

# UNAMI Herald

Volume 12, Issue 1

January — February 2025



## UNAMI hosts cultural carnival to celebrate Baghdad's designation as Arab Capital of Tourism 2025

**Baghdad, 27 February 2025** - Iraq's capital, Baghdad, has been designated as the Arab Capital of Tourism for 2025 by the Arab Tourism Organization. To celebrate this prestigious recognition, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) hosted a cultural carnival today at its headquarters in Baghdad.

The event featured a vibrant cultural exhibition, including traditional music, dance, and fashion. Attendees included the Speaker of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, Dr. Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, the Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities, Dr. Ahmed Fakak Al-Badrani, as well as several ministers, Iraqi officials, ambassadors, and representatives of diplomatic missions.

Additionally, the Mayoralty of Baghdad organized a bazaar at the



venue showcasing handicrafts and craftsmanship, artisanal products, highlighting Iraq's rich cultural heritage and

*Continued on page 72.*

## Iraq unveils key census insights: a new era for Iraq's national planning

**Baghdad, 24 February 2025** – The Government of Iraq, supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), announced the results of the 2024 General Population and Housing Census today at a high-level national conference held in Baghdad. This marks a significant milestone in Iraq's efforts to leverage data for sustainable development and evidence-based policymaking.

The event was attended by senior government officials, international experts, and representatives from the United Nations. His Excellency Dr. Mohammed Ali Tamim, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning, emphasized the transformative impact of the census: "The 2024 Census is a historic achievement for Iraq, providing a clear and comprehensive picture of our population. This data is fundamental for national planning, ensuring that resources are directed to where they are most needed and that every individual's needs are



recognized in development strategies."

The UNFPA Representative in Iraq, Dr. Hind Jalal, reaffirmed UNFPA's commitment to supporting Iraq in translating census data into actionable policies: "This census is more than just numbers, it is a tool for change. By investing in data-

driven decision-making, Iraq can develop inclusive policies that address the needs of all citizens, particularly women, youth, and marginalized communities. UNFPA is proud to stand alongside the Government of Iraq in this journey."

*Continued on page ...*

## In this edition ...

### **UNDP successfully launches the final Plans of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism across 15 governorates**

**Baghdad, 16 January 2025** – UNDP have successfully launched the final Plans of Action (PoAs) for Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) across 15 Governorates, with 8 PoAs developed in 2023 and 7 in 2024.

*More on page 3.*

### **UNAMI emphasizes the role of women in Iraq and protection of their rights**

**Baghdad, 13 January 2025** – Recognizing the critical role civil society plays in promoting women’s empowerment, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, met today with members of the Women Advisory Group and representatives of Civil Society Organizations to discuss a number of priorities for Iraqi women and how the UN can support progress on this important file.

*More on page 11.*

### **UN Women and the National Directorate for Iraqi Women convene civil society consultation to advance Iraq’s Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security**

**Baghdad, 5 February 2025** – The National Directorate for Iraqi Women, in collaboration with UN Women, convened a high-level consultation session with 75 representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs) and the Government of Iraq to advance the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda and support the development of Iraq’s third National Action Plan (INAP III).

*More on page 14.*

### **SRSG Dr. Al Hassan: “Investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency is an investment in Iraq’s brighter, more sustainable future.”**

**Baghdad, 28 January 2025** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Isaczai, participated today in the Iraq Energy Conference in Baghdad, highlighting how the UN can support Iraq in leveraging technology to advance the energy sector and promote sustainability.

*More on page 32.*

### **Audrey Azoulay celebrates the return of the “Spirit of Mosul” as UNESCO reconstruction nears completion**

**Mosul, 6 February 2025** — Audrey Azoulay visited Mosul on Wednesday to thank all the workers, architects and engineers who have successfully completed UNESCO's reconstruction of the Old City. In 7 years, thanks to the joint efforts of Mosul's inhabitants and international solidarity, this multicultural city martyred by Daesh has been reborn and is once again inspiring.

*More on page 62.*

### **UN and Iraq launch ONE UN Plan to support the return, rehabilitation, and reintegration of Iraqis from Al-Hol Camp**

**Baghdad, 30 January 2025** – The United Nations and the Government of Iraq launched today the second phase of the ONE UN Plan, titled “New Beginnings”, a comprehensive framework aimed at facilitating the safe, voluntary, and dignified return, rehabilitation, and reintegration of Iraqi nationals from Al-Hol and Al-Roj camps in northeastern Syria.

*More on page 19.*

### **New National Housing Policy to bridge Iraq’s housing affordability gap with green and sustainable solutions**

**Baghdad, 27 February 2025** - The European Union remains committed to supporting Iraq in developing affordable, adequate, and sustainable housing solutions. As part of this commitment, the EU-funded Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT) project is playing a key role in advancing Iraq’s National Housing Policy.

*More on page 34.*

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

## SRSO Al Hassan visits the Iraq Fiqh Council in Baghdad



**Baghdad, 31 January 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, visited the Iraq Fiqh Council in Baghdad, where he met with Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Hassan Al-Taha, the Senior Scholar of the Iraq Fiqh Council.

During the visit, the Special Representative toured the Imam Abi Hanifa Al-Nu'man Mosque and then performed the Friday prayer.

In a statement to the media, the Special Representative emphasized the importance of national unity and that there is no room for division among the Iraqi people.

“Our message at the United Nations is clear: security and stability for Iraq. Iraq belongs to everyone; it is a homeland that embraces all. The pure soil of Iraq rejects sectarian and

factional agendas, and marginalization. At the United Nations, we believe that such sectarian and factional plans have no future in this noble country.”

Here is the text of SRSO’s remarks to the media:

“May peace, God's mercy and blessings be upon you, and may you all have a blessed Friday.

Our message at the United Nations is clear. It is the stability and security of Iraq. Iraq is for everyone and is a homeland that embraces everyone. Iraq's pure soil rejects sectarian and factional agendas and marginalization. We at the United Nations believe that such factional and sectarian plans have no future in this noble country. We have confidence in the awareness of the Iraqi citizens and their ability to distinguish between good and bad. The

Iraqi citizen today is yearning for leaders who are more keen and whose concern is not to promote political projects as much as to present and implement projects that raise the standard of living of Iraqis in all the governorates, projects that provide security and a decent life for all Iraqis.

The education sector needs development. The transportation and roads sector as well. The health sector, the electricity sector, and other sectors.

The Iraqi citizen is looking forward to seeing tangible efforts in various sectors. What we have witnessed in efforts in the past few years is something good, honorable, and heartwarming. But there is a great deal that needs to be done, and Iraq is approaching- God willing - an important constitutional entitlement, which is the elections.

We have confidence in the ability of the Iraqi people to distinguish and exercise their constitutional right peacefully and responsibly, by choosing the leaderships in which they see what fulfills their aspirations and hopes, far from sectarianism and far from exclusionary projects. It is time for the people of this country, with their various affiliations, to all enjoy this country's fortunes. The future of Iraq is entrusted to you. The projects of sectarianism and intimidation by the past and the future have ended. We wish this country all the wellbeing, prosperity and what is in the best interest of this historic country and the people.

## UNDP successfully launches the final Plans of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism across 15 governorates

**Baghdad, 16 January 2025** – UNDP have successfully launched the final Plans of Action (PoAs) for Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) across 15 Governorates, with 8 PoAs developed in 2023 and 7 in 2024.

This achievement marks the culmination of extensive efforts to localize the National Strategy on PVE, supported by UNDP with generous funding from the Government of Denmark through the Iraq Social Cohesion Programme (ISCP).

The initiatives involved close collaboration with the National Committee on Countering Violent Extremism and the Governorate-level PVE Sub-committees, ensuring public consultations were held to engage the community.

Sub-Committees and CSOs received training on PVE through a human rights



based approach, while technical support was provided throughout the drafting process by UNDP.

In each Governorate, two initiatives from the PoAs were implemented with UNDP’s support catalyzing over 650

initiatives from PVE Plans of Actions to be supported by the Government of Iraq, UNDP, and civil society throughout 2023 and 2024, reinforcing our joint commitment to creating safer, more resilient communities.

## The United Nations emphasizes on dialogue to build a better future for Iraq

**Baghdad, 22 February 2025** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, participated today in the Baghdad International Dialogue Conference, held under the auspices of Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' Al-Sudani and attended by Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani, along with several distinguished figures.

In his speech at the conference, Dr. Al Hassan emphasized that despite regional changes, Iraq remains determined to move forward in consolidating security, stability, and state-building.

He further stated that Iraq is in dire need of meaningful and constructive dialogue, one based on mutual respect, fostering unity rather than division, and focusing on the future and on building a strong and sustainable Iraq.

Dr. Al Hassan stressed that such dialogue must begin internally before extending outward, reaffirming the United Nations' continuous support for Iraq in its path toward a better future.

He also highlighted the efforts of the Iraqi government under the leadership of Prime Minister Al-Sudani, who has outlined a clear vision for infrastructure development, economic diversification, improved public services, investment enabling environment, anti-corruption measures, and essential reforms that contribute to Iraq's stability and growth.

Here is the full text of the SRS's speech:

"H.E. Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' Al-Sudani,

H.E. President Nechirvan Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq,

Brother Mohammed Al-Halbousi, Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Peace be upon you all,

I have the honor to participate in the seventh edition of Baghdad International Dialogue Conference and would like to extend my gratitude to the organizers of this conference, especially Dr. Abbas Radhi Al-Ameri, wishing you all a fruitful and constructive dialogue.

Distinguished Guests,



We are all aware that Iraq and the Middle East are going through a critical phase of geopolitical changes. However, one constant that must be highlighted is Iraq's firm determination to move forward in consolidating the foundations of security, stability, and building the state of institutions. This requires embodying national spirit and love for the homeland while rejecting sectarianism and exclusion and embracing the principles of equality and justice among all citizens, regardless of their affiliations.

Having said the above, I can say with confidence that the Iraq to come is a source of hope for all, both inside and outside the country. Despite differing perspectives, the vision for Iraq's future remains a common goal that unites all its people in a way that enables Iraq to regain its position and effective role and move forward toward the future. This is not mere rhetoric—it is a reality we will soon witness through Iraq's policies and initiatives to strengthen dialogue, citizenship, and extend bridges with others.

With its rich history, human potential, natural resources, and the ambitions of its leaders and people, Iraq is in dire need today of constructive and meaningful dialogue. A dialogue based on mutual respect, one that unites rather than divides, builds rather than destroys. A dialogue that brings all Iraqis together under one unifying principle—love for Iraq. A dialogue that focuses on the future and on building a strong and sustainable Iraq.

Before dialogue with the outside world, internal dialogue must come first. Iraq today needs such dialogue,

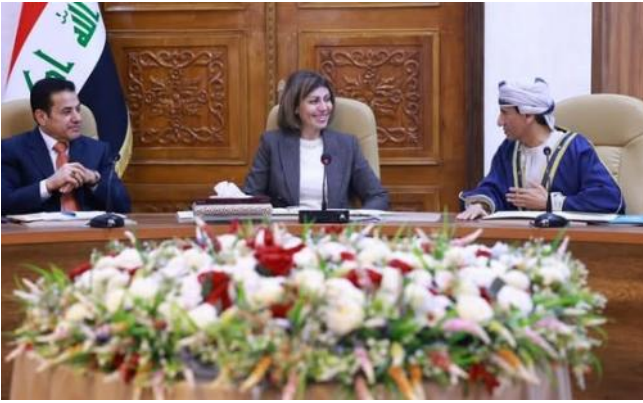
and this platform is crucial. If utilized optimally, it can serve as a space that unifies efforts and visions and paves the way toward engagement with the outside world and toward the future.

We must also acknowledge the role of the Iraqi government. I extend my sincere appreciation to His Excellency, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' Al-Sudani, for his clear vision in rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure—not only to serve Iraq but also to benefit the region and the world. His efforts in economic diversification, improving essential public services, and enhancing the livelihoods of Iraqis are commendable. Iraqis need such aspects that touch their living to be addressed. I also commend the government and constitutional institutions for creating an attractive investment environment, combating corruption, and implementing necessary reforms to ensure the country's stability and growth. Among the major initiatives is the Development Road project, which we believe will usher in a new era of prosperity for Iraq and the region.

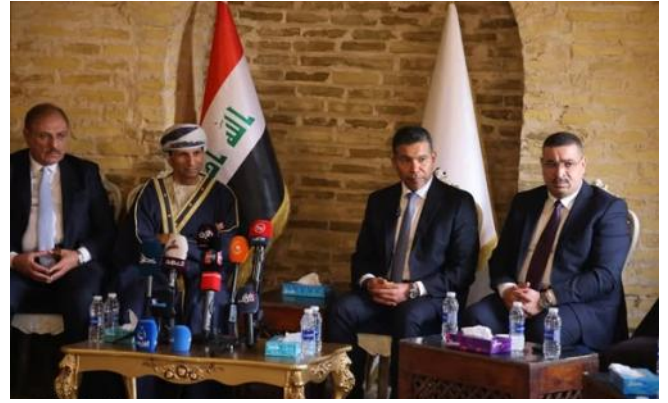
At the United Nations, we are strong supporters of this conference and remain committed to supporting Iraq, away from any external agendas. We commend the organizers valuable efforts dedicated to the future of Iraq.

I would like to conclude that: "Iraq is a





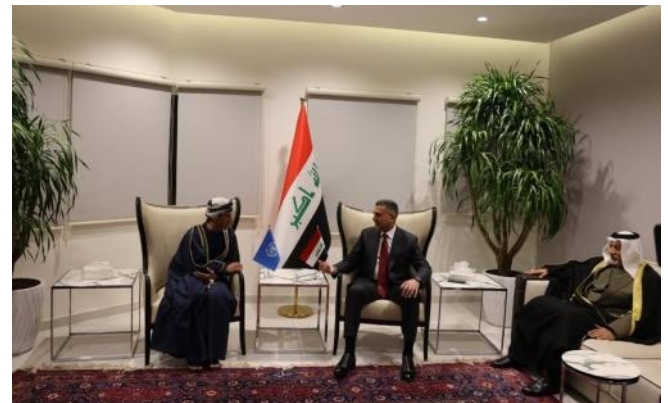
**Baghdad, 11 January 2025** - Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with Minister of Migration and Displaced, **Ms. Evan Faiq Jabro**, and National Security Adviser, **Qassim al-Araji**. They discussed the issue of the repatriation of Iraqi nationals from the Al-Hol camp in northeastern Syria and the continuing UN support for Iraq on this file.



**Khan Dhari, 11 January 2025** - Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, visited Khan Dhari west of Baghdad today, where he was hosted by **Sheikh Jamal Al-Dhari**, Secretary-General of the Iraqi National Project, and met with Iraqi tribal leaders and notables. The SRSG heard the views and ideas of the participants about the developments in Iraq that contribute to Iraq's unity and stability, and appreciated the history of Iraq and its pivotal role in the region. The SRSG emphasized the importance of national unity and the participation of all Iraqi components in the political process, and to remain hopeful about a bright future in the high interest of Iraq. The SRSG also toured Khan Dhari, built in 1908, and expressed appreciation of this historical site.



**Baghdad, 16 January 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met with the Iraqi Minister of Interior, **Mr. Abdul-Amir Al-Shammari**. They discussed the situation in Iraq and the cooperation between the United Nations and the Ministry of Interior, especially in the field of human rights, as well as issues of mutual interest. The SRSG was also briefed about the work of the ministry in the service of the people and maintaining their security, and he praised the measures that enhance the capabilities of the Ministry.



**Basra, 18 January 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, visited Basra Governorate today, where he met with Governor **Asaad Al Eidani**. They discussed the developments in the governorate, challenges faced by communities in Basra, and continued support from the United Nations.



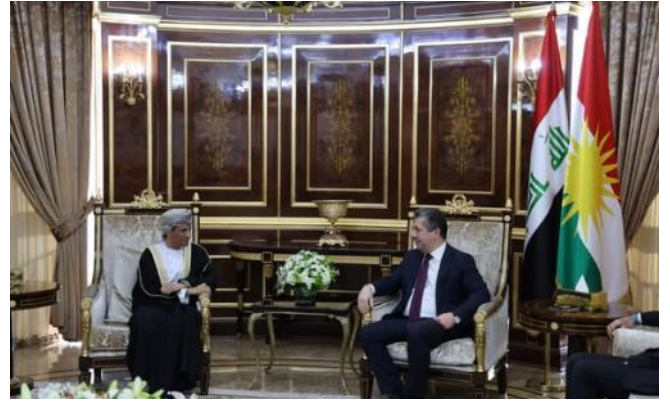
**Basra, 19 January 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today in Basra with tribal leaders.



**Davos, Switzerland, 23 January 2025** - Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq **Masrour Barzani** on X: "I had a timely meeting with **António Guterres** at World Economic Forum 2025. We discussed key challenges facing Iraq and the region, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding the Kurdistan Region's constitutional rights to ensure stability and progress."



**Baghdad, 3 February 2025** - The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met with the Iraqi Minister of Education, **Dr. Ibrahim Namis Al-Jubouri**. They discussed coordination and joint cooperation between Iraq and the United Nations in the fields of education and science. Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Education.



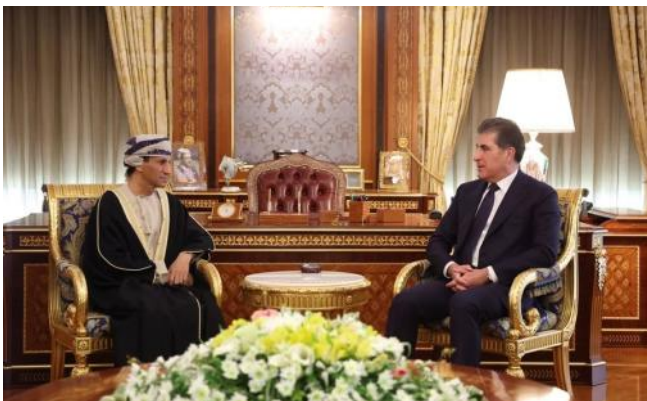
**Erbil, 4 February 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met with the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, **Mr. Masrouf Barzani**. The meeting discussed the situation in Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region, as well as in the Middle East, in addition to the ongoing cooperation with the United Nations in various fields. Photo courtesy of KRG Media Office.



**Erbil, 4 February 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met in Erbil with **Mr. Qubad Talabani**, Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and discussed the situation in the region and Iraq, as well as matters of mutual interest.



**Erbil, 4 February 2025** - The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met with the Minister of Interior of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, **Mr. Rêber Ahmed**. They discussed the situation in the Region and the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the Kurdistan Region in humanitarian affairs. Photo courtesy of the KR Ministry of Interior.



**Erbil, 5 February 2025** - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today in Erbil with the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, **Mr. Nechirvan Barzani**. They discussed the situation in Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region, as well as cooperation between the United Nations and the authorities to serve the best interests of the country and all its components. Photo courtesy of the KR Presidency Media office.



**Sulaymaniyah, 5 February 2025** - The First Lady of Iraq, **Shanaz Ibrahim Ahmad**, received today in Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**. They discussed cooperation between Iraq and the United Nations regarding the protection and restoration of antiquities, as well as the preservation of national heritage, given the expertise of specialized UN organizations in this field. The Special Representative expressed his gratitude to the First Lady for her kind invitation to visit the city.



**Baghdad, 05 February 2025** – The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Claudio Cordone**: “Meeting today in Baghdad with **Alexander Hug** and his International Commission on Missing Persons - ICMP colleagues. Discussed UNAMI’s cooperation on supporting Iraq in addressing the issue of missing persons in the country, key to our human rights mandate.”



**Samarra, 10 February 2025** - **Claudio Cordone**, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance: “Meeting with the NGO **Tadaruk** in Samarra. Discussion focused on human rights issues, including enforced disappearances, and the forthcoming parliamentary elections. We will continue to work together.”



**Tikrit, 10 February 2025** - **Claudio Cordone**, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance:

“In Tikrit this morning, meeting with First Deputy Governor of Salah Al-Din **Hashem Azzawi Al-Sammarrai**. Discussing developments in the governorate including potential for tourism. Assured him of the continuing support of the United Nations.”

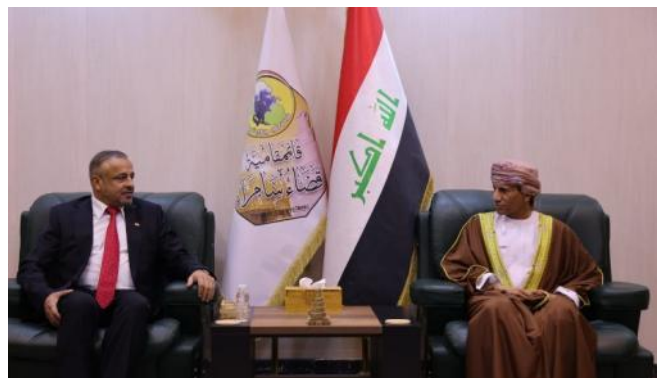


**Baghdad, 12 February 2025** - H.E. Prime Minister **Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani** received today the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**.

They discussed the situation in Iraq and the region as well as enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and Iraq in the service of Iraq and its people. Dr. Al Hassan also briefed H.E. Prime Minister Al-Sudani about the most important aspects of his recent visit to the State of Kuwait and his meetings with His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and noted the Kuwaiti keenness to strengthen the fraternal bonds between the two brotherly neighbors, restore trust that is based on mutual respect and good neighborliness, and build bridges of cooperation to serve the interests of the two brotherly countries and peoples. Photo courtesy of the Prime Minister’s Media Office.



**Baghdad, 13 February 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with **Mr. Ammar Al-Hakim**, Head of Al Hikma National Movement. They discussed the situation in Iraq and the region as well as the work of the United Nations in Iraq.

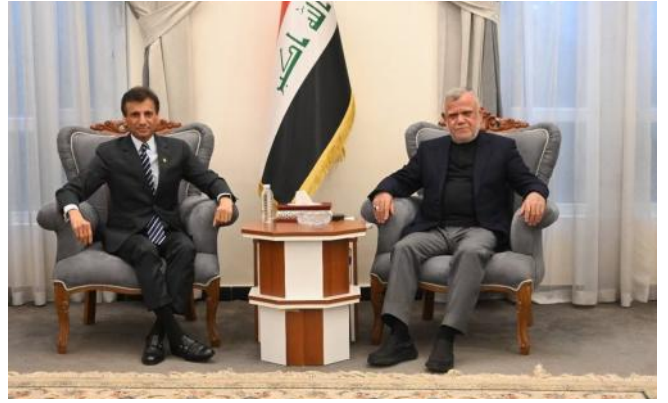


**Sammara, 15 February 2025** - On a visit to Salah Al-Din Governorate, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met in Sammara with Governor **Badr Mahmoud Al-Fahl**.

The meeting included a briefing on the reconstruction work in the governorate and the role of the United Nations as well as the future tourism potential of this region with its rich history.



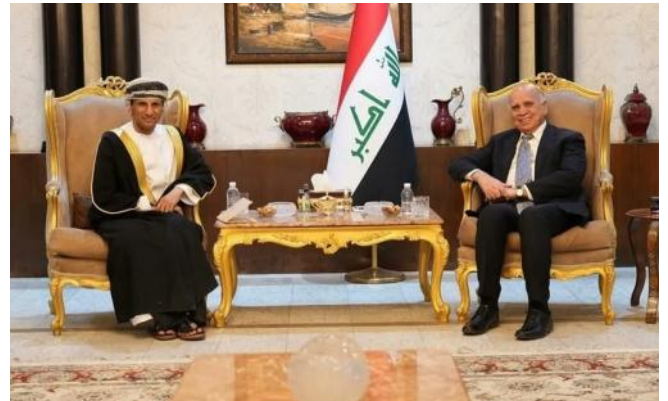
**Salah Al-Din, 15 February 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met with members of **Salah Al-Din Provincial Council** as well as tribal leaders, dignitaries and stakeholders at the headquarters of Salah Al-Din Provincial Council, where he listened to the views and concerns of the representatives of the area.



**Baghdad, 16 February 2025** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with the Secretary General of the Badr Organization, **Mr. Hadi Al-Amiri**. They discussed the current situation in Iraq and the region as well as cooperation between Iraq and the United Nations.



**Baghdad, 17 February 2025** - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with the Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Multilateral and Legal Affairs, **Ambassador Shorsh Khaled Saeed**. They discussed ways to enhance cooperation between Iraq and the United Nations across various areas, especially supporting stability and development efforts in the country.  
Photo courtesy of MOFA.



**Baghdad, 27 February 2025** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Mr. Fuad Hussein**. They discussed UNAMI's work, ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and Iraq across various fields, and ways to further enhance it.

Photo courtesy of MOFA.

Regional Consultations

**SRSR for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, meets Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh Al Khulaifi, Minister of State at the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

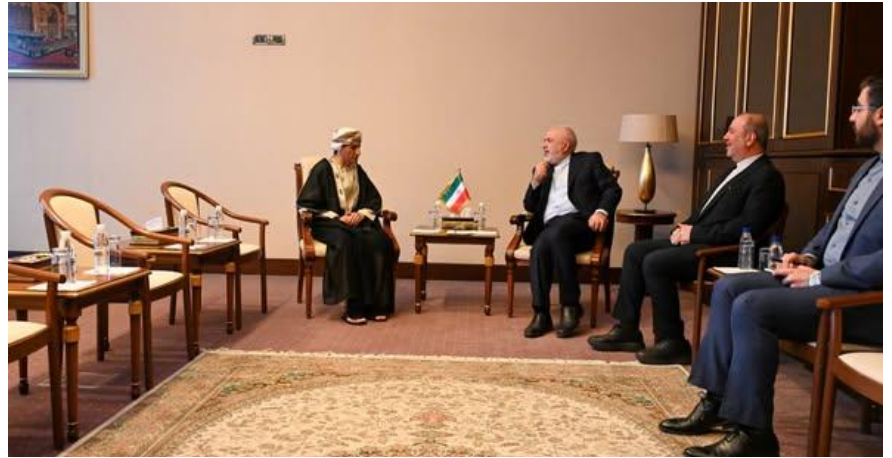
**Doha, State of Qatar, 14 January 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with H.E. **Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh Al Khulaifi**, Minister of State at the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during his visit to the State of Qatar. They discussed the latest developments in the region, topics of mutual interest, and ways to enhance cooperation for the benefit of Iraq and the broader region.





## **SRSB for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, meets Vice President for Strategic Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif**

**Baghdad, 6 February 2025** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, met in Baghdad today with the Vice President for Strategic Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, who is currently visiting Iraq. Regional developments and its impact and efforts in support of regional stability as well as cooperation between the United Nations and the Islamic Republic of Iran were among the issues discussed.



## **His Highness Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**

**Kuwait, 9 February 2025** - His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received today the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, on the occasion of his visit to Kuwait. H.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya attended the meeting.



## **Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**

**Kuwait, 9 February 2025** – His Highness the Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received today the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, on the occasion of his visit to Kuwait. H.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya attended the meeting.



## SRSR for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, meets Mr. Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia , 19 February 2025 - His Excellency Mr. Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), met with the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, at the General Secretariat headquarters in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

During the meeting, several topics were discussed, including UNAMI activities in supporting Iraq as well as cooperation between the GCC and the Mission, including the files relating to the Republic of Iraq and the State of Kuwait.

