

Highlights

- Protection challenges during COVID-19 in Iraq
- Updated GHRP Launched
- Human rights report on ongoing political demonstrations
- Crop fires
- New Resources to Help IDPs Return Home
- SRSB Briefs Security Council
- UNAMI mandate extended to 2021



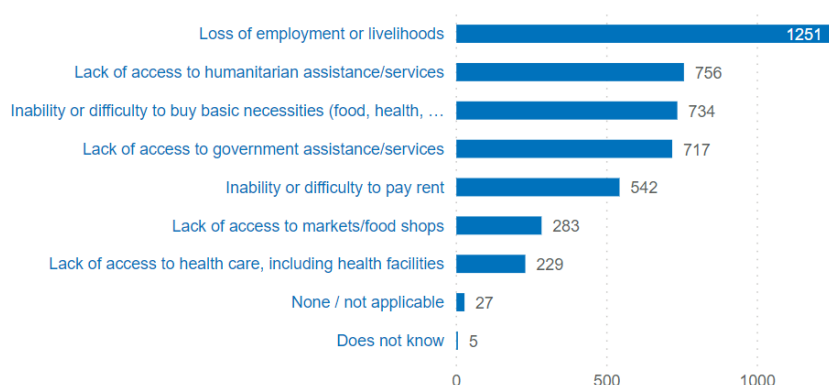
Local NGO SAIFO delivers meals to vulnerable people during Ramadan [Photo Credit: SAIFO]

PROTECTION CHALLENGES DURING COVID-19

Despite an inability to carry out in-person monitoring due to COVID-19 preventative measures, protection partners adapted their activities to ensure that communication with affected communities continued during the reporting period. The National Protection Cluster launched a remote protection monitoring (RPM) exercise with key informants to measure the protection impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on affected communities in Iraq. Interviews were conducted with IDPs in camps, informal sites, and out-of-camp settings, as well as with people living in return areas.

The RPM found that nearly three quarters of respondents reported that protection issues have significantly increased since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, illustrating the need to keep protection at the centre of the COVID-19 response. Increased feelings of trauma, stress and anxiety were reported as critical issues, with women, girls, children, people with disabilities and the elderly reporting poorer mental health and psychosocial well-being. Loss of employment income and lack of access to humanitarian or government services contributed to negative coping mechanisms, including reducing food consumption and taking on additional debt.

Impact of COVID-19 Situation on the Community



In parallel, the gender-based violence (GBV) sub-cluster and its partners conducted a rapid assessment to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on incidences of GBV in Iraq. Lack of income, harmful social norms or traditional practices, lack of health services (including reproductive health), and lack of safe shelter for GBV survivors were among the top reported GBV risks. The assessment found that there was a 65 per cent increase in reported cases of GBV during the

outbreak; 94 per cent of incidents were reported to be domestic violence perpetrated by a household member. Nearly three quarters of respondents reported that isolation was the main reason for an increase in domestic violence. There were reportedly 123 GBV-related suicide attempts or incidents reported involving women and girls, with the majority reported in Ninewa, Diyala and Kirkuk governorates. Findings from a GBV sub-cluster analysis of the activities outlined in the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan showed significant response gaps to date, due to funding constraints and access challenges in Anbar, Diyala, Salah Al-din, and Kirkuk governorates.

UPDATED GLOBAL HRP FOR COVID-19 LAUNCHED

On 7 May 2020, the United Nations issued an update COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP), seeking \$6.7 billion to address the impact of COVID-19 in fragile countries. Humanitarian actors in Iraq determined that efforts to prevent, mitigate and respond to the pandemic would require US\$263.3 million to implement 54 COVID-19 specific activities; of this amount, US\$122.4 million was already requested through the 2020 Iraq HRP, while US\$140.9 million in new requirements had been identified to scale up the COVID-19 response.

