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This UN flag was recovered following the UN compound bombing in Baghdad on 19 Aug 2003. [Photo Credit: UN]

World Humanitarian Day 2021



On 19 August, the humanitarian community around the world commemorated [World Humanitarian Day](#). This annual tribute honors all aid workers who provide life-saving support and protection to those most in need. In Iraq, the event holds special significance as it memorializes those United Nations staff who lost their lives during the attack on the Canal Hotel on 19 August 2003.

In a press release, Humanitarian Coordinator Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano noted that “[t]his year, the theme of World Humanitarian Day is #TheHumanRace, drawing attention to the climate emergency, which is causing global damage on an unforeseen scale.

We see firsthand in Iraq that extreme temperatures and water scarcity are impacting people's health and livelihoods, and we know that climate change is one of the largest risk factors for future humanitarian crises. I look forward to continuing to work with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government over the coming year to assess how we can collectively mitigate the impact of the climate emergency on vulnerable Iraqis, while we continue our ongoing work serving Iraqis in need of humanitarian assistance.”

Targeted Reintegration Support for Former Child Soldiers

During the occupation of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), many Iraqi children were forcibly recruited in active combat and support roles, or were born during the conflict to parents who chose or were forced to join the group; there are also more recent reports of families in areas with few other livelihood opportunities withdrawing their children from school and enlisting them with non-state armed groups as a way to earn money. Children who find themselves in such circumstances may experience sexual, physical and psychological abuse. Targeted reintegration support is an ongoing need for children associated with armed forces and armed groups.

In August 2021, a project co-led by UNICEF commenced in several IDP camps in Duhok, aiming to support children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups, as well as children at risk of being recruited into armed groups. The project, which will also serve families in Sinjar and Ninewa, will include specialized programming to help strengthen social bonds, peer-to-peer peacebuilding, and community awareness activities. It also incorporates livelihoods support and enrollment in education (formal and informal), as both are key elements in preventing child recruitment. Reintegration support will be provided within the home and in communities. Coordination with other humanitarian agencies with specific expertise in this subject-matter and an effective referral system will enable children to access a comprehensive set of prevention and reintegration services. Programming will be delivered in-person, with COVID-19 prevention measures in place.

Inter-agency Mission to Samarra

On 23 August, OCHA organized an inter-agency mission to Samarra district in Salah Al-Din, with representatives from WFP, IOM, UNHCR, the Durable Solutions Technical Working Group and several NGOs. The mission was a follow-up to a visit by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) in July 2021 to meet with the Area-Based Coordination working group, which serves as a nexus between humanitarian response and development activities.



Humanitarian Coordinator Visit to Samarra, July 2021
[Photo Credit: UNAMI]

IOM—on behalf of the Returns Working Group (RWG)—briefed on the no-return areas in Salah Al-Din and the need for improved security conditions in the areas of origin. Samarra hosts 8 per cent of all IDP sites in Iraq, including 21 informal sites hosting 1,873 internally displaced person (IDP) households. Almost all informal sites are located in Samarra city. The IDPs originate from districts in southern Salah al-Din; return is hampered because of lack of security, shelter, basic services and livelihoods in areas of origin. In addition, many IDPs lack the necessary civil documentation to gain security clearance. Most of the conditions for sustainable returns are not in place. The Mayor of Samarra invited the RWG to meet him bilaterally for a more detailed discussion.

UNHCR—on behalf of the Protection cluster—addressed the possible eviction of IDPs from informal sites in Samarra city. The Mayor explained that IDPs are sheltering in schools and other public buildings which are needed so that formal education can resume. Protection partners asked to be informed about planned evictions so that partners can prepare and respond. The Mayor expressed his support for low-cost housing units and reported that he had discussed the launching of a low-cost housing project in Samarra with the Prime Minister.

Access conditions in Samarra have recently improved, and areas which were previously considered hard-to-reach are now accessible due to the intervention of the Mayor. This should permit more frequent visits and follow-up by both humanitarian and development actors in the future.

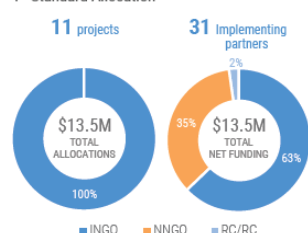
Update on First Standard Allocation of the Iraq Humanitarian Fund

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and the sudden closure of IDP camps contributed to an increase of both humanitarian and socioeconomic needs in Iraq, the consequences of which are still evident in 2021. Published in August, the Iraq Humanitarian Fund's (IHF) most recent bi-monthly dashboard details the Fund's activities for the first half of the year. The first Standard Allocation of 2021—launched in April—is underway, helping to address the growing severity of humanitarian needs in Iraq over the past year, as well as the implementation of key recommendations from the 2020 HRP gap analysis. The \$13.5 million allocation targets vulnerable returnees and out-of-camp IDPs in underserved locations, prioritizing interventions in protection, health and WASH services, and emergency livelihoods. Particular consideration has been given to projects that focus on gender issues (especially relating to women and girls), gender-based violence, and those that address the specific needs of persons with disabilities. The allocation is supporting 11 projects to be delivered by 31 partners, and targets at least 342,000 people. In line with the Fund's continued commitment to localization, this allocation of funds enhances the participation and capacity-building of national partner organizations through their inclusion in NGO consortia.