Photo courtesy of GCC SG.



### Electoral

## UNAMI welcomes the extension of IHEC's Board of Commissioners' mandate

Baghdad, 13 January 2025 - The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) welcomes the Council of Representatives' endorsement of the Supreme Judicial Council's decision to extend for two years the mandate of the Independent High Electoral

Commission (IHEC)'s Board of Commissioners in the Republic of Iraq. UNAMI underscores the importance of constitutional obligations and holding the parliamentary elections scheduled for this year. The Mission reaffirms its readiness to continue working closely

with the Iraqi authorities by providing technical assistance to IHEC to fulfill its vital role in ensuring free, fair, credible, transparent, and timely elections.



## DSRSG Cordone visits IHEC, discuss 2025 CoR elections

Baghdad, 29 January 2025 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Claudio Cordone: "Today at IHEC meeting with IHEC Chair Judge Omar Mohammed and board members to discuss planning for the 2025 CoR elections, including work on the Kirkuk voters' register. UNAMI's support continues."



### Women Empowerment

## UNFPA on X

Baghdad, 2 February 2025 – "UNFPA is developing a digital referral app in Iraq to enhance collaboration between organizations assisting survivors of violence. The app will ensure safe, fast, and confidential access to essential services."



## UN Women supports capacity building and women empowerment trainings

**Duhok, 6 January 2025** - Accepting Others Organization (AOO) implemented two impactful three-day training workshops aimed at empowering 20 women and girls in each session, from diverse backgrounds including host communities, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, government and political parties' representatives. The workshops were held at the Kurdistan Women Union in Duhok.

The first workshop which targeted host community, IDPs and refugees focused on key areas such as livelihoods & economic empowerment, Know About Business (KAB), and business financial planning, while the second workshop specifically targeted women and girls aged 22 to 55 who hold managerial and leadership roles in government institutions and political parties to build their capacities and enhance leadership skills focusing on leadership, negotiation skills, conflict resolution, and crisis management.

Jinda Organization for Women and Girls Affected by War conducted a series of capacity-building sessions aimed at advancing the understanding

of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). The sessions included 50 religious leaders and media representatives in Dohuk and Zakho, focusing on fostering peace and promoting community coexistence. Additionally, 80 law enforcement officials in Dohuk, Zakho, and Bardarash were trained to enhance their understanding and application of legal frameworks, particularly international humanitarian law, to protect women, especially in camp

settings. These efforts will continue with the next phase extending to 20 more law enforcement officials in Amedi.

These trainings are part of the project "Advancing the Implementation of the Second Iraq National Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security," funded by the Government of Sweden and implemented in partnership with UN Women.



## UNAMI emphasizes the role of women in Iraq and protection of their rights

**Baghdad, 13 January 2025** – Recognizing the critical role civil society plays in promoting women's empowerment, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, met today with members of the Women Advisory Group and representatives of Civil Society Organizations to discuss a number of priorities for Iraqi women and how the

UN can support progress on this important file.

In the discussions, the SRSG and the UN team heard from the representatives an overview of the situation of women's rights in Iraq, including their concerns about pending draft amendments to laws relating to women's rights. He emphasized the need to ensure that proposed legislations safeguard women's rights and that women participate fully in decision-making processes.

Dr. Al Hassan also affirmed that the United Nations remains engaged and will continue to support the Government of Iraq and civil society in ensuring progress towards the full realization of Iraq's commitments to the protection and empowerment of women and girls across the country, in line with the Government's vision and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



## Advancing women's leadership for peace and development in Kirkuk



**Kirkuk, 20 January 2025** - Today, UN Women Iraq, in collaboration with the Sewan Women Empowerment Organization and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), hosted an inspiring event in Kirkuk to highlight the achievements of the Kirkuk Women's Network. This initiative, supported by the WPHF, aimed to empower women leaders to drive social cohesion, advocate for

women's rights, and address key community challenges. The conference showcased transformative initiatives on social and economic development for returnee women and girls in Kirkuk, which have raised awareness and fostered collaboration across the community. "This program has laid the groundwork for a strong women's network that not only enhance women's roles but also

drives community development and social cohesion in Kirkuk," said Mr. Hoshier Malo, Manager of the Kurdistan Organization for Human Rights Watch.

With 55 participants, including representatives from civil society, government, and international organizations, the event underscored the importance of grassroots leadership in fostering change. Throughout the event, the critical role of the Kirkuk Women's Network in advocating for women's rights and promoting positive change was underscored. Local government representatives reiterated their commitment to supporting the women's network and advancing efforts to foster community development in the region.

As part of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, this initiative demonstrates the power of women's leadership in advancing peace and development in Iraq.

## Advancing women's roles in Kirkuk: women, peace, and security event highlights progress and collaboration

**Kirkuk, 23 January 2025** - Today, the Kirkuk Governorate, in partnership with UN Women and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), hosted a landmark Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) event at the Kirkuk Governorate building. The event brought together nearly 200 participants, including civil society leaders, activists, senior government officials, and representatives of United Nations agencies, to reaffirm their commitment to advancing women's roles in governance, peacebuilding, and society.

The Governor of Kirkuk, Mr. Rêbwar Taha, opened the event with a warm welcome, expressing gratitude to UN Women and UNAMI for their collaboration and emphasizing aspirations for deeper partnerships with the United Nations. Echoing his sentiments, the Chairman of the Kirkuk Governorate Council, Mr. Mohammed Al-Hafiz, reaffirmed his support for initiatives aligned with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and their vital role in promoting women's rights.

UNAMI's Head of Kirkuk Office, Mr. Beppe Lovoi, delivered remarks, underscoring highlighted the importance of empowering women as key drivers of peace and security in Iraq. Additionally, Mrs. Intisar Karim, Head of the Kirkuk Women's Affairs

Directorate, and Ms. Iman Abdulrahman, Head of the Women Leadership Institute (WLI), presented compelling overviews of ongoing initiatives and programs supported by UN Women to bolster women's leadership and rights.

A dynamic panel discussion followed, featuring esteemed women leaders. The panel delved into critical topics, including the implementation of UNSCR 1325, women's leadership, and enhancing collaboration between government and civil society. Key proposals included recognizing influential women as role models, integrating women into higher administrative roles, and leveraging media to champion women's rights.

The event concluded with a resounding call for continued dialogue, cooperation, and actionable steps to advance the role of women in Kirkuk and beyond, reinforcing the province's commitment to fostering justice and inclusive governance.

"This initiative in Kirkuk represents an important opportunity to raise awareness of the WPS agenda as Iraq prepares to develop its Third National Action Plan on SCR 1325. It also highlights the vital role of women-led organizations in strengthening social cohesion and supporting Kirkuk authorities in delivering critical services to Iraqi women and girls," said Ajay Madiwale, UN Women Representative in Iraq.



## Italy and WFP partner with the Government of Iraq to strengthen community resilience and women empowerment for green opportunities in Iraq

**Baghdad, 30 January 2025** – The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a generous contribution from the Italian Government through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) to strengthen community resilience and empower women through green opportunities, to address the challenges climate change poses to agriculture and food security in Iraq. WFP will work together with the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment to empower local communities in food security and climate action decisions. WFP will also provide capacity building and technical expertise to local government authorities, helping them implement sustainable farming and livelihood solutions that can withstand climate challenges.

This project takes an innovative approach to support vulnerable women-led households, crisis-affected people, and smallholder farmers. It aims to help communities become more adaptable and resilient to climate change shocks by promoting inclusive coordination, active participation, and income-generating activities with a focus on empowering women, youth, and persons with disabilities. The project will be implemented in Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Thi-Qar, and Basra.

Iraq's agricultural sector is one of the main sources of income for vulnerable populations and the second-largest contributor to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) after oil revenues. More frequent droughts and continued water scarcity are increasing challenges to 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 that heavily affect its agriculture and, in turn, its food security. WFP is committed to

working with the Government of Iraq to support local governments and communities in developing scalable and sustainable climate-smart solutions that not only address those issues, but enable the people to adapt and overcome them," said WFP Representative and Country Director Mageed Yahia. "To build long-term resilience, it is essential to involve all members of the community—especially women, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups—in decision-making processes that support food security and sustainable livelihoods."

WFP will partner with the Government of Iraq, academia and a number of Italian experts to provide technical solutions, equipment and expertise, fostering innovative ecosystems that draw from the extensive experience on providing technical capacity building to public institutions and national organizations.

Collaboration with the private sector and academia will help drive innovative and sustainable solutions to empower women in agriculture. This includes improving food production, processing, storage, and distribution, as well as promoting responsible farming practices, diverse income opportunities, and reducing waste. The project also focuses on the connection between

agriculture, energy, and the environment to create lasting change.

"Climate change poses significant risks to Iraq's agricultural sector, threatening livelihoods and food security all over the Country, and especially for women-led households" highlighted H.E. Niccolò Fontana, Ambassador of Italy to Iraq. "Various regions across Iraq face the harsh realities of water scarcity, land degradation, and rising temperatures. This project directly addresses these challenges by promoting green skills and expanding the private sector workforce, enhancing agricultural value chains, supporting women's entrepreneurship in climate-resilient sectors. Italy is proud to commit to fostering a green transition that will benefit not only the environment, but also the population, empowering their communities and nurturing sustainability."

WFP will continue working with the Government of Iraq to support communities affected by climate change by aligning its project implementation with the Government's priorities, particularly focusing on the addressing unemployment, improving water management in irrigation to drive up production and empower women to seek and maintain sustainable livelihoods.



## UN Women and UNFPA partner to strengthen the resilience of women and girls in Iraq

**Baghdad, 5 February 2025** –UN Women and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are pleased to announce a new collaboration to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable women and girls—including internally

displaced persons, returnees and host communities in Sinjar, Sinuni, and Al-Amal Centre in Ninawa Province. Building on ongoing efforts to foster social cohesion and enhance women's leadership, this initiative will equip

participants with business and technical training in sustainable practices, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. Additionally, women will receive essential resources to support their economic independence

## UN Women and UNFPA partner to strengthen the resilience of women and girls in Iraq *(continued)*

and strengthen their role in rebuilding their communities.

“Investing in women’s resilience is key to fostering inclusive development in Iraq,” said UN Women Representative for Iraq, Ajay Madiwale. “This initiative will provide women with the tools to drive their own recovery and contribute to a stronger, more cohesive society.”

“This partnership represents a vital step towards empowering women and girls. By equipping them with the skills

and resources they need, we are not only supporting their individual growth but also enhancing the overall resilience of their communities,” Mr. Garik Hayrapetyan, UNFPA Representative a.i. stated.

This partnership underscores UN Women and UNFPA’s commitment to advancing women’s resilience and empowerment in Iraq, ensuring they have the skills and support needed to thrive.



## UN Women and the National Directorate for Iraqi Women convene civil society consultation to advance Iraq’s Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

**Baghdad, 5 February 2025** – The National Directorate for Iraqi Women, in collaboration with UN Women, convened a high-level consultation session with 75 representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs) and the Government of Iraq to advance the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda and support the development of Iraq’s third National Action Plan (INAP III).

As a regional leader in Women, Peace, and Security, Iraq is developing its INAP III, set to be launched soon. During the consultation, Dr. Ahlam Shaheed presented INAP III on behalf of the National Directorate for Iraqi Women, outlining its focus on strengthening institutional frameworks, legal protections, and societal support for women’s leadership. The session highlighted the vital role of civil society in shaping and implementing the plan, with insights from the discussions feeding directly into its finalization to ensure grassroots perspectives are reflected in national policymaking.

Dr. Yousra Kareem Mohsin, Director-General of the National Directorate for

Iraqi Women, emphasized the importance of women’s integration into security institutions, stating, “Women’s inclusion enhances the effectiveness of security institutions and strengthens their capacity to respond to crises and challenges. Our vision is to build a society founded on justice, where both women and men contribute to sustainable peace.”

Ajay Madiwale, UN Women Representative for Iraq, reiterated the critical role of women-led civil society in shaping and implementing INAP III. “Civil society remains integral in strengthening women’s health,

advancing economic empowerment, and reinforcing women’s roles in peacebuilding efforts across Iraq,” he noted.

The consultation concluded with a reaffirmation of collective commitments to ensuring that women’s rights, leadership, and political participation remain central to Iraq’s national and international policy agenda. With INAP III soon to be launched, the National Directorate for Iraqi Women and UN Women continue to prioritize inclusive policymaking and sustained engagement with civil society to drive forward the WPS agenda in Iraq.



## Strengthening peace and stability: the role of Iraq’s Women Peace Mediators Network

**Baghdad, 17 February 2025** - The National Directorate for Iraqi Women (NDIW) and UN Women convened a meeting with members of the Iraq National Women’s Peace Mediators Network. The meeting focused on outlining the tasks, roles, and responsibilities of the network, with an

emphasis on the mediators’ crucial role in enhancing sustainable peace and promoting women’s political participation, in line with the National Action Plan for Women, Peace, and Security.

Dr. Yousra Kareem, General Director of the NDIW, stated in her speech, “This

program is not merely a local initiative; it is the first national network of its kind at the Arab and regional levels, aiming to enhance the role of women in peacebuilding and support women in the governorates to achieve stability and sustainable development.” Additionally, Deputy Secretary-General

## Strengthening peace and stability: the role of Iraq's Women Peace Mediators Network *(continued)*

of the Council of Ministers Dr. Othman Al-Jaheshi highlighted the importance of reconciliation and peacebuilding and emphasized the mediators' role in positively influencing their communities and resolving disputes.

He also acknowledged the significant role of tribal leaders in resolving conflicts, noting the support of the Prime Minister for this initiative and the coordination with governors,

provincial councils, and relevant women's departments.

This initiative is rooted in principles that align with the Iraqi Constitution, local laws, social diversity, and a commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. It aims to empower women within their communities, positioning them as catalysts for positive change. While the focus includes conflict resolution, the initiative also seeks to foster understanding and facilitate peaceful solutions. It underscores the importance of collaboration between local communities, government institutions, and organizations to ensure effective and sustainable outcomes.



## On International Women's Day, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Iraq praises the history of Iraqi women and calls for a greater role in decision-making

**Baghdad, 22 February 2025** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, participated today in an event organized by Dream Organization under the theme "Celebrating Iraqi Women", to mark the International Women's Day.

In his speech, Dr. Al Hassan praised the history of Iraqi women, commending their role across generations as an inspiring example for other women.

Speaking about the present, he emphasized that women have a wide space to contribute to shaping Iraq's future. He raised a question: "What prevents us from dreaming and seeing, in the near future, an Iraqi woman as President of the Republic, Prime Minister, or Speaker of Parliament?"

He further stated: "Iraq is capable of developing plans and visions to empower Iraqi women in a way that aligns with its customs and traditions."

Dr. Al Hassan reaffirmed the United Nations' continuous support for Iraqi women and their aspirations, stressing the importance of preserving the achievements made so far.

Here is the full text of SRSG Al Hassan speech:

"Dear Dr. Nawar Assem, Head of Dream Organization  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Distinguished guests,



Peace be upon you all,

It is a great pleasure to participate in this event on the occasion of International Women's Day. My pleasure is even greater as we celebrate Iraqi women—past, present, and future—here in this Abbasid palace.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the organizers of this event, especially Dr. Nawar and her colleagues, for their commendable efforts in promoting women's rights, which is deeply appreciated by us at the United Nations.

I also take this opportunity to express my deep admiration for Iraqi women and the sacrifices they have made over the years, despite the difficult situations and challenges they have faced. I say this with complete honesty

and sincerity: Iraqi women are a shining example for women everywhere.

History records, in golden letters, the names of Iraqi women who have contributed to the progress of humanity. And I am not just speaking of modern history, I am referring to a rich, ancient civilization with deep roots in history. Iraqis, both men and women, have every right to take pride in this great legacy.

And let me be frank: Iraq today lacks a more active role for Iraqi women. Their presence in decision-making positions remains limited, and I believe that the time has come for Iraqi women to take on greater responsibilities and hold key positions in decision-making circles.

Our focus must be on the future—on

## On International Women's Day, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Iraq praises the history of Iraqi women ... (continued)

how to transform reality for the better, how to turn challenges into opportunities, and opportunities into concrete, actionable programs. After all, challenges create opportunities, and opportunities give rise to leaders.

Why not dream? What prevents us from dreaming that, in the near future, we will see an Iraqi Woman as President of the Republic, Prime Minister, or Speaker of Parliament? In my view, Iraq's Constitution is among the most advanced in the region, and it provides ample space for women to contribute to shaping Iraq's future. The Constitution and Judiciary are among the major pillars of the nation and citizens and preserving an independent and fair Judiciary is a sacred national duty.

Iraq is a unique country, with its own distinct identity. We must capitalize on this uniqueness to draw a roadmap for tomorrow's Iraq—an Iraq of hope, an Iraq of civilization, an Iraq where all

citizens are equal based on the principle of citizenship.

Ladies and gentlemen

Distinguished guests

I personally do not believe in imported stereotypes. Iraq is rich in its own cultural, historical, and social heritage, and I believe that Iraq is capable of developing its own plans and visions to empower women in a way that aligns with its traditions and values.

And I say it loudly: Long live Iraqi women—with their knowledge and their cultural heritage, from Al-Faw in the south to Zakho in the north.

I can only reaffirm that the international community and the United Nations will remain steadfast in supporting Iraqi women and their aspirations. I also call upon Iraqis and decision-makers to preserve the achievements of Iraqi women.

Allow me to conclude my remarks with a few lines of Iraqi poetry. I do not know the name of the poet, but these

verses were written about Iraqi women—specifically those from Basra. They resonated with me deeply. I present them here with some slight modifications, seeking the poet's permission and forgiveness:

'A blessing is the daughter of Iraq, and blessed is her name,

She bore the nation's burdens alongside her own worries,

The daughters of the country are pearls and a necklace of coral,

My pen is perplexed, not knowing what to write about her,

She is from Basra,

And I say,

She is the free daughter of Iraq, a thousand times free,

She is noble like a palm tree, with golden skin and dark eyes,

Her soul is enriched with forgiveness; and does not know anger,

Unto you are my blessings and sincere greetings.'

Thank you."

## Human Rights

### UNAMI Human Rights Office organizes a workshop on "Interviewing victims of human rights violations"

**Tikrit, 13 January 2025** - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized a one-day training for staff members of Independent High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) and human rights activists on "Interviewing victims of human rights violations." Twelve participants (8 men and 4 women) from Salah Al-Din governorate attended the training. Participants acquired knowledge and techniques in conducting interviews

with victims of human rights violations and participated in scenarios allowing

to conduct interviews with victims of traumatic experiences.



### Statement by the United Nations in Iraq

**Baghdad, 24 January 2025** - The United Nations in Iraq is closely following the latest developments regarding the Iraqi Council of Representatives' approval of amendments to the 1959 Personal Status Law, along with other important legislation.

In this regard, the United Nations in Iraq underscores the importance of

ensuring that legal reforms align with Iraq's international human rights commitments, particularly in relation to safeguarding the rights and well-being of women and children, in a way that meets the aspirations of the Iraqi people and preserves the country's historic achievements and gains.

We have engaged extensively with the relevant Iraqi stakeholders and

emphasized the need for a constructive and inclusive dialogue on this matter. We will continue our efforts in this direction, reaffirming the United Nations' steadfast support for Iraq in its aspirations toward a state governed by the rule of law and respect for human rights.



## UN Human Rights Council concludes the Universal Periodic Review of Iraq

**Geneva, 27 January 2025** - UN Human Rights Council concluded the Universal Periodic Review of Iraq on 27 January 2025, with 93 states speaking

at the meeting. You can watch the video of the session at <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k15/k158n>

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The UPR48 Working Group adopted the report on Friday, 31 January 2025.

## The Federal Commission of Integrity and the Human Rights Office of the UNAMI start dialogue sessions across Iraq on integrating a human rights-based approach into anti-corruption efforts

**Baghdad, 27 February 2025** – On 19 February 2025, the Federal Commission of Integrity (CoI) and the Human Rights Office of the UNAMI held the first of five dialogue sessions across Iraq on integrating a human rights-based approach into anti-corruption efforts.

Today’s event in Baghdad brought together 40 participants, including journalists, representatives of civil

society organizations, defense lawyers, and CoI staff. Discussions focused on the connection between corruption and human rights violations, emphasizing the need for collaborative strategies to prevent and combat corruption while promoting human rights, including economic, social, and cultural rights.

Participants also explored challenges in ensuring a safe and enabling environment for human rights

defenders, journalists, anti-corruption activists and whistleblowers, recognizing their crucial role in tackling corruption.

The second dialogue session was held in Anbar on 27 February 2025.

The event in Anbar brought together 50 participants, including journalists, defense lawyers, CoI staff and representatives of 24 civil society organizations.



## Living with Disabilities

## SRSG for Iraq and Head of UNAMI Al Hassan receives a delegation from the Al-Foratain Network for the Care of the Deaf in Iraq

**Baghdad, 31 January 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, received in his office earlier this week a delegation from the Al-Foratain Network for the Care of the Deaf in Iraq. The SRSG stressed the need to provide opportunities and an appropriate climate for persons with disabilities. He emphasized that the United Nations attaches great importance to supporting them by integrating the perspective of disability into all pillars of UN work on peace, security, human rights, and development.



## SRSR for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, visits the Iraqi Media Network

**Baghdad, 20 January 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, visited today the Iraqi Media Network. He met with its Chairman, Mr. Kareem Hamadi, and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Thaer Al-Ghanimi, in the presence of directors of the network's channels and media institutions. The Special Representative was briefed on the work of the network and its various institutions and highlighted the pivotal role of Iraqi media in promoting stability and progress in Iraq.



## SRSR for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, visits Rudaw Media Network

**Erbil, 4 February 2025** - The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, visited the headquarters of Rudaw Media Network in Erbil. During his meeting with the network's CEO Ako Mohammed, Dr. Al Hassan stressed the importance of freedom of press and more joint cooperation between the UN and the media in general, and Rudaw in particular in a manner that contributes to further advancement in Iraq, including in the Kurdistan region. After the meeting, the Special Representative toured the network's offices and studios, and praised the network's high professionalism, wishing them further progress.



## UNESCO holds meeting at the High Judicial Council to Support the “Social Media for Peace” (SM4P) Project

**Baghdad, 27 February 2025** - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) convened a high-level meeting today at the High Judicial Council, bringing together government institutions and independent bodies to discuss and endorse its newly launched “Social Media for Peace” (SM4P) project, funded by the European Union. The meeting, held at the Judicial Development Institute, was inaugurated by Judge Amer Hassan, Head of the Publishing and Media Court. Discussions focused on the project's objectives and implementation mechanisms, including the establishment of a national task force comprising government institutions, a civil coalition of NGOs, and social

media activists. This initiative aims to promote responsible media practices and foster a culture of peace.

During the meeting, Ahmed Al-Tayyar, Deputy Head of the Iraqi National Security Service, and Saad Maan, Head of the Security Media Committee, delivered presentations highlighting the importance of collaboration between media and security institutions in strengthening societal stability.

The meeting gathered representatives from the Human Rights Commission, the Communications and Media Commission, the Ministry of Interior, the University of Baghdad, the Prime Minister's Office for Artificial Intelligence Affairs, the Baghdad Municipality, the Ministry of Justice,

and other key stakeholders.

Discussions concluded with a consensus to advance the project, with full support from the national task force and official endorsement by the Iraqi judiciary, ensuring successful implementation.



## UNAMI on X

**Baghdad, 12 February 2025** - The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan:

“Iraq has suffered from terrorism in past years. Thanks to the grace of God

Almighty, the solidarity of the Iraqi people and their leadership, and the sacrifices made by its citizens, Iraq has been able to defeat terrorism. On the International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism, observed on 12 February, we remember these sacrifices and call on Iraqis of all backgrounds to

strengthen their collaboration in combating incitement and hate speech, which sow division within society. We also emphasize the need for all Iraqis to stand together in rejecting voices of discord and to uphold the vision of Iraq, the cradle of civilizations, as an oasis of security, stability, and prosperity.”

## Migrations

### Supporting Iraq in the registration of its nationals seeking voluntary repatriation from Al-Hol Camp

**Baghdad, 16 January 2025** – Today, an official ceremony was organized in Baghdad by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) to hand over information technology (IT) equipment to the Iraqi national authorities in charge of registering adult Iraqi nationals seeking to be repatriated from Al Hol Camp located in Northeast Syria.

This equipment consists of two servers, 20 laptops, 20 desktops, 15 tablets, 15 portable printers, 10 fingerprint scanners, six cameras and other IT devices for efficient data management, for a total amount of ca. USD 200,000. Senior representatives from the Iraqi government, including the Office of the National Security Advisor, the Head of the European Union delegation to Iraq, the Head of the European Union Advisory Mission to Iraq, and the Head of the UNOCT office in Iraq, participated in the ceremony.

The equipment was procured by the European Union – United Nations Global Terrorism Threats Facility, a joint initiative implemented by UNOCT in partnership with and thanks to funding from the European Union. The Facility has been working in



coordination with the UNOCT Global Programme on Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (PRR) to support the Iraqi national authorities responsible for managing the complex process of registration and screening Iraqi nationals seeking voluntary repatriation. This support seeks to foster effective and ethical practices, in compliance with international human-rights standards. In addition to the IT equipment, the Facility has provided since March 2024 advisory support and training sessions

to relevant Iraqi officials for the development and management of a secure and functional registration database in line with good practices for the management and protection of sensitive personal data in accordance with privacy rights. Iraqi personnel also benefited from opportunities to enhance their trauma-informed, and ethical interviewing practices to effectively interact with volunteers for repatriation, and to maintain their own mental well-being in delivering on these challenging tasks.

### UN and Iraq launch ONE UN Plan to support the return, rehabilitation, and reintegration of Iraqis from Al-Hol Camp

**Baghdad, 30 January 2025** – The United Nations and the Government of Iraq launched today the second phase of the ONE UN Plan, titled “New Beginnings”, a comprehensive framework aimed at facilitating the safe, voluntary, and dignified return, rehabilitation, and reintegration of Iraqi nationals from Al-Hol and Al-Roj camps in northeastern Syria.

The event, held at Al-Nahrain Center in Baghdad, was attended by senior representatives of the Government of

Iraq, the United Nations, the diplomatic community, and international partners.

Speaking at the ceremony, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan stated: “Iraq’s leadership, in facilitating the return of its citizens from northeastern Syria, sets a global positive precedent. This comprehensive and courageous initiative has been praised by the highest levels in the

United Nations, including the Secretary-General himself.” He added: “It is time to close this file and turn the page on ISIS threats. It is a challenging project and solving it in accordance with international standards and in a manner that commensurate with the level of this country that has shaped the civilization of humanity is evidence of Iraq’s recovery.”

For his part, the National Security Advisor Mr. Qassim al-Araji thanked all government and international

## UN and Iraq launch ONE UN Plan to support return, rehabilitation, and reintegration of Iraqis from Al-Hol Camp *(continued)*



partners for their efforts, emphasizing the importance of accelerating the return process and closing Al-Hol camp. He also urged international partners to continue supporting Iraq in this effort.

