iraq operations including mine action, challenges, and continued cooperation with national mine action authorities. Mr. Paris and Lodhammar fully agreed on the importance of continued mine action efforts until such time Iraq is free explosive ordnance.



Amman, Jordan, 12 August 2024 - UNMAS Iraq conducted the seventh **Donor Briefing** in Amman, Jordan. The briefing was attended by six diplomats representing six countries.

Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, chaired the meeting and provided a presentation of the UNMAS Iraq programme activities and achievements, highlighting UNMAS Iraq's efforts in applying justice between women and men in the Iraqi mine action sector.

UNMAS extends its gratitude to the donor community for their active participation during the briefing and their ongoing support of the Iraqi mine action sector.

UNMAS Iraq visits the Norwegian People's Aid Quality Control Team working in Quch Village, Makhmur

Baghdad, 20 August 2024 – In early August, a team from UNMAS Iraq visited the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) Quality Control (QC) Team working in Quch Village, Makhmur, where NPA was conducting a final QC inspection, on behalf of the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) of Iraq. QC is done across a 10% sample of the hazard area, to ensure the correct standards of clearance. The hazard area visited had been cleared by UNMAS implementing partner Shareteah Humanitarian Organization in 2023. The NPA Team described and discussed the

methodology used for sampling and how this final quality control ensures communities have full confidence to

start reusing the land. UNMAS Iraq thanks NPA for affording the opportunity to visit the team.



Supporting Iraqi women in Mine Action - the journeys of Noor and Safa

Baghdad, 30 August 2024 - Noor is a qualified Iraqi woman working in the Iraqi mine action sector. She joined an explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) team nine years ago with an international mine action NGO. Since then, she has been developing her skills to educate communities about explosive hazards. Noor later transitioned to a clearance team, participating in non-technical surveys and clearance activities. To advance her expertise, she pursued and received Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Level 1 and 2 certifications supported by UNMAS in Iraq. This qualified her for Level 3 EOD training at the EOD training school of the Ministry of Interior Baghdad, aiming to become a certified clearance team leader. In 2023, Noor achieved this goal, becoming a team

leader with UNMAS Iraq's national partner, Shareteah Humanitarian Organization (SHO), leading a team of five, including four deminers and one medical specialist in Sinjar, Ninawa governorate.

Safa is another competent Iraqi woman who started her career in the Iraqi humanitarian sector. Born and raised

in a country facing multiple wars and conflicts, Safa was driven to take a role in humanitarian work. She engaged with NGOs and later joined the UN as national personnel. Safa developed her skills and enriched her experience by taking on different roles and positions until she stepped into the world of mine action through UNMAS Iraq, bringing



Supporting Iraqi women in Mine Action - the journeys of Noor and Safa *(continued)*

with her 12 years of experience and a commitment to continue her career in this critical part of the humanitarian sector.

Both Noor and Safa excel in their respective roles by leveraging cross-functional collaboration. Safa ensures that the UNMAS programme management efforts align with humanitarian mine action goals, while Noor guarantees the technical aspects of mine action meet community needs and the necessary quality standards through collaboration. Despite working in different fields and in different roles,

their ability to work effectively with different organizations highlights the importance of cross-functional collaboration in achieving an explosive ordnance-free Iraq, and ultimately safety for Iraqi communities.

Since its inception, UNMAS Iraq has promoted the integration of women in the mine action sector and has applied all the means of justice between women and men in programming and operations, reaching a point where women represent 36% of the operational teams.

Noor and Safa are two inspiring Iraqi

women making a difference in the mine action sector. Despite working in different roles, they both demonstrate the power of cross-functional collaboration making #Iraq safer!

UNMAS Iraq expresses its deepest appreciation to the donors who have supported the integration of women into the mine action sector.

This initiative aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (#SDGs), particularly Goal 5 (Gender Equality), by promoting justice between women and men.

UNMAS Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior Explosive Ordnance Disposal Training Center in Salman Pak, hosts a visit from a French delegation

Baghdad, 15 August 2024 – Today, UNMAS Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior Explosive Ordnance Disposal Training Center in Salman Pak, hosted a visit from a French delegation represented by the Security Attaché, Mr. Frank Clément. The visit included a presentation covering the Center's activities, and in particular training courses provided jointly between the MoI and UNMAS Iraq.

UNMAS Iraq is grateful for the support from the Government of France and looks forward to continued collaboration in the future.



Healthcare

UNICEF and Ministry of Health launch Digital Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) for birth registration in Iraq

Baghdad, 04 July 2024 - Today, Iraq takes a major step towards enhancing its health infrastructure with the official launch of the Digital Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) for Birth Registration. Spearheaded by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with UNICEF, this initiative marks a transformative shift from traditional paper-based systems to a robust digital platform.

"The digital CRVS system aims to ensure universal birth registration and improve service delivery across Iraq's diverse regions," said Dr. Salih Mahdi al-Hasnawi, Iraqi Minister of Health. By digitizing birth registration, the initiative seeks to streamline processes, enhance accuracy, and ensure accessibility of vital data essential for



effective planning and service delivery in health, education, and social protection sectors.

"This launch represents a significant milestone in Iraq's journey towards digital health transformation," said Sandra Lattouf, UNICEF

Representative in Iraq. "By ensuring every child's right to legal identity from birth, we are not only advancing children's rights but also setting the stage for a more inclusive and efficient service delivery system."

UNICEF has played a pivotal role in

UNICEF and Ministry of Health launch Digital Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) for birth registration in Iraq *(continued)*

supporting the Ministry of Health over the past 15 months. Through capacity building and technical assistance, UNICEF has empowered health officials to successfully pilot and implement the digital CRVS platform in 12 birth registration sites across Baghdad and Kurdistan Region. This successful pilot phase underscores the readiness and effectiveness of the system for nationwide rollout. Collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), alongside

generous funding from the Government of Germany (KfW), has been instrumental in supporting Iraq's broader digital health transformation agenda. The digital CRVS for birth registration is poised to revolutionize service delivery in Iraq, ensuring timely and accurate data access for informed decision-making and improved health outcomes. Today's launch event at the Ministry of Health in Baghdad marks a significant stride towards building a

more inclusive and efficient health system in Iraq, ultimately benefiting every child and family across the nation. "This initiative not only strengthens our commitment to children's rights, but also sets a precedent for leveraging technology to achieve sustainable development goals, especially Sustainable Development Goal 3," added Ms. Lattouf.



WHO Iraq supports Ministry of Health of Iraq to enhance data analysis on mortality and causes of death

Baghdad, 29 June 2024 - WHO Iraq supports Ministry of Health of Iraq to enhance data analysis on mortality and causes of death. Visits to Baghdad Al Karkh Hospital and to the Directorate of Forensic Medicine addressed bottlenecks for better decision-making and health outcomes.



Baghdad, 07 July 2024 - Dr. Georges Ki-Zerbo, WHO Representative in Iraq met with H.E. Ambassador of Kuwait, Dr. Tariq Abdullah Al-Faraj. They discussed Kuwait and WHO Iraq potential areas of cooperation.



Baghdad, 11 July 2024 - Dr. Georges Ki-Zerbo, WHO Representative in Iraq met with H.E. Ambassador of Korea, Choi Sung-soo. They discussed South Korea in Iraq and WHO Iraq partnership and joint support to health systems, capacity strengthening for resilience and human development.

UNDP Iraq inaugurates the rehabilitated Abu-Teeban Primary Health Care Centre in Ramadi

Ramadi, 17 July 2024 - Today marks a significant milestone as UNDP inaugurates the rehabilitated Abu-Teeban Primary Health Care Centre in Ramadi, Anbar. With generous funding from USAID Iraq, this project has transformed the old building, ensuring modern facilities and uninterrupted services for 8,000 community members. We thank USAID for making this project possible and for their commitment to improving healthcare

access and inclusivity. Join us in celebrating this achievement

and the positive impact it will have on community's health and well-being.



The impactful renovations and capacity building efforts lead to reduced neo-natal mortality

Erbil, 25 July 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai, and the World Health Organization (WHO) Iraq Representative, Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo, today visited the Maternity Teaching Hospital - Erbil Health Department in Erbil, Kurdistan Region-Iraq. They witnessed the impactful renovations and capacity building efforts, leading to reduced neo-natal mortality.

DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai said: “Great work by WHO Iraq in partnership with Health Department of Kurdistan

Regional Government (KRG) and Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) of the U.S. State Department funding drastically reducing neonatal mortality rate in

four years. Very impressed by dedication of the hospital staff to save lives and contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”



World Hepatitis Day was observed in Sulaymaniyah

Sulaymaniyah, 28 July 2024 - World Hepatitis Day was observed in Sulaymaniyah- Kurdistan Region of Iraq with a focus on raising awareness about hepatitis challenges and global efforts to combat the disease.