THIRD SPECIAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

On 23 May, the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI HRO) issued its third special report on human rights in the context of ongoing political demonstrations. The protests, which began on 2 October 2019 and have been concentrated largely in Baghdad and the southern governorates, had called for the appointment of a new Prime Minister and a commitment from the government to address issues of perceived corruption, lack of employment opportunities, poor public services and alleged foreign political interference.

The report—[Abductions, torture and enforced disappearances in the context of ongoing demonstrations in Iraq](#)—documents cases involving 123 people who went missing between 1 October 2019 and 21 March 2020. Of these, 98 have been found while 25 others remain missing. UNAMI HRO has also verified the deaths of 490 activists and the injury of 7,783 others since October 2019. While some members of the Iraqi security forces were among the victims, the vast majority of those killed or wounded were unarmed civilians. The report concludes that “there is a pattern of abduction and torture of protestors and activists by unidentified armed actors typically referred to as ‘militia’, and an accompanying absence of accountability.”

UNAMI HRO notes that the abduction and disappearances occurred amid other reported incidents of additional abuses targeting activists and protestors, including deliberate killings, shootings, knife attacks, threats of sexual violence, ill-treatment of detainees, and the excessive use of force at demonstration sites. Recently appointed Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi has resolved to address the issue and formed a committee to investigate the alleged existence of secret government prisons in which protestors have reportedly been held.

The demonstrations, now in their eighth month, partially abated during the COVID-19 movement restrictions but have since sporadically resumed with the lifting of curfews. Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, has denounced the violence and called for the protection of demonstrators.

ASSESSING THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF CROP FIRES

In 2019, the spring and early summer were marked by [suspicious incidences of fires in productive agricultural fields](#), affecting more than 250 districts in 11 governorates. Most fires occurred in areas with medium to high severity of needs among returnees (indicating a lack of livelihoods, services, social cohesion and security). Some authorities and farmers believed the fires were an intentional tactic targeting returnees or aiming to deter IDPs from returning. Others attributed the intentionally lit fires to terrorist activity, criminal elements, or tribal retribution. The fires mostly burned along the lines of Iraq’s internal disputed areas. Violence against civilian farmers sometimes accompanied the arson attacks.

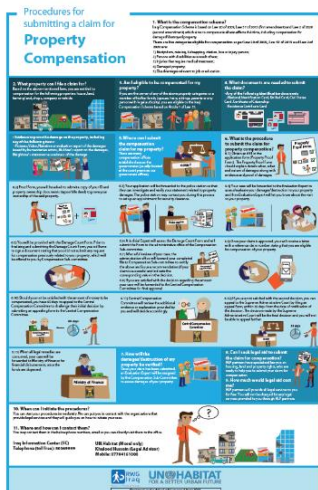


Agricultural land on fire near Mosul
[Photo Credit: OCHA Ninewa Field Office]

In 2020, the pattern of crop fires resumed. Responsibility for some of the incidents has been attributed to ISIL, while the cause of others is unknown. The first reported fire destroyed wheat crops on the outskirts of Samarra (Salah al-Din). Investigations showed the fire was caused by an electric fault, but residents suspected arson, due to the concerns of the previous year. During the week ending 13 May, 14 intentional fires were recorded; with some caused by IED detonation.

As COVID-19 movement restrictions continue to affect access to food and food prices, there may be more acute market sensitivity caused by any interruption to the supply chain of staples given the overall economic crisis. However, the Food and Agriculture Organization, World Food Programme and other food security actors report that the impact of the fires is not currently affecting food prices.

HELPING DISPLACED PEOPLE RETURN HOME



The Returns Working Group and UN-Habitat have developed a series of leaflets, posters and social media post cards for prospective returnees which provide information on compensation for housing and property damaged during the armed conflict against ISIL.

In a visual and simplified form, the communication materials outline the procedures involved in filing a compensation claim for property damage. They also highlight the compensation rights that Iraqis are entitled to according to the Iraqi Compensation Scheme. IDPs and returnees have consistently reported that they have found the compensation process highly complex and lacking in guidance. This is likely to have contributed to low application rates for compensation and the rejection of claims by compensation committees.