The ONE UN Plan builds upon Iraq's efforts since 2021 to repatriate and reintegrate its citizens, particularly women and children who have lived in harsh and volatile conditions in Al-Hol. More than 60 percent of the Iraqis in the camp are children under 17, and 20 percent are under five, many of whom have been denied access to fundamental rights, including education. Recognizing the deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in Al-Hol, the Government of Iraq has accelerated the return process, despite the many challenges. The United Nations has commended Iraq's determination and reiterated the importance of strengthening national coordination mechanisms and empowering local authorities to sustain the progress made.

The ONE UN Plan: "New Beginnings" is part of a broader global framework and is implemented through the established UN-Government of Iraq technical working group.

Here is the full text of the SRSG Al Hassan's speech at this event:

"His Excellency National Security

Advisor, Mr. Qassim Al-Araji, Her Excellency, Mrs. Ivan Fa'iq Jabro, Minister of Migration and Displacement, Al-Salam Aliyukum

Good Morning

I salute each and every one of you, you are the ones that contribute to restoring hope to thousands of people in this country, all those who are present in this hall today, or even those who are absent today have played a key role.

As you know, staff prepare these speeches, but I will not read all what is here, and there is an Arabic saying: Brevity is the soul of wit. But allow me to begin this intervention by commending the National Security Advisor, His Excellency, Qassim Al-Araji, on his efforts and the efforts of his important institution. I would also like to commend our UN partner, Minister of Migration and Displacement, Her Excellency Ivan Fa'iq Jabro. You are now well known in international circles, especially in the UN.

Distinguished representatives of the Government of Iraq,

Esteemed members of the diplomatic community,

Colleagues from the United Nations,

It is a privilege to address you all on this occasion at the launch of the second iteration of the ONE UN Plan: New Beginnings. This plan

represents a renewed and collective commitment to find a solution to one of the most challenging and pressing priorities for Iraq; the safe, voluntary, and dignified return, rehabilitation, and reintegration of Iraqis stranded in Al-Hol Camp and other parts of northeastern Syria.

Allow me to begin with His Excellency Prime Minister Mohammed Sha'aa Al Sudani and the Government of Iraq, for his commitment, leadership and wisdom in addressing this humanitarian and security challenge and for reading the situation accurately.

Under the stewardship of the National Security Advisor H.E. Qassim Al Araji and the Minister of Migration and Displacement, Her Excellency Ivan Fa'iq Jabro, and with the collaboration of various ministries and institutions, Iraq has adopted many bold and decisive measures.

Madam, the words that you have mentioned here, that the most important aspect of this process is not the return, but the dignified, safe and voluntary return for all the people of Iraq in a way befitting of Iraq.

Iraq's leadership in facilitating the return of its citizens from northeastern Syria sets, truly, a global precedent in terms of numbers, mechanism as well as the method, and Iraq can create a global model in this regard. This comprehensive and courageous initiative, has been praised by the highest levels in the United Nations, including the Secretary-General himself.

From the outset, the United Nations has been a committed partner with Government of Iraq, providing technical expertise. "The ONE UN Plan: New Beginnings" reflects shared commitments to align resources and expertise to support Iraq.

Allow me, I will not read all this, but I will conclude,

It is time to close this file and turn the page on ISIS threats. Iraq must move beyond Al-Hol and ISIS. It is a challenging project and solving it in accordance with international standards and in a manner that commensurate with the level of this country that has shaped the civilization of humanity is evidence of Iraq's recovery. All these people are Iraqi's and their safe return, and their honourable integration is what we expect from this benevolent country, and this is what is required from Iraq. Thank You."



## The ONE UN Plan Steering Committee meets to discuss support for Iraqi efforts to repatriate citizens from Syria

**Baghdad, 19 January 2025** - Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, chaired the ONE UN Plan Steering Committee to discuss support for Iraqi efforts to repatriate citizens from Syria. The United Nations in Iraq reaffirmed its commitment to

supporting the Government of Iraq leadership in voluntary returns and

delivering equitable, needs-based services for all.



## Workshop to develop a policy paper on Iraq's position regarding the return of Syrian refugees and its impact on the labour market

**Erbil, 18 February 2025** (ILO News) - The International Labour Organization (ILO) in Iraq, through the PROSPECTS Partnership funded by the Government of the Netherlands, organized a workshop to examine the anticipated return of Syrian refugees and its impact on the Iraqi labour market. This event was organized in direct coordination and collaboration with several relevant ministries, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, the Ministry of Planning, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, in addition to the participation of representatives from workers' and employers' organizations.

Given the evolving political developments in Syria and the expected return of refugees from Iraq and other countries in the region in the medium to long term, Iraq's labour market faces both challenges and opportunities. Syrian workers have played a critical role in key sectors such as construction and services, and their departure may impact labour supply dynamics. The ILO underscored the need for a coordinated response to maintain labour market stability, protect vulnerable populations, and create new economic opportunities for both returning refugees and the local workforce.



Dr. Maha Kattaa ILO country coordinator stated that “the return of Syrian workers will have significant labour market implications. A well-coordinated approach is essential to mitigate disruptions, protect workers’ rights, and create inclusive economic opportunities. By strengthening labour market policies, enhancing skills development programmes, and fostering social dialogue, we can support both returnees and host communities in building a more resilient workforce.”

Mr. Marwan Azeez, Director General of the Labour and Social Security Department in the Kurdistan Region, emphasized the importance of this workshop as a platform to exchange views on the potential return of Syrian refugees and its impact on the labour market. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided insights into Syrian refugees' perceptions and intentions regarding their return, while the ILO shared findings from a survey assessing the economic implications of Syrian refugees' return from Iraq.

Discussions centred on the sectors most affected by the return of refugees, key

labour market challenges, and potential mitigation measures. Participants emphasized the importance of conducting an accurate census of Syrian workers and business owners, classifying their occupations to support skills development and training initiatives for Iraqi workers, and ensuring that refugee returns are voluntary and do not disrupt the labour market. Furthermore, they underscored the need to enhance data collection and categorization on Syrian refugees, as well as the importance of a safe and organized return process. Calls were made for strengthened cooperation between relevant federal and regional ministries to address legal challenges related to residency and return. The outcomes of the workshop will be presented at the forthcoming regional conference on refugee return. This multi-stakeholder initiative reinforced the critical role of government in labour market regulation, emphasized the value of tripartite engagement, and sought to formulate actionable recommendations for ensuring a smooth reintegration process for returning refugees while fostering labour market resilience.

## Austria and UNIDO digitally upskill Syrian refugees youth at Domiz 2 Camp in Iraq

**Duhok, 5 February 2025** - The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), with funding from the Austrian government, conducted a 7-day training programme at Domiz 2 Refugee Camp near the city of Duhok, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), from 15 to 23 January 2025. This training programme is part of Austria and UNIDO's broader initiative, "Digital technology skills to enhance employability in Iraq," to support young refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and host communities with a particular focus on digital technologies and entrepreneurship. The programme aims to empower participants, especially women, by equipping them with practical skills that can lead to wage employment or self-employment.

The training attracted over 650 applications. Following a competitive selection process, 20 Syrian refugees aged 17 to 30 were chosen to participate, including 13 women. This is the first of some planned UNIDO digital technology training programmes. Participants represented both Domiz 1 and Domiz 2 refugee camps, with the majority residing in Domiz 2, where the training took place. The training programme consisted of three key components. The first one, Photoshop and Graphic Design, spanned three days. It emphasized graphic design principles such as color theory, typography, and layout. Participants engaged in hands-on workshops, utilizing tools like Photoshop and Canva to create logos, flyers, and reusable templates. The second component, Social Media Marketing (SMM) over two days, equipped participants with skills to optimize social media accounts, plan content calendars, and execute campaigns with paid advertisements. A standout feature of the programme was the incentive for top-performing participants to receive high-end laptops, providing them with the tools to launch their careers in digital fields. The third component, the Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) over two days, introduced participants to foundational entrepreneurship concepts. The EDP guided them in identifying business opportunities and developing practical business plans using the Business Model Canvas, with a focus on budgeting and resource management. Trainers highlighted the transformative potential of the



programme. Mohammed Qasim Ali Baba, an IT specialist, emphasized the impact of the training, saying, "This type of training will greatly benefit the students. They are very smart and successful in learning graphic design techniques. I encourage them to continue practicing and focus on marketing skills to manage their own businesses in the future."

Areen Adrees Mahmood, a computer engineer and social media expert, noted that many participants feel trapped by the challenges of the camp life. "I remind them this training is a chance to change their lives. By the second day, they already felt that they were accomplishing something important," adding, "I hope they continue practicing even after the course is finished because graphic design skills are in high demand in the job market." Areen also commented that she hopes to one day see that all her students succeed in managing their own businesses and improving their livelihoods and financial situations.

The trainees, on the other hand, expressed excitement and hope for their futures.

Mediya Nassar Ahmad, a 27-year-old from Domiz 2, has lived in the KRI for 10 years. She shared, "This training is so important for me. I've learned new skills in Photoshop and graphic design. One day, I hope to start my own business focused on technology and design. I also hope to see more women working in the tech field." Mediya also explained that due to the challenging circumstances within camps, she had no opportunities for employment. However, the training from the Austrian government and UNIDO has

given her hope for a brighter future.

Alaa Abdulhamid Sulaiman, a 23-year-old from Rojava in Syria, has lived in the KRI since 2013. He said, "As refugees, we need strong skills to compete in the job market. This training has helped me improve my graphic design skills, and I plan to promote my designs through a social media page. I encourage other refugees to join programmes like this if given the opportunity." Alaa added that the trainers are highly experienced and have done an excellent job in not only training participants in new digital methods but also supporting and encouraging them to use their knowledge to improve their lives.

UNIDO's initiative aligns with its vision of fostering shared prosperity by equipping individuals with means to overcome economic challenges. As one of the trainers, Areen, aptly put it, "This is a golden opportunity for these students to change their lives. I hope they focus on the good things in their lives which will help them overcome challenges and build amazing futures." Beyond technical skills, this training has given participants the confidence to pursue their goals. The inclusion of women in such programmes underscores the importance of empowering marginalized groups in refugee communities.

By providing opportunities like this, UNIDO, with the funding support from the Austrian government, continues to make a significant impact in the lives of refugees, IDPs, returnees, and host community people, helping them rebuild their futures and contribute to the local economy.

## UN Resident Coordinator Isaczai meets with Iraq's Minister of Health Al-Hasnawi, to discuss healthcare needs, including MoH support for returnees from northeast Syria at Al-Amal Centre

Baghdad, 17 February 2025 - UN Resident Coordinator Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai met with Iraq's Minister of Health, H.E. Dr. Saleh Mehdi Al-Hasnawi, to discuss healthcare needs, including MoH support for returnees from northeast Syria at Al-Amal Centre. They addressed essential health services, existing challenges, and solutions to enhance access. UN Iraq remains committed to ensuring inclusive access to quality healthcare for all vulnerable populations.



### UNHCR on X

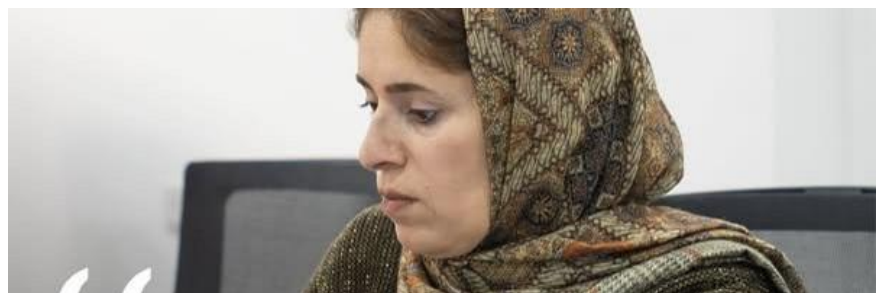
Zakho, 3 February 2025 - "In Zakho, UNHCR opened the first-ever multi-functional community centre which will support refugees, displaced families, and the local community, fostering cohesion and inclusion. Thank you to the Kurdistan Regional Government and partners for making this possible!"



## Strengthening Iraq's data systems to better serve internally displaced persons

Erbil, 26 February 2025 - Last week, together with UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, IOM provided targeted capacity building support to the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) Ministry of Interior, Kurdistan Regional Government, to transform the approach to displacement data for informed policy decisions. Ms. Gulan Naef, Data a& Information Directorate, Joint Crisis Coordination Center, KRG: "This system is essential for our daily tasks, as most of our work

involves data management, analysis, and collection. It significantly improves efficiency, reducing tasks that once took a week to just minutes."



### Humanitarian

## UNDP: Rebuilding dreams after displacement – some dreams have no expiration date

Baiji, 31 December 2024 - In the resilient landscape of Salah al-Din's Baiji district, where the scars of conflict and displacement are etched into the earth, the story of Liqaa Hamed emerges as a beacon of hope. At 28, Liqaa's journey is one of unyielding perseverance—of how she fought to reclaim her dreams after nearly a decade of displacement, loss, and

adversity. For nine years, Liqaa and her family lived in limbo, uprooted from their home by the brutal violence of war. What followed was a relentless cycle of uncertainty, with every step forward fraught with challenges. The pain of leaving her childhood home was compounded by the trauma of losing loved ones, and the dream she had

cherished since childhood—to become a teacher—seemed to slip further out of reach. But in 2023, after years of struggle, Liqaa's family finally returned to the place they once called home. Yet, their return was not to a place of peace but a landscape marked by loss, destruction, and an overwhelming sense of displacement. With no real sense of

## UNDP: Rebuilding dreams after displacement – some dreams have no expiration date *(continued)*



security, no steady livelihood, and a broken community, rebuilding seemed an impossible task.

However, Liqaa's journey would take a surprising turn when she joined a Cash for Work program implemented by UNDP and World Vision International, with generous support from USAID. The initial goal was modest—simply to earn enough to cover the basic needs of her family—but what she received in return was far greater than financial assistance.

"At first, I thought the program was just about the money," she says, reflecting on her initial doubts. "But as I got involved, I realized it was about something more profound—something that touched my soul. It was about finding hope, healing, and a new way of seeing myself and my future."

### The Power of Psychological Support

One of the most pivotal aspects of the program was the psychological support sessions, where Liqaa was encouraged to reflect on her journey and the toll the years of displacement had taken on her. "The sessions were a turning point," she recalls. "They helped me understand how I had survived, and more importantly, how my true strength was revealed not in the crisis but in the moments when I reflected on how I had overcome it."

These therapeutic sessions were not just about processing trauma; they empowered her to confront fears that had long held her back—fears of rejection, of being stigmatized, and of not belonging. The fear of being an outsider, especially when surrounded by others who had never lived in the refugee camps, weighed heavily on her. "I worried the others would look down

on me," Liqaa admits. "I was terrified that the children would see me as different, an outsider who didn't belong."

But when the work began, something unexpected happened. "The children treated me as one of their own, as a teacher," Liqaa says with a smile. "I could see the joy in their faces as they came to class, the way they rallied together, breaking down the walls that had divided us. It was the first time I truly felt like I was coming home."

Rediscovering the Dream of Teaching  
Liqaa's dream to teach had seemed a distant memory, eclipsed by the harsh realities of war and displacement. "Before the war, I was on my way to graduating from the College of Education," she remembers. "But when everything collapsed, I lost my sense of direction. I never imagined I would stand in front of a classroom again."

But when the children, with their innocent enthusiasm, began calling her "Teacher Liqaa," her heart swelled with a powerful realization: "Some dreams have no expiration date." That moment, when a child asked her for lessons every day, was a profound reminder that despite the years of loss, her dream was still alive. "I never thought I would be teaching again. But here I was, helping these children rebuild their future while also rebuilding my own."

### The Transformative Power of Community

Through her role in the program, Liqaa discovered that real transformation comes not just through individual effort but through community support. Working together with other returnees, she experienced firsthand the strength

of collective action, where each person's effort contributed to the broader healing of a community.

"At first, I thought I was just helping the students," she says. "But I soon realized that the program helped all of us—the teachers, the students, the families. We were all healing together, learning to trust again, to believe in each other again."

Her newfound sense of belonging wasn't just a result of her work in the classroom but the deep connections she built within the community. "I made lifelong friends during this process," Liqaa adds. "People I would never have met if I hadn't stepped out of my comfort zone. We laughed, cried, and supported each other. It was the beginning of my real return home."

### A New Beginning Amidst Old Wounds

The memories of the displacement—the airstrikes, the deaths, the separation from her family—will never leave Liqaa. "My sister died in one of the bombings. I couldn't even afford to get her medical treatment. My family lost so much," she says softly. But through the pain, there is now a sense of purpose. "The project allowed us to process those wounds. It didn't erase them, but it helped us carry them with dignity and strength."

### The Path Forward: Rebuilding a Future

Though her life remains far from easy, Liqaa's involvement in the Cash for Work project has given her a renewed sense of purpose. It sparked her to return to her studies and pursue her teaching qualifications again. "I didn't just find a job—I found my passion again," she says. "Teaching is not just a job for me. It's a way to heal, to give back, and to ensure that the next generation doesn't lose their dreams the way we almost lost ours."

As Liqaa reflects on her journey, she knows there is still much work to be done. "We need more help—more support for mental health, more services, more stability. But I know that if we continue working together, we will rebuild not just our homes, but our futures."

Her story is a testament to the power of resilience—that even in the darkest times, the human spirit can rise. Some dreams, like Liqaa's, have no expiration date. They may fade, but they never die. And when given the chance, they can be rebuilt stronger than ever, one small step at a time.



## Ending protracted displacement, expediting compensation to IDPs in Iraq



**Baghdad, 8 January 2025** - Tackling low registration and disbursement rates for compensation services for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Iraq, the Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MoMD) has pledged to speed up the disbursement process for families whose homes were destroyed nearly a decade ago during the conflict with Daesh. This commitment, aimed at overcoming a key obstacle to durable solutions for displaced populations, was endorsed during the first Steering Committee meeting held in December 2024, for the project on “Strengthening Data Systems to Improve the Management of Internally Displaced Persons Referral Systems,” jointly implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UN-Habitat in Iraq.

Supported by the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund, the project proposes solutions to key bottlenecks that have hindered the compensation process. Central to these challenges are gaps in data systems and delays in disbursement, which severely affect vulnerable groups, such as female-headed households, persons with disabilities, unaccompanied minors, and the elderly.

### Key Challenges Identified

During the Steering Committee meeting, participants discussed challenges identified in an initial assessment conducted by UN-Habitat. The assessment involved 24 directors from Iraq’s Central Compensation Committees and judges from subcommittees, focusing on displacement-prone areas like Anbar, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Kirkuk, and Ninewa. Key issues included tight submission deadlines, lack of staff

capacity, and difficulties in verifying claimant documentation. Many displaced families lost civil and property documents while fleeing conflict, making it harder for them to prove their claims.

One of the primary solutions recommended for these challenges is the creation of an integrated and centralized database aligned with international standards. “The lack of an integrated database and standardized procedures has made it difficult to efficiently manage compensation claims,” said Mr. Ammar Ali Jum’ah, Director General of the Information Department at MoMD. “This database aligned with international standards will ensure that the most vulnerable families are prioritized, facilitating their reintegration and stability.”

### Tailored Capacity Building

The project will also enhance government efficiency through targeted capacity building. Results from an initial assessment of data systems and capacity gaps, conducted by IOM in collaboration with MoMD and the Joint Crisis Coordination Center (JCCC), highlighted the need for developing an automated reporting tool for MoMD, and tailored training program for JCCC staff. Set to run from January to May 2025, this training will cover data management, geospatial analysis, and the use of visualization tools to support more efficient compensation processing.

Improving the Compensation Process Following the Steering Committee meeting, a workshop was also held on December 2024, where representatives and judges from both central and subcommittees participated in discussions about improving the

compensation process. Key recommendations included amending the compensation law to be more agile, re-establishing connections between subcommittees and the central committee, and integrating e-governance systems to streamline operations.

Through this project, the Government of Iraq will overcome technical barriers, ensuring that displaced individuals can access the compensation they need to restore their homes and livelihoods. Aligned with Iraq’s Durable Solutions Roadmap, the project will bridge critical gaps in documentation and compensation, ensuring that individuals without proper identification are not excluded from receiving essential support. By enhancing data management and strengthening referral mechanisms, the project will also facilitate evidence-based policymaking, improve transparency, and ensure more effective resource allocation for property compensations.

With the anticipated improvements in data systems and governance, displaced people will have faster and more efficient access to compensation for damaged property. This will enable them to return to their homes and rebuild their lives, furthering Iraq’s long-term goals of achieving durable solutions for displacement and promoting sustainable development. Ultimately, IOM and UN-Habitat are supporting Iraq’s efforts to create a stable and peaceful future for its people and advance towards the end of protracted displacement.



## Legal aid helps refugee families overcome challenges in Iraq

**Mosul, 9 January 2025** - For years, Faisal and his brothers watched as other children in their neighbourhood walked past their window laughing on their way to school. Each morning they would turn to their father with the same question about why they couldn't join. Abu Faisal describes how he choked up with tears every time, unsure of how to respond. "I felt I was to blame. Because I am a Syrian refugee, they didn't have the papers they needed."

Originally from Syria, Abu Faisal recalls how the last decade has been filled with challenges, including legal barriers that have affected his entire family. When he married his Iraqi wife in 2012, documenting their union seemed like a low priority while starting a new life together. Financial constraints and the fear of fines for late registration added to their hesitance as time went by.

The situation grew even more complicated in 2015, when Abu Faisal and his family fled Mosul during Da'esh's occupation. They returned three years later, only to face additional barriers to register their marriage due to difficulties securing the documentation needed and the complexities of being a Syrian refugee married to an Iraqi.

As their children reached school-age, the consequences of the lack of a marriage certificate became even more pronounced. "I was not able to prove Faisal is my child, and it broke my heart," Abu Faisal says. Without official documentation, his children struggled to access basic services like healthcare or education – a constant reminder of the impact of their displacement.

Desperate to change their situation, Abu Faisal turned to a trusted source of support: UNHCR's partner, Terre des Hommes (TDH) which runs a community centre in Mosul where a range of protection services and support including legal aid are provided. Through TDH, Abu Faisal attended a counselling session where he was assigned a lawyer to help him



navigate his complex legal process. Securing a marriage certificate was the first step. Given Abu Faisal's refugee status, this was not an easy task and involved first renewing his expired residency documentation with the Iraqi government. Only then could he proceed with a court case to get a judge to recognize his marriage. But with legal guidance, Abu Faisal persevered. In the meantime, UNHCR also supported his children to enrol in school for the first time based on a declaration by the Ministry of Education in February 2024 that refugee children should be allowed to enrol in school using their UNHCR registration certificate. For Faisal, his eldest son, who stepped into the classroom for the first time at 11 years old, this was life changing.

In September 2024, Abu Faisal finally received his marriage certificate. With this document in hand, the family was able to update their residency records with the Iraqi government, officially uniting the mother, father, and their four children under the same file. The timing couldn't have been better: his younger sons were able to start school that same year by simply showing their new identity documents (cards given by the Permanent Committee for Political Refugee Affairs of the Ministry of Interior of Iraq, known as PC-MOI cards). This enrolment process, requiring no support from UNHCR,

marked a significant turning point for the family. It underscored their ability to independently access a range of public services in Iraq using their new documentation, restoring a sense of self-sufficiency and hope for the future for the family.

"Issuing my marriage certificate paved the way to secure documents for my children, allowing them to enrol in school and see a doctor when needed," Abu Faisal says.

Abu Faisal hopes that his experience can inspire others facing similar struggles. "There are many families like mine who feel stuck because they don't know where to turn for help," he says. He now actively encourages others in his community to visit the TDH community centre, sharing his own experience as proof that change is possible with the right support. "If I can overcome this, so can they," he adds with a determined smile.

Thanks to support from donors like Switzerland, Abu Faisal is among 13,500 refugees and asylum-seekers who have received legal aid services from UNHCR in 2024. These services include legal awareness sessions, counselling, and representation before legal and administrative bodies, helping refugees resolve critical legal matters.

By Hamzeh Almomani and Lilly Carlisle, UNHCR Iraq

## UNHCR & Intersos are equipping Syrian teachers with skills

**Sulaymaniyah, 12 January 2025** - In Sulaymaniyah, UNHCR, together with Intersos Iraq, is equipping Syrian teachers with skills to excel in the Kurdistan education system.

From language mastery to classroom management, these trainings are

helping to support teachers become more confident and prepared to meet the needs of all students

Supporting teachers across Kurdistan is a key part of the Refugee Education Integration Policy!



## Austria and UNIDO create digital career pathways for IDP youth in Sharya Camp

**Baghdad, 10 February 2025** - From 2 to 10 February 2025, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) conducted a digital technology and entrepreneurship training programme in Sharya Camp for the internally displaced person (IDP) community. This initiative is part of UNIDO's broader project with funding from the Austrian government, "Digital technology skills to enhance employability in Iraq," to enhance employability and self-reliance among IDPs and refugees, particularly youth and women, through digital skills and entrepreneurship development.

The training aimed to equip participants with skills in entrepreneurship, graphic design, and social media marketing (SMM), enabling them to secure employment opportunities or launch their own businesses. Twenty participants aged 17 to 30 – 12 women and 8 men – were selected for the training in Sharya Camp. The training was the third of some similar capacity-building initiatives planned by the project.

The training programme consisted of three key components: Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP), Photoshop and graphic design, and SMM.

EDP: This module was led by Newar Ameen Saleh, a specialist in regional development economics. The module introduced participants to core entrepreneurship concepts, guiding them in identifying viable business opportunities. Using Business Model Canvas, trainees learned how to develop practical business plans, manage resources, and budget for

startup ventures.

Photoshop and Graphic Design: Co-facilitated by Mohammed Qasim Ali Baba, an IT specialist, and Areen Adrees Mahmood, a computer engineer and social media expert, this component focused on graphic design principles such as colour theory, typography, and layout. Participants engaged in hands-on workshops using Photoshop and Canva to learn about creating logos, marketing materials, and reusable design templates.

SMM: This was also co-facilitated by Mohammed and Areen and provided participants with skills to optimize social media accounts, plan content calendars, and conduct digital marketing campaigns.

A key highlight of the training programme was the opportunity for top-performing participants to receive high-end laptops, enabling them to continue practicing what they have learned throughout the training in digital technology and one day start their own businesses in technology fields.

The trainers emphasized the transformative potential of the programme. Mohammed noted, "This type of training will greatly benefit the students. They are highly motivated and quick learners. I encourage them to continue refining their graphic design and marketing skills to create their own businesses in the future."

Areen highlighted the challenges of living in displacement and the importance of digital skills in overcoming these barriers. "Many students feel trapped by their circumstances in the camp. I remind them that this training is a

steppingstone to changing their lives. If they continue practicing, they can secure freelance work or establish their own ventures. I hope to see them succeed in the technology sector and improve their livelihoods."

A graduate of the Duhok University in Computer Science, Zalal Alyas Abozet, saw this training as an essential step in becoming a full-stack developer. "I decided to participate in this class because I am also a mobile application programmer. But I need to learn graphic design to be a full-stack developer," he explained. Zalal found the entrepreneurship component particularly valuable, noting, "Newar taught us how we could start our own business and gave us the skills to be successful."