World Health Organization in Iraq was happy to participate in the Kurdistan Viral Hepatitis Summit on 25 July, contributing to the 2nd panel

discussion on the local, national, and global impact of hepatitis.

We explored essential actions to achieve our global goals, including regular screenings, affordable diagnostics, timely antiviral therapies, vaccination, and measures to ensure safe blood, injections, and food.

Together, we can make a difference and work towards a hepatitis-free Iraq!



Strengthening healthcare in the Kurdistan Region

Erbil, 30 July 2024 – UNFPA is proud to support the Kurdistan Region's Ministry of Health with the donation of three fully equipped mobile clinics! These state-of-the-art ambulances will enhance healthcare access and provide vital services to communities in need.

In addition, our efforts have also included the renovation of the maternity and children's hospital in Halabja, ensuring better care for mothers and children. This reflects our unwavering commitment to improving

healthcare infrastructure and services in the region.



WHO in Iraq convenes a productive workshop on WHO Global Program of Work GPW14 prioritization

Baghdad, 01 August 2024 - World Health Organization in Iraq convened a productive 2-day Technical Consultative Workshop on World Health Organization (WHO) Global Program of Work GPW14 Prioritization. “A heartfelt thank you to the Iraqi Ministry of Health, UN and partners for their steadfast support and collaboration. Your presence and engagement at the workshop are a testament to our collective commitment

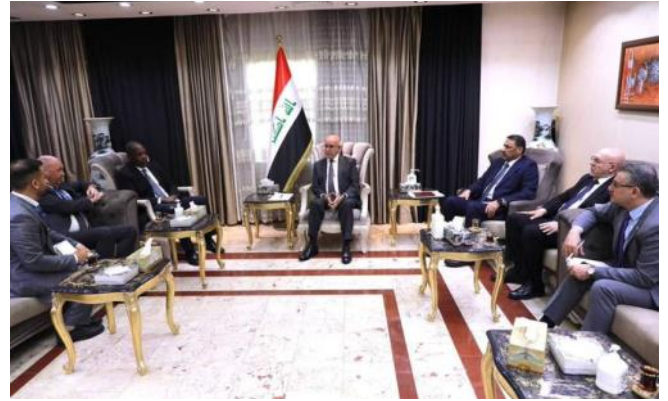
to addressing Iraq’s most pressing health challenges,” said Dr Georges Ki-Zerbo WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq.

The GPW14 platform led by MoH-Iraq and supported by partners aims at fostering continuing dialogue, and strategic alignment and clarifying priority areas that will make a significant impact on health outcomes for all Iraqis.





Baghdad, 31 July 2024 - Dr. Georges Ki-Zerbo, WHO Representative in Iraq, paid a courtesy visit to H.E. Sultan Mubarak Al-Kubaisi, Ambassador of Qatar to Iraq. They had an insightful dialogue on joint cooperation in line with Qatar and Iraq commitments to #Health4All and SDGs.



Baghdad, 05 August 2024 - WHO Representative in Iraq, Dr. Georges Ki-Zerbo, and UNDP Iraq Representative, Auke Lootsma, visited Dr. Saleh Al Hasnawi, Minister of Health. World Health Organization in Iraq is grateful for the shared vision on strategic investments in durable solutions towards universal health coverage, human security and sustainable development goals.

Breastfeeding: not just a mother’s job

Baghdad, 04 August 2024 - Health workers play a key role in helping mothers start their breastfeeding journey and achieve their breastfeeding goals.

UNICEF and WHO are calling for investment in breastfeeding support and protection, including the prioritization of women’s nutrition and essential antenatal care services.



IOM joins marking of the World Breastfeeding Week

Baghdad, 21 August 2024 - This month, IOM joined the World Breastfeeding Week to generate public awareness and support for breastfeeding.

IOM trained medical specialists from Ninewa and Anbar who can now support their peers across nine

primary healthcare centers, creating a supportive environment for pregnant and lactating women. Let’s appreciate breastfeeding mums and ensure they get the support they need.



Empowering youth to be champions of change and ensuring a healthier, more resilient future for all

Baghdad, 31 August 2024 - On International Youth Day 12 August, UN agencies in Iraq, in partnership with the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH), launched a comprehensive campaign that lasted through the Arbaeen visit - 25 August.

This campaign harnessed the momentum of one of the world's largest religious gatherings, where millions march towards Karbala, to spread crucial awareness on the impact of climate change on health, water, and food safety.

Led by passionate young volunteers and MoH teams, both online and on the ground, the campaign reached

countless visitors with vital messages on staying safe in the face of climate-induced challenges, including how to prevent heat strokes during the intense

summer heat.

Together, we’re empowering youth to be champions of change and ensuring a healthier, more resilient future for all.



Building Health and Hope in Mosul !

Erbil, 14 August 2024 - This week, the UNDP team, led by Kennedy Chibvongodze, Head of the UNDP Erbil Office, alongside our partners from KfW, visited the Oncology Hospital Construction Project in Nineveh Governorate.

Once completed, this vital facility will provide specialized care for cancer

patients, offering much-needed support to the people of Ninawa and the surrounding areas.

In partnership with the Government of Iraq and with financial support from the Government of Germany through KfW, we are dedicated to ensuring that healthcare services will soon be accessible to the Iraqi people.



The Ministry of Health and World Health Organization follow up the implementation of the MoH's prevention plan against the M-box virus

Baghdad, 20 August 2024 - The Ministry of Health held a meeting with the World Health Organization to follow up the implementation of the Ministry of Health's prevention plan against the M-box virus.

Under the guidance and supervision of Mr. Minister of Health, Dr. Saleh Mahdi Al-Hasnawi, the Department of Public Health in the Ministry of Health, headed by the Director General of the Department, Dr. Riyadh Abdel Amir Al-Halfi, today, Tuesday, 20 April, 2024 had a meeting with the World Health Organization and the Directors of the Department of Public Health.

During the meeting, the global situation and the state of health alertness in the countries of the world were discussed after the announcement and monitoring of the spread of the M-Box virus in African countries and a number of countries of the world, the ways of transmission and diagnosis of the disease.

During the meeting, the precautionary



plan of the Ministry of Health to prevent the entry of the virus into Iraq was discussed, with a number of precautionary measures were taken at the border ports, as the examination of foreign arrivals by our medical teams in central health centers at border ports.

The intensification of the efforts of the

Public Health Department departments in the Ministry and health departments in Baghdad and the governorates and the media campaigns for awareness and health education about the disease in cooperation with various media outlets were emphasized.

It was mentioned that Iraq has not yet recorded any infection of this disease.

Mental Health

In search of inner beauty: Dalia's transformation story

Sulaymaniyah, 30 June 2024 - From the conflict-ridden Yathreb district of Salaheddin governorate, to the supportive Ashti camp, 18-year-old Dalia's journey is a testament to resilience and hope. Forced to flee her hometown, Dalia now lives in the Ashti camp for internally- displaced people in Sulaymaniyah governorate. Amidst the challenges of displacement, she diligently helps her mother with household chores, fostering a sense of normality and stability within her large family.

Dalia's education was abruptly stopped as she dropped out of school after completing Grade six. She endured relentless bullying from peers,



stemming from a congenital malformation—a Sebaceous cyst on her right cheek. "My friends used to tell me that my face is deformed, and they refused to play with me. As a child, this made me sad," Dalia recounted. Unkind

comments from family and close relatives also left deep scars on her self-esteem. "The most difficult thing I heard was that no one would accept me," Uttered Dalia.

From darkness to light

In search of inner beauty: Dalia's transformation story

A few months ago, a significant change occurred when Ms. Khalat, a compassionate social worker, introduced Dalia to mental health and psychosocial support sessions, that were provided at the child protection center inside the camp.

"These 10 sessions helped me to overcome my weakness and made me more optimistic," Dalia said with a smile.

Each session with Khalat brought Dalia more positivity and hope. "I used to be angry and shout at home. Now I am much calmer, and I recommended these sessions to my sister," added Dalia.

With unwavering support from Khalat and her colleagues at the child

protection center, Dalia's dream of removing the sebaceous cyst became a reality.

Dalia was referred to a specialized physician at a Governmental hospital and underwent surgery on 13 May 2024.

"The surgery was successful," Khalat said with pride.

Grateful for the opportunity, Dalia expressed, "I thank the center for providing me the opportunity to search for my inner beauty. I am grateful to Ms. Khalat, who accompanied me every step of the way, often settling medical bills."

"Now I feel beautiful inside and out, thanks to the psychosocial and physical support I received from this center,"

said Dalia with glittery eyes.

Dalia now hopes to become a beautician "I aspire to expand my knowledge in this field and ultimately establish my own beauty parlor."

This inspiring initiative, supported by UNICEF and funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), highlights the incredible resilience of individuals like Dalia and the profound impact of compassionate support.

Note: In order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals mentioned in this story, some of the names have been altered.