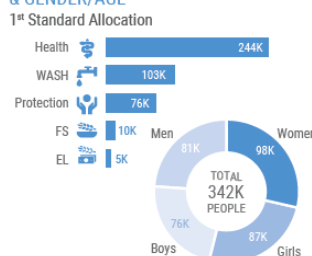
DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS
(US\$ MILLION)



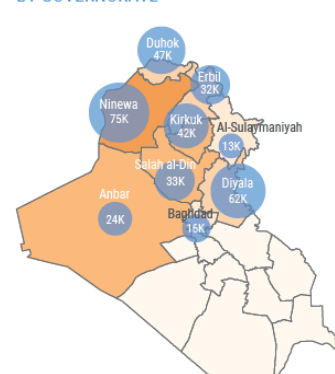
ALLOCATION BY PARTNER TYPE (US\$)
1st Standard Allocation



PEOPLE TARGETED BY CLUSTER & GENDER/AGE¹
1st Standard Allocation



ALLOCATION AND PEOPLE TARGETED BY GOVERNORATE



Concerns of Evictions from Informal Sites in Mosul

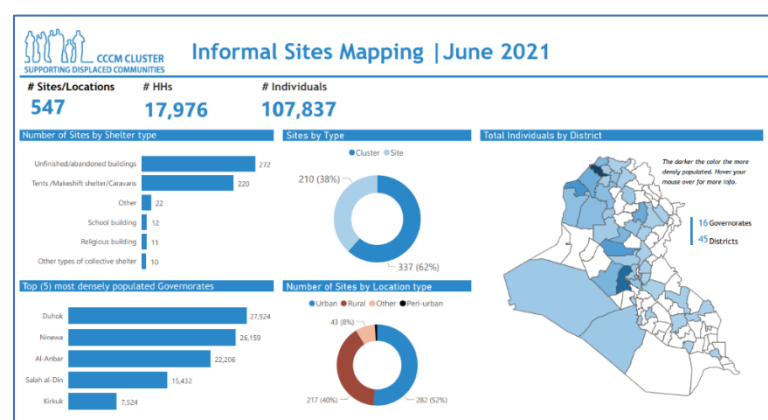
Protection partners have expressed concerns regarding eviction notices being served to IDPs in Mosul and other areas in Ninewa governorate. Following camp closures, initiated by the Government of Iraq in late 2020, nearly 47,000 IDPs left certain camps at short notice and at times without clear destinations in mind (over 30,000 from Ninewa-based camps). While tens of thousands returned to areas of origin, many others ended up in informal sites¹ in large cities like Mosul, joining earlier waves of people displaced during the conflict against ISIL who were unwilling or unable to return home. In Mosul, evictions and threats of evictions have reportedly been carried out by local authorities, under the direction of the Mayor, in accordance with a recent plan launched by the municipality to reorganize the city, remove slum areas and retake public sites owned by the Government in order to rehabilitate them. According to the Iraqi Penal Code Article 428, illegal occupation of government buildings is a crime. Past evictions from informal sites have occurred with short notice. Some of the evicted families are female-headed households (FHHs) with children and who lack sources of income. The absence of alternative housing solutions often means that affected families will end up in secondary displacement. According to the CCCM Cluster's [Informal Sites Mapping overview](#), as of June 2021, there were 547 informal sites in Iraq, hosting 107,000 people. As per the mapping, there are 120 informal sites in Ninewa, where more than 25,000 people live.

Informal Sites

What is an Informal Site?

- Site where more than 5 displaced households have settled collectively.
- Sites not built to accommodate people, but serving that purpose, set up on state-owned or private land/buildings.
- IDP families are living in the site as a group, possibly with shared leadership.
- Shelter is sub-standard (critical shelter) e.g. tents, improvised shelters, unfinished buildings, or buildings not meant for living in e.g. schools, mosques.
- Facilities in the site are likely sub-standard. Families share basic public/communal services and facilities, e.g. WASH facilities.
- Government authorities have not assumed responsibility for management and administration.
- Services and assistance are delivered collectively, and even if available are not provided regularly.
- Land use is conflicting, or not in line with, the land use for the location as defined by approved urban master plans and/or detailed plans, if any.
- Degraded urban environment.