Zalal believes the training is an important opportunity for the IDP community. "I have many ideas for my own business, and this class is crucial for our entire community," he stated, adding "I hope that many more people can benefit from this project, not only from Sharya Camp but from the larger community, even in Sinjar."

Dakhil Mishko Khalil had no choice but to give up his education due to family difficulties, but he has taken on the responsibility of caring for his loved ones. "We had many problems in my family, so I could not finish school. Now, I have a job taking care of my family," he shared. Despite his responsibilities, he remains eager to learn. "Every day I am learning something new in programming and how I can make my own business."

A barber by profession, Dakhil recognizes the importance of digital design for growing his business. "This course was so professional and good. I know that someday I will need this design programme. My business will need this design, especially to market on social media. Designing and creating a page for social media is crucial." His aspirations extend beyond his current location. "Now my barber shop is in Sharya, but I hope to return to Sinjar soon to open a new business. I will need these skills to promote my business."

Abeer Ibrahim Hassan, a graduate of the College of Law at the Duhok University, found immense value in the training despite its difference from her primary field of study. "I love this training. It is my goal to develop my skill in technology. I really appreciate this chance to improve my skills," she expressed. Having lived in Sharya for



## Austria and UNIDO create digital career pathways for IDP youth in Sharya Camp *(continued)*

10 years, with a family of 10 members, she sees digital skills as an essential tool for self-sufficiency. “Even if I work as a lawyer, in my extra time, I hope to work in photography and design to bring in extra income.”

Abeer highlighted the financial benefits of the training. “If someone wants a logo, they usually have to pay for this service. But with this training, I can depend on myself to create my own designs and logos. This can be additional income for myself and my family.” Abeer hopes to return to Sinjar one day if stability improves.

Reflecting on the broader significance of the training, Abeer emphasized its impact on young IDPs. “This training is important, especially for displaced youth, because we suffered a lot and lost everything. We need to develop our skills and depend on ourselves. It is difficult to find jobs during this time, but this training provides us with skills in digital design so that we can find employment more easily.”

Through this initiative, UNIDO, with support from the Austrian government, is contributing to the long-term resilience of IDPs by providing them

with market-oriented skills. The programme is a crucial step toward economic empowerment, enabling participants to build sustainable futures despite the challenges of displacement.

As UNIDO continues to expand its digital technology and entrepreneurship training, it remains committed to fostering opportunities for marginalized communities such as IDPs and refugees, supporting their integration into the digital economy and self-reliance.

## WFP Representative in Iraq meets with Minister of Migration and Displacement

**Baghdad, 12 February 2025** - World Food Programme (WFP) Representative and Country Director in Iraq, Mageed Yahia, met with Evan Faeq Jabro, Minister of Migration and Displacement, to discuss strengthening cooperation in humanitarian assistance for IDPs and returnees, and supporting residents of Al-Amal Center for Psychological and Social Rehabilitation.



## Five years of investment in civil documentation restores displaced and vulnerable Iraqis' sense of belonging and hope for the future

**Baghdad, 13 February 2025** - Having a civil identity document – a birth certificate, national identity card or housing card – is the first step for any individual to be recognised as a citizen in their country. These documents serve as official proof of identity, enhancing access to public services provided by the state. Without civil documentation, people may be unable to enrol in school, access healthcare, secure employment or apply for social protection benefits.

Decades of conflict, violence and persecution left countless Iraqis with lost or damaged civil documents. While in displacement, many faced complex administrative hurdles preventing them from renewing or obtaining new documents.

Even as the security situation in Iraq improved, many vulnerable Iraqis remained stuck in limbo. Without documents, they faced restricted freedom of movement at checkpoints, exclusion from restitution or reconstruction programmes, and were unable to fully engage in civic and



political life.

Since 2019, UNHCR has been working with the Government of Iraq to help internally displaced people (IDPs), IDPs who returned to their area of origin and other vulnerable Iraqis obtain core civil documents.

Through sustained efforts, significant progress has been made.

In total, between 2019 and 2024, more

than 244,000 Iraqis received legal assistance from UNHCR and partners, helping them overcome complex administrative and legal barriers to obtain their civil documents. This has led to over 233,000 civil documents issued as a direct result of UNHCR assistance.

Meet IDPs, returnees and Iraqis whose lives were transformed thanks to

## Five years of investment in civil documentation restores displaced and vulnerable Iraqis' sense ... *(continued)*

having civil documents:

Ibrahim sits with his children in Jurf Al-Sakhr, relieved and happy after securing civil documents for his family: "These documents will give us many rights. My children will be able to study, and I will be able to work."

In 2014, Ibrahim was forced to flee the Jurf Al-Sakhr area in Babil governorate as violence escalated, and eventually found refuge in Fallujah, in Anbar. Nearly a decade later, safety concerns continued to prevent them from returning to their area of origin. This prolonged displacement meant that Ibrahim and his family were unable to apply and obtain essential civil documentation. UNHCR supported the Iraqi Ministry of Interior to organize a civil documentation mission to assist displaced families from Jurf Al-Sakhr. The mission helped many Iraqis, including Ibrahim and his family, secure critical documents such as Iraqi nationality certificates.

Emad at the community center in Mosul after receiving UNHCR support

to obtain civil documentation: "I received my Unified ID card. Now I can go anywhere with peace of mind, knowing that I have a proof of my identity."

Emad, Internally Displaced Iraqi who returned to Mosul, received support from UNHCR and partners to obtain his national ID card.

"I care for five children on my own. I am very cautious and make sure they have the documents to go to school and see a doctor at any time." - Saadyah, Internally Displaced Iraqi, attended a session at the community centre that UNHCR's partner, TDH, runs in Mosul to learn more about the process in obtaining the civil documentation for her family. She also received legal counselling how to overcome documentation challenges stemming from the fact she is a single mother.

Kawe Haji holds her Iraqi certificate with pride: "We lost our home and all our belongings on the way to seek safety, including our identity documents."

Kawe is an Ezidi Internally Displaced Iraqi who fled Sinjar in 2014. In 2024, UNHCR provided Kawe with legal counselling and helped her gather the required documentation to prove her and her children's identities – a process that required months of follow-up with administration and judicial actors in Sinjar and Dohuk to obtain supporting document. After Kawe received her identity documents, she expressed her renewed hope for a brighter future for her children.

In light of these achievements, and following the roll-out of the new Unified ID system by the Government in 2024, which facilitates easier access to the UID across the country, UNHCR has significantly scaled down its civil documentation programme in 2025.

UNHCR extends its appreciation to donors who have contributed specifically to civil documentation efforts over the years: such as the European Union (ECHO), France, and the Netherlands.

By Farha Bhoyroo, UNHCR Iraq

### Stabilization and Development

## Iraq's commitment to sustainable development: a step toward responsible investment and inclusive growth

**Baghdad, 1 January 2025 - Iraq is** advancing its journey towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by preparing its Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In partnership with the Ministry of Planning and UNDP Iraq, national consultations are underway to shape this critical report, with a focus on "Responsible Investment, Rehabilitation, and Justice."

This process highlights Iraq's commitment to sustainability and inclusivity, aiming to build trust in its economy and attract responsible investments. Central to the discussions is Iraq's SDG Investor Map, which identifies key areas for investment that align with national development

priorities.

By collaborating across government sectors, civil society, and the private sector, Iraq is paving the way for a

more sustainable, just, and prosperous future, with the VNR to be presented at the High-Level Political Forum in July 2025.



## USAID, through UNDP Iraq, provides the Anbar Governorate with 33 garbage compactors

**Anbar, 11 January 2025 - USAID,** through UNDP Iraq, provided the Anbar Governorate with 33 garbage compactors. The delivery of new garbage compactors will enhance the

Municipalities sector and improve the lives of many Iraqis living in Anbar by helping create cleaner, healthier communities for many Iraqis in Anbar. Through USAID's support, we're

advancing Anbar's development and empowering its municipality sector. Together, we are building a brighter, more resilient future for Iraqis!



## Developing tourism enterprises in Kurdistan Region of Iraq *(continued)*

"This collaboration exemplifies our commitment to supporting inclusive and sustainable development in Iraq. By investing in the capacity building of women and youth, we are not only fostering economic empowerment, but also contributing to the overall advancement of the tourism sector in the KRI. This wouldn't have been possible without the generous contribution of our steadfast partner, USAID," said Auke Lootsma, the Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq. "The successful completion of these

trainings underscores the importance of partnerships in driving positive change. By working together, we can create opportunities for women and youth to play a transformative role in the tourism sector, ultimately contributing to job creation and economic diversification and prosperity in the KRI," said Ms. Erin Mone-Marquez, Mission Director, USAID Iraq. The program's emphasis on producing diverse tourism handicraft products, tailored to local market demands, reflects a holistic approach to

strengthening the tourism product of KRI. Participants were trained on creating different tourism handicrafts made of Kurdish textiles, ceramic and pyrography art.

Through these trainings, the KRG, UNDP, and USAID aim to enable women and youth to not only enter the tourism industry but also to establish their own micro-enterprises, thereby fostering sustainable livelihoods and contributing to the region's economic growth.

## Enhancing water infrastructure in Basra

**Basra, 15 January 2025** - The UNDP's Deputy Resident Representative in Iraq, Sascha Graumann, met the Netherlands Ambassador, Janet Alberda, to discuss key water and environmental projects in Basra.

As part of the visit, the delegation met with Eng. Nazar Nasir, the Head of the Basra Water Directorate, reviewed the achievements of the Basra Water Supply Project, which rehabilitated critical infrastructure like the Khor Al-Zubair Water Complex.

This project, funded by the Netherlands and done by the UNDP-UNICEF Joint

Programme, restored safe drinking water access to over 99,000 beneficiaries while addressing climate-related challenges such as salinity and drought.

Such collaborations underscore the commitment to sustainable development, improving the lives of local communities, and ensuring climate resilience across Iraq.



## With support from the European Union, UN-Habitat and Basra authorities are collaborating to enhance the quality of life

**Basra, 17 January 2025** - With support from the European Union, UN-Habitat and Basra authorities are collaborating to enhance the quality of life for residents by upgrading urban infrastructure, increasing access to employment opportunities for vulnerable urban populations, and improving data-driven decision and policy-making capacities for city management.

On Thursday, the 16th, UN-Habitat hosted a delegation from the European Union in Basra, comprising the Head of Cooperation, Lennart Deridder, Head of the Political Section, David Healy, and Political Counsellor, Frerik Kampman. Led by the Head of the Iraq Programme, Muslim Qazimi, the UN-Habitat team provided the delegation with the opportunity to witness firsthand the tangible benefits of the partnership.

During their visit to Al Ghadeer Park in Shatt Arab district, they saw a 12,000-square-metre green public space situated within the densely populated informal settlement of Jurf Al Melah. This space serves as a much-needed



haven for the community.

At the Basra Vocational Training Centre's new building, developed in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, they observed facilities where unemployed youth receive vocational training to enhance their qualifications, enabling them to secure better positions in the labour market and stimulate the local economy.

In Al Kubiya informal settlement, the most remarkable aspect was not what they saw, but what they did not see. Thanks to the renewed sewage and water systems, streets remained flood-

free even during the rainy season—a significant improvement for the area. Residents shared how, for the first time in years, they are no longer struggling with floods and now have access to potable water in their homes. Additionally, the delegation visited sites where new access roads pavement are being constructed to improve connectivity with the rest of the city. Although the visit was brief, it effectively showcased the positive impact of this partnership in building a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban future for Basra's most vulnerable populations.

## SRSO Dr. Al Hassan: “Investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency is an investment in Iraq’s brighter, more sustainable future.”



**Baghdad, 28 January 2025** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Isaczai, participated today in the Iraq Energy Conference in Baghdad, highlighting how the UN can support Iraq in leveraging technology to advance the energy sector and promote sustainability. Here is the full text of SRSO Dr. Al Hassan’s remarks at this conference:

“Honorable Prime Minister Mr. Sudani,  
Distinguished Members of the Iraqi Government,  
and representatives of friendly governments to Iraq,  
Honorable Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
It is an honor to be with you today as we discuss one of the most urgent issues facing Iraq and the world and that is: the transition to sustainable energy.

Iraq, like many other countries, is already facing the harsh realities of climate change, with devastating droughts, floods, and heatwaves surpassing 50°C, threatening both lives and vital natural resources. These challenges strain the country’s infrastructure, especially its electricity grids, making it harder to meet even the basic energy needs.

While climate change requires collective global action, Iraq, I believe, can address critical energy issues by investing in renewable energy and reducing reliance on fossil

fuels. This shift is not only essential for environmental sustainability but also for economic resilience, shielding the nation from vulnerabilities of price fluctuations and supply chain disruptions.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, I cannot stress this enough: as policymakers, legislators, and business leaders, let this be your daily reminder - investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency is an investment in Iraq’s brighter, more sustainable future.

Today’s discussion on sustainable energy is crucial - not just for the transitioning energy systems but also for securing a prosperous and resilient future for Iraq. This is about more than infrastructure; it is about cooperation, innovation, investment, and most importantly, political will.

Overcoming challenges like competing priorities and delays in policy reform is essential to addressing systemic issues and meeting Iraq’s growing energy needs. By working together, I believe, we can align with the goals of the Paris Agreement and SDG 7, ensuring affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy.

And let us not forget that – the transition to clean energy is not just about mitigating the impacts of climate change. It is a catalyst for innovation, the creation of new industries, and economic opportunities. The transition will also support Iraq in diversifying its economy and energy sources, paving the way for long-term sustainable development.

I believe Iraq has already been taking bold and transformative steps to

transform its energy sector, not only regionally but also globally. Just days ago in Davos, President Abdullatif Rashid reaffirmed Iraq’s commitment to reducing gas flaring by 2028 and improving air quality - clear evidence of Iraq’s determination to act.

I’d also like to highlight the significance of key national initiatives such as the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions Strategy, the Green Growth Strategy, and the Energy Transition Framework Policy - developed by the UNDP support. Endorsed by the government, these initiatives represent pivotal steps towards building a sustainable and resilient future for Iraq.

I would like to commend Prime Minister Sudani, who, during his recent visits, reinforced this vision with concrete proposals for public-private cooperation and partnerships to achieve shared energy and climate goals. International collaboration and private sector engagements are vital to realizing this transformative agenda. Iraq has the opportunity to take on a leading role as the Chair of the G77 and China in 2025. In his address marking Iraq’s assumption of the presidency of this very important group, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Iraq Fuad Hussein has underscored the vital importance of global cooperation on climate change, highlighting Iraq’s commitment to driving collective actions on the critical issue.

The United Nations is fully committed to supporting Iraq’s aspirations and need to transform its policy towards the journey of The UN is fully committed to supporting Iraq through this endeavor and transformative journey towards sustainability.

As the UN Special Representative to the Secretary General in Iraq and Head of UNAMI, I will continue advocating support for Iraq in addressing the challenges of climate change. I will also continue advocating support for Iraq in leading the international community in addressing global climate and energy challenges.

The UN, through UNDP and other agencies, is already partnering with the Government of Iraq to drive policy change and help Iraq achieve its Nationally Determined



## SRSR Dr. Al Hassan: “Investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency is an investment in Iraq’s brighter ... (continued)”

Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. This is a top priority for us, as reflected in the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2024–2029), which dedicates one of its four pillars to climate action and sustainability.

We know that the road ahead is not

without challenges, but the UN is confident that, with collaboration and innovative solutions, we can build a sustainable energy future for Iraq that benefits both the economy and the environment. Under your leadership, Excellency Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, we are dedicated to

transforming Iraq into a regional model for sustainable energy. The UN remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting Iraq at every step of this vital journey.

Thank you.“

## Toyota Iraq visits UN-Habitat projects in Mosul

**Mosul, 1 February 2025** – Mr. Tadashi Tanimoto, CEO of TOYOTA Iraq, Mr. Sardar Al Bebany, Chairman of Sardar Group and President of Toyota Iraq, and their team visited Mosul to follow up on TOYOTA Iraq’s contributions to the Japan Village Project, funded by the Government of Japan. They were welcomed at the project’s construction site by the governor of Ninewa, Mr. Abdulqadir al-Dakhil, along with the UN-Habitat Iraq team, led by Muslim Qazimi, Head of Programme, and also visited another UN-Habitat’s contribution to the city’s well-being, the iconic Al Yarmouk Park, largest public park in east Mosul.

Funded by the Government of Japan, UN-Habitat Iraq is leading the construction of a social housing

complex and managing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) with Japanese private sector companies—including Toyota, SUMITOMO Corporation, and TOTO (Sardar Group)—to enhance the quality of life and environmental

resilience in the complex and its surroundings through their innovative expertise. In parallel, UN-Habitat is supporting local authorities in restoring and improving essential public infrastructure.



## UN-Habitat Iraq facilitated a study visit to the Netherlands for Iraq’s Real Estate Registration Department (RERD) staff

**Baghdad, 06 February 2025** - Through the Modernising Urban Land Knowledge (MULK) project, funded by the European Union, UN-Habitat Iraq facilitated a study visit to the Netherlands. The delegation participating from Iraq’s Real Estate Registration Department (RERD), included General Director Ms Ibtisam Raheem Abdullah, Mr Haider Mohammed Alwan, Head of the ICT Unit, and Mr Mohammed Rasheed Jasim Al-Shamari, Head of the Legal Department.

The visit aimed to support Iraq’s efforts to modernise its land governance framework through digital transformation by engaging with the experiences of one of the top 10 countries in digital governance, according to the 2024 United Nations E-Government Survey – Accelerating Digital Transformation for Sustainable Development.

Over two days, the delegation engaged with experts from the Dutch Cadastre, Land Registry, and Mapping Agency (Kadaster) to explore digital land



administration, legal frameworks, and strategies for innovation and transformation. They also spent a working day at a notary in Apeldoorn to observe legal procedures in practice. The visit provided a valuable reference, highlighting the benefits of e-governance and demonstrating how digital systems streamline land administration, reduce operational

costs, and enhance transparency, efficiency, and international reliability. The knowledge-exchange experience strengthened Iraq’s understanding of digital cadastre systems, equipping the government with insights to progress towards e-cadastre and digitised land governance, building upon UN-Habitat Iraq’s ongoing support to modernise land management.

## How ITC boosts top Iraqi farm and food entrepreneurs



**Baghdad, 10 February 2025** (ITC News) - Ten of Iraq's most promising farm and food businesses competed for top honours at the Wifra Program run in collaboration with the International Trade Centre (ITC).

Young entrepreneurs often have great ideas that they don't know how to market. This intense incubator programme set them on a path to profitability.

Over 800 applied for the programme, and only 200 made it to the interview round. Of those, 25 were accepted to the incubator, and the top 10 made it to the product fair in Baghdad.

'In just a few months, they managed to reshape their products in a very creative way, producing diverse new

offerings,' said Ali Taher, executive director of the Makers of Baghdad innovation hub.

The entrepreneurs displayed organic mushrooms, handmade desserts, natural skincare and other creative products.

'These products offer solutions to problems faced by this sector in Iraq,' said ITC expert Hanaa Alhasan. 'The Iraqi market is a thirsty, niche market that truly needs these types of products. Creating a vibrant ecosystem for these projects is crucial so they can thrive, create jobs, contribute to Iraq's economic growth, and achieve sustainable development.'

A panel of business development experts evaluated the businesses on

their creativity, packaging, and market potential. The top-ranked product, Micro Harvest which produces organic micro-greens, won a \$500 prize.

'At the beginning, I had no background in project management, accounting or marketing,' said Micro Harvest Hasan Falah Hasan. 'The accounting knowledge especially helped, particularly for those without prior project experience.'

Makers of Baghdad ran the Wifra Program in partnership with the SAAVI Project at ITC, which supports small businesses working in food and agriculture.

The product fair let the entrepreneurs network with investors, private companies, and fellow entrepreneurs.

All 10 finalists will receive dedicated marketing campaigns, reinforcing their journey toward success. They've already benefited from personalized mentoring sessions in business development, accounting, and marketing to refine their operations and strategies.

Without Makers, it might have been difficult for Iraqi youth with entrepreneurial projects to grow their ventures, make them gradable, and turn them profitable.

## SRSG for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, visits the Iraqi Private Banks League

**Baghdad, 29 January 2025** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, visited the Iraqi Private Banks League today, where he met with the League's president and several heads and representatives of private banks operating in Iraq.

Dr. Al Hassan was briefed on the achievements in the banking sector, as well as the challenges and obstacles they face and the international support required for their operations.

The Special Representative emphasized the importance of the banking sector in strengthening and diversifying the economy. He stressed the need to uphold transparency and adhere to international standards, enhancing

trust in this vital sector, given its central role in job creation, investment,

and building a better future for all Iraqis.



## New National Housing Policy to bridge Iraq's housing affordability gap with green and sustainable solutions

**Baghdad, 27 February 2025** - The European Union remains committed to supporting Iraq in developing affordable, adequate, and sustainable

housing solutions. As part of this commitment, the EU-funded Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT) project is

playing a key role in advancing Iraq's National Housing Policy.

To drive this initiative forward, the Ministry of Construction and Housing,

## New National Housing Policy to bridge Iraq's housing affordability gap with green and sustainable solutions *(continued)*



in collaboration with UN-Habitat, hosted a two-day workshop in Baghdad on 26–27 February 2025. The event brought together Iraqi national authorities and technical teams from key departments, including the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Construction and Housing, the Housing Directorate, the Urban Planning Directorate, and the Housing Training and Development Centre. Participants analysed past housing policies, identified existing gaps, and worked together to establish a comprehensive framework for the new National Housing Policy.

Representing the European Union Delegation to Iraq at the workshop, Dr. Lennart Deridder, Head of the Cooperation Section, was joined by Mr. Ali Al-Naseri, the Programme Manager overseeing the BEIT project, further reaffirming the EU's commitment to working collaboratively with Iraq to bridge the housing affordability gap and develop sustainable urban solutions.

Iraq faces significant housing challenges driven by population growth, rapid urbanization, and rising land and construction costs. In response, the government is formulating a National Housing Policy that prioritizes green and sustainable solutions, ensuring all Iraqis have access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing. This initiative not only addresses immediate housing needs but also contributes to the country's broader goals of equitable growth, urban resilience, and sustainable development. By aligning with international best practices while addressing Iraq's unique housing context, the proposed policy framework represents a crucial step toward fostering inclusive and sustainable urban development.

The importance of the initiative was emphasised by Mr. Lennart Deridder, Head of Cooperation Section, Delegation of the European Union to Iraq, in his opening remarks: "Based on recent census data, almost 25% of Iraq's population is between the ages of five and fourteen. This highlights the urgent need to address the existing housing shortage and accommodate the growing

demand over the next decade. Every Iraqi family deserves to live in a safe and decent home with access to essential utilities such as electricity, water, and other basic services. Additionally, they should also have the opportunity to enjoy open spaces, breathe fresh air, and spend quality time outdoors in safe and well-planned environments. Today's National Housing Policy Workshop marks a pivotal step toward achieving this vision. Together, we will refine the policy framework, integrate green and sustainable practices, and work towards building a resilient, inclusive housing ecosystem. This, in turn, will serve as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth, job creation, and social inclusion in Iraq."

Mr. Mohammed Haider Al-Sakiny, Director General of the Planning and Follow-up Department at the Ministry of Construction, Housing & Public Municipalities, highlighted the Ministry's commitment to the shared challenge of developing and implementing a comprehensive policy that effectively addresses Iraq's current housing challenges: "It is necessary to prepare a new National Housing Policy that includes clear, executable and realistic steps, and which is derived from the reality of the current situation. Implementation must be both comprehensive and sustainable, and it is important to emphasise that achieving the aims of the new housing policy is a shared responsibility that falls on government, the private sector and society, to reach the desired goals.

During the workshop, the Ministry of Planning, the BEIT project's primary government counterpart, underlined the importance of integrating housing into national urban policies. "The Iraqi National Development Plan 2024–2028 sets a strategic roadmap for economic growth, infrastructure development, and housing reform. With a focus on investing in human capital, diversifying the economy, and modernizing urban planning, the plan addresses key challenges such as housing shortages, spatial development gaps, and service disparities. The new National Housing

Policy will support sustainable housing solutions, helping the government improve living standards, reduce urban-rural inequalities, and drive national prosperity", stated Dr. Mohammed Mohsen Al-Sayed, Director General of the Department of Regional and Local Development, Ministry of Planning.

The new policy will prioritise the right to adequate housing while addressing the specific housing issues Iraq faces such as the need for improved land management and infrastructure policies, more affordable housing solutions, and enhanced building materials and technologies. Recognising Iraq's growing climate challenges, the policy will also incorporate principles of green housing to support sustainable urban development.

Under the BEIT programme, UN-Habitat will continue to focus on supporting the Government of Iraq in addressing the country's housing challenges by reviewing existing legislation, exploring new affordable housing finance models, providing capacity building and technical assistance, and building demonstration green social housing units in two pilot locations.

UN-Habitat's "Housing at the Centre" approach positions housing as a fundamental human right and an integral part of national and local urbanization strategies. These principles, which are also enshrined in Iraq's constitution, will be reflected in the new National Housing Policy. "This joint effort aims to put housing at the centre of policy dialogue in Iraq highlighting its potential as a significant driver of socio-economic growth and job creation. Through the BEIT project, we are promoting the creation of decent jobs, building institutional capacity, strengthening housing sector value chains, and promoting green solutions to foster resilience and deliver sustainable housing solutions." said Muslim Qazimi, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq. Promoting access to adequate housing for all, along with essential urban services such as clean water, sanitation, electricity, transportation, and economic opportunities, will contribute to more inclusive and sustainable urban growth. The Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT), an European Union -funded initiative, is a joint effort by UN-Habitat, the International Labour Organization, and the International Trade Centre. The programme aims to drive economic growth by creating decent job opportunities through advancing Iraq's affordable and sustainable housing initiatives and strengthening the construction sector.



**Diyala, 8 January 2025** - Today, the Joint Coordination Forum (JCF) in Diyala held its monthly meeting, bringing together the government, UN and NGOs to discuss key priorities, including restoring the basic services to Al-Khailania area and facilitating the compensation process for returnees and IDPs.



**Salah al-Din, 14 January 2025** – Today, Joint Coordination Forum (JCF) in Salah al-Din held its monthly meeting, bringing together government, UN and NGOs to discuss key priorities. These included the Durable Solutions Roadmap for Tuz Khurmatu district, the conditions of IDPs and returnees in Shirqat and Ad-Dour districts, and the procedures to facilitate NGOs activities in Salah al-Din.



**Diyala, 14 January 2025** – Today, the Diyala Joint Coordination Forum (JCF) conducted a needs assessment mission to Al-Khailania village in Miqdadiya district to evaluate the needs of returned families and assess the capacity to restore basic services in the village. The mission was joined by the Deputy Governor and the Head of the Reconstruction and Investment Committee.



**Kirkuk, 15 January 2025** – The Joint Coordination Forum (JCF) held its 8th monthly meeting in Kirkuk, co-chaired by the Governor's Assistant and International Rescue Committee (IRC). The meeting brought together representatives from government, UN agencies, and NGOs to discuss key priorities, including the development of the JCF workplan for 2025 and addressing the critical shortage of medical staff in areas of return.