By Shahad Butrus Bulbul, UNICEF Iraq

Healthcare providers from Duhok and Erbil trained to improve mental health for women during prenatal, birth, and postnatal periods

Duhok, 02 July 2024 - The World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq and the Ministry of Health - Kurdistan Region Government recently held a 4-day workshop at Duhok Child and Adolescent Mental Health Centre. Thirty healthcare providers from Duhok and Erbil trained to improve mental health for women during prenatal, birth, and postnatal periods.



IOM's support to displaced Iraqis through mental health and psychological support, transitional justice and protection services is crucial for their recovery

Baghdad, 25 July 2024 - Deputy Chief of Mission of the Japanese Embassy in Baghdad, Masamoto Kenichi, attended IOM's workshop ensuring trauma-informed and person-centered approach when it comes to providing mental health and psychosocial support for survivors.

"IOM's support to displaced Iraqis through mental health and psychological support, transitional justice and protection services is crucial for their recovery", said Mr. Masamoto Kenichi, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan in Iraq.



Environment

WFP works in 6 governorates to prepare locally-led plans that will help farmers adapt to climate hazards

Baghdad, 30 June 2024 - WFP is cooperating with Iraqi Government and Ministry of Environment to mitigate the harmful impacts of climate change in Iraq.

WFP is working in 6 governorates to prepare locally-led plans that will help farmers adapt to climate hazards and continue to grow their crops.



Nurturing resilience: UN efforts for a resilient Iraq



Baghdad, 02 July 2024 - Climate change and water scarcity pose significant threats to Iraq's stability, prosperity, and the well-being of its people. The environmental challenges facing the nation are complex and interconnected, requiring a comprehensive and coordinated response. In Iraq, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), under my leadership, has been at the forefront of addressing these critical issues, working tirelessly to build a more sustainable and resilient future for all Iraqis.

Through the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), we aim to leverage the diverse expertise and resources of different UN agencies, fostering a coordinated and integrated approach to development challenges. Through this collaborative model, we can maximize our impact and deliver holistic solutions to tackle the interconnected web of factors that contribute to climate change and water scarcity. This includes not only mitigating the immediate effects of these environmental threats but also addressing their underlying causes, such as unsustainable water management practices and overreliance on fossil fuels.

The UN in Iraq has made a lasting impact in Iraq through a number of key initiatives. These include:

1) Forging climate resilience

Iraq is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, including rising temperatures, droughts, and desertification severely impacting agricultural productivity and social stability. To address this, the UNCT, in cooperation with the Iraqi Government, organized Iraq's first Climate Conference in Basra in 2023. This event resulted in the "Basra Declaration" with key government commitments and initiatives like an afforestation campaign, aimed at

enhancing Iraq's climate resilience.

These efforts led to increased national and international awareness and cooperation on climate issues, establishing a framework for future environmental and policy planning, including the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). The Basra Declaration aims at strengthening Iraq's institutional, technical, and financial capacities to tackle climate change by mainstreaming medium- to long-term adaptation strategies into national and local planning.

2) Advancing water security

Iraq suffers from a critical water crisis due to reduced rainfall and over-utilization of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. These challenges are exacerbated by inefficient water management and agricultural practices.

Last year, Iraq was the first country in the Middle East to join the UN Water Convention, underscoring the country's commitment to boosting regional cooperation and ensuring equitable water use, essential for the stability and prosperity of the region. In alignment with these national objectives, the RCO is leading a 'Water Task Force' that brings together UN agencies in Iraq to enhance water governance, boost agricultural resilience, and improve sustainable water usage.

For instance, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are working together to integrate traditional knowledge with modern technology, optimizing water use for agriculture—an essential step for bolstering Iraq's food security. Meanwhile in the Sinjar district, a United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) initiative, funded by the Italian government is transforming local water access, in-line with the need to ensuring safe water for all Iraqis. Similarly, in Ninewa Governorate, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) installed water desalination systems in seven villages, significantly improving living conditions.

3) Preserving the Mesopotamian Marshes

The Mesopotamian Marshes, a unique ecosystem and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are threatened by climate change, pollution, and unsustainable water management practices, leading to severe ecological and human impacts.

The RCO coordinated efforts across UN agencies to conserve the marshes by developing environmental strategies, supporting afforestation projects and facilitating community-based adaptation plans to improve the livelihoods of local communities.

For example, the World Food Programme (WFP) is undertaking afforestation projects in both southern Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, aligning with the government objective of planting five million trees by 2029. These efforts are directly contributing to the national climate change strategy through the Local Adaptation Plan, focusing on areas most impacted by climate change. Furthermore, the UN has led legislative advancements in natural resource management, including the adoption of the Environmental Strategy and the



Nurturing resilience: UN efforts for a resilient Iraq *(continued)*

National Sustainable Land Management Strategy and Action Plan, which are crucial for agriculture and marshland conservation.

These initiatives have helped restore ecological balance, supported local livelihoods, and bolstered the marshlands' resilience to environmental pressures, thereby securing their status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

4) Developing renewable energy policies

Iraq's heavy reliance on fossil fuels not only constrains its economic stability but also contributes to substantial greenhouse gas emissions. The country has significant potential for renewable energy development but faces challenges in attracting investment and developing necessary infrastructure. To address this gap, the UN facilitated the revision and adoption of Iraq's Renewable Energy Law, a pivotal move towards boosting renewable energy investment and development. The revised Renewable Energy Law has created a more favourable environment for renewable energy investment. Similarly, an initiative by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is supporting Iraq's shift away from oil-dependence, through the NAP



– which outlines efforts to reduce emissions and prepare for the effects of climate change. The UN is also assisting Iraq develop its NDCs for 2025, which is the country's commitment to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change as part of the Paris Agreement.

These efforts have opened avenues for increased investment in renewable energy, promoting sustainable economic growth and reducing the country's carbon footprint.

A sustainable and resilient future for Iraq

The collective work of the UN in Iraq has set the country on a promising trajectory towards climate

sustainability and resilience. Our upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2025-2029 will outline our efforts to help Iraq mitigate and adapt to climate change, manage water resources sustainably, and protect its unique environmental and cultural heritage. As we look to the future, the UN in Iraq remains committed to supporting the government and people of Iraq in their pursuit of a sustainable and resilient future.

This blog was written by Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Iraq. To learn more about the work of the UN in Iraq visit iraq.un.org.

Joint Coordination Forum in Diyala discussed drinking water shortages and water purification plant status

Diyala, 30 June 2024 - The 4th Joint Coordination Forum in Diyala discussed drinking water shortages and water purification plant status, and the living conditions of 450 families who returned to 30 villages in Al-Saadiya near Imam Wais. The Diyala local government representatives, NGOs, UN agencies, and representatives of the Federal Government departments attended the meeting.



UNEP West Asia Office and the Ministry of Environment meet to discuss the implementation of the GEF funded project

Baghdad, 04 July 2024 - Stakeholders met recently in Iraq with UNEP West Asia Office and the Ministry of Environment to discuss the implementation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded project for the "Promotion of Integrated Biodiversity Conservation and Land Degradation Neutrality in Highly Degraded Landscapes of Iraq". The project strengthens capacities to

achieve biodiversity conservation and land degradation neutrality and is being implemented in Lakes Razzaza and Sawa in Karbala and Muthanna, severely affected by desertification and unregulated groundwater extraction for agriculture and industrial use.



DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai: “The UN family in Iraq, in collaboration with the Government of Iraq and international partners, is working on initiatives to reduce the impact of sand and dust storms.”



Baghdad, 12 July 2024 - Statement by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai on the International Day of Combating Sand

and Dust Storms:

On this International Day of Combating Sand and Dust storms, we reaffirm our commitment to addressing the environmental challenges impacting the health and livelihoods of communities across Iraq. Sand and

dust storms are a transboundary issue, affecting many countries in our region including Iraq.

The UN family in Iraq, in collaboration with the Government of Iraq and international partners, is working on initiatives to reduce the impact of these storms on health, land and economic growth.

Our initiatives aim to raise public awareness, promote sustainable land use, enhance food security, implement strategies to mitigate these storms, and build resilience against climate change. This is a collective effort, and together, we must take proactive steps to ensure a sustainable and greener future for all Iraqis. “

UN-Habitat and KISR develop the key principles and a range of techniques to mitigate sand and dust storm impacts

Baghdad, 12 July 2024 - UN-Habitat, in partnership with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), worked on developing the key principles and a range of techniques to

mitigate Sand and Dust Storm impacts with decision-makers from the Government of Iraq and southern governorates during the “Sand and Dust Storms Monitoring and Mitigation

Workshop,” funded by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED).

The workshop addressed the unique nature of the transboundary hotspots between southern Iraq and Kuwait, considering wind erosion patterns and local land use for agriculture and rangeland management. This equipped representatives and officials to design strategic actions to combat and prevent SDS, reducing their intensity and incidence.

While the techniques were tailored to the region's specific needs, the principles are broader and can be adopted wherever SDS occurs.