In 2020, the rate of returns has slowed down considerably, due to factors including the COVID-19 pandemic and associated movement restrictions, as well as disruptions to the issuance of civil documentation and a lack of social cohesion programmes in affected returns areas.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW PRIME MINISTER, MUSTAFA AL-KADHIMI

On 6 May 2020, the Iraqi Parliament appointed Mustafa Al-Kadhimi as Prime Minister, following six months of political uncertainty following the resignation of former Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi, and two interim appointments who were unable to gain the necessary political support. The new Prime Minister has announced his intentions to address some of the grievances of the protestors, combat corruption and promote needed economic and security reforms. Elections were expected to take place in early 2020 but have been delayed due to the political crisis and COVID-19. The United Nations Security Council welcomed the formation of the new government and its pledge to address COVID-19 and urgently deliver meaningful reforms around economic opportunities, good governance and political participation.

SRSG BRIEFING TO UN SECURITY COUNCIL

On 12 May 2020, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, remotely briefed the United Nations Security Council from Baghdad on the situation concerning Iraq. Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert welcomed the appointment of new Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi. The briefing included a report on the impact of COVID-19 and related economic slowdown, and raised the urgent matter of access constraints which continue to prevent humanitarian workers from reaching people in need.



SRSG Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert briefs the United Nations Security Council on 12 May. [Photo Credit: UNAMI]

UNAMI MANDATE EXTENDED TO MAY 2021

On 29 May 2020, the United Nations Security Council extended the mandate of UNAMI for a one-year period, until 31 May 2021. Unanimously adopting resolution 2522 (2020) the Security Council confirmed its continued support for Iraq in addressing the challenges it faces as it continues the task of recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation. The Council welcomed efforts to urgently deliver meaningful reforms addressing the Iraqi people's demands to address corruption, and deliver essential and basic services, as well as holding free and fair elections with United National electoral support. The Council also called on the international community to continue supporting Iraq in its humanitarian, stabilization, reconstruction and development efforts.

In the resolution, UNAMI was further tasked with promoting, supporting, and facilitating, in partnership with the Government of Iraq, the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance and the safe, orderly, and voluntary return or local integration of refugees and displaced persons.

2020 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING OVERVIEW



US\$528.4M
HRP & COVID-19 UNMET REQUIREMENTS as of 7 June 2020

US\$132.3M¹
FUNDING RECEIVED FOR HRP & COVID-19 as of 7 June 2020

US\$238.9M
TOTAL FUNDING RECEIVED as of 7 June 2020



The total funding received represents the overall funding linked to the requirements of the response plans/appeals; the HRP & COVID-19 funding is a subset of overall funding to the affected country.