**Ninewa, 22 January 2025** – The Joint Coordination Forum (JCF) held its 9th monthly meeting in Ninewa, co-chaired by the Governor's Assistant and UNICEF. The meeting brought together government, UN agencies, and NGO representatives to discuss key priorities, including the challenges and needs of east Mosul camps as well as incidents caused by remnants of war explosives in different areas of Ninewa.



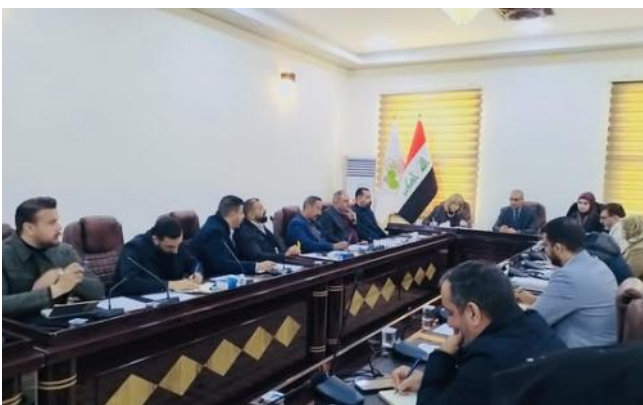
**Ramadi, 28 January 2025** – Today, Anbar Joint Coordination Forum convened in Ramadi, co-chaired by the Deputy Governor and IOM, bringing together representatives from the government, UN and NGOs. Discussions covered NGO/private sector capacity-building, water crisis challenges and safety, and 2025 services mapping.



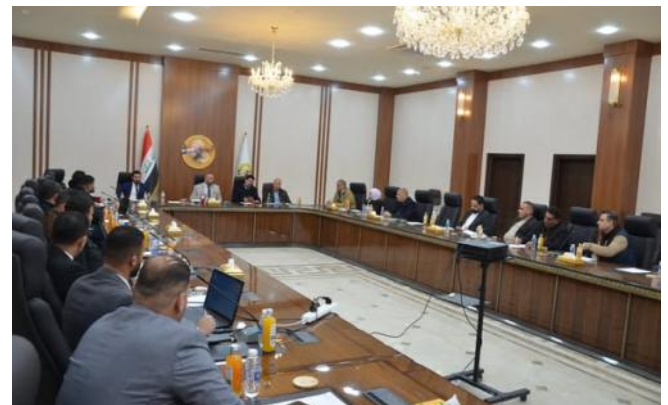
**Diyala, 18 February 2025** - Today, the Joint Coordination Forum (JCF), in collaboration with the Returns Working Group / IOM, organized a workshop in Diyala Governorate. The workshop covered the fundamentals of durable solutions, as well as international principles and standards for addressing displacement issues, with the aim of achieving voluntary, safe, and sustainable return and integration that contributes to long-term stability. It was attended by committee members from the government side, along with representatives of organizations operating in the governorate.



**Erbil, 23 February 2025** - Today, the UN Resident Coordinator Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai inaugurated the Joint Coordination Forum (JCF) Workshop in Erbil, bringing together key government stakeholders to discuss the residual humanitarian needs in areas affected by displacement. Strengthening coordination & ensuring government ownership is vital for the long-term reintegration of displaced populations across Iraq.



**Ramadi, 26 February 2025** - Today, Anbar Joint Coordination Forum (JCF) convened in Ramadi, co-chaired by the Deputy Governor and IOM. The meeting brought together representatives from the government, UN, and NGOs to discuss available projects and funding opportunities for 2025, challenges in the education sector, and key takeaways from the Iraq-wide JCF workshop with COMSEC held on 23 February.



**Salah Al-Din, 26 February 2025** - Joint Coordination Forum (JCF) in Salah al-Din held its monthly meeting, bringing together government, UN and NGOs to discuss key priorities. These included the #DurableSolutions Roadmap for Tuz Khurmatu district, financial challenges for 2025, enhancing coordination between governmental institutions and organizations in Salah al-Din, and key recommendations from the Iraq-wide JCF workshop with COMSEC held on 23 February.

## Agriculture



**Baghdad, 12 January 2025** - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO Iraq) representative in Iraq, **Dr. Salah Al-Hajj Hassan**, met with the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, **Dr. Hamid Al-Ghazi**. During the meeting, the programs implemented by the organization in Iraq in cooperation with the government and partners were discussed.



**Baghdad, 12 January 2025** - Today, the World Food Programme (WFP) signed an agreement with the **Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture** to implement the Smallholder Agriculture Revitalization Project, funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development. WFP is committed to support climate resilient investments and diversifying Iraq's agriculture and livelihood opportunities, this project will allow WFP to further build on our excellent collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture in serving Iraq and its people.

## Paving the way for a greener, more sustainable Iraq!

**Basra, 14 January 2025** - The UNDP's Deputy Resident Representative in Iraq, Sascha Graumann, met with the Netherlands Ambassador, Janet Alberda, to strengthen collaborations and advance shared goals for Iraq's development. During the visit, they connected with local farmers whose agricultural initiatives have been supported by UNDP programs, funded by generous partners.

The ambassador expressed happiness during the meeting with the farmers: "We are pleased to meet you, discuss, and stand together on the ground to explore ways to develop and support agriculture in Iraq."

UNDP's Deputy Resident Representative, Sascha Graumann said: "UNDP Iraq is dedicated to advancing the climate and environment agenda, fostering sustainable solutions for a brighter future in Iraq."

Farmers expressed their heartfelt

gratitude for the support they received, which revitalized agriculture on their farms and improved the environmental conditions in their areas. These efforts contribute significantly to Iraq's goals of adapting to climate change and

mitigating its impacts, improved environmental conditions, and strengthened resilience to climate challenges.

Together, we are paving the way for a greener, more sustainable Iraq!



## FAO Iraq and partners continue their efforts to enhance sustainable agricultural development and empower rural communities

**Wasit, 11 January 2025** - As part of strengthening collaboration between FAO Iraq and local government in Wasit, FAO Representative Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan met with DG of Agriculture in Wasit, Eng. Arkan Al-Shammari.

The joint activities to promote climate-smart agricultural practices were reviewed as part of Canada Government funded project.

The joint team from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the directorate also reviewed the project's interventions to develop key value chains, Farmer Field Schools (FFS), and rural women empowerment.

FAO Iraq continues its efforts, in

collaboration with local and international partners, to enhance

sustainable agricultural development and empower rural communities.



## Enhancing coordination and joint action to support food security and sustainable development in Iraq

**Baghdad, 29 January 2025** - The 5th meeting of the Sector Coordination Group for Agriculture, Food & Irrigation was held today, co-chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO Iraq and European Union in Iraq and was attended by representatives from the Government of Iraq, relevant ministries, UN agencies, national and international partners.

The meeting was chaired by the Technical Deputy Minister of

Agriculture, and discussions focused on monitoring financing mechanisms, early warning systems for food security, and the latest developments and achievements in the food, agriculture, and water sectors

This meeting is part of the joint efforts of the Iraqi Government, donors, UN agencies, and other partners to enhance coordination and joint action to support food security and sustainable development in Iraq.



## EU delegation visits Southern Iraq to witness the progress in climate-smart agriculture applications and the improvement of farmers' livelihoods



**Basra, 20 January 2025** - The FAO-EU-funded project entitled "Restoration and Strengthening the Resilience of Agri-food Systems in Southern Iraq" is being implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and local partners. This initiative aims to support smallholder farmers and communities in adapting to climate challenges while improving agricultural productivity and livelihoods.

A delegation from the European Union (EU), comprising Mr. David Healy, Deputy Head of Delegation and Chargé d'Affaires, and Dr. Lennart Deridder, EU Head of Cooperation in Iraq, visited project sites in Basra and Thi-Qar Governorates. The visit aimed to assess the progress of ongoing initiatives and highlight their impact on enhancing resilience and sustainability in the region's agri-food systems, particularly focusing on livestock, dairy production, tomatoes, and dates.

The FAO-EU funded project, addresses key challenges faced by smallholder farmers in southern Iraq by introducing agricultural practices aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change and improving water use efficiency at the farm level. During the visit, the delegation engaged with farmers, women dairy producers, and local officials, observing the progress made in advancing agricultural practices, and marketing.

The visit included:

- Rural Dairy Centers for Milk Collection, Cooling, Processing, and Marketing:

The delegation visited one of the 45 rehabilitated centers across the three targeted governorates. These centers should support 300 women groups,

- Cultivation of New Fodder Crops:

The delegation visited sites where new fodder crops have been introduced by the project as part of an integrated package for sustainable farming.

- Developing Tomato and Date Palm Value Chains:

The delegation witnessed the advancements achieved in these value chains on production, quality, post-harvest handling, and marketing. Utilizing Clean Energy for Marshland Water Desalination:

The delegation visited a solar-powered household water desalination unit in Halab, located in the marshlands of Al-Chibayish. Designed by FAO experts, this unit uses solar panels to generate electricity and operate the household desalination system, ensuring clean and sustainable energy production. These solutions aim to empower families to thrive in place, helping them overcome the challenges posed by harsh environmental conditions, reduces the household workload for women and improves overall hygiene standards.

- Meeting with Local Authorities and Communities at the Marshlands Revitalization Center:

The delegation met with local authorities and communities at the Marshlands Revitalization Center, where discussions focused on the sustainable development of the marshes region and the collaboration between various stakeholders.

Dr. Deridder appreciated the project's

achievements and its collaborative approach, stating: "The EU is committed to supporting initiatives that foster sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture in Iraq. This project exemplifies how innovation and partnership can transform challenges into opportunities. Witnessing the positive impact on farmers, women groups, and value chains in the region, is truly inspiring. The EU deeply values its partnership with local communities and FAO in achieving these shared goals."

Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Iraq Representative, emphasized the importance of the initiative in promoting resilience and sustainability, saying: "This partnership between FAO, the EU, and the Ministry of Agriculture reflects our shared commitment to building a sustainable future for Iraq's agri-food systems. By equipping farmers and women groups with climate-smart practices, we are empowering communities to improve their livelihoods while preserving the unique environment of southern Iraq. We also extend our gratitude to the European Union for its exceptional support and underscore the importance of collaboration with all national stakeholders."

Mr. Kifah Al-Asadi, the Head of Local Authority of Al-Chibayish district highlighted the importance of international efforts, stating: "Local authorities appreciate the ongoing efforts of international organizations for their attention to the Marshes area, given its historical and environmental significance. The local government remains committed and ready for further cooperation to ensure sustainable development in this region."

The FAO-EU collaboration, continues to promote resilient agri-food systems, and community empowerment, ensuring a more sustainable future for southern Iraq.



## Advancing sustainable agriculture in Basra

**Basra, 20 January 2025** - The UNDP's Deputy Resident Representative in Iraq, Sascha Graumann, and the Netherlands Ambassador, Janet Alberda, visited one of the beneficiaries of a UNDP-supported sustainable agriculture project in Basra.

This farm highlights the transformative power of sustainable practices, made possible through UNDP initiatives. By utilizing solar energy systems and modern irrigation tools, the farm now operates entirely on clean energy, reducing reliance on diesel and cutting costs significantly.

Producing wheat in the winter and watermelons and cantaloupes in the spring, the farm is thriving. With the project's continued support and technical guidance, the farmer plans to



expand to new crops, including date palms and tomatoes, in future seasons. The visit featured a comprehensive tour of the farm's systems and a demonstration of its productivity, showcasing its critical role in

promoting sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture in #Basra. This initiative is paving the way for enhanced food security, improved rural livelihoods, and a greener, more sustainable Iraq.

## FAO Iraq Representative meets with the Kurdistan Regional Government's Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources

**Erbil, 29 January 2025** - FAO Iraq Representative, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, met with Ms. Begard Talabani, the Kurdistan Regional Government's Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources, along with the Deputy Minister and team, to discuss ongoing joint efforts, including updates on the Genebank/Seedbank project in Sulaymaniyah, funded by the European Union. The FAO and MoAWR-KRG meeting also highlighted key joint efforts in: developing veterinary services; enhancing beekeeping and honey production; and Shamamk Irrigation Project (WaPOR).



## FAO Iraq continues to monitor the activities developed with farmers and producers in Nineveh Governorate

**Mosul, 22 January 2025** - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), continues to monitor the activities developed with farmers and producers in Nineveh Governorate to ensure the achievement of objectives and the sustainability of agricultural activities after the completion of the European Union in Iraq funded project, supporting the livelihoods of returning farmers in rural and peri-urban areas.

The challenges of the wheat season in northern Iraq are increasing due to the delay and scarcity of rainfall, which will significantly impact rainfed crops. Farmers have resorted to sprinkler irrigation to adapt to these difficult

conditions.

In this context, rainfall levels in Al Hamdaniya District, Nineveh Governorate, for the current 2024-2025 season recorded only 58mm, compared

to 584mm in the previous season on the same date. This significant decline in rainfall highlights its direct impact on the agricultural sector.





## WFP and Italy partner with the government of Iraq to boost climate resilience and agricultural livelihoods

**Baghdad, 4 February 2025** - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomes a generous contribution from the Italian Government, through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), to help Iraqi communities strengthen their resilience to climate change while creating economic opportunities, especially for women.

This initiative, in collaboration with Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment, will introduce climate-smart farming techniques, irrigation improvements, and financial support to help farmers and entrepreneurs adapt to climate change. Rising temperatures, worsening water scarcity, and land degradation have put Iraq's agricultural sector under increasing strain. As much as 40 percent of arable land in the south is feared to have been lost to desertification, with negative consequences for livelihoods and food security.

"Iraq's farmers and rural communities are on the frontlines of the fight against climate change, and WFP is committed to working with the Government of Iraq to support local governments and communities in developing scalable and sustainable climate solutions," said WFP Representative and Country Director in Iraq Mageed Yahia. "Through this initiative, we are ensuring that smallholder farmers and vulnerable groups have access to better water management, resilient crops, and climate financing. These efforts, alongside early warning systems and disaster risk reduction measures, will help communities withstand environmental shocks and secure long-term food security."

The project will be implemented in Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Thi-Qar, and

Basra; facing the harshest effects of climate change and will benefit vulnerable women-led households, crisis-affected people, and smallholder farmers. WFP will introduce efficient irrigation systems, helping farmers cut water use by 40% while boosting productivity as well as training sessions to help farmers transition to drought-resistant crops and better land management practices, ensuring long-term food security and soil preservation.

The initiative will also empower women, youth, and persons with disabilities by integrating them into climate adaptation programs, providing technical training, and facilitating access to financial resources to support entrepreneurial ventures.

WFP will partner with the Government of Iraq, academia and a number of Italian experts to provide technical solutions, equipment and expertise, to enable more efficient management of ecosystem resources. This can be done through community water ponds, nurseries and afforestation and revegetation initiatives. These approaches contribute to improved agricultural productivity and, subsequently, strengthened food systems.

"Climate change poses significant risks to Iraq's agricultural sector, threatening livelihoods and food security all over the Country, and especially for women-led households" highlighted H.E. Niccolò Fontana, Ambassador of Italy to Iraq. "Various regions across Iraq face the harsh realities of water scarcity, land degradation, and rising temperatures. This project directly addresses these challenges by promoting green skills and expanding the private sector workforce, enhancing agricultural value chains, supporting women's entrepreneurship in climate-resilient sectors. Italy is proud to commit to fostering a green transition that will benefit not only the environment, but also the population, empowering their communities and nurturing sustainability."

WFP will continue working with the Government of Iraq to support communities affected by climate change by aligning its project implementation with the Government's priorities, particularly focusing on the addressing unemployment, improving water management in irrigation to drive up production and empower women to seek and maintain sustainable livelihoods.



## Monitoring and improving water productivity workshop in Najaf

**Najaf, 11 February 2025** - As part of Sida funded project, FAO conducted training workshops on "Field Data Collection for Crop Mapping & Water Productivity Assessment" in Najaf to monitor and improve water productivity, which aligns with the broader objectives of FAO's Water Productivity Open-access Portal #W#WAPOR.

The training focused on enhancing capacity of experts from the Ministry of Water Resources and the Ministry of

Agriculture in Bagdad and Najaf to collect high-quality field data for crop mapping, which contributes to: identify

productivity gaps; promote sustainable agricultural practices; and foster improved resource management.



## Continuous efforts to develop the value chain of date palms in southern Iraq

**Basra, 12 February 2025** - With the support of the European Union Delegation in Iraq, FAO equipped the Directorates of Agriculture in Basra, Dhi Qar, and Maysan with special equipment for automatic pollination of date palms to provide this service to farmers with the aim of: faster and more efficient pollination and to reduce manual effort and waste.



## A workshop on monitoring women's rights to land ownership and/or control within national legal frameworks held in Baghdad

**Baghdad, 13 February 2025** - Within the project "Strengthening Government Capacity to Monitor & Report on UN SDG" FAO concluded a workshop in cooperation with Commission of Statistics and GIS of the Ministry of Planning of Iraq on monitoring women's rights to land ownership and/or control within national legal frameworks.

Dr. Diaa Kazim, Head of Commission of Statistics & GIS stressed the importance of women's participation in the development of economic sectors & population census data as they represent half of society, praising the constructive joint cooperation with FAO in monitoring SDGs.

Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Country Representative for Iraq, said that

effective monitoring and reporting on this indicator could help identify legal

gaps and promote reforms that ensure better land management between genders.



## Field visits continue to witness progress firsthand!

**Thi Qar, 14 February 2025** - A delegation from the Canadian Embassy in Iraq, alongside FAO and Ministry of Agriculture teams, visited FAO-GAC funded project sites in Thi Qar to see the progress in: the development of priority value chains and climate-resilient agriculture.

Participants met with women groups managing a rural dairy processing and

marketing centre - one of many to be rehabilitated, equipped, inclusive with training in climate-resilient practices.

The team also visited wheat farmers adopting climate-smart agriculture and sustainable irrigation practices, and engaged in discussions on challenges, solutions and impact.

These initiatives are paving the way for a more resilient and productive

agricultural sector in southern Iraq!



## A workshop on data management and analysis in Erbil empowers 18 epidemiologists and data specialists

**Erbil, 24 February 2025** - Under the #OneHealth approach, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in coordination with Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture and KRG Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, conducted a five-day workshop on Data Management and Analysis in Erbil to empower 18 epidemiologists and data specialists in: data collection, quality assurance and control and GIS mapping.

Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO

Country Representative for Iraq, stressed the importance of these modern technologies on data management and analysis and

developing GIS maps for animal diseases and using them in early warning animal diseases.



## Supporting 3,580 rural women in Basra, Maysan and Thi Qar with dairy value chain development equipment



**Basra/Maysan/Dhi Qar, 18 February 2025** - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and local partners, launched a new series of equipment distribution ceremonies for dairy value chain development to support rural women in southern Iraq, within the EU-funded project "Restoring and Strengthening the Resilience of Agri-Food Systems in Southern Iraq".

During the celebrations, the new equipment was distributed in the governorates of Maysan, Dhi Qar and Basra, in the presence of the Technical Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. Mithaq Al-Khafaji, FAO Representative, Salah ElHajj Hassan, representatives of the Ministry of Planning, the Women Empowerment Department of the Iraqi Council of

Ministers, the Director General of the Department of Environmental Protection and Improvement in the Southern Region, the local governments, and a number of female farmers.

### Empowering Rural Women

The dairy value chain development equipment to support rural women in southern Iraq will empower 3,580 rural women in the dairy sector in the three governorates, with 1,180 rural women in nine administrative units in Maysan Governorate, 1,250 rural women in three administrative units in Basra Governorate, and 1,150 rural women in two administrative units in Dhi Qar Governorate. The women will use the equipment to transport and store approximately 160,000 liters of milk per day.

"These activities are part of broader efforts to empower 25,834 rural

households in Basra, Dhi Qar, and Maysan, where women make up the majority of beneficiaries, which contributes to achieving significant development in improving the quality of milk and dairy products, increasing production, and economically empowering rural women, which enhances food security and opens new horizons for sustainable development in southern Iraq," said Salah ElHajj Hassan during the ceremony.

"Supporting and empowering rural women by providing them with the necessary skills and modern equipment to produce dairy products and other small agricultural projects through FAO, contributes significantly to enhancing food security efforts in Iraq, and leads to improving the economic conditions in rural communities and creating more job opportunities. We are pleased to cooperate with FAO in such efforts within deep and long-term partnership," said Dr. Mithaq Al-Khafaji, Technical Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The FAO-EU-funded project entitled "Restoration and Strengthening the Resilience of Agri-food Systems in Southern Iraq" is being implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and local partners. This initiative aims to support smallholder farmers and communities in adapting to climate challenges while improving agricultural productivity and livelihoods.

## FAO enhances knowledge and skills for Plant Genetic Resource Management in Iraq

**Baghdad/Sulaymaniyah, 22 February 2025** – On 16 February 2025 in Baghdad, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concluded a 5-day training course on "Enhancing Knowledge and Skills for Plant Genetic Resource Management in Iraq" held in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and supported by European Union in Iraq. Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq emphasized the importance of genetic resources for the development of new plant varieties with the aim of: meeting food, nutrition, health and economic security needs; enhancing biodiversity; enhancing adaptation to climate change and ever-evolving pests and diseases; building resilience in agricultural production and rural livelihoods.

On 22 February 2025 in Sulaymaniyah FAO started the same training targeting staff from General Directorate of Agriculture, relevant to Seedbank, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

"Genetic resources are critical for the development of new plant varieties that can thrive in changeable and uncertain environmental conditions, which is essential for biodiversity and food

security," said Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Country Representative for Iraq, in his opening speech.

Mr. Shalaw Jamal Director General of Agriculture in Sulaymaniyah stressed the importance of this training which contributes to supporting the gene bank that FAO is establishing here in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources with support of European Union in Iraq.



## Discussion on the Draft Trade Union Organization Law with the ILO and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

**Baghdad, 06 February 2025** - As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen workers' rights and trade union freedoms in Iraq, the Labour and Civil Society Organizations Committee in the Council of Representatives, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), held a discussion session on Wednesday, 5 February 2025. The session, chaired by MP Nahida Al-Daini and attended by several committee members, focused on reviewing the proposed Trade Union Organization Law for workers.

The discussion was attended by the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs for Labour Affairs, senior ministry officials, and the ILO, represented by Dr. Maha Kattaa, the ILO Country Coordinator for Iraq. The discussions centered on reviewing the legal frameworks of the proposed law drafted by the committee to ensure its alignment with international labour standards ratified by Iraq, particularly



ILO Convention No. 87 of 1948 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize and ILO Convention No. 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining.

The ILO reaffirmed its commitment to providing technical support for the legal reform process to ensure that the legislation complies with international standards on trade union rights and

freedoms. It was agreed to continue discussions among social dialogue partners to review the proposed law and introduce necessary amendments.

The ILO continues to provide technical support to strengthen social dialogue in Iraq as part of its activities under the Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT) project, funded by the European Union in Iraq.

## Discussion on the National Employment Policy – meeting of the High Committee for Workforce Planning and Employment

With the participation of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Iraq's High Committee for Workforce Planning and Employment held its first meeting of 2025 to discuss the final draft of the National Employment Policy for Iraq (2025-2030). This policy aims to promote the creation of sustainable job opportunities, enhance labor market efficiency, and improve working conditions.

**Baghdad, 13 February 2025** (ILO News) - The National Employment Policy seeks to foster inclusive economic growth by providing sustainable employment opportunities and reducing unemployment rates, with particular attention given to the most vulnerable groups, especially forcibly displaced persons, to ensure their inclusion in national systems. The policy also aims to improve the work environment, enhance the performance of labor institutions, develop skills, support entrepreneurship, and strengthen social protection, contributing to long-term economic and social stability.

During the meeting, Iraq's Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Mr. Ahmed Al-Asadi, stated, "The Iraqi people are a young nation, with 65% of the population being of working age. This makes it essential to establish effective

employment mechanisms and plans to empower those who can contribute to building the country. We are here to provide practical details on how to activate these plans and turn them into reality by reviewing the National Employment Policy and discussing potential amendments through joint efforts in this meeting."

The meeting addressed several key areas, including a comprehensive discussion of the National Employment Policy. Senior officials from various Iraqi ministries, trade unions, and employers' organizations, who are members of the committee, engaged in detailed dialogues to ensure the policy aligns with national employment goals and responds to the evolving needs of the workforce.

Representatives from the Ministries of Migration and Displacement, Industry and Minerals, and Environment, along with other ministries, labor organizations, and employers' organizations participating in the committee, provided their feedback on the final draft of the National Employment Policy. They commended the policy's robustness and acknowledged the role of national experts in developing it to align with Iraq's national policies and strategies.

The ILO contributed valuable technical insights through its regional specialists and Iraq office, supported by the PROSPECTS Iraq partnership, funded by the Government of the Netherlands. The organization also highlighted the development and coordination



## Discussion on the National Employment Policy – meeting of the High Committee for Workforce Planning and Employment *(continued)*

processes, along with a comprehensive framework for implementing the proposed policy.

Dr. Maha Kattaa, ILO Coordinator in Iraq, emphasized during the meeting that the National Employment Policy serves as a cornerstone for achieving sustainable development and enhancing economic and social stability in Iraq. She stressed the importance of adopting a holistic approach to addressing unemployment, stimulating economic growth, and promoting decent work conditions. She also highlighted the significance of public-private partnerships, the development of

training and employment programs, and the promotion of entrepreneurship to create sustainable job opportunities. Dr. Kattaa called for joint efforts among all stakeholders to ensure the implementation of an effective employment policy that meets labor market needs and contributes to development and stability.

The meeting concluded with an agreement to adopt the final draft of the National Employment Policy after incorporating the final amendments proposed by the Chair and members of the High Committee for Workforce Planning and Employment, to be

submitted to the Council of Ministers. The ILO provided the necessary technical support to the Government of Iraq in drafting the policy through an effective tripartite social dialogue process that spanned over three years. This process included multiple stages of policy development at various levels, reinforcing the principles of participatory policymaking between the government, labor organizations, and employers' organizations in shaping national policies aimed at achieving decent work in Iraq.

## United Nations praises Iraq's launch of the National Protection of Civilians Policy

**Baghdad, 17 February 2025** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, participated today in the national conference for the launch of the National Protection of Civilians Policy.

Under the patronage of His Excellency Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, the conference was organized by the Permanent National Committee for International Humanitarian Law, in coordination with the National Security Advisory, in cooperation with the PAX organization. In attendance were the National Security Adviser Mr. Qassim Al-Araji and a number of dignitaries.

In his remarks, Dr. Al Hassan conveyed the commendation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, for the decision of the Iraqi government to launch the National

Protection of Civilians Policy.

The Special Representative said: "We are with you in this initiative, and we believe that the time has come to launch such an initiative."

He added: "Iraq will find in the international community and the United Nations all the support and assistance in what is good for this honorable land."

While stressing the importance of

formulating a national policy to enhance accountability and hold perpetrators accountable, Dr. Al Hassan stressed the need for the policy to be carried out through fair and transparent laws to achieve justice.

"We are proud to work with you, side by side, towards an Iraq that is secure from within and with its neighbors, sovereign, strong and prosperous," he concluded.



## Iraq is moving forward to legislate a trade union law in accordance with international labour standards

**Baghdad, 19 February 2025** - With the participation of a delegation from the International Labour Organization (ILO), and as a significant step towards aligning Iraq's Trade unions law with international labour standards, the Labour and Civil Society Institutions Committee in the Iraqi Parliament held a high-level discussion session on the proposed Trade unions law.