WFP and USAID launch a new partnership to empower local communities in developing local adaptation plans to tackle climate change and water scarcity in Iraq

Baghdad, 25 July 2024 – WFP and USAID launched a new partnership to empower local communities in developing local adaptation plans to tackle climate change and water scarcity in Iraq, enabling WFP to strengthen communities' resilience through better climate information and knowledge on adaptation practices.

H.E. Minister of Water Resources, H.E. Minister of Environment and the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Mr. David Burger, Chargé d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy Iraq, attended the signing, highlighting the partnership and cooperation towards achieving food security and stability in Iraq.



Iraq participates in the United Nations organized 29 Climate Conversations: the road to the COP29

Baghdad, 26 July 2024 – Iraq participated in the United Nations organized 29 Climate Conversations: The Road to the COP29 and the ILO EUROPE and Central Asia Regional Network on Enterprise Development and Just Transition.

As part of the knowledge sharing and peer learning workshop “Promoting a gender responsive just transition towards environmental sustainability in the Republic of Azerbaijan,” a representative from the Ministry of foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, Raghda Talal Jumaah participated with presentation on “Gender and Climate Change” to the UNFCCC.”

Ms. Jumaah, praised the efforts of the International Labour Organization for launching the Groundbreaking Iraq National Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Inequalities in the World of Work. The launch of the Iraq National Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Inequalities in the World of Work marks a significant milestone in the country's journey towards a more inclusive and equitable labour market. She also added “Empowering women through education, capacity building, and inclusion in decision- making process can significantly enhance community resilience.”



International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem marked in Iraq

Basra, 26 July 2024 - Mangroves are vital coastal ecosystems that protect our shores, provide habitat for diverse wildlife, and help combat climate change.

Mangrove trees: are perfect for barren areas, thrive on salty water and support coastal communities.

Mangroves provide wood, food, medicines and are essential for the nutrition and food security of millions. World Food Programme (WFP) implements a mangrove tree nursery project in Khor Al-Zubair, Basra, which aims to plant 95 million trees by 2029.



UNESCO discusses guidance and advisory plans with the Iraqi Environmental Media Committee

Baghdad, 31 July 2024 - UNESCO discussed with the Media Authority and the Environmental Media Committee a plan to build the capacities of the committee, which represents governmental authorities and was formed by a government decree as part of the initiative to combat climate change and highlight the Iraqi government's commitments to the resolutions of the Global Climate Summit.

As part of UNESCO's initiative "Journalism for the Planet: Journalists Confronting the Climate Crisis," the UNESCO Iraq Office provides guidance and advisory support to governmental



institutions and the journalistic and media community on environmental

journalism tools and public information dissemination.

The Government Climate Gambit held in Erbil

Erbil, 29 July 2024 - A chess tournament, public talks on climate action and various exhibits exploring environmental concerns – all happened today in Climate Gambit–Erbil edition! Special thanks to Erbil Chess Academy & Kurdistan Regional Government for making Climate Gambit-Erbil Edition happen.



Promoting climate adaptation for food security and stability in Iraq



Baghdad, 04 August 2024 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a generous contribution of \$15 million from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Iraq to strengthen the capacities of local governments, address water scarcity, and enhance the resilience of rural and agricultural communities suffering from climate-related challenges across Iraq.

USAID and WFP will partner with local governments and communities to strengthen their climate preparedness and risk reduction, as well as to mainstream climate adaptation practices to guarantee food security for vulnerable communities, especially smallholder farmers.

Iraq's agricultural sector is one of the main sources of income for farmers and the second largest contributor to the

country's Gross Domestic Product after oil revenues. More frequent droughts and continued water scarcity are challenges for farmers, who face reduced crop yields and loss of arable land, leading to an overall decline of agriculture in Iraq.

"Iraq, 'the land of two rivers,' faces a serious problem with water scarcity, desertification, rising temperatures and other climate impacts. WFP is committed to working with the Government of Iraq to support local governments and communities in developing effective and sustainable climate adaptation plans," said WFP Representative and Country Director, Ally-Raza Qureshi. "While the need for more water is critical, Iraq must use climate information systems and early warning systems to explore innovative solutions to deal with the impacts of climate change."

WFP will work with the Government of Iraq to support communities affected by climate change by promoting modern irrigation systems and desertification countermeasures, introducing affordable hydroponics and aquaponics, and beekeeping. WFP is already implementing robust, innovative projects tackling reforestation and mangrove planting for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

WFP will expand its partnership with the Government of Iraq to enhance climate information systems, which will form the backbone of early warning systems and assist in timely planning to mitigate the impact of climate events. This partnership also will improve access to finance for agribusinesses and smallholder farmers seeking to increase their use of modern irrigation and farming technologies.

"This partnership is a vital step in helping agricultural communities adapt to water and climate challenges. By strengthening local climate data use, promoting modern farming, and increasing access to adaptation financing, we will build resilience and improve livelihoods for all Iraqis," said USAID/Iraq's Acting Mission Director, Erin Mone-Marquez. "I'm eager to see the positive impact it will have on Iraq's communities."

FAO campaign to clean Hawizeh Marshes

Baghdad, 26 August 2024 - In line with the World Water Week, and the "Water is Life" campaign, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq, in cooperation with the Iraqi government, local authorities and fishermen, launched a campaign to clean the Al-Hawizeh Marsh from plastic waste and pollution. The campaign will last for 10 days to cover 3 main passages: Umm Al-Tous, Al-Zubair and Al-Husseji (Al-Doub). It is expected that the volume of waste that will be removed from Al-Huwaizah Marsh by the end of the campaign will be about 100 cubic meters of plastic waste.

"This initiative is vital to protecting water resources, wetlands and the riverine ecosystem, especially considering the severe water shortage, heat waves and drought that the marshes are exposed to, which are among the negative impact of climate change and water scarcity that this region in southern Iraq is witnessing" said Dr. Salah El-Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq.

The marshes have recently witnessed severe heat waves, accompanied by a sudden shortage of water in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, causing severe negative impacts on the ecosystem, buffalo breeders, farmers and fishermen in the marshes.

El-Hajj Hassan stressed that FAO, in cooperation with its national and international partners and donors, is keen to continue working to address the negative impacts of climate change and water scarcity and to confront the challenges facing the marshes, calling

on all stakeholders to unite in a spirit of cooperation and determination and to work diligently to protect the marshes, combat climate change, and ensure the well-being of present and future generations who depend on these invaluable resources.

"The impacts of climate change are exacerbating water scarcity and challenging our ability to manage natural resources sustainably. Increasingly frequent and extreme weather events, droughts and floods are putting stress on our ecosystems,



FAO campaign to clean Hawizeh Marshes *(continued)*

with negative consequences for agricultural production and food security," said Dr. Abdulhakim Al-Waer, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa. "On this occasion, we reaffirm FAO's commitment to making every possible effort to address the impacts of climate change on Iraq and the region," he

added.

This initiative comes also within the context of the "Water is Life" campaign launched by the United Nations in Iraq recently in partnership with the Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources to address the severe water crisis facing the nation. The year-long awareness campaign "Water is Life" aims to sensitize Iraqi citizens about the

critical state of their water resources and foster a sense of responsibility to mitigate this crisis.

Through this campaign, significant progress can be made in water conservation and management, ensuring a sustainable and better future for all Iraqis.



UNICEF's Non-Revenue Water campaign, led by 24 young volunteers, aims to raise awareness on the importance of rational use of water

Basra, 18 August 2024 - "Every person in Iraq needs to be responsible in conserving water for the present and future generations. People's positive engagement in this campaign is truly encouraging," Bashair, 23

UNICEF's Non-Revenue Water (NRW) Campaign, led by 24 young volunteers aims to raise awareness on the importance of rational use of water.

The campaign will benefit 1,500 households in Basra.

This project is supported by EU International Partnerships.



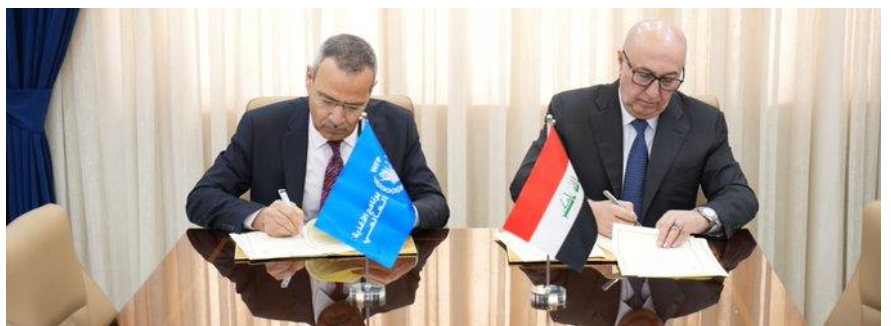
UN-Habitat works on a 40-kilometre canal to channel water from the Eastern Euphrates to reduce sand and dust storms in southern Iraq

Baghdad, 26 August 2024 - In Iraq, where water is scarce, using it wisely is essential. UN-Habitat is working on a 40-kilometre canal to channel water from the Eastern Euphrates to reduce sand and dust storms in Southern Iraq, support reforestation, restore ecosystems, and reverse desertification. This initiative, implemented with local partners and funded by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), will increase water access and promote long-term environmental recovery.