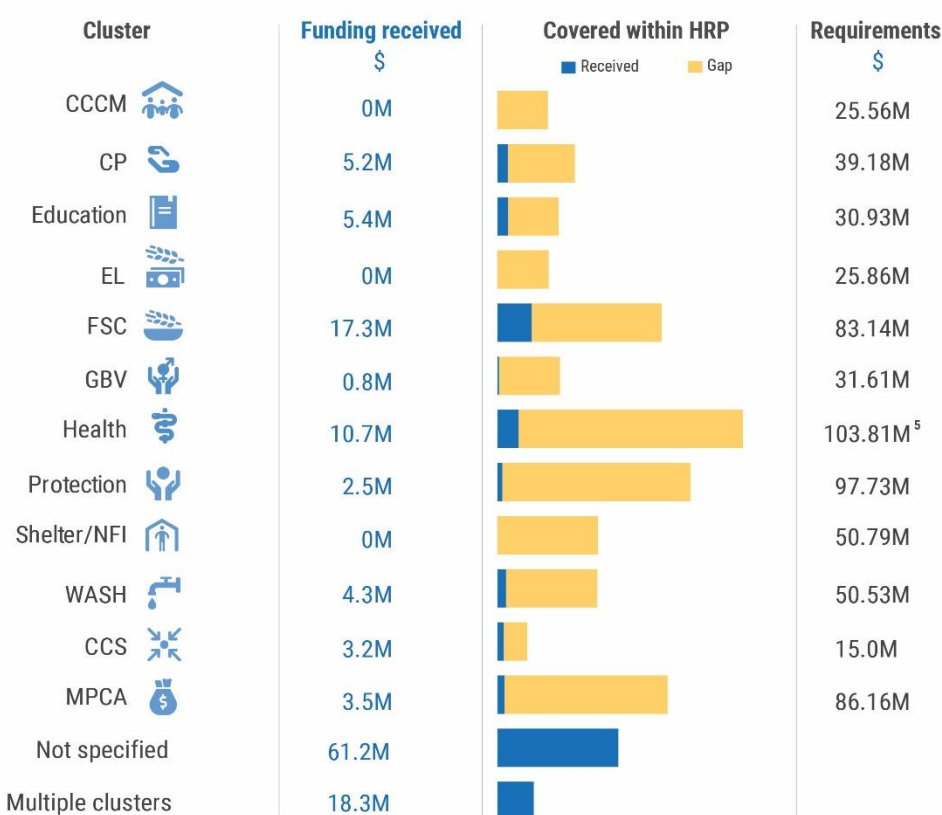
US\$660.7M
TOTAL HRP & COVID-19 FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

US\$263.3M
COVID-19 FUNDING REQUIREMENTS (US\$16.9M RECEIVED / US\$246.5 UNMET)

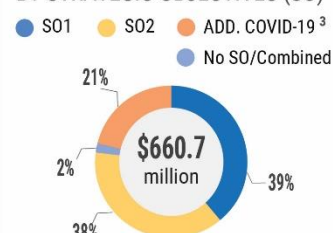
US\$132.3M
HRP & COVID-19 FUNDING THROUGH THE 2020 HRP

US\$106.6M
FUNDING OUTSIDE 2020 HRP & COVID-19

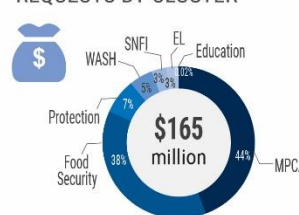
BY CLUSTER FOR HRP & COVID-19 (US\$)



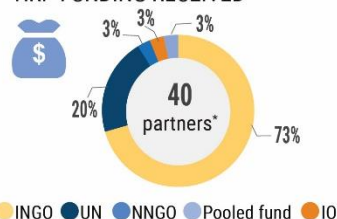
BY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (SO)



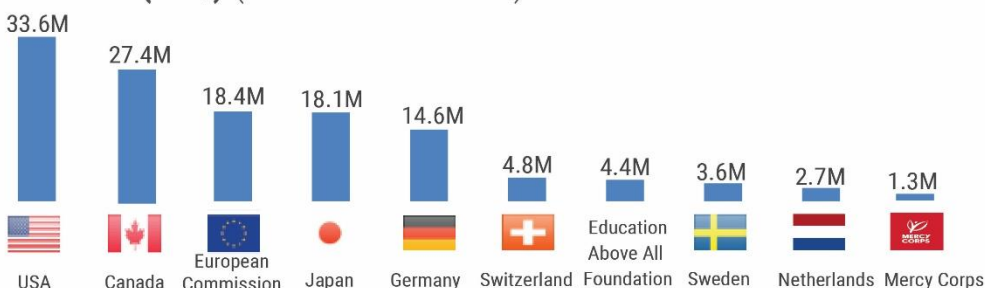
BREAKDOWN OF CASH FUNDING REQUESTS BY CLUSTER⁴



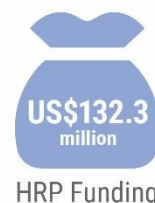
HRP FUNDING RECEIVED



BY DONOR (US\$) (TOP TEN DONORS)



*Partners reported on FTS. Numbers are rounded up



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