Conditions in informal settlements can be basic, although circumstances vary depending on the site. Informal sites have not traditionally been served by humanitarian partners in Iraq, although some shifts in programming are underway due to population movements over the last year and the fact that many more IDPs now live outside of camps than in camp settings.²³ According to the findings of assessments carried out by [ACTED of informal sites in West Mosul](#) and published in August 2021, needs diverge greatly between different sites. The Al-Mulawatha informal site hosts 357 families; some of the residents moved there following the conflict with ISIL, while others had reportedly moved to the area before 2014 due to the desertification of their home area that caused wells to dry up and livestock to die. Residents reportedly do not currently have access to potable water and are drinking water from unsafe sources, and some have purportedly developed some health issues due to the quality of the water. The assessment found that they are in need of WASH facilities. Residents also stated that they live in sub-standard shelters, and—according to the assessment—more than 420 school-aged children are not attending school because the school is too far away and the families do not have the financial resources to pay for transportation and educational material. Despite these conditions, 92 per cent of those interviewed do not want to return to their area of origin.



The 21 families who live at the Hawi Al-Kaneesa informal site are a mixed population of those displaced during the conflict with ISIL and others who arrived following camp closure in 2020 and in 2021. Residents are reportedly unable to meet their basic needs, with some stating that debt and store credit were their primary means of survival. Residents reportedly also noted difficulties in accessing health services as there is no health center near the site and they cannot afford transport costs. The assessment found that children have not been able to access education, and some of those that joined from the closed camps dropped out of school once they departed camps. Sixty-two per cent of the households living in Hawi Al-Kaneesa stated they

¹ Definition in this section taken from the CCCM Cluster's [Informal Sites Mapping Overview](#)

² In Anbar governorate, the World Food Programme and the Ministry of Migration and Displacement have recently agreed to address food insecurity in informal sites.

³ According to the [IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), only 15 per cent of IDPs currently live in camps. However, not all out of camp IDPs live in informal settlements; the majority live in rented housing or with host families; approximately 9 per cent of the current IDP population lives in informal sites.

wish to return to their area of origin one day. These households are originally from Sinjar and are currently unable to return due to security tensions in their areas of origin and the destruction of homes.

Twenty-six families live in the Rajm Hadeed informal settlement, the majority of whom arrived during the conflict with ISIL. Residents reportedly do not have regular access to water, and WASH facilities are in poor condition and require improvements. These families lost their livestock during the ISIL conflict and currently support themselves through casual labor. They also reportedly need support to improve their current shelters and better cope with the climatic conditions. Despite these circumstances, 100 per cent of site residents intend to stay on site in the coming 12 months and 73 per cent expressed that they do not intend to return to areas of origin.

As Iraq continues to transition out of its post-conflict environment into a context where actors are more focused on stabilization and development, consideration will need to be given to the more than 100,000 people living in informal sites. While authorities are focused on reclaiming public land and municipal sites to further reconstruction efforts, many of these out-of-camp IDPs have neither the means nor motivation to return to their areas of origin, which may lack shelter, services and security.

Mapping of Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms in Support of AAP

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), in its [Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action](#), committed to “a system-wide and comprehensive response to conflicts and disasters” and affirmed that this “response is driven by the needs and perspectives of affected persons, with protection at its core.” In service of this commitment, several initiatives contribute to Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Communication with Communities (CwC) in Iraq. These include: the Iraq Information Centre (IIC) – managed by UNOPS; the PSEA Network, led by a dedicated coordinator, - reporting to the HC; the GBV hotline – managed by UNFPA; Community Resource Centers (CRC) – under the CCCM cluster and located in targeted areas of return; IDP camp-based complaints and feedback mechanisms (CFM) – managed by the camp management agency and the CCCM Cluster; and cluster/working group-specific feedback mechanisms. In an effort to better understand the resources available to affected populations in Iraq, the AAP/CwC working group recently carried out a [mapping exercise of the available CFMs](#), all of which are free of charge for users.

In 2021, a total of 397 CFMs have been deployed in 331 locations in camps, out-of-camp locations and in urban centres, allowing displaced people and their host communities to access important information, and to provide feedback and complaints regarding the level of assistance they are receiving. Formal CFMs include the Iraq Information Centre telephone hotline which links callers with services, and enables feedback and complaints to be recorded and addressed; secured complaint and feedback boxes located in camps and community spaces; staffed help desks and information feedback points; and official email reporting mechanisms, including those dedicated to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Feedback and complaints from the affected population are sometimes provided through informal channels such as social media, community engagement and outreach activities, or reported directly with humanitarian workers. If complaints are received through these methods, partners are encouraged to refer them to more official channels.