The session was chaired by Ms. Nahida Al-Daini, Chairwoman of the

Committee, in the presence of committee members and a delegation from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, led by Minister Ahmed Al-Asadi, along with representatives from Iraqi Workers organizations and the Iraqi Federation of Industries.

In her opening speech, MP Al-Daini welcomed the attendees, emphasizing that this discussion aims to enhance dialogue on the proposed legislation, which represents a crucial step towards

protecting workers' rights and organizing union activities in accordance with best practices and international standards. She reaffirmed the committee's commitment to a participatory approach that ensures the involvement of all stakeholders, including the government, Trade Unions, and the ILO, to develop a modern law that addresses challenges in Iraq's labour environment and supports union

## Iraq is moving forward to legislate a trade union law in accordance with international labour standards *(continued)*

freedoms.

For his part, the Deputy Chairman of the Committee, MP Hussein Arab, outlined the constitutional and legislative framework upon which the proposed law is based. He highlighted provisions related to the Trade Unions bylaw, ensuring their independence, and strengthening mechanisms for coordination and cooperation among unions. He also discussed the specific procedures for establishing general and subsidiary unions as well as Trade Unions federations.

In the same context, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Mr. Ahmed Al-Asadi, reaffirmed the Iraqi government's commitment to drafting a comprehensive law that regulates union activities and protects the rights of workers and professionals. He stressed the importance of forming a specialized committee comprising representatives from the Ministry, trade unions, employers' organizations, parliamentary committee members, and ILO experts to refine the draft law and ensure its alignment with Iraq's national legislation and international commitments.

Dr. Maha Kattaa, the ILO Country Coordinator for Iraq, briefed the technical support provided by the ILO in this aspect. She stated that the legislative process had undergone multiple stages of discussions and technical consultations, including knowledge exchanges with the ILO, the recent visit of a direct contact mission to Iraq, and a study visit by an Iraqi



delegation to Geneva to explore best international practices in this field.

During the session, representatives of trade unions shared their observations on the draft law, emphasizing the importance of strengthening workers' and professional employees' rights to union organization. They also called for justice for workers who were reclassified as labourers under a 1987 government decision, demanding the restoration of their right to union representation. The discussion also covered aspects related to the establishment of trade unions at different levels, whether at workplaces, provincial levels, or the national level. Additionally, the session addressed the roadmap of the ILO's direct contact mission, which included a proposal to establish a social dialogue forum. This initiative aims to foster collaboration among key labour market stakeholders and support the development of a fair and sustainable work environment.

At the conclusion of the session, the

Parliamentary Labour Committee recommended holding a joint workshop bringing together the Legal Department of the Ministry of Labour, parliamentary committee members, consultants, as well as heads and members of trade unions, along with ILO experts. The workshop aims to conduct an in-depth review of the draft law and produce a comprehensive legal framework that serves the interests of both workers and professionals in Iraq. The committee also reaffirmed its commitment to continuing consultations and holding further workshops to finalize a law that aligns with international best practices.

The ILO continues to provide technical support to the Iraqi government and social partners to develop and implement labour legislation in Iraq. This effort is part of the Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT) project, funded by the European Union, to establish the foundations of decent work.

## ILO convenes third Technical Working Group meeting on social security and formalization in KRI

**Erbil, 26 February 2025** - The International Labour Organization (ILO) convened the third meeting of the Technical Working Group on Social Security and Formalization in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) on 23 February. The meeting brought together key stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Chamber of Commerce, and Trade Unions.

Building on the discussions from previous meetings held on 3 September and 1–2 December 2024, where priority sectors for formalization were identified, this session focused on operationalizing the five-year

formalization strategy. Participants engaged in in-depth discussions on the cooperation framework among relevant ministries to ensure a smooth, region-based implementation of the strategy. Additionally, new monitoring tools were introduced to track progress and assess the effectiveness of the approach.

The meeting facilitated a highly constructive dialogue on key issues, including policy options for expanding social security coverage, addressing legal and institutional barriers, and leveraging tripartite collaboration to tailor strategies to the regional economic and social context.

Reaffirming their commitment to a structured and inclusive formalization

process, stakeholders agreed to continue convening quarterly meetings, with future sessions dedicated to tackling sector-specific challenges and designing targeted interventions to extend social security to informal workers.

This initiative is part of the broader ILO-led efforts under the EU-supported Joint Social Protection Programme in Iraq, implemented in collaboration with UNICEF and WFP. The programme aims to accelerate social security reforms and strengthen policy frameworks to foster inclusive economic growth and promote decent work in Iraq.

## Launch of the National Social Dialogue Forum in Iraq to strengthen trade union rights and freedoms



**Baghdad, 27 February 2025** (ILO News) – Today, Baghdad witnessed the launch of the National Social Dialogue Forum in Iraq, with the participation of a high-level ministerial delegation led by Mr. Ahmed Al-Asadi, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, alongside the Deputy Minister for Labour Affairs, several general directors, senior ministerial officials, and representatives of workers' and employers' organizations. The forum also included members of the Labour Committee and civil society institutions from the Iraqi Parliament. The launch marks a significant step in enhancing consultation and cooperation between the government, workers' organizations, and employers on labor market issues and other matters of mutual interest.

The forum aims to promote social dialogue through a sustainable mechanism that enables the tripartite partners to consult on labor issues and economic and social policies, ensuring a balance between economic interests and social justice. It serves as an advisory body focused on reviewing and developing labor legislation, monitoring its implementation, strengthening trade union rights and freedoms, and ensuring compliance with international labor standards.

### Ministerial Opening Remarks

In his opening speech, the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs emphasized: "Social dialogue is a fundamental pillar in shaping labor policies, ensuring labor market stability, and protecting workers' rights."

Al-Asadi further clarified that the forum will serve as a permanent platform for dialogue and consultation on labor policies and legislation. It will also address challenges, propose

solutions, strengthen trade union rights and freedoms, and improve enforcement mechanisms in a way that benefits all stakeholders.

### Ensuring Compliance with International Labor Standards

The forum will play a crucial role in enhancing compliance with international labor standards, particularly concerning trade union rights and freedoms. The 2023 Direct Contacts Mission report from the International Labour Organization (ILO) to Iraq highlighted the need for a dialogue platform between the government, workers' organizations, and employers to develop a new trade union law to replace Law No. 52 of 1987. In this regard, the ILO has provided the necessary technical support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as well as to workers' and employers' organizations, to facilitate the establishment of this forum.

### Stakeholder Support and Commitment

Mr. Hussein Arab, Deputy Chair of the Labour and Civil Society Institutions Committee in Parliament, stated: "The forum is one of the key outcomes of the Direct Contacts Mission visit, and its launch represents a crucial step toward strengthening the partnership among all relevant stakeholders."

He also affirmed the full commitment of the Parliamentary Labour Committee to supporting the forum and contributing to achieving its objectives. Updating Iraq's trade union law to align with international labor standards is essential, as it directly impacts the effectiveness of social dialogue and promotes decent work in Iraq. In this context, Dr. Maha Kattaa, ILO Country Coordinator for Iraq,

highlighted during her speech at the forum's launch: "The launch of the National Social Dialogue Forum in Iraq is a significant step that reflects consensus among the tripartite constituents— the government, represented by the Ministry of Labour, as well as workers' and employers' organizations. Their agreement to move forward in promoting decent work, trade union freedoms, and labor rights is critical. A consultation platform ensures that no party's voice dominates over another, providing a valuable space for enhancing dialogue, labour legislation, and enforcement mechanisms. The ILO works closely with all partners in Iraq, and this forum represents a new mechanism for collaboration, offering comprehensive technical and advisory support to promote decent work through the National Programme implemented by the ILO."

### A National Platform for Social Dialogue

Social dialogue is a key tool for achieving economic development and strengthening social justice. The launch of the National Social Dialogue Forum in Iraq establishes a national platform for consultation, negotiation, and dialogue on labor market policies, programs, and legislation. This step aligns with Iraq's commitment to the roadmap agreed upon between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, workers' organizations, and employers' organizations following the ILO Direct Contacts Mission's visit to Iraq in 2023.

### A Space for Tripartite Consultation

The forum aims to create an inclusive and democratic environment for tripartite consultation on legal, economic, and social issues of common interest. In this context, Mr. Adel Akab, President of the Iraqi Federation of Industries, emphasized: "The forum is highly significant as it serves as a platform for consultation and dialogue between the government, workers' representatives, and employers. Had such a forum existed in the past, it would have been an essential tool for bridging gaps, addressing obstacles, and preventing issues from escalating—especially concerning the development of a trade union law for workers."

### Strengthening Trade Union Freedoms and Supporting Social Dialogue

Key objectives of the forum include reviewing and advising on labor law

## Launch of the National Social Dialogue Forum in Iraq to strengthen trade union rights and freedoms *(continued)*

reforms, monitoring law implementation, ensuring compliance with international labor standards, and reinforcing trade union rights and freedoms. The forum will also contribute to fostering a culture of effective social dialogue, strengthening the role of labor unions within the workforce and society. In this regard, Mr. Sattar Danbous Barak stressed: "The establishment of the Social Dialogue Forum is an important step toward advancing labor rights and

strengthening the foundations of decent work in Iraq by enabling workers and their representatives to express their views, aspirations, and hopes for achieving social justice."

### A Vital Step for Labor Market Regulation

The forum is expected to be a valuable addition to efforts aimed at regulating Iraq's labor market by institutionalizing tripartite dialogue and fostering consensus among

stakeholders on labor-related policies and legislation. This, in turn, will contribute to sustainable development, economic stability, and social cohesion. The ILO remains committed to providing technical support to enhance social dialogue in Iraq, develop and implement labor legislation, and strengthen enforcement mechanisms through the Building Inclusive and Transformative Employment (BITE) Project, funded by the European Union.

## Security Sector Reform

### Leadership and women's empowerment in Iraq's security sector



**Baghdad, 26 December 2024** - Over the past several years, we've made remarkable strides in empowering women in Iraq. From identifying groundbreaking successes that have sparked positive change in communities to reflecting on the critical role of women's groups in connecting local initiatives with broader strategies, much has been achieved. However, much remains to be done in advancing the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda—a critical area where progress has been slow, particularly in the security sector.

As a passionate advocate for women's empowerment, I have always believed that empowering women in the security sector is especially difficult in Iraq, given the strong societal and institutional resistance. Conservative tendencies often push for the re-establishment of traditional gender roles, relegating women to the private sphere and keeping them away from public life. These social, economic, security, and religious pretexts often disguise themselves as a form of

protection but, in reality, limit women's opportunities. Simultaneously, some conservative groups argue that women and girls do not need protection from domestic violence—a deeply concerning issue.

Despite these challenges, I have long held that women's empowerment is critical in countries facing crisis, such as Iraq. Empowering women in the security sector has the potential to break down entrenched barriers, challenge the traditional masculinity that permeates society and institutions, and ultimately lead to greater economic independence. I strongly believe that the next generation's perspective is vital in transforming Iraq's security sector. This generation recognizes the importance of women's inclusion in this domain and acknowledges the need for a multi-sectoral approach—one that goes beyond enhancing women's capacities. We must engage men in the process, create more responsive work environments, and collaborate with senior male leaders. Their involvement is essential to dismantling existing

barriers, fostering an inclusive culture, and ensuring that the sector becomes more equitable and effective.

A pivotal moment in my work was during a four-day training session I facilitated for 24 senior leaders from the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the Ministry of Defense (MOD), focused on empowering women in security institutions. The training consisted of 28 working sessions and was designed to help participants critically assess their roles and contributions toward gender equality in Iraq's security sector.

Historically, Iraq's security sector has been dominated by men, a reflection of broader societal norms. This exclusionary structure limits women's participation and hinders the sector's ability to respond to the diverse needs of Iraqi communities. In this context, men—especially those in influential leadership roles—have a critical opportunity to challenge entrenched norms and create an environment conducive to women's empowerment. Their support can accelerate change and lend credibility to initiatives aimed at increasing women's representation in the security sector.

Through engaging discussions and interactive methodologies, participants in the training began to identify their own roles in challenging harmful stereotypes about women's suitability for security sector roles. They explored ways to embrace inclusive practices, normalize women's presence in leadership positions, and promote a culture of empowerment. The support of male leaders proved pivotal in making these changes more meaningful and ensuring that women's voices are not only heard but respected.



## Leadership and women's empowerment in Iraq's security sector (continued)

Several senior leaders shared their insights during the training:

Brigadier Ali Hasan Ali of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) reflected on the early resistance to female leadership in his institution. He recalled that in 2009, male officers were hesitant to salute women in higher ranks, even though Law No. 18 provided for gender equality. "We understood the importance of this change, and so did the women. However, the leadership was insisting to adapt. Over time, however, we succeeded in transforming the institution's culture and influencing policies and practices."

Mr. Ibrahim Khalel of the Ministry of Defense (MOD) emphasized that leadership's role in women's inclusion is not merely symbolic. "It is meaningful and impactful. This is why we are actively seeking cooperation with UNDP to enhance women's engagement in the security sector."

Brigadier Adnan Hmood of the Community Police at MOI, stated, "Male leadership not only improves recruitment, training, and mentorship programs, but it also fosters collaboration and builds cohesive teams that leverage diverse perspectives. This, in turn, improves the overall

quality of security services."

The question that arose from these discussions was: What are the best strategies to engage leadership in women's empowerment?

There is no single, universal answer to this question; the strategy must be built on local contexts and needs. However, the participants agreed on several key approaches that can facilitate progress:

**Awareness and Education:** Raising awareness about gender equality and educating both men and women on the benefits of an inclusive security sector.

**Inclusive Leadership Development:** Fostering leadership skills that prioritize gender equality and inclusivity.

**Policy and Accountability:** Ensuring that policies are in place to support women's involvement and holding leadership accountable for implementing these policies.

**Success Stories:** Sharing and celebrating success stories that inspire change and demonstrate the tangible benefits of women's empowerment in the security sector.

Engaging male leadership in empowering women within Iraq's security sector is not only a moral

imperative but also a practical necessity. Men play an essential role in advancing this cause, accelerating progress, and enriching the sector's capabilities. The inclusive future that Iraq aspires to build can only be realized by working together, with both men and women collaborating to create a security landscape that serves and represents all members of society.

The road ahead requires unwavering commitment, collaboration, and a recognition that women's empowerment is a shared responsibility. As allies, advocates, and agents of change, men have a unique opportunity to champion this cause and help shape a more equitable and secure Iraq for all.

By Sundus Abbas, Gender Specialist, UNDP



## Six judges from Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council equipped with advanced arbitration knowledge and teaching skills

**Baghdad, 5 January 2025** - UNDP have concluded the Train the Trainers Program in Arbitration, marking a significant step forward for Iraq's judiciary. The program equipped six judges from Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council with advanced arbitration knowledge and teaching skills.

The journey began with a study visit to Egypt, where the judges were hosted by the Cairo Economic Court to observe its Mediation and Case Preparation Department, sharing practical insights on how courts foster Alternative Dispute Resolution for resolution of commercial disputes. The visit continued at the Cairo Regional Center for Commercial Arbitration (CRCICA), where its Secretary General, Dr. Ismail Selim facilitated experience-sharing on how arbitration proceedings are administered by arbitral instructions. Visit to Egypt concluded with the judges attending a 2-day conference on "The Role of Courts in Arbitration". Here, they exchanged insights with regional peers and engaged with Egypt's Minister of Justice – fostering



collaboration on the application of the New York Arbitration Convention. Iraqi judges were the first in the region to receive the newly published 2nd Edition of the Arabic translation of the ICCA's Guide to the New York Convention.

Organized within UNDP's Anti-Corruption and Arbitration Initiatives financed by the European Union, the

program concluded with an intensive 5-day workshop focusing on arbitration law, practice, and adult learning methodologies.

By empowering judges to train their peers, we aim to ensure long-term, sustainable impact – strengthening Iraq's judiciary and expanding the reach of arbitration knowledge across the country.

## UNAMI welcomes Iraqi president's call for reform of the justice system

**Baghdad, 8 January 2025** - UNAMI welcomes the President of the Republic of Iraq's call for reform of the justice system.

Reform of the justice system and expediting procedures and the release of prisoners who have completed their sentences or whose convictions have been overturned by the Court of Cassation, as well as addressing the conditions in prisons, as stated by H.E.

the President of the Republic Mr. Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid in his statement today, are all elements that strengthen the rule of law in Iraq.

A justice system based on the rule of law, the respect for human rights and the principle of presumption of innocence until proven guilty enhances people's trust in national institutions and promotes a just society, based on the principles of equality and

inclusivity, contributing to sustainable peace, security, and development.

UNAMI looks forward to the reform of the justice system that ensures justice for all. This is in line with UNAMI's mandate to promote accountability, the protection of human rights and judicial and legal reform, with full respect for the sovereignty of Iraq and national ownership.

## UNAMI on X on Iraqi Judiciary Day

**Baghdad, 23 January 2025** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**:

“On Iraqi Judiciary Day, we highlight the importance of the judiciary's independence and authority as a pillar for the security and stability in any country, including Iraq. On this occasion, we extend our warmest congratulations to the members of this esteemed authority. We also reaffirm our commitment to supporting and ensuring an independent, fair, and transparent judiciary in Iraq that meets the aspirations of the Iraqi people with all its components and affiliations.”



**Baghdad, 29 January 2025** - Today, UN Resident Coordinator **Ghulam Isaczai** visited the **Basmayah Model Police Station** to observe the progress of Iraq's Model Police Stations initiative. Supported by UNDP Iraq, this initiative is driving Iraq's security transition from militarized to people-centered policing. By fostering trust, enhancing safety, and expanding access to justice—particularly for women and girls—these stations are playing a crucial role in community-oriented law enforcement.



**Baghdad, 19 February 2025** - The Resident Coordinator **Ghulam Isaczai** met with **Dr. Mohammed Ali Al-Lami**, Chief of the Federal Commission of Integrity, to discuss Iraq's anti-corruption efforts, and enhancing UN collaboration to strengthen accountability and advance the Sustainable Development Goals (#SDGs).

## UNDP's report signal progress in prosecutions, stronger convictions, and the need for continued justice reform

**Baghdad, 22 February 2025** – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council and with the generous support of the European Union, launched the **Second Trial Monitoring Report**, a comprehensive view of Iraq's progress in tackling high-level corruption through the Central Anti-Corruption Criminal Court (CACC).

**Key Findings: Continued Progress in the Fight Against Corruption**  
Covering the period from August 2023 to July 2024, the report analyzes 170 monitored cases at the CACC and 80

verdicts issued by criminal and misdemeanour courts in Rusafa and Karkh, providing a comprehensive look at Iraq's efforts to address grand corruption; cases involving large-scale financial misconduct, senior government officials, and significant public interest.

Findings include:

- A rise in prosecutions of high-ranking officials, including parliament members, ministers, and governors, demonstrating a firmer stance on accountability.
- A higher conviction rate, reflecting improved case preparation

and more effective prosecutions.

- Fewer pre-trial investigations, retrials, and cases returned for reinvestigation, indicating increased judicial efficiency.
- A decline in reliance on general amnesty and trials held in absentia, reinforcing the integrity of judicial decisions.
- A closer examination of corruption networks, including cases related to the “Theft of the Century” scandal, and their impact on financial governance.
- The continued concentration of corruption cases in Baghdad and key

## UNDP's report signal progress in prosecutions, stronger convictions, and the need for continued justice reform *(continued)*



sectors such as Finance, Industry and Minerals, and the Municipality Directorate, highlighting both progress and persistent challenges.

### Moving 'Beyond the Verdict' – the push for justice and sustainable reform

The report goes beyond case outcomes to explore underlying challenges and opportunities for legal reform, emphasizing the need for electronic case management systems to enhance coordination, case tracking, and evidence integrity while streamlining judicial processes. It also highlights the importance of strengthening asset recovery mechanisms and the role of legal representatives from government institutions, which are critical for reclaiming stolen public funds. Additionally, the report examines the role of women in Iraq's judiciary, particularly in handling grand corruption cases, shedding

light on the barriers they face in advancing to senior positions and the need for greater inclusivity in the justice system.

### Supreme Judicial Council, UNDP and EU Perspectives on Iraq's Anti-Corruption Reforms

Speaking at the launch event the Head of Public Prosecution at the Supreme Judicial Council, Judge Najim Abdullah Ahmed recommitted their efforts to curb corruption, "As the second report under the Trial Monitoring Programme, conducted in partnership with UNDP, this report demonstrates that our efforts to combat corruption are beginning to yield results. However, it also highlights the challenges that remain. The Supreme Judicial Council remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing reforms and ensuring a corruption-free Iraq." Recognizing Iraq's ongoing efforts,

UNDP Iraq's Resident Representative, Auke Lootsma, highlighted the importance of continued investment in judicial capacity: "We commend the Supreme Judicial Council for its commitment to fighting corruption and strengthening judicial integrity. The Central Anti-Corruption Criminal Court and ongoing reforms demonstrate a strong commitment to accountability. Investing in judicial capacity, specialized courts, and electronic systems will have lasting benefits for transparency, economic growth, and stability in Iraq."

Thomas Seiler, European Union Ambassador to Iraq, reiterated the EU's commitment to supporting Iraq's judicial reforms: "The European Union is proud to stand alongside Iraq in the fight against corruption. Our partnership with the United Nations and the Supreme Judicial Council reflects a shared dedication to integrity, good governance, and sustainable development."

Following the First Trial Monitoring Report launched in 2024, the Second Trial Monitoring Report of 2025 offers concrete recommendations to further strengthen the anti-corruption legal framework, enhance judicial role and capacity, and build public trust in accountability mechanisms.

Access to the full report and related infographics:

English: <https://go.undp.org/3SM>

Arabic: <https://go.undp.org/3Sf>

## Mine Action

### UNMAS : Safe Home - an Iraqi TV Series on women in Mine Action

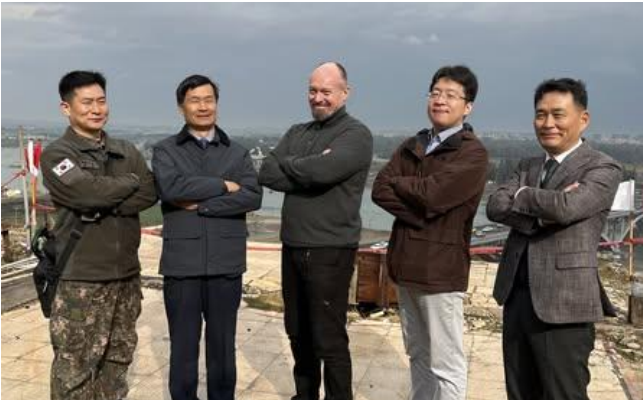
**Baghdad, 07 February 2025** - Safe Home is a six-episode online series following the journey of a young Iraqi woman named Ahlam, who works as a searcher with a demining NGO. As she clears dangerous lands of improvised explosive devices, she faces profound challenges not only in her work but also from her family and society.

UNMAS Iraq made this series to facilitate the inclusion of more women in the mine action sector in the country. Today, women represent 40% of implementing partner staff, serving in senior management, operational roles, and support functions. This

includes four women in management, 33 in operational roles, and nine in

support positions, reflecting significant progress in achieving gender inclusion.





**Baghdad, 9 January 2026** - Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme met with His Excellency Ambassador **Choi Sung-soo** at the Embassy of the Republic of South Korea in Baghdad. The meeting focused on the vital role of mine action in enabling the restoration of normal life and rebuilding of infrastructure in Iraq.

On this occasion, UNMAS Iraq expresses its deepest gratitude for the long-standing support provided by the government of South Korea to Iraq and looks forward to continued collaboration in the future.



**Baghdad, 13 January 2025** - Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, met with the Ambassador of Italy to Iraq, His Excellency **Niccolò Fontana**, at the Embassy of Italy in Baghdad. Pehr provided an overview of UNMAS Iraq activities and various matters related to mine action in Iraq.

UNMAS Iraq would like to express its heartfelt gratitude for the recent generous financial contribution and the longstanding support from the government of Italy to mine action in Iraq. We look forward to continuing this fruitful collaboration.



**Baghdad, 16 January 2025** - Recently, Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, met with **Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Obaidan**, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Qatar in Baghdad. Pehr provided an overview of UNMAS Iraq operations including contamination and challenges, as well as the continued cooperation with the Government of Iraq mine action authorities. Furthermore, Mr. Lodhammar highlighted the achievements including enabling the safe and dignified returns of IDPs.

## The Government of Italy provides additional contribution to UNMAS in support of Mine Action in Iraq

**Baghdad, 11 February 2025** - The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional funding from the Government of Italy, 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. The Government of Italy has actively participated in the UNMAS Iraq programme, since 2016.

Iraq is one of the most EO contaminated countries in the world. According to data from the Iraqi national mine action authorities, a total of over 2.7 square kilometers are still 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 Italy, through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), 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 a nationalised mine action response and is implementing and managing survey and clearance operations, as well as explosive ordnance risk education activities in the most vulnerable and EO contaminated areas of Iraq.

Furthermore, through this contribution, UNMAS Iraq will also 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.

“Despite the progress made over the past two decades in mine action, it is crucial to permanently overcome this

threat. This initiative, implemented by UNMAS Iraq, represents a further step towards ensuring the necessary security conditions and facilitating returns and reconstruction in the areas most contaminated by explosive ordnance. Italy attaches great importance to this programme and expects a positive influence in the socio-economic, welfare and environmental aspects of the lives of the Iraqi people.” said Niccolò Fontana, Ambassador of Italy to Iraq.

“UNMAS Iraq is grateful for the generous contribution from the Government of Italy and AICS. The additional funding will allow UNMAS to continue to our support of a strong and well-coordinated mine action sector also in 2025. It will also allow UNMAS to continue to support safe and dignified returns of Internally Displaced People.” said Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme.

## The Government of the Slovak Republic and the Governemet of Estonia provide additional contribution to UNMAS in support of the Iraqi Mine Action sector

**Baghdad, 11 February 2025** - The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes a new contribution from the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Governemet of Estonia, in support of humanitarian mine action endeavors in Iraq. Both countrites, Slovakia and Estonia have 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.

Iraq is one of the most explosive ordnance contaminated countries in the world. According to data from the national mine action authorities, namely the Directorate for Mine Action

(DMA) and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), more than 2.7 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 will support the continuation of the clearance operations 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 also support UNMAS Iraq's technical and advisory support to the DMA and IKMAA, as well as explosive ordnance risk education efforts delivered to raise awareness and protect civilians.

Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq, Chief Mine Action Programme, expressed his gratitude: "UNMAS Iraq deeply appreciates the generous contribution from the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Governemet of Estonia. This support enables us to continue assisting the DMA and IKMAA, as well as national operators in creating a safe environment free from explosive hazards for all Iraqis."

## Healthcare

### UNFPA on X

**Baghdad, 21 January 2025** - Fact - 98.5% of main health centers in Iraq now provide family planning services, up from 44% in 2019. 1,052 centers empower families to plan for a better future. UNFPA is dedicated to ensuring a healthy, safe life for all.