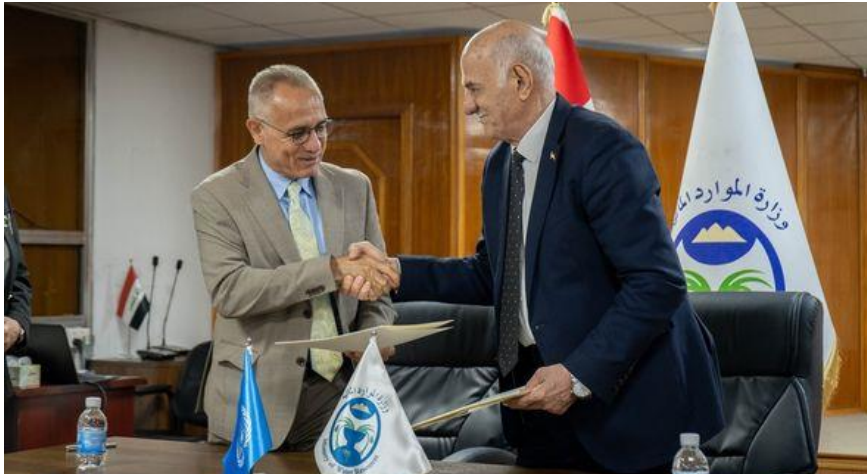


Iraq's Ministry of Environment and WFP Iraq sign an agreement to boost cooperation on climate resilience

Baghdad, 29 August 2024 - H.E. Engineer Nzar Amedi, Iraq's Minister of Environment and WFP Iraq's Representative, Mageded Yahia signed an agreement to boost cooperation on climate resilience, helping farmers adapt and communities prepare for climate shocks, via enhancing adaptation, accessing climate finance and promoting knowledge sharing.



UN Iraq and Ministry of Water Resources launch "Water is Life" campaign



Baghdad, 22 July 2024 – Today, the United Nations in Iraq, in partnership with the Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources, kicked off a crucial campaign to address the severe water crisis facing the nation. The year-long awareness campaign, titled "Water is Life – Every Drop Counts," aims to sensitize Iraqi citizens about the critical state of their water resources and foster a sense of responsibility to mitigate this crisis.

The launch event was held at the Ministry of Water Resources and included a comprehensive overview of the campaign, followed by an engaging discussion and a press conference.

Minister of Water Resources, H.E. Aoun Diab Abdullah, stated, "Our Ministry is committed to updating our water management strategies and incorporating modern technologies in irrigation projects. These efforts are essential to prevent waste and depletion of our water resources and ensure that every drop of water is used efficiently. The partnership with UN and international organizations has been crucial in these advancements. We are grateful for their support in raising awareness and promoting sustainable practices."

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ghulam Mohammed Isaczai, emphasized the urgency of the situation and the collective actions needed to address it. He said, "Water is essential to life, yet we are currently facing a significant crisis. In recent years, the rivers have run lower, and the fields have dried up more than ever before. Through collective efforts and cooperation, we can tackle this challenge. Crucial steps such as upgrading water systems, protecting the rivers from pollution, and investing in innovative water management

practices are paramount. Let's work together to protect water for the future of Iraq. Every drop counts and so does every action."

The "Water is Life" campaign is structured through four phases over the next year. The initial phase will focus on raising awareness about the water crisis and the effects of climate change. The following phase will introduce the key players involved in managing Iraq's water resources, fostering a sense of accountability and collaboration. The third phase will showcase ongoing projects and efforts by the Iraqi government and UN agencies, highlighting successes and ongoing initiatives. The final phase will look to the future, outlining plans and strategies to continue addressing the water crisis and highlighting Iraq's participation in international forums and efforts to secure support and funding for water projects.

The "Water is Life" campaign represents a unified effort by the UN agencies and the Iraqi government to address one of the most pressing issues facing the country. Through this campaign, significant progress can be made in water conservation and management, ensuring a sustainable and better future for all Iraqis.

Here is the full text of the opening remarks by DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai:

"Y.E. Aoun Diab Abdullah, Minister of Water Resources,

Distinguished guests, colleagues, and ladies and gentlemen,

Al-Salamu Alikum and Good morning.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to the launch of the joint UN and Ministry of Water Resources "Water is Life" campaign together with H.E., the Minister.

Water is not just a resource; it is the very essence of life itself.

Every water drop counts, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that this vital resource is preserved and conserved for future generations.

Today, water crisis is one of the most pressing and urgent challenges facing Iraq. This issue transcends environmental concerns, touching every facet of life, from national security to public health, from agricultural productivity to social stability.

The crisis is immediate and severe, with far-reaching consequences if left unaddressed.

Allow me to share some alarming facts based on scientific data. By 2050, we could see temperature increases of 2-4°C and reductions in precipitation by up to 20 per cent in key agricultural regions by 2040.

Additionally, river flows are expected to decline by 30-40 per cent, and experts predict that by 2035, Iraq will only be able to meet 15 per cent of its water needs.

This looming crisis threatens to exacerbate rural poverty and displace communities, particularly in the southern regions.

Therefore, the "Water is Life" campaign is not just an initiative; it is a call to action.

Over the next year, we will work tirelessly to raise awareness about the urgency of the water crisis and promote individual and collective responsibility.

This campaign will be rolled out in four distinct phases, each designed to build a comprehensive understanding and foster active engagement.

Throughout this campaign, we aim to instill a sense of hope and optimism.

While we must communicate the gravity of the situation, we also want to inspire collective action and resilience.

We will leverage a diverse range of content to reach a wide audience, from simple messages to expert interviews, infographics, and videos.

Collaboration is key. We will coordinate with line ministries, local governments, civil society groups, academia, and influencers to ensure a unified and effective approach.

Let us remember that every water drop counts, and so does every action we take.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to H.E. Minister Theyab and his teams, and to all our partners for their commitment.

Together, we can make a difference. Let us work together to make "Water is Life" campaign a rallying cry for positive change in Iraq.

Thank you."

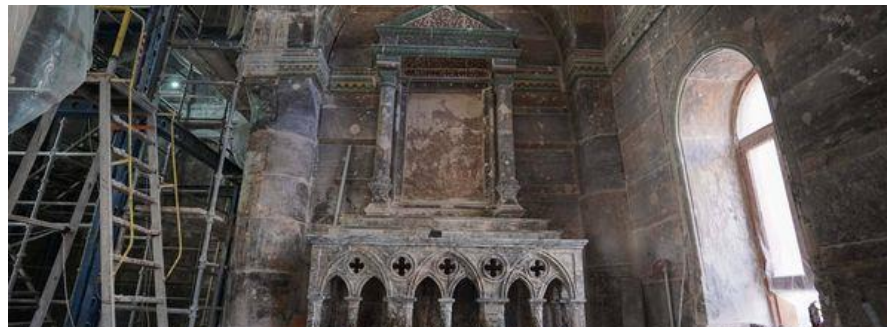
The vibrant activities of 'Mosul Heritage Day' have kicked off

Mosul, 28 June 2024 - In the heart of Mosul's old city, the vibrant activities of 'Mosul Heritage Day' have kicked off. Organized by Bytna Institute and run by the city's youth, the event highlights the rich heritage of the city, which UNESCO is working hand in hand with the residents to revive.



AL-Tahera Church Altars restituted to Former Glory!

Mosul, 30 June 2024 - UNESCO's dedicated historic preservation efforts with SBAH's determination, have successfully restored, piece by piece, the historic western altar in Mosul's Al-Tahera Church. Through UNESCO's on-the-job conservation training, decades of painted layers were carefully removed, revealing the Altar's 160-year-old glorious colored motifs, a testament to the enduring spirit of Mosul's cultural heritage.



UNESCO on X

Mosul, 30 June 2024 - We are deeply grateful to the Iraqi Armed Forces for their swift & effective action in securing and removing unexploded ordnances discovered at the Al-Nouri Complex. Thanks to their efforts, the area is now safe, and we are pleased to announce that reconstruction work has resumed.

UNESCO, in partnership with Volunteer with Us, hosts an engaging dialogue session titled 'Reviving the Spirit of Mosul: Celebrating Achievements and Charting the Future'

Mosul, 30 June 2024 - UNESCO, in partnership with Volunteer with Us, hosted an engaging dialogue session titled 'Reviving the Spirit of Mosul: Celebrating Achievements and Charting the Future' at the Community Center. During the session, the UNESCO team, in collaboration with the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, discussed the successes of the first two phases of the UNESCO project funded by the European Union. These accomplishments included restoring over 124 heritage houses, upgrading public infrastructure, developing youth



skills and job opportunities, and establishing Mosul's first child-friendly school. They also presented the plan for

the next phase, all of which was met with strong community support at the Mosul Heritage Foundation.