## WHO and UNHCR jointly strengthen health services in Iraq

**Qushtapa, 21 January 2025** - Today, the Qushtapa Primary Health Care Center (PHCC) was officially inaugurated—a collaboration between WHO and UNHCR, with support from BPRM, to integrate refugees into the national health system.

This PHCC will provide essential services to 50,000 beneficiaries, including Syrian refugees and the host community.

- UNHCR: Construction
- WHO: Equipment and furniture

Qushtapa camp is the final camp to be integrated, a significant step towards inclusive and equitable healthcare in Iraq.



### UNFPA on X

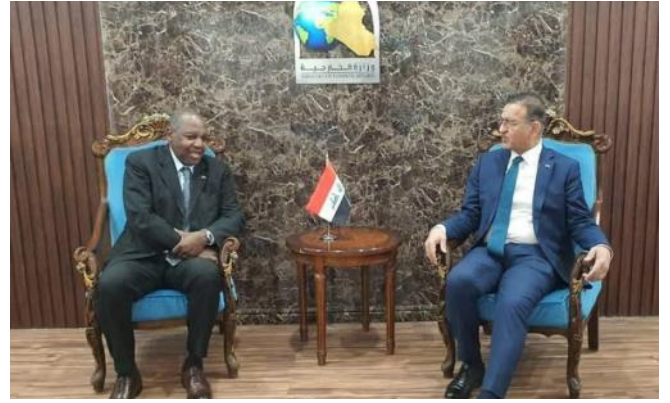
**Baghdad, 24 January 2025** - UNFPA in Iraq, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, brought the Adolescent Girls' Toolkit to schools in 10 governorates, equipping girls with essential health knowledge. This is a step towards healthier, stronger communities.

Empowering Adolescent Girls Through Education, UNFPA: organized 14 capacity-building sessions (ToTs); trained 350 Ministry of Education staff; reached 2,736 adolescent girls with reproductive health & family planning education.





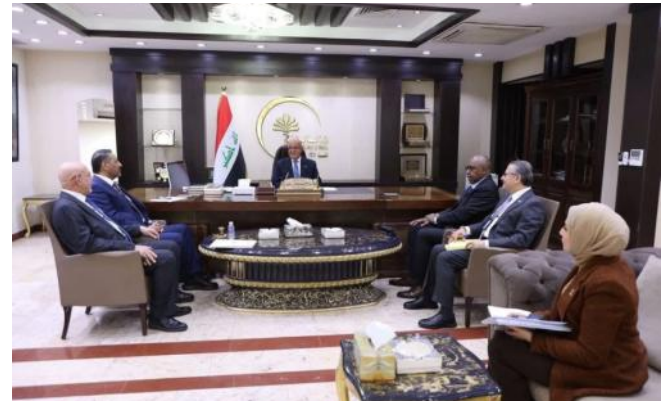
**Baghdad, 23 January 2025** - Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Iraq, met with Mr. Saleh Thamad, Health Advisor to the Prime Minister. They reiterated the importance of addressing all determinants of health and leveraging Cooperation.



**Baghdad, 23 January 2025** - Dr. George Alfred KI-Zerbo, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Iraq, met with Dr. Fadhel Al-Rahim, Head of the Department of International Organizations and Conferences at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the meeting, the important role of WHO and United Nations support in improving health and development outcomes through joint investments and multilateral partnerships was emphasized.



**Erbil, 27 January 2025** - The World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Iraq, Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo, met with Kurdistan Region's Minister of Health, Saman Barzinji, alongside the executive team, to bid them farewell. The Minister expressed deep appreciation for the WHO team's invaluable efforts and contributions to advancing the health and well-being of the Iraq population in particular in the Kurdistan Region. Dr Ki-Zerbo Georges Alfred dedicated the Ministry of Health/Government recognition to the entire team from the WHO Iraq, WHO EMRO, and WHO HQ. He assured the Minister of the WHO's continuing support in line with the Country Cooperation Strategy and KRG priorities. The conversation marked a moment of gratitude and continued commitment to improving public health in Iraq and in the Kurdistan Region.



**Baghdad, 27 January 2025** -The World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Iraq, Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo, paid a courtesy visit to H.E. Dr. Saleh al Hasnawi, Iraq Minister of Health, and his executive team. The Minister of Health lauded WHO Iraq's dedicated work and the organization's impactful role in enhancing the health and quality of life of the population. Dr Ki-Zerbo expressed gratitude on behalf of three levels of the organization for the excellent collaboration between WHO Iraq, WHO EMRO, WHO HQ, in the context of the organization's Country Cooperation Strategy and the UN Sustainable Development Country Framework (UNSDCF) for Iraq.

## UN Resident Coordinator Isaczai visits healthcare facilities in Baghdad

**Baghdad, 3 February 2025** – Today, UN Resident Coordinator Ghulam Isaczai visited a Primary Healthcare Center in Baghdad to see how WHO Iraq-supported digital tools are improving immunization records. He also toured Al-Shaab Hospital, a public-private partnership model offering state-of-the-art equipment and services.

At the Alziwya Primary Health Care facility, he observed how digital health solutions, supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) Iraq, were transforming immunization record management by improving vaccine

tracking, reducing paperwork, minimizing errors, and enabling real-time data access. These advancements contribute to a more efficient, data-driven health system, supporting Iraq's efforts toward better-managed and more responsive healthcare services.

During his visit to Al-Shaab Public Hospital in Baghdad, UN Resident Coordinator Isaczai observed the success of the country's public-private partnership model. By collaborating with the private sector, the hospital is enhancing service delivery, modernizing expertise, and improving patient care.



## UNFPA on X

**Ninawa, 12 February 2025** – “Access to quality reproductive health & family planning services is key! At Ninawa Excellency Health Center with British Embassy Baghdad, seeing firsthand the impact of collaboration in strengthening healthcare services. Honored to welcome the British Deputy Ambassador and UKaid team.



## WHO team successfully concluded its participation at the Health Exhibition in Erbil

**Erbil, 16 February 2025** - The WHO team successfully concluded its participation at the Health Exhibition in Erbil, engaging through panel moderation, technical lectures, and our interactive booth. A valuable opportunity to strengthen partnerships and advocate for health security and #HealthForAll.”



## The story of Rajwan Shawana: a journey of hope

**Sulaymaniyah, 18 February 2025** - In the city of Sulaymaniyah, nestled in the embrace of Iraq's northeast mountains, the birth of Rajwan Shawana brought both joy and unanticipated challenges to his family. At just nine months old, Rajwan's fight for survival began as his parents noticed something amiss with his growth. After medical consultations, they were confronted with the alarming reality: a congenital heart defect was preventing his heart from pumping oxygen efficiently, making urgent surgery a matter of life or death.

### The Way to Baghdad

With unwavering determination, Rajwan's parents embarked on a grueling journey to Ibn Al-Bitar Center for cardiac surgery in Baghdad. Despite the emotional and physical toll, their hope remained steadfast. At the center, medical evaluations confirmed the need for advanced cardiac surgery. The case was then promptly referred to Fallujah Hospital, which had recently undergone a remarkable transformation, equipped with all new medical facilities under the UNDP, generously funded by the German government.

### The Way to Fallujah: A Community of Compassion

Upon arriving in Fallujah, the family was greeted with an outpouring of kindness from the city's residents. Rajwan's father, moved by their hospitality, remarked:

"The people of Fallujah welcomed us like their own family. Their warmth gave us strength during a difficult

time."

In a twist of fate, Rajwan's father reunited with an old friend, Saif Hikmat, a man who had once sought refuge in Sulaymaniyah during the ISIS conflict. Saif's gratitude for the past became a beacon of support for the family.

"In Sulaymaniyah, your people were our family when we had nowhere to go. Now, it's my turn to stand by you," Saif said.

### A Lifesaving Surgery

At Fallujah Hospital, Dr. Mohammed Hamdi led a team of specialists equipped with state-of-the-art cardiac technology. Speaking about Rajwan's case, Dr. Hamdi shared:

"Every child deserves a fighting chance, and we are here to make that possible." The hospital's recent upgrades—courtesy of international support—had turned it into a center of excellence. In the past year alone, the facility had conducted over 15 pediatric open-heart surgeries and 225 monthly catheterization procedures, serving patients from across Iraq.

### Recovery and Renewal

Ten days post-surgery, Rajwan's health began to stabilize. Dr. Hamdi expressed optimism about his future, stating:

"This is a new beginning for Rajwan and his family. With proper care, he has a great chance at a normal life."

For his parents, the successful surgery marked the end of a harrowing chapter and the start of a hopeful journey toward a brighter tomorrow.

### A Symbol of Hope

Rajwan's story transcends his personal struggles. It is a testament to the resilience of communities, the power of international cooperation, and the life-changing impact of medical innovation. His recovery not only brings hope to his family but also highlights the profound role of humanitarian efforts like the United Nations Stabilization Program and the generosity of the German government.

When Rajwan returns to Sulaymaniyah, his journey will echo as a tale of triumph over adversity—a story of how compassion, determination, and unity can light the way, even in the darkest of times.





**Baghdad, 26 February 2025** - The Acting WHO Representative in Iraq, **Dr. Ali Ardalan**, met with **Dr. Riyadh Al-Hilfi**, Director General of Public Health, in a formal engagement. Dr. Ardalan took this opportunity to commend Dr. Al-Hilfi's leadership and ongoing efforts in fortifying public health in Iraq. He also underscored the significance of the Pandemic Fund's application which provides an opportunity to enhance pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response capabilities. During the discussion, WHO confirmed its commitment to assisting Iraq in strengthening its public health system, with a focus on implementing the PHC approach, advancing UHC and improving measures to ensure health security.

**Baghdad, 26 February 2025** - The Acting WHO Representative in Iraq, **Dr. Ali Ardalan**, was received by His Excellency **Dr. Saleh Al-Hasnawi**, Iraq Minister of Health, during a courtesy visit. Dr. Ardalan took this opportunity to acknowledge His Excellency's initiatives in advancing public-private partnerships, digitalizing health information systems, strengthening the local pharmaceutical industry, promoting the One Health Initiative, and the pandemic fund's application, among other initiatives. During the meeting, WHO reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Iraq in strengthening its health system, particularly through the primary health care (PHC) approach, in alignment with the designation of this year as the Year of Strengthening Primary Health Care. WHO also reiterated its readiness to collaborate on key health priorities, including health system development during the transition from humanitarian response to development, and improving access to medicines and medical products, which is one of the flagship initiatives of the WHO Regional Director.

## Revitalized Erbil Maternity Hospital is open



**Erbil, 28 February 2025** - The World Health Organization (WHO) Iraq reaffirms its commitment to strengthening healthcare systems with

the inauguration of the revitalized Erbil Maternity Hospital alongside MoH KRG. With the presence of Minister of Health of KRG, Dr. Saman Barazanji, and acting WHO Representative in Iraq, Dr. Ali Ardalan, this initiative advances universal access to quality maternal & newborn care, especially for vulnerable populations, including refugees and IDPs. Aligned with UN commitments and SDG 3, this investment in safer deliveries and resilient healthcare infrastructure supports equitable health access, gender equality (SDG 5), and reduced inequalities (SDG 10)—critical for achieving #HealthForAll.

## Population

### New UNFPA Representative in Iraq presents her credentials to MOFA

**Baghdad, 18 February 2025** - Today, Ms. Hind Jalal officially presented her credentials to the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, marking the start of her tenure as the UNFPA Representative in Iraq.





## Iraq unveils key census insights: a new era for Iraq's national planning



*Continued from page 1*

The conference featured a detailed presentation of the census findings by the President of the Central Statistical Organization, Dr. Dhiaa Awad Kazem, highlighting key demographic trends, socio-economic indicators, and housing statistics. A panel discussion, involving international experts, explored best practices for utilizing census data to inform policies on education, healthcare, economic planning, and social inclusion.

Building on the momentum of today's conference, an Advisory Committee Meeting will take place on 25 February 2025, bringing together national and international experts to discuss the next steps in leveraging census data for policy formulation and program implementation. The focus will be on ensuring that the findings lead to impactful, people-centered policies that drive Iraq's development agenda forward.

UNFPA, in collaboration with the Government of Iraq, remains dedicated to ensuring that the census serves as a foundation for informed decision-making, contributing to Iraq's National Development Plan 2024-2028 and the broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Here is the text of the speech by the Deputy Special Representative to the United Nations Secretary General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Isaczai at this event:

"Your Excellency, Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, Minister of Planning, Dr. Mohammed Tamim, Your Excellency Minister of Planning in the Kurdistan Regional Government, Mr. Dara Rashid, Esteemed guests and experts,

Colleagues and friends,  
Peace be upon you.

It is with great honor that I stand today at this significant event, which marks a remarkable milestone in Iraq's development journey as we launch together 2024 Census results. This occasion is not merely a celebration of numbers and statistics; rather, it is a testament of the progress Iraq is making toward building a more prosperous and sustainable future.

In this context, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Government of Iraq for this remarkable achievement, which reflects its steadfast commitment to progress and development. I also would like to express my gratitude to all officials and decision-makers present here today, whose tireless efforts have made this possible.

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation to my colleagues at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), who have provided technical support to the Government of Iraq during the various stages of the census, thus enabling maximum benefit from available international expertise in this field.

The results of the census serve as a cornerstone in achieving the government's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This data plays a crucial role in shaping general policies, prioritizing

expenditures, and directing resources to the sectors most in need. Furthermore, they represent an essential tool for ensuring social justice in line with the national development priorities.

The United Nations remains committed to supporting the Government of Iraq in achieving its development goals. To this end, we have developed the "United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)", a five-year partnership framework between the United Nations and the Government of Iraq aimed, specifically, at advancing this objective.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to H.E. Dr. Mohammed Ali Tamim and the team of his esteemed Ministry for their relentless efforts and continuous support over the past year in developing the Cooperation Framework. At this critical stage, I urge the Government of Iraq to expedite the approval process, so that, we can move forward, in close partnership, toward achieving our mutual goals and making tangible progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We look forward to an effective partnership with the Government of Iraq in implementing the Cooperation Framework and enhancing its leadership role by considering financial contributions to the Trust Fund, to be established to support the implementation of the Cooperation Framework.

Finally, I reaffirm the United Nations' commitment, as a key partner, in supporting Iraq on its path towards a more prosperous and sustainable future. The UN stands ready to provide all necessary expertise and knowledge in various fields, particularly in relation to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Thank you."





**Baghdad, 28 January 2025** - Senior Advisor to KRG Prime Minister Masrour Barzani for Foreign Affairs and Climate Change, **Ms. Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman**: "A good and detailed discussion today with **Auke Lootsma**, Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq. I thanked UNDP for its support to Kurdistan Region and the federal government on climate change and discussed how we can enhance our coordination."



**Baghdad, 28 January 2025** - **Mr. Mageed Yahia**, World Food Programme (WFP) Iraq Representative and Country Director, and his team in Baghdad were pleased to host the Senior Advisor to the Kurdistan Region Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs and Climate Change, **Ms. Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman**, and her accompanying delegation to WFP Iraq's office. We had a rewarding discussion on the ongoing collaboration between WFP Iraq and Kurdistan Region on key portfolios in relation to advancing the carbon climate financing and carbon opportunities in support of the food security situation in the country."

## ILO participates in the “Changemakers session: The role of women in promoting awareness of clean energy”

**Basra, 26 January 2025** - On the occasion of the International Day of Clean Energy, the International Labour Organization (ILO) participated in the “Changemakers session: The role of women in promoting awareness of clean energy” in Basra.

We discussed how clean energy is an environmental solution and an opportunity to create decent and sustainable jobs.

Basra women, you are the driving force of this transformation. Through clean energy, you can build a professional and sustainable future for yourself and your families

The ILO, in collaboration with the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), is implementing an ambitious project in southern Iraq to promote private sector development, with a focus on sustainable green businesses.

This project not only aims to improve the economy but also to create decent jobs and raise awareness of the importance of the green economy and clean energy. In July, we launched a Green Business Camp in Basra to promote innovation, along with solar energy training.



## UNHCR on X

**Erbil, 26 January 2025** – “Clean energy = brighter futures. Solar panels installed by UNHCR at Bahirka Registration Centre help power operations. Additional energy created is also shared with the local community, driving sustainability in Erbil.”



## WFP on X

**Baghdad, 31 January 2025** - Thanks to the Italian government for their contribution to the World Food Programme (WFP) Iraq, enabling us to connect the various Iraqi institutions, academia and communities with Italian expertise to support farmers, boost community resilience, and empower women through green projects in Iraq.

**Baghdad, 3 February 2025** - On World Wetlands Day, we highlight a collaboration between the World Food Programme (WFP) Iraq and the University of Sulaymaniyah on natural solution to climate change. Constructed Wetlands can treat up to 4,000L of graywater for irrigation, offering a sustainable, low-cost option to farmers facing water scarcity and pollution. It also reduces carbon emissions, boosts biodiversity, and restores ecological balance, while serving as a research hub for scientific studies. #ProtectWetlands

## SRSB for Iraq Dr. Al Hassan visits The Green House project

**Baghdad, 31 January 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, accompanied by the Governor of the Central Bank, Mr. Ali Al-Alaq, and Mr. Wadee Al-Handal, Chairman of the Iraqi Private Banks League, visited today The Green House project. This youth-led initiative aims to promote afforestation, combat desertification, and encourage organic farming, with support from Iraqi banks and under the sponsorship of the Central Bank of Iraq.



## UNEP on X

**Baghdad, 3 February 2025** - There are a variety of wetlands in West Asia including marshes, mangroves, lagoons, oases and others. Protecting these ecosystems is necessary due to their role in providing clean water and food, and protecting from extreme weather events.

## WFP on X

**Baghdad, 6 February 2025** - Today, The Ministry of Environment, endorsed the first Nature based Solution project. It enables Basra government with the World Food Programme's support to leverage the Global carbon market to finance Mangrove plantation initiatives that enhance degraded ecosystem services for food security. This endorsement by the Government of Iraq is a milestone that will bring forth a new phase of development and climate financing to the country.

## Climate Change Forum brings together more than 100 stakeholders from government, academia and civil society to tackle pressing

**Mosul, 12 February 2025** – Climate Change Forum brought together more than 100 stakeholders from government, academia and civil society to tackle pressing climate challenges. With support from the United Nations in Iraq and partners, discussions focused on solutions for water scarcity, sustainable agriculture and resilience. UNAMI's Development Coordination Officer for Ninawa, Martijn Dalhuijsen,

emphasized the importance of collective action: "Climate change affects us all,

and solutions require joint efforts at all levels."



## SRSB for Iraq Dr. Al Hassan visits the Al-Barakiya water project

**Najaf, 24 February 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, visited the Al-Barakiya water project in the Kufa district. This project is in cooperation between the Najaf Water Directorate, UNICEF and the German KfW Development Bank, and is among a package of projects initiated in response to climate change. The project aims to reduce contamination and provide clean water, benefitting 250,000 people in the Najaf Governorate.



## The preparatory meeting for the National Water Dialogue in Iraq convenes in Baghdad

**Baghdad, 20 January 2025** - Today, Minister of Water Resources Dr. Aun Dheyab and UN Resident Coordinator Ghulam Isaczai convened the preparatory meeting for the National Water Dialogue in Iraq. The discussion brought together Government, civil society, international partners, and experts to address pressing water challenges and explore avenues for sustainable water management.



## For the first time in Iraq FAO launches the “Climate Wise Women” initiative to enhance rural communities to adapt to climate change



**Basra, 28 February 2025** - For the first time in Iraq, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, concluded a 4-day ToT to train a cadre of women under the Climate Wise Women (CWW) initiative to act as agents of change for climate adaptation in the agricultural sector, and to reach out to rural women in Central and Southern governorates of Iraq, in particular, in rural communities in Muthanna and Najaf Governorates. The training was designed and delivered by a team of FAO international experts specialized in climate-smart agriculture and women empowerment.

This training is an initiative under the “Enhanced Climate Resilience of vulnerable agriculture households in Southern Iraq” project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Climate Wise Women (CWW) is a pilot approach in the Middle East for empowering rural women, building their capacities, and bridging the gap between scientific-learning and practice-based knowledge. It consists of a cadre of female extension officers, and local facilitators trained and certified

as Climate Wise Women (CWW) to strengthen their capacities to adapt and mitigate to climate-related challenges through; scientific curriculum tailored to local agro-climatic context, practical demonstrations at field-level, in addition to community engagement and awareness.

Salah Elhadj Hassan, the FAO representative in Iraq, emphasized on the importance of this pioneering initiative and its significance in the region.

He also elaborated on the FAO efforts and expertise gathered and spent to bring this innovative initiative into

action. “The key role to be played by the Master trainers and facilitators consists in increasing rural women awareness, adaption and mitigation skills, which in turn will help local communities to mitigate to climate change” he said.

“Empowerment of these women at village level by raising their awareness about the seriousness of climate change effects, strengthening their skills, and providing them with tools to promote Climate Smart Agriculture, will support collective action to adopt effective adaptation practices” he added.

Based on this TOT, the Climate Wise Women are intended to become advocates and resource persons of climate adaptive agriculture for women and men farmers in their communities. Moreover, they will be practitioners of climate smart and adaptive agriculture at farm level, and facilitators of understanding and dialogue on climate change and modern climate adaptive agriculture among farmers, women in particular.

The Climate Wise Women will advocate for mainstreaming women and small-holder farmers needs and perspectives in National policies and Governorate plans through policy dialogues with decision-makers.



## UNESCO and ICCROM release Training Guide for Post-Conflict Heritage Recovery

**Mosul, 19 December 2024** - United Arab Emirates, UNESCO, and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) launched a training guide for post-conflict heritage recovery, enhancing their joint efforts to rebuild Mosul's cultural heritage through capacity building.

The publication of this guide follows a two-year capacity-building program in Mosul, Iraq, aimed at developing local expertise for heritage recovery. This initiative targeted 49 young graduates from local universities in the fields of engineering and architecture, equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to become heritage recovery experts.

Developed through extensive fieldwork, in cooperation with the University of Mosul, the guide showcases UNESCO and ICCROM's dedication to knowledge-sharing and capacity-building in heritage recovery, addressing the growing global challenges posed by conflicts and disasters. It outlines key objectives, such as empowering local institutions, equipping professionals with tools to tackle post-conflict challenges, and providing a roadmap for recovery projects that emphasize community engagement, sustainability, and



peacebuilding. These efforts were undertaken within the framework of UNESCO's initiative, Revive the Spirit of Mosul, as part of the project Reviving the Spirit of Mosul by Rebuilding its Historic Landmarks generously funded by the United Arab Emirates.

Aimed at a diverse audience of heritage professionals, policymakers, students, and researchers, the guide features modules on orientation, damage and risk assessment, significance evaluation, recovery planning, and implementation. It incorporates adaptable pedagogical tools, including case studies and field exercises, making it a valuable resource for institutions and individuals.

The guide captures these experiences, offering a universal framework for cultural heritage recovery in conflict zones. By fostering local expertise, community ownership, and resilience, the guide inspires hope for the preservation of cultural heritage worldwide, supporting sustainable recovery and reconciliation efforts, while leveraging it for new opportunities.

The Training Guide for Post-Conflict Heritage Recovery is available for free at

[https://articles.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2024/12/ICCROM%20Training%20Guide%20UNESCO-17-12-2024\\_final.pdf](https://articles.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2024/12/ICCROM%20Training%20Guide%20UNESCO-17-12-2024_final.pdf)

## SRSG for Iraq Dr. Al Hassan visits the ancient city and ziggurat of Ur

**Ur, 18 January 2025** - The Special Representative of Secretary-General of the United Nations for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, arrived today in Dhi Qar, southern Iraq. Continuing his

tour of the historical and cultural landmarks in the country, the SRSG visited the ancient city and ziggurat of Ur. Dr. Al Hassan spoke to the media where he highlighted the role of the Ur in influencing the human civilization over the ages. The SRSG will also visit

the Ahwar of Southern Iraq which is inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a Biodiversity Refuge and the Relict Landscape of the Mesopotamian Cities.



## Audrey Azoulay celebrates the return of the “Spirit of Mosul” as UNESCO reconstruction nears completion



*Audrey Azoulay visited Mosul on Wednesday to thank all the workers, architects and engineers who have successfully completed UNESCO's reconstruction of the Old City. In 7 years, thanks to the joint efforts of Mosul's inhabitants and international solidarity, this multicultural city martyred by Daesh has been reborn and is once again inspiring.*

**Mosul, 6 February 2025** - In February 2018, less than a year after the city's liberation, Audrey Azoulay launched the “Reviving the Spirit of Mosul” initiative. For the first time in its history, UNESCO proposed not only to coordinate but also to directly lead the reconstruction of heritage sites destroyed by war. It was an intervention of rare complexity: the Old City was 80% destroyed, empty of its inhabitants who had fled the fighting, and riddled with unexploded bombs.

“Seven years later, after having mobilized more than \$115 million, cleared and demined the site, conducted a vast consultation with the local community and trained more than 2,800 Iraqis in restoration and heritage skills, UNESCO is completing its work and Mosul is recovering essential elements of its identity. This is a collective victory, demonstrating just how useful multilateralism can be, in concrete terms and through action,” UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay.

Combining heritage, culture and education

The famous leaning Al-Hadba Minaret has regained its place in the city skyline, while the bells of the Syriac Al Tahera Catholic Church and the Dominican Our Lady of the Hour Convent are ringing again. Finally, in a few weeks' time, the Al-

Nouri Great Mosque, which had been destroyed by Daesh who had planted its black flag there, will be able to resume the thread of its history.

UNESCO's initiative has also resulted in the renovation of 400 classrooms in and around Mosul, support for the university library, the training of over 5,000 teachers and educators in peace education programs, and the conduct of numerous cultural projects such as the revival of festivals and art centers.

The UNESCO Director-General's visit was intended to thank all those who have made this initiative a reality: workers, craftsmen, architects, engineers, as well as many other members of Mosulian society. In all, UNESCO's initiative has created 7,700 jobs, accelerating economic recovery.

An example for the region and the world

“Thanks to the commitment of the United Arab Emirates, the European Union and other partners, under the impetus of UNESCO, Mosul's civil society has shown its commitment to reconnect with its heritage, culture and knowledge, and to safeguard collective memory in order to recover from a profound tragedy,” UNESCO Director-General, Audrey Azoulay.

UNESCO has also been strengthened by this initiative. The Organization has acquired new expertise in post-conflict situations and is now in a position to transpose it to other crises.

The lessons learned from its work in Mosul have already inspired several of its interventions in recent years - such as in Lebanon to rehabilitate schools in Beirut damaged by the double explosion in the port on August 4, 2020, or in Ukraine to protect heritage and help education

continue in wartime.

“What has been achieved in Mosul is an example of what can be done in the future by UNESCO and other actors in the region and around the world,” UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay

Mosul, a historically multicultural city

Mosul - al-mawsil in Arabic - means “the meeting point”. For 2,500 years, this city has been a crossroads of cultures, marked by the coexistence of different religious and linguistic communities, the crucible of Iraq's plural identity. The heritage of Mosul's Old City has always embodied these values of coexistence and openness.

This multicultural heritage was highlighted in the city skyline by the presence of the 45-metre-high Al-Hadba Minaret, erected in the 12th century, to which the bell tower of Our Lady of the Hour Convent and its clock, donated to the Mosulites by Empress Eugénie at the end of the 19th century following the first Pope mission to Mesopotamia, a few dozen metres away.