“Restoring Mosul University Library” Steering Committee meets in Erbil

Erbil, 04 July 2024 - “Restoring Mosul University Library” Steering Committee chaired by His Excellency Professor Haidar Abed Dhahad, Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research for Scientific Research Affairs met on 25 June 2024

in Erbil. The representatives from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), Prime Minister's Advisory Council, Mosul University, and UNESCO, along with the project's partners attended and took stock of the project's achievements, work plan, and

discussed action points for successful implementation of the project.

Restoring Mosul University Library is an important part of UNESCO's "Reviving the Spirit of Mosul" initiative. The project is being implemented in collaboration with the

“Restoring Mosul University Library” Steering Committee met in Erbil *(continued)*

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Mosul University with funding from AICS. UNESCO has mobilized National and International institutions to collaborate in this initiative for developing Mosul University Library. During July - October 2024, Mosul University Library technical staff will be trained on the Library Information System for the library's full functions to improve access to valuable resources and educational materials in the library,

benefiting more than 70,000 students and approximately 5,000 university

staff, as well as the wider community in Ninewa and other provinces.



Revive the Spirit of Mosul: UNESCO completes the rehabilitation of the House of Prayer at Al-Saa'a Convent with the support of ALIPH

Mosul, 16 July 2024 – UNESCO completed the extensive rehabilitation of the House of Prayer next to Al-Saa'a Convent in Mosul, with the financial support of the International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH) and in close cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities and the Dominican Order. The house will be a place dedicated to the local community. UNESCO began the project in 2022, with initial efforts concentrated on clearing remnants of conflict and laying the groundwork for rehabilitation. By April 2023, it entered an active phase, focusing on the reconstruction and careful restoration of the House's architectural elements.

The rehabilitation extended beyond structural repairs, including the revamp of the House of Prayer's interior design and modernization of its facilities to ensure historical integrity, necessary functionality and installation of eco-friendly elements enhancing the sustainability of the building, such as a solar panel system.

This ambitious task was undertaken by hundreds of Moslawis from all faiths, under the guidance of a joint committee from UNESCO, the Iraqi Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities and the Dominican Order. Amongst these workers were 10 unskilled or semi-skilled trainees and 25 young Moslawi architects and engineers.

This effort marks a significant step forward in the preservation of this historic area, returning it to the care of the Dominican Fathers. It also showcased a powerful example of community resilience and collaborative efforts.

The first school for girls in Mesopotamia



Since its establishment in 1866, the Al-Saa'a Convent (Our Lady of the Hour) in Mosul has been a significant site of faith and community. It is a typical example of a traditional Mosuli house that includes a central courtyard, with the main spaces distributed around it. It features many covered corridors and distinctive Mosul alabaster columns adorned with inscriptions. It also includes large basements, making the building's three floors available for use. With financial support from ALIPH (USD 1.53M) and in close partnership with the Dominican Order, the Iraqi Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities and the French government, the restoration by UNESCO focused not only on the

convent but also on the House of Prayer.

The House of Prayer held a crucial role within this sacred compound. It was used as the very first school for girls in Mesopotamia. Recently, this particular house experienced severe damage due to conflict, leading to structural collapse and the loss of invaluable heritage elements.

This project is part of UNESCO's flagship initiative "Revive the Spirit of Mosul", launched in 2018 by Director-General Audrey Azoulay as a response to the recovery of one of Iraq's iconic cities. It reflects UNESCO's broader vision of fostering unity and resilience through support for cultural life and heritage restoration.



Seven years of reviving Mosul – UNESCO's achievements and future projects



Mosul, 20 July 2024 – On the eve of the seventh anniversary of Mosul's liberation, UNESCO takes stock of the significant achievements under its flagship initiative "Revive the Spirit of Mosul" supported by the United Arab Emirates, the European Union as well as 13 other partners, and in partnership with the Iraqi government. This initiative aims to support heritage preservation, educational development, and community revitalization through multiple projects.

Key Achievements

Reconstruction of Iconic Landmarks: UNESCO has made remarkable progress in rebuilding Mosul's cultural and historical landmarks:

- Al-Nouri Mosque and Al-Hadba minaret

These symbols of Mosul's heritage are being meticulously reconstructed, with the financial support of the United Arab Emirates. Efforts have included extensive studies, reinforcement of structures, and careful selection of rebuilding methods. The construction stages of the Al-Hadba minaret have reached advanced phases, and it will begin to rise in the city's skyline in the coming weeks. The prayer hall and service buildings of the Al-Nouri Mosque are being rebuilt, integrating archaeological discoveries from the 12th century while also ensuring the preservation of the Green Dome, symbolizing resilience in the face of conflict. Despite the many challenges that arose over the years, such as the recent discovery and removal of hidden explosives, the reconstruction of the Al-Nouri Mosque complex remains on track for completion by year's end.

- Al-Saa'a Convent and the House of Prayer, and Al-Tahera Church

Al-Saa'a Convent has been fully reconstructed with the financial

support of the United Arab Emirates. Its bells and famous clock have regained their place in the Mosul skyline. The rehabilitation of the House of Prayer near the church is also fully completed, with the financial support of ALIPH), ensuring the preservation of architectural details and heritage integrity. Al-Tahera Church is in the final stages of reconstruction, with the support of UAE. Its bells have been recently installed, and the entire site will be ready for handover in the coming weeks.

- Heritage Houses and Al-Ekhlal Primary School

With the financial support of the European Union, UNESCO has carefully rebuilt 124 heritage houses, restoring original details and reviving traditional architectural styles. Many of them are now inhabited again. The project also included upgrading public alleyways and infrastructure to increase the appeal of the historic neighborhoods for the residents. In addition, the project involved the complete reconstruction of two heavily damaged and historically significant palatial houses – Suliman Al Sayegh and Al Zyada palatial houses – owned by the Iraqi Ministry of Culture. These houses are intended for cultural and artistic activities. As for the Al-Ekhlal Primary School, it has been built and equipped to serve as Mosul's first child-friendly school, featuring 12 classrooms, a library, and various child-friendly activities.

Job creation and skills development
UNESCO's projects provided around 6,200 job opportunities for Mosulis, enabling them to participate in the reconstruction of their city. The UNESCO Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) program has also benefited more than 1,400 unemployed youths, equipping them with new skills and facilitating

their entry into the labor market. In the upcoming months, additional 1,400 youth will benefit from the TVET training, and TVET institutions will benefit from equipment and curriculums, as well as the rehabilitation of facilities.

Restoring the Mosul University Library
UNESCO works to ensure that the Mosul University Library resumes operations and becomes accessible by providing digital equipment and training librarians, with the financial support of Italy. It also includes restoration, digitization and preservation of manuscripts, rare books, periodicals and manuals as well as supporting partnerships with national and international institutions. As a part of this initiative, 87 library staff are receiving training in library management, cataloging/ indexing, digitalization, collections management, borrowing and lending and restoration of rare materials. Additionally, partnerships with 4 institutions were established to support the exchange of expertise and knowledge resources. These activities, along with the ongoing creation of a restoration and preservation unit for rare materials and the cataloging and digitalization of library resources, will benefit more than 60,000 students and 5,000 staff members of Mosul University, as well as the wider community.

Fostering cultural revival

UNESCO is committed to reviving Mosul's cultural life by creating spaces for cultural and creative activities, intended to serve as hubs for artists, intellectuals, and the community to engage in cultural expressions and events. UNESCO also trained 20 young students from Mosul, in collaboration with the City Theatre of Ghent, and 9 short movies have been shot and produced by them in the city. A Film Lab was also established at the Institute of Fine Arts of Mosul.

The Revive the Spirit of Mosul initiative has also relaunched various cultural festivals, music performances, film screenings, and other events, helping to restore Mosul's vibrant cultural scene. UNESCO also established in the Old City a "Community Information Center", located by the river Tigris, which organizes events, including cultural activities and weekly visits to the heritage and education programs for students in the community. Since its opening in November 2022, hosting more than 67,000 national and international visitors so far.



Mosul, 24 July 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai**: "Visited this beautiful Al-Saa'a Church (1873) in Mosul yesterday which has been fully renovated by UNESCO after it suffered major damage during the conflict with ISIS. Traces of bullets are maintained on its column to tell the story of war to next generation."



Erbil, 26 July 2024 -The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai**, toured the Erbil Citadel site, appreciating the remarkable work by UNESCO to preserve cultural heritage in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. More funds are needed to complete the task. "Great work by UNESCO in restoring this world heritage site which has huge potential for tourism and business opportunities "for local businesses and jobs.

The first "Door of Mosul" unveiled at the French Embassy in Baghdad!

Baghdad, 22 July 2024 - The first "Door of Mosul" has been unveiled at the French Embassy in Baghdad! This amazing art project, led by Louis-Cyprien Rials and supported by UNESCO, is funded by the Centre National des Arts Plastiques (CNAP) and honors Mosul's rich cultural heritage. The project includes beautiful

engravings by Muhammad Nila and designs by Sahar M. Kharrufa, with engineering by Anas Al-Zakaria, a site engineer for UNESCO. Stay tuned for more updates and join us in celebrating Mosul's history and strength.



Al-Hadba Minaret Soars Higher!

Mosul, 30 July 2024 - The reconstruction of Al-Hadba Minaret is making remarkable progress! The minaret now stands tall at 22 meters, with the foundation and base securely in place. This is a major milestone in rebuilding this iconic symbol of Mosul. These efforts are side by side with UNESCO and SBAH with generous fund from UAE.



UNESCO supports Mosul University Library capacity-building activities

Mosul, 29 August 2024 - From July 21 to August 7, 2024, the UNESCO Iraq Office, in partnership with the Sacred Abbasid Shrine and Mosul University's Central Library, organized three workshops for 30 librarians from Mosul University. The training covered the restoration and preservation of manuscripts and books, installation and management of the Koha Library Information System, as well as cataloging, RDA standards, and resource management.

These efforts are part of the 'Restoring Mosul University Library' project,

supported by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and implemented by UNESCO in partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education Scientific Research and Mosul University, under the 'Revive the Spirit of Mosul' Initiative. On 19th and 26th August 2024, two comprehensive sessions were conducted for 20 participants from Mosul University Libraries. These sessions focused on the second and third training modules, covering crucial topics such as Training and Facilitation Skills and Library Collections



Management.

As the training progresses, UNESCO remains committed to empowering Mosul University Library key staff

UNESCO supports Mosul University Library capacity-building activities *(continues)*

members, who will play a vital role in cascading their newfound expertise to other library personnel, ensuring sustainable development across various library functions.

From 28 July to 7 August 2024, UNESCO Iraq Office, in partnership with the Cataloging and Information System Center and the Sacred Abbasid Shrine (SAS), organized two training workshops for 25 participants from Mosul University Libraries.

The first workshop focused on installing the latest version of the Koha

Library Information System. It covered system management and monitoring to support the use of the automated system across all library operations. The second workshop concentrated on Cataloging and RDA standards, Classification, and the borrowing and lending of library resources. Delivered by three trainers from the Cataloging and Information System Center, Department of Intellectual and Cultural Affairs, SAS, the workshops adopted theoretical and practical approach.

From 21 to 30 July 2024, UNESCO Iraq Office, in partnership with the Manuscripts Restoration and Preservation Center at the Sacred Abbasid Shrine, organized a training workshop for the five key restoration and preservation staff from Mosul University Libraries. The workshop was conducted on two rounds, in Karbala and Mosul, and focused on restoration techniques for manuscripts, documents, old books, and various preservation methods.

On 05 August 2024, UNESCO and Ulster University organized a training session on library values, structures, and roles for 20 participants from the Central Library and other departmental libraries at Mosul University. The session explored how an academic library can be structured, detailing the different units within a library, the various work roles of library staff, and the skills needed to work effectively in a university library. UNESCO office greatly appreciates the efforts and dedication of the trainers in delivering the training, as well as the active participation of the trainees and their contributions to the success of the interactive training sessions.



UNESCO on X

Mosul, 30 June 2024 - We are deeply grateful to the Iraqi Armed Forces for their swift & effective action in securing and removing unexploded ordnances discovered at the Al-Nouri Complex. Thanks to their efforts, the area is now safe, and we are pleased to announce that reconstruction work has resumed.

Education

Government of Iraq launches national and sub-national childhood care units to strengthen child protection services

Baghdad, 13 July 2024 - Iraq takes a significant stride in safeguarding child rights as the Government, through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), inaugurates 44 National and Sub-National Childhood Care Units. These units are pivotal in ensuring access to essential protection services and promoting the well-being of children across the country.

"The launch of the National and Sub-National Childhood Care Units reflects Iraq's dedication to upholding the rights of every child," said Ahmed Al Asadi, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs. "These units will serve as strategic hubs for coordinating and enhancing child protection services, promoting safe environments, and supporting the holistic development of children and families."



Under the umbrella of the national child protection policy, these National Childhood Care Units will oversee and monitor child protection services nationwide, providing technical assistance, capacity building, and conducting research to inform evidence-based policies. With 2 central units and 42 additional centers spread across

different governorates, these facilities will play a crucial role in advancing Iraq's progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions, and SDG 3 on good health and well-being. This initiative aligns with Iraq's commitment to the Convention on the

Government of Iraq launches national and sub-national childhood care units to strengthen child protection services *(continued)*

Rights of the Child.

At the governorate level, the Sub-National Childhood Care Units will deliver localized services such as child protection case management, prevention programmes, family support services, and robust referral systems. They will collaborate closely with local communities, civil society organizations, and governmental

agencies to ensure responsive and effective child protection measures.

"This initiative marks a significant step forward in Iraq's efforts to strengthen its child protection systems," said Sandra Lattouf, UNICEF Representative in Iraq. "By establishing these units, Iraq is advancing towards ensuring that every child is protected from violence,

neglect, exploitation, and abuse, aligning with international standards and contributing to the achievement of SDGs related to child well-being."

Supported by comprehensive training programmes and technical assistance, the establishment of these units underscores Iraq's commitment to building a protective environment where every child can thrive.

Empowering Iraq's youth for a digital future!

Baghdad, 15 July 2024 – WFP Iraq and WFP Innovation launched Jousour, a now nation-wide programme equipping youth with skills in English, IT, entrepreneurship and more.

In 2024, 2,750 graduates are ready to seize new opportunities.

#WorldYouthSkillsDay



On the occasion of World Youth Skill Day, UNESCO Iraq Office is sharing the Voice of Youth

Baghdad, 15 July 2024 - On the occasion of World Youth Skill Day, UNESCO Iraq Office is sharing the Voice of Youth. The theme for World Youth Skills Day 2024 is Youth Skills for Peace and Development. It highlights the crucial role that young people play in peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts.

The world faces a multitude of challenges today, many of which affect the youth. Violent conflicts disrupting education and stability, a polarized online environment fostering negativity, and persistent economic inequality limits opportunities. These issues threaten not only individual futures but also the overall stability of

societies. It is crucial to equip youth with the necessary skills for fostering a culture of peace, nurturing responsible global citizens, and promoting sustainable development to build a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future for all.

On World Youth Skills Day, let us unite in recognizing the potential of young people as agents of peace and commit to providing them with the skills and opportunities to address challenges and contribute to a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable future.



On this World Youth Skills Day let's celebrate the incredible youth of Iraq

Baghdad, 17 July 2024 - With support from UNICEF Iraq, Hajir represented Iraqi youth at the Second Regional High-Level Meeting in Tunis, advocating for sustainable job opportunities, enhanced education and professional skills, and employment and entrepreneurship.

The meeting focused on addressing youth unemployment and promoting learning for decent work, especially for girls and young women in accessing

digital and green jobs.

On this World Youth Skills Day, let's

celebrate the incredible youth of Iraq as they work towards a brighter future!



Future TVET programs and projects will focus on green and digital economy to prepare Iraqi youth for meaningful employment

Baghdad, 05 August 2024 - A consultative meeting took place between the European Union, UNESCO, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR) at MoHESR to discuss the programmatic priorities of the Ministry and Iraq's Technical Universities. The meeting highlighted the importance of

greening and digitalization, which are strategic priorities for both Iraq and MoHESR. It was agreed that future TVET programs and projects would focus on these areas to prepare Iraqi youth for meaningful employment and to leverage opportunities in the green and digital economy.



UNDP Iraq and Toyota Iraq excited to welcome 20 new trainees into the latest TOYOTA Training and Development Programme

Baghdad, 16 August 2024 - UNDP Iraq with Toyota Iraq is excited to welcome 20 new trainees into the latest Toyota Training & Development Programme! Trainees will gain new technical skills and benefit from practical on-the-job training with Toyota cert partners. This training is part of UNDP's Building Resilience through Employment Promotion (BREP) project, in partnership with Toyota Iraq, with financial support from the

Government of Germany. To provide youth with access to sustainable

income opportunities and contribute to rebuilding the business environment.



A new school in Erbil, Basirma, will provide quality education to over 400 refugee and Iraqi children in the area

Erbil, 29 August 2024 - UNHCR is excited to announce the opening of a new school that will provide quality education to over 400 refugee and Iraqi children in the area. With the support of UNHCR, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has made significant strides in including Syrian refugee children and teachers into the public education system in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. UNHCR's support enabled the distribution of around 34,000 teaching and learning materials to schools, helping accommodate more students. Additionally, over 390 refugee teachers received training, and more than 7,000 refugee children, parents, and teachers



participated in Kurdish language courses. Furthermore, over 4,000 refugee students benefited from catch-up and

literacy classes, and 2,900 students received assistance with transportation costs. The KRG is committed to expanding this education program to include grades five to 12 by 2030.