In June 2014, Daesh seized the city to make it its capital. From the Great Al-Nuri Mosque, its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, proclaimed the creation of the Islamic caliphate in Iraq. Thousands of books and ancient objects were destroyed or looted. Daesh closed cafés and persecuted artists. Religious minorities were given the choice of converting or dying. The Al Saa'a - Our Lady of the Hour Convent became a training ground for Jihadists, and its adjacent prayer house a place of imprisonment and torture.

During its rout in July 2017, Daesh decided to dynamite the Al-Hadba Minaret and the Al-Nouri Grand Mosque. Only a human chain formed by local residents prevented the total destruction of these two monuments.



## Iraq: How the world helped Mosul rise from the rubble of war



**Mosul, 6 February 2025** - Terrorist fighters with ISIL/Da'esh invaded Iraq's second city of Mosul in 2014, destroying centuries-old landmarks in a bid to erase its history and impose a bleak and repressive future on the nearly two million people who lived there.

Now, with UN support, Mosul has risen from the ashes of war and its historic monuments which had been reduced to rubble, dot the skyline once again.

The devastating nine-month-long battle to liberate the city from the terrorist group killed 10,000 civilians, leaving it in ruins.

In less than seven years, reconstruction has revitalised the city, with robust support from UN agencies and international partners, like Japan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the European Union.

International cooperation builds lasting legacy

The intensity of the fighting between the terrorists and Iraqi ground forces – supported by US-led coalition airstrikes – left many priceless buildings completely or partially destroyed, including the famous 12th century Al-Nouri Mosque.

UN agencies forged action plans with

local authorities and international partners to rebuild the war-torn city.

Teams tackled the enormous challenges, from recycling rubble and removing unexploded bombs, to rebuilding classrooms and centuries-old landmarks while re-energising the Moslawi spirit.

### Reviving the spirit of Mosul

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) joined those efforts in 2018, with a budget of \$115 million and 15 partners, including the UAE and the European Union.

The Revive the Spirit of Mosul project drafted plans to resurrect historic landmarks, classrooms and homes alongside the vibrant essence of a reborn city.

### Blueprints amid the rubble

The rebuilding plans unfolded at a steady pace.

To document the dramatic transformation, young Iraqi filmmakers set out to track the recovery in a UNESCO-supported video series.

Its 48 episodes captured the human dimension of the city's rejuvenation, telling the poignant stories of

Moslawis alongside their hopes and dreams for their beloved city.

### Safety comes first

When a conflict ends, unexploded remnants of war must be safely removed as they pose deadly threats long after the guns go silent.

First, safety was ensured for civilians returning to their neighbourhoods.

To address those dangers, a UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) team was deployed to search for and clear unexploded ordnance among the rubble.

### Dealing with 8 million tonnes of debris

To deal with an estimated seven to eight million tonnes of debris created by the battle for Mosul, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) joined forces in 2021 with local authorities to establish the city's first debris recycling centre.

“By processing the rubble to produce quality materials that can be used in reconstruction efforts, creating much needed job opportunities for returnees and cleaning-up the urban environment, this initiative practically illustrates how humanitarian needs and sustainable development goals can be addressed in a joint manner,” Dr. Jassim Humadi, Iraq's Deputy Environment Minister, said at the time.

The local population welcomed the project.

“Young people in our village view debris recycling as a golden chance in terms of job creation, which additionally, by clearing the rubble, is allowing us to return and rebuild our homes,” added Mijbel Mar'i, a 24-year-old day labourer.

### Reclaiming unity

Reconstruction is about much more than physical restoration; it is about reclaiming identity and unity.

This conviction lies at the heart of UNESCO efforts to rebuild Mosul's treasured monuments, including Al-Nouri Mosque and Al-Hadba Minaret.

The project employed more than 7,700 Moslawis and has rehabilitated four religious monuments, 124 historical homes and renovated 404 classrooms.

‘Watching my city come back to life’

“When I saw the minaret rise again, it was like watching my city come



## Iraq: How the world helped Mosul rise from the rubble of war *(continued)*

back to life,” said Omar, a young architect.

He was among several local experts that helped meticulously piece together its fragments.

Over 45,000 original bricks have been recovered from Al-Nouri Mosque and Al-Hadba Minaret and cleaned and catalogued for the reconstruction of the latter.

### Beyond bricks and mortar

UN agencies also led projects to rebuild education institutions and other civilian infrastructure damaged or

destroyed.

The newly rehabilitated Central Library at Mosul University, Iraq’s second-largest university that serves more than 50,000 students, was officially reopened in 2022 by the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

By 2021, damaged or levelled schools were being rebuilt, and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) supported psychosocial training activities for teachers, including at Al Huda Primary School in west Mosul.

UNESCO trained over 5,000 educators and parents in preventing violent

extremism, supporting more than 120,000 students.

Moslawis are now free to enjoy their culture and passions, from music to sports, like the Mosul Girls Football Club, founded in 2021 by the Sustainable Peace Foundation with UN migration agency (IOM) support.

In helping to revive the “spirit” of Mosul, UNESCO has demonstrated that culture can play an essential role in post-conflict reconstruction and the promotion of peace.

By Eileen Travers, UN News

## Mosul celebrates the opening of the House of Prayer!

**Mosul, 12 February 2025** - In partnership with ALIPH, SBAH, and the Dominican Order, UNESCO has reopened the newly rehabilitated House of Prayer, a historic landmark in Mosul next to Al-Saa’a Convent in Mosul.

The celebration ceremony was attended by Nineveh Governor Abdul Qader Al-Dakhil, the Consul general of France, representatives from UNESCO, ALIPH, the Ministry of Culture, and the Dominican Order, along with many community members.

This project is part of UNESCO’s #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul Initiative, which works to restore the city’s cultural heritage after years of conflict. The House of Prayer rehabilitation is a step towards preserving Mosul’s rich history and strengthening its

multireligious and cultural identity, promoting peaceful coexistence among

communities after city’s liberation from ISIL.



## High level European Union delegation visits Erbil Citadel

**Erbil, 19 February 2025** - UNESCO and the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalization were delighted to welcome at the World Heritage Site of Erbil Citadel, Ms. Rosamaria Gili, Deputy Managing Director for the MENA Region, Ms. Anna Maria Panagiotakopoulou, Director for GCC (including Iraq) at European External Action Service of the EU, as well as the EU countries consul generals in the Kurdistan Region.

The visit highlights the strong partnership between UNESCO and the European Union, which has backed heritage-driven recovery through the "Support to Livelihoods through Cultural Heritage Development" project, funded by the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis and now completed.

Together, we will continue to safeguard cultural heritage while fostering

economic opportunities and resilience in Iraq.





## Vocational training equips young people with the skills needed to thrive in the workforce

**Mosul, 28 January 2025** - A delegation from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, specifically the Labor and Vocational Training Directorate, visited the Vocational Training Center in Mosul in a key step toward fostering collaboration and progress in vocational education. During their visit, they met with UNESCO staff to discuss activities under the EYE-N project, funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). This initiative focuses on enhancing vocational training opportunities and providing essential support to the local community, empowering individuals to build sustainable livelihoods. The discussions also touched on efforts under the Revive the Spirit of Mosul

Initiative, which aims to restore the city's heritage and rebuild its socio-economic fabric following years of conflict. Together, the delegation and UNESCO representatives reviewed the progress achieved so far and addressed challenges that require attention. They emphasized the importance of strengthening coordination and communication among stakeholders to maximize the impact of these initiatives.

The delegation underscored the need to align vocational training efforts with the community's needs, ensuring these initiatives contribute to long-term stability and growth. During their visit, they toured the training workshops, engaging directly with trainees, observing their work, and listening to

their feedback. By doing so, they demonstrated a clear commitment to refining training programs to keep them relevant and effective for the trainees.

This visit is part of a broader effort to advance international cooperation and support the professional development of Mosul's youth. The emphasis on vocational training holds particular importance as it equips young people with the skills needed to thrive in the workforce, contributing to the city's reconstruction by addressing critical gaps in employment opportunities. By investing in youth and empowering the local community, these initiatives aim to build a more resilient and prosperous future for Mosul.

A total of 100 young individuals, including 30 women, have successfully graduated from the vocational training center in Mosul. They received specialized training in air conditioning installation and maintenance, upholstery, and TV and monitor repair, equipping them with valuable skills for a brighter future.

Looking ahead, UNESCO plans to train approximately 700 more young men and women in the coming months across various fields, further empowering them with essential skills for sustainable employment.



## Iraq commemorates International Day of Education 2025

**Baghdad, 29 January 2025** - Under the patronage of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning, Dr. Mohammed Ali Tamim, the Ministry of Planning, in collaboration with the Ministries of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Education, organized a celebration for the International Day of Education 2025. The event centered on the theme "Education: The Key to Building Human Capital." During the event, UNESCO was recognized for its leadership and contributions to advancing education in

Iraq, particularly its efforts in expanding access to quality learning opportunities across the country. The celebration reaffirmed education's

pivotal role in Iraq's development and acknowledged the collective efforts of all partners in strengthening the nation's education sector.



## Exciting news for students in Domiz, Faida sub-district, Duhok!

**Duhok, 30 January 2025** - A brand new 18-classroom school is now open, providing quality education to over 500 displaced and local Iraqi students. This school is constructed by UNHCR in support of the Refugee Education Integration Policy initiated by Kurdistan Regional Government. The new school is an important step towards building inclusive education systems in Kurdistan Region of Iraq.



## The Employment for Youth in Nineveh (EYE-N) project is working to create better job opportunities for young people in the region

**Mosul, 22 January 2025** - As part of UNESCO's #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul Initiative, the Employment for Youth in Nineveh (EYE-N) project is working to create better job opportunities for young people in the region.

A total of 100 young individuals, including 30 women, have successfully graduated from the vocational training center in Mosul. They received specialized training in air conditioning installation and maintenance, upholstery, and TV and monitor repair, equipping them with valuable skills for a brighter future.

This project is generously funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and implemented by

UNESCO in partnership with the Vocational Training Center in Mosul. Looking ahead, UNESCO plans to train approximately 700 more young men

and women in the coming months across various fields, further empowering them with essential skills for sustainable employment.



## UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq meets with the President of Baghdad University

**Baghdad, 17 February 2025** - UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Isaczai, met with Dr. Bahaa Ansaf, President of Baghdad University, to explore ways to strengthen UN-academia collaboration in Iraq and drive progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. Mr. Isaczai posted on X: "It was my pleasure to meet Dr. Bahaa Ansaf at the Baghdad University, one of the oldest and prestigious universities in the region to discuss cooperation on advancing the SDGs."



## 400 beneficiaries successfully complete vocational training in specialized workshops and on-the-job training

**Mosul, 23 February 2025** - Today, UNDP celebrates the achievements of 400 beneficiaries who successfully completed vocational training in specialized workshops and on-the-job training with local business owners.

The ceremony, organized in collaboration with the Department of Vocational Training Center, the University of Mosul, and Northern Technical University, also marks the distribution of participation and completion certificates to recognize their hard work and dedication.

Meet some of our inspiring graduates!

Maha Raad: "I am trained in sustainable and solar energy. Despite the challenges, I am determined to work in this field and hope to join a sustainable energy company soon!"

Ebaa Muhammad: "Through the green building workshop, I learned how important eco-friendly materials are for

Iraq's future. This training has opened new opportunities for me."

Khader Ahmed: "Electric cars are the future of Iraq! Through this training, I gained hands-on experience and aspire to open my own electric car repair workshop."

Firas: "I was skeptical about hybrid cars, but now I understand their potential in Iraq. This training has given me the knowledge and confidence to work in this field."

Ream Akram: "Solar energy is the future! now I know how to install and use solar batteries now and hope to find my place in the local market."

Mafaz Mumtaz: "As am only girl in the electric car workshop, I want to break barriers and open a car repair workshop for women in Iraq."

Congratulations to all our graduates! and wishing all our graduates success in their future careers!



## A workshop assesses the current EdTech landscape, identify available resources, and address capacity gaps to develop an EdTech action plan for advancing digital education in Iraq

**Baghdad, 20 February 2025** - UNESCO Iraq Office, with funding from the European Union and as part of the ITALEEM Programme, held a five-day workshop titled “Enhancing EdTech in Iraq: Current Initiatives, Resources, and Capacity Gaps” in Baghdad from 16 to 20 February 2025, in collaboration with the Ministries of Education in Baghdad and Erbil. The workshop featured insightful discussions through focused group dialogues among key stakeholders from both ministries. It aimed to assess the current EdTech landscape, identify available resources, and address

capacity gaps to develop an EdTech action plan for advancing digital education in Iraq.

This initiative marks a significant step

toward integrating technology into Iraq’s education system, ensuring inclusive, innovative, and high-quality learning opportunities for all learner.



### Youth

## The first-ever integrated child benefit initiative for children and pregnant women launched in Muthanna Governorate

**Muthanna, 8 January 2025** - UNICEF Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health, launched the country’s first Child Benefit initiative in the Muthanna Governorate. This effort will benefit 7,000 vulnerable children and expectant mothers and inform social safety net reforms led by the government.

The initiative, funded by the European Union, is part of a broader effort by UNICEF, ILO, and WFP to support the Government of Iraq in reforming the social protection system and achieving human development outcomes throughout the lifecycle.

The initiative was developed in collaboration with the Government of Iraq. It aligns with Iraq’s National Development Plan for 2024-2028, which aims to reform the social protection system, eliminate poverty, and deliver comprehensive health services to families. Iraq’s Social Service Workers will play a crucial role in the success of this pilot by connecting families to social care services to improve health outcomes.

“The launch of the Cash Plus pilot programme in Muthanna is a crucial step towards supporting pregnant women and ensuring children’s well-being,” said Dr. Sanaa Al-Moussawi, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Disability Affairs. “With this initiative, we are laying the groundwork for an integrated social protection model which the

Government could expand to all Iraqi provinces,” she added.

“This project addresses immediate poverty and aims to tackle the underlying causes of child vulnerability by improving healthcare access and promoting healthy behaviours. The project reflects the Government of Iraq’s long-standing commitment to ensuring that every child is healthy and thriving,” said Dr. Khames Al Saad, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health.

“This programme represents a strategic step toward achieving social justice and supporting the most vulnerable groups in our society. Through this initiative, we aim to enhance national vaccination adherence, reflecting our commitment to improving the health of future generations and ensuring a dignified life for beneficiary families,” said Ahmed Al-Asadi, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs.

The pilot project is launching in

Muthanna, one of Iraq’s poorest and most deprived governorates. Muthanna falls short in all aspects of children’s health indicators compared to the national average. More than 15 per cent of children in Muthanna are stunted. Similarly, immunisation rates among children are below 40 per cent, and only 18 per cent of women exclusively breastfeed. This project aims to address these critical issues by providing tailored support to pregnant women and children 0 to 2 years of age. This initiative is designed to meet the challenges faced by women and children in Muthanna and demonstrates the government’s dedication to empowering vulnerable families in Iraq and fostering comprehensive social development,” said Muhannad Al-Attabi, Governor of Muthanna.

“The EU is committed to supporting the Government of Iraq in their effort to



## The first-ever integrated child benefit initiative for children and pregnant women launched in Muthanna Governorate *(continued)*

improve the social protection system. We all want to learn from this cash pilot project before rolling it out to other regions in the country," said Steven De Vriendt, Programme Manager, The European Union Delegation to Iraq.

The project envisions establishing a foundational model for a national child benefit integrating cash assistance with essential services throughout Iraq.

"Investing in the health and well-being of children from the earliest stages of life is crucial for building a strong foundation for their future potential," said Ken Legins, UNICEF Iraq Representative, a.i. "We are grateful to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the European Union, the World Food Programme, the International Labour Organization, and all partners for their

support," he added.

As Iraq transitions from conflict to becoming an upper-middle-income country, robust social protection systems are vital for empowering Iraqis with nation-building skills. This is especially pertinent for Iraq, where women and children constitute the majority of the population.

## United Nations in Iraq launches its first "Youth Advisory Council"

**Baghdad, 15 January 2025** – Today, the United Nations in Iraq officially launched the UN Youth Advisory Council (UNYAC), an initiative designed to ensure the active participation of Iraqi youth in shaping UN initiatives, programs, and development efforts in Iraq.

The council is made up of 13 young leaders aged 17–24, selected through a rigorous and competitive process. It includes members from varied social, educational, and economic backgrounds, ensuring inclusivity and broad representation.

"This Youth Advisory Council represents our commitment to amplify the voices of Iraqi youth, ensuring their creativity, energy and ideas contribute to Iraq's sustainable development," said Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, Deputy Special Representative for Iraq, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator.

Speaking at the launch event, he added, "Young people deserve better opportunities and a stronger voice in decision-making. The Council is a chance for Iraqi youth to directly influence the work of the UN, ensuring our programs are inclusive, relevant, and effective."

The UNYAC aligns with the UN Youth Strategy 2030, which aims to engage young people as equal partners in

peace, human rights, and sustainable development. Through this platform, young Iraqis will play a meaningful role in shaping policies, monitoring progress, and contributing to critical issues such as climate change, education, employment, governance and other issues affecting their daily lives.

The event also featured a video message from Mr. Felipe Paullier, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, who underscored the significance of the newly established Youth Advisory Council. He hailed it as a transformative step toward amplifying youth participation in Iraq and reaffirmed his office's unwavering

commitment to supporting the Council in its efforts.

The establishment of UNYAC is a collaborative achievement made possible through the support of UN agencies and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Together, these partners are working to create a space where youth can actively engage in shaping Iraq's development agenda and contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The launch event, held at the UN Compound in Baghdad, featured an introduction to the UN Country Team, the UN system, capacity-building workshops, and the development of the Council's work plan.



## UNFPA on X

**Baghdad, 20 January 2025** - UNFPA Iraq Deputy Representative Garik Hayrapetyan: "Another milestone! Proud to launch Iraq's first-ever Youth Advisory Council, empowering 13 inspiring young leaders to contribute to the UN's decision-making process. I was honored to hear their perspectives and passion for change. UNFPA will always advocate for youth rights!"



## UNAMI on X

**Baghdad, 6 January 2025** - UN Iraq SRSR Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan: "We congratulate Iraq on the anniversary of the founding of the Army. The role of this institution today is all too important in protecting security, sovereignty, and independence, and in safeguarding the country for a brighter future of its people."

## SRSG for Iraq Dr. Al Hassan pays respect on the passing of the owner of the landmark Al-Shabandar Coffeehouse in Baghdad

**Baghdad, 12 January 2025** - Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, paid his respects on the passing of Hajj Mohammed Kazem Al-Khashali, the owner of the landmark Al-Shabandar Coffeehouse on Baghdad's Al-Mutanabbi Street. Offering condolences to the family, the SRSG recalled the life of Al-Khashali as a symbol of Iraq's tragic past and sacrifices of its people as well as its resilience and subsequent revival. Four of Al-Khashali's sons were killed in a terrorist bombing on the street in 2007 that devastated the area, but the century-old café was rebuilt to once again become a gathering place for writers, intellectuals and tourists as well as a symbol of Iraqi resilience.



## Ceremonial meeting to mark handover of Chairmanship of Group of 77 and China

**New York, 13 January 2025** - The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq and incoming Chair of the Group of 77 and China, Dr. Fuad Mohammad Hussein, meets UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, at the ceremonial meeting to mark the formal handover of the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China from the Republic of Uganda to the Republic of Iraq.



**Baghdad, 12 January 2025** - Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, accompanied by former Deputy Prime Minister Baha Al-Araji, today visited the **Holy Shrine of Imam Musa Al-Kadhim** in Baghdad.



**Basra, 19 January 2025** - The Special Representative of United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, today at Shatt al-Arab with Basra Governor **Asaad Al Eidani**. The Shatt al-Arab is a waterway about 200 kilometres in length that is formed at the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in the town of al-Qurnah in the Basra Governorate of southern Iraq.



**Basra, 19 January 2024** - The Special Representative of Secretary-General of the United Nations for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, today visited the **Shanasheel Al Basra Museum**. The SRSG is currently on a visit to southern Iraq.



**Basra, 19 January 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, today toured the **Old City in Basra**. The SRSG is currently on a visit to southern Iraq.



**Basra, 18 January 2025** - The Special Representative of Secretary-General of the United Nations for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, visited today the **Ahwar of Southern Iraq**. SRSG Al Hassan toured the marshes together with Iraqi Minister of Water Resources, Mr. Aoun Diab, and the Governor of Dhi Qar, Mr. Mortada Aboud al-Ibrahimi. "The marshlands are not only magnificent landscapes, they are also essential for Iraq's biodiversity," noted the SRSG.



**Baghdad, 29 January 2025** - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, visits the "**Al-Rahla (Journey)**" exhibition by the visual artist Muayad Joda, at "The Gallery" hall in Karrada.



**Samarra, 10 February 2025** - **Claudio Cordone**, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance: "Samarra, on the Malwiya minaret and visiting the 'Askari shrine, rebuilt following two devastating terrorist bombings. Always a unique experience. Visiting Samarra. The Abbasids, Al-'Ashiq Palace and the Pool Palace."



**Tikrit, 10 February 2025** - **Claudio Cordone**, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance: "Paying respect to the memory of 1,700 young cadets of the **Tikrit Air Academy** (Camp Speicher) massacred by Daesh on these grounds in 2014, one of the worst atrocities by this sick murderous group. Perpetrators should be brought to justice in fair trials wherever they are."

## SRSR for Iraq Dr. Al Hassan: “Your vision is both inspiring and powerful”



**Baghdad, 3 February 2025** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, attended today the 7th Anniversary celebration of the founding of “The Station”.

Here is the full text of his remarks at this event:

“Dear Esteemed Guests,  
Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ambassadors, Heads of Diplomatic Missions, and Their Representatives, My Colleagues from the United Nations and Non-Governmental Organizations, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Good Evening,

It is an honor to be with you today as we gather to celebrate the seventh anniversary of the launch of “The Station.”

Your vision is both inspiring and powerful: an Iraq with a prosperous and inclusive economy, driven by the

energy, creativity, and leadership of its innovative youth.

At the United Nations, we firmly believe that Iraq’s future is brighter and more secure, and it can only be fully realized through investment in youth - in you - the generation of change-makers, change for the best and the better.

“The Station” is a unique initiative that looks forward to the future, connecting communities of thinkers, innovators, ambitious individuals, and creative minds.

I am delighted from the depths of my heart to know that it provides a space for young people to unleash the potential of their creative minds and to access the support and resources they need for their innovative ideas and future projects.

This place stands as living testimony to the strength of Iraqi minds, the embrace of creativity, and the determination, willpower, and

collective efforts that play a crucial role in advancing Iraq toward a prosperous future.

Over the past years, “The Station” has played an important role in Iraq’s economic development by empowering local initiatives and fostering an environment conducive to growth and opportunities.

In short, it is a new culture finding its way into Iraq - one that must be embraced and supported.

On this anniversary, I congratulate you on your outstanding work and efforts. I would like to express - and reaffirm - the United Nations’ unwavering support for such innovative initiatives that propel Iraq towards its rightful future place among nations, far from the negativities of the past and the exaggerations of future concerns. A bright Iraq, led by its youth, is vital to securing a prosperous future for the coming generations, filled with opportunities and growth.

I take this moment to thank the international community for its support of “The Station’s” work, and I call upon and encourage them to offer more support and initiatives, as they directly impact Iraq’s future. Your support has been vital in making “The Station” a success, and we will work together to ensure its continuity and prosperity.

Thank you once again. Thank you for inviting me today to celebrate this occasion with you, Mr. Wadie, my colleagues, and friends. Thank you.”

## UNAMI on X

**Sammara, 15 February 2025** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, visited the Al-Askari Shrine in Sammara. He was also briefed by the representative of the Shrine about the rehabilitation work and met a number of visitors of the Shrine.



## An art exhibition recently held at the UNAMI Erbil office promoted culture and supported a charitable cause

**Erbil, 20 February 2025** - An art exhibition recently held at the UNAMI Erbil office promoted culture and supported a charitable cause. The exhibition showcased the work of Dr. Raouf Al-Attar, an Iraqi artist who has made an indelible mark on the art world with 27 exhibitions and international awards, and Ali Mohamed, a UN staff member who has used his art as a bridge between

cultures, holding exhibitions in Iraq and Mali. Proceeds from the exhibition will go toward supporting elderly and orphanage centers in Iraq.

See the video produced by the Strategic Communications and Public Information Office (SCPIO) of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) at

<https://www.facebook.com/UnitedNationsIraq/videos/631074955990504>



## UNAMI hosts cultural carnival to celebrate Baghdad's designation as Arab Capital of Tourism 2025 *(continued)*



*Continued from page 1*

Here is the full text of the SRS Dr. Al Hassan's speech at this event:

"His Excellency Dr. Mahmoud Al-Mashhadani, Speaker of the Council of Representatives

His Excellency Dr. Ahmed Fakak Al-Badrani, Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to stand before you today as we celebrate a remarkable achievement - the selection of Baghdad as the Arab Tourism Capital for 2025.

This important recognition is a testament to Iraq's rich cultural heritage and reflects the significant progress the country has made in recent years toward security, stability, and development.

Today, we honor a city that has endured unimaginable hardships, emerging as a symbol of resilience,

civilization, history, and culture. This is the city of Al-Rashid, a capital of literature, science, and creativity for centuries.

Iraq, the land of Mesopotamia, is truly the cradle of civilization. This is where history was written, where the first eternal laws were inscribed by human hands, where the first cities were built, and where knowledge flourished.

From the ancient Sumerians to the Babylonians and Assyrians, this land has gifted humanity unparalleled

advancements in writing, law, governance, and science. Baghdad, in particular, has long been and will remain the intellectual capital of the world, home to the great House of Wisdom, where scholars from different civilizations gathered to advance knowledge and innovation.

This recognition serves as an invitation to rediscover Iraq's vast historical and cultural treasures. Visitors to this deep-rooted and sacred land will witness its rich and diverse beauty, its deep-rooted history, and the warmth and generosity of its people.

The United Nations extends its congratulations to Iraq's leadership and people of Iraq on this well-deserved designation, and we look forward to seeing Baghdad shine on the global tourism map.

We invite Arab tourists, and visitors from all around the world, to explore this extraordinary city and experience its unique charm.

I sincerely thank each and every one of you for being here today.

Thank you."



## UNAMI Human Rights Office coordinates visit to the UNAMI Erbil Regional Office by students from Salahaddin University

**Erbil, 27 February 2025** – The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), jointly with the UNAMI Head of Office in Erbil, organized a visit to the Regional Office of UNAMI in Erbil by a group of 35 students (23 female and 12 male) and two staff from the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, College of Political Sciences, Salahaddin University. The Head of Erbil Office, Francesc Revuelto-Lanao, in his welcome remarks thanked the students and academic staff for their interest in the work of UNAMI. Various sections, including the Human Rights Office (HRO), Office of Political Affairs and

Analysis (OPAA), Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA), Development Support Office, and Strategic Communication and Public Information Office, delivered presentations about

their priority areas of engagement and activities. Students engaged in interactive discussions and showed keen interest in the work of UNAMI and the United Nations in Iraq.