All these efforts have been made possible with the support of the Netherlands. Through this partnership, we can continue this vital work, ensuring that both refugee and Iraqi students have access to education and advocating for better ways to include refugees into the education system, fostering a better learning environment for all.

The future workers of the Japan Village Project in Mosul are currently undertaking vocational training in masonry,

Mosul, 28 August 2024 – The future workers of the Japan Village Project in Mosul are currently undertaking vocational training in masonry, whitewashing, blacksmithing, carpentry, and solar panel maintenance. Soon, 100 trainees, including 40 women, will use their newly acquired skills to help build a better urban future for returnees in Mosul.

This project is implemented by UH-Habitat and funded by the Government of Japan.



Youth

Celebrating Success!



Baghdad, 22 July 2024 - UNDP celebrates the outstanding achievements of the Iraqi teams at the International Negotiation and Mediation Competition in Vienna!

Represented by students from American University of Iraq - Baghdad, Al-Turath, and Al-Iraqia universities, Iraq participated for the first time in

the prestigious IBA/VIAC Consensual Dispute Resolution Competition (CDRC) among 46 global teams. Al-Turath University received the special award for the Mediator's "Most Effective Opening Address".

Through our EU-funded Commercial Dispute Resolution Initiatives, UNDP has been supporting Iraqi law students

in building their capacities in alternative dispute resolution, including mediation. By doing this, we aim to strengthen business enabling environment in Iraq, making Iraq more reliable with efficient dispute resolution approaches.

Zahra, a participant, shared: "The whole journey has been transformative for me and my friends. First, we joined the workshops provided by UNDP on mediation, then we got accepted to participate in the competition in Vienna. Now we are back with a backpack of new skills, international experience and network. It has been uniquely rewarding and exciting."

Stay tuned for more updates on UNDP's work in commercial dispute resolution!

DSRSG/HC/RC Ghulam M. Isaczai launches the 3rd Iraq Model United Nations

Mosul, 24 July 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai, launched the 3rd Iraq Youth Model UN (IYMUN2024) in Mosul today. He engaged with the youth, emphasizing their important role they play in shaping Iraq's future.

Here is the text of his speech at this ceremony:

"Mr. Haitham Al-Shakarchi and IYMUN team,
Distinguished Guests, and Young Delegates,
Assalam Alaikum and warm greetings to you all.

I am pleased to stand before you today

at the opening ceremony of the Iraqi Youth Model United Nations (IYMUN) 2024.

Let me express my appreciation to the organizers for their dedication in establishing this platform for dialogue,

collaboration, and positive change.

I am particularly heartened by IYMUN's commitment to inclusivity and diversity, bringing together participants from all across the country. This reflects the true spirit of



DSRSG/HC/RC Ghulam M. Isaczai launches the 3rd Iraq Model United Nations *(continued)*

Iraq – a nation rich in history, culture, and diversity.

Let me take a moment to acknowledge the Governor of Nineveh, Mr. Najm al-Jubouri, and his team for their support of IYMUN and his commitment to youth empowerment.

To the young delegates gathered here, you represent the hope and aspirations of Iraq. Your energy, creativity, and determination are the driving force that will shape the future of Iraq.

This event provides you with a unique



opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions on global challenges, and to learn from each other's diverse perspectives. Your engagement demonstrates your commitment to addressing global issues and your eagerness to contribute to a better future for all. Your voices matter, and your actions have the power to make a difference.

The themes you have chosen for this year's committees, "Protecting Middle Eastern Heritage: Enhancing UNESCO's Role in Crisis Intervention" is both timely and critical.

The preservation of cultural heritage is not only about safeguarding the past but also about building a resilient future. It is about recognizing the interconnectedness of human rights and environmental sustainability.

The United Nations stands ready to support your endeavours. We believe in the potential of young people to be agents of change. Through education,

empowerment, and meaningful engagement, we can build a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world.

As we embark on this journey, I encourage you to embrace the spirit of collaboration, to challenge yourselves to think critically, and to explore innovative solutions to the complex issues we face. Remember, the future of Iraq is in your hands.

I am confident that the discussions and outcomes of this event will not only enrich your knowledge and understanding but also inspire you to take action and become active contributors to your communities and the world.

I wish you all a successful and fruitful conference.

With that, I officially launch the 3rd Model United Nations in Iraq.

Shukran Jazilan.
Thank you"

WHO on X

Mosul, 24 July 2024 – Dr. Georges Ki-Zerbo, WHO Representative in Iraq: "Honored to speak @ #Iraq #Youth #Movement for the #UN #IYMUN 3rd Conference in #Mosul #Ninawa - Inspiring #Dialogue on #Humanheritage at the core of @UN #SDGs - I reflected on intersections with #Health4All #PPPR - I conveyed @WHO commitment".

International Youth Day marked in Baghdad with the launch of the National Youth Council

Baghdad, 12 August 2024 – Today, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, led by Dr. Ahmed Al-Mubarqa, marked International Youth Day with the launch of the National Youth Council, empowering Iraqi youth to address issues and serve as a platform for youth aspirations.

The event featured youth announcing a set of recommendations on security, peace, and climate, which emerged from the Baghdad Youth Summit 2024, where youth leaders from 28 Arab and foreign countries gathered to share their insights.

Minister Al-Mubarqa hailed the Council as a symbol of hope for Iraq's future and praised the youth's achievements.

Sandra Lattouf, UNICEF Iraq's representative, underscored the

importance of youth engagement, calling Iraqi youth "a source of endless creativity and determination."

This event marks a significant milestone in the journey to empower Iraq's young people!



UNAMI on X

Baghdad, 12 August 2024 - On this International Youth Day, we celebrate Iraqi youth as key architects of Iraq's future. UN Iraq recognizes their immense potential and commitment to progress. We renew our pledge to support them and create opportunities for growth and sustainable development.

UNFPA proudly participated in the International Youth Day Summit



Baghdad, 12 August 2024 - UNFPA proudly participated in the International Youth Day Summit,

hosted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports from August 10th to 12th, under the theme "From Clicks to Progress:

Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development."

During the summit, we highlighted the critical link between climate change and reproductive health, addressing issues like access to healthcare during extreme weather, exposure to pollutants, and the broader impact on fertility. We also discussed essential strategies to combat these challenges, including social equity, strengthening health systems, and integrating reproductive health into climate change adaptation.

Together, we're empowering youth to lead the way towards a sustainable and equitable future.

UNICEF celebrates the power of youth

Baghdad, 14 August 2024 - On this International Youth Day, we encourage every young person to lead change and build a better future.



"Participating in the youth skilling, employability, entrepreneurship, and social engagement programme in Mosul taught me valuable skills like time management, negotiation, and communication. It gave me the courage to engage in various activities and volunteer opportunities. I now feel better prepared to contribute to my community and improve my future prospects. I encourage every youth to join such programmes," said Jelan, 21 years old.

"Before participating in the youth programme, I struggled with problem-solving. Thanks to this programme, I'm better at it now, and I can communicate and interact with others more



effectively. My self-esteem has also grown. I wish I could relive this experience every day!" - Nour, 23 .

On International Youth Day, we honor the growth and confidence that youth programmes inspire.



"Participating in the youth programme in Mosul was a turning point for me. The training not only introduced me to amazing people but also equipped me with the skills to overcome challenges in my life. I now feel confident in

navigating obstacles and am optimistic about the future. This experience has truly empowered me to keep pushing forward." - Muhammad, 20.

On this International Youth Day, let's recognise the resilience and potential of young people around the world.



"The youth programme in Mosul opened my eyes to what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur. I learned so much about running a business and personal growth. Thanks to this programme, I feel more confident in my abilities and excited about expanding my ventures in the future. It's been an incredible journey of self-discovery and empowerment." Rusul, 18.

On this International Youth Day, we celebrate the power of youth to transform their futures.

Maryam Alfakhrey, a climate activist from Mosul, attended the High-Level Global Forum on Youth, Peace, and Security in Jordan

Baghdad, 03 September 2024 - Maryam Alfakhrey, a climate activist from Mosul, attended the High-Level Global Forum on Youth, Peace, and Security in Jordan, where she emphasized the crucial role of youth in decision-making to ensure peace, security, and inclusion. Supported by UNFPA Iraq in collaboration with UNFPA Jordan, Maryam contributed to a panel discussion on the synergies

between the Youth, Peace & Security, and Climate Agendas.

Maryam concluded her panel with a powerful message: "Adaptation and mitigation measures can't be decided without involving those who are at the heart of the crisis—youth, women, and the next generation. Youth are the future, and they have the right to reshape it."

