

UNAMI Herald

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Five years on from ISIL 'caliphate' proclamation in Iraq, Security Council makes first-ever visit



New York, 30 June 2019 - From 28 to 29 June, the members of the Security Council visited the State of Kuwait and for the first time, the Republic of Iraq, in a mission co-led by the State of Kuwait and the United States of America. The members of the Security Council were grateful to the Governments of Kuwait and Iraq, as well as the United Nations, for facilitating the visit.

The members of the Security Council noted that the visit underscored their support for Iraq's continued post-conflict recovery, stabilization, reconstruction, and reconciliation efforts to meet the needs of all Iraqis, and emphasized the importance of the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, and security of Iraq.

In Kuwait on 28 June, the members of the Security Council met Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The members of the Security Council welcomed the strong bilateral relations between Iraq and Kuwait and commended the Government of Kuwait's continued support for Iraq in its efforts to achieve stability and prosperity.

The members of the Security Council also met Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs for UNAMI Alice Walpole and the head of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Delegation in Kuwait in his

capacity as chair of the Tripartite Mechanism, Omar Odeh. The members of the Security Council commended both organizations for their role in the implementation of resolution 2107 (2013) to resolve outstanding issues related to missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and the return of Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, and urged continued engagement on these issues.

The members of the Security Council welcomed the 19 June joint statement by the Tripartite Mechanism on the recent recovery of remains in Al-Muthanna Governorate, Iraq, believed to be of Kuwaiti citizens, in-

cluding civilians and prisoners of war, as a result of joint efforts between the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait and the ICRC.

The members of the Security Council met World Bank representative Ghassan Khoja and encouraged active regional and international donor coordination and effective follow-up of international pledges to Iraq, including from the 2018 Kuwait International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq co-chaired by Kuwait, Iraq, the UN, EU and World Bank, and commended their efforts towards recovery and reconstruction to meet the needs of all Iraqis.

In Iraq on 29 June, the members of the Security Council met President Barham Salih, Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi, Foreign Minister Mohammed Ali Al-Hakim, Speaker Mohammed Al-Halbusi of the Council of Representatives, Kurdistan Regional Government President Nechirvan Barzani, representatives of political blocs in the Council of Representatives, and members of civil society and non-governmental organizations. The members of the Security Council welcomed the positive recent progress towards the full formation of the Government of Iraq, with the confirmation of Ministers of Justice, Defense, and Interior, which will further strengthen and reaffirm Iraq's national unity, sovereignty, and inde-



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pendence. The members of the Security Council recognized the importance of the Government of Iraq upholding the values set forth in the Iraqi Constitution and responding to the needs of all Iraqis, including women, youth, children, displaced persons, and persons belonging to all ethnic and religious groups.

The members of the Security Council discussed efforts towards implementing the 2018-2022 National Government program, to include addressing corruption and strengthening viable and responsive state institutions. They welcomed the Government of Iraq’s sustained and active outreach to promote the development of good neighborly relations and further support regional stability.

The members of the Security Council welcomed the continued engagement of the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to resolve all outstanding issues, in accordance with the Iraqi Constitution. They also welcomed progress towards the full formation of a new Kurdistan Regional Government.

The members of the Security Council recognized the challenges facing Iraq in transitioning into a post-conflict environment, including the delivery of basic services. They stressed the need for economic reform, attracting greater inward investment, and regional economic integration to better address the aspirations and concerns of the Iraqi people. The members of the Security Council also commended the Government of Iraq’s efforts, in association with local and regional authorities to counter terrorism and encouraged them to further their coordination.

The members of the Security Council



discussed the humanitarian situation in Iraq and underscored the importance of the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of all internally displaced persons affected by conflict, including in areas liberated from Da’esh/ISIL.

The members of the Security Council reaffirmed their support for UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and Special Representative for Iraq and Head of UNAMI Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert to continue, in accordance with the mandate in resolution 2470 (2019), to support and assist the Government of Iraq to inter alia promote inclusive political dialogue, national and community-level reconciliation, regional cooperation, security sector reform, and judicial and legal reforms.

The members of the Security Council underscored the importance of, and their support for, the efforts of the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by

Da’esh/ISIL (UNITAD) established in resolution 2379 (2017) led by Special Adviser Karim Khan to hold ISIL accountable by collecting, preserving, and storing evidence of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, and they underscored that UNITAD shall operate with full respect for the sovereignty of Iraq and its jurisdiction over crimes committed in its territory. They also stressed importance of UNITAD’s independence and impartiality in carrying out its mandate and underlined that UNITAD should ensure its Iraqi members benefit from international expertise on the Team, and make every effort to share knowledge and technical assistance with Iraq.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their support to the work being undertaken by the United Nations country team in support of Iraq and its people.



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Security Council extends mandate of UNAMI for one year, until 31 May 2020

Baghdad, Iraq, 26 May 2019 – In a resounding statement of support for the Government and people of Iraq in the country's post-conflict recovery, the United Nations Security Council on 21 May 2019 extended the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for another year, until 31 May 2020.

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Karbala and Babil Governorates host “Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability” workshops

Karbala/Babil, Iraq, 4 May 2019 – At two separate workshops in Karbala and Babil governorates, under the theme “Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability”, young Iraqi women and men discussed their role in promoting peaceful coexistence in their local communities and their potential involvement in the affairs of their governorates ...

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Increased cooperation between the UN Iraq family and Women’s Advisory Group to advance women issues

Baghdad, 27 June 2019 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas, and representatives of UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, discussed with members of the Women’s Advisory Group increased cooperation to advance women’s issues in Iraq. They focused on the challenges facing women and their role in the country’s politics, the economy and society in general, and also addressed the specific problems of displaced women finding economic opportunities and obtaining civil documentation ...



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UN emphasizes importance of a survivor-centred approach towards victims of ISIL abuses

Baghdad/Erbil, 26 June 2019 – A tailored and robust response to the needs of survivors of sexual violence in conflict perpetrated by ISIL (Da’esh) is needed to assist victims’ recovery and contribute to lasting peace in post-conflict Iraq, the United Nations in Iraq said, marking the annual International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict... *More on page 26.*



UN welcomes Iraqi leadership’s support for enactment of Anti-Domestic Violence Law

Baghdad, 6 May 2019 - The United Nations welcomes the Iraqi leadership’s support for steps towards the enactment of an Anti-Domestic Violence Law that fully protects the legal rights of all victims of domestic violence and serves as a deterrent, preventing impunity for perpetrators. Legislators were urged to adopt a law that is fully aligned with the Constitution of Iraq. ... *More on page 24*



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

Security Council deliberated situation concerning Iraq

New York, 21 May 2019 – On its 8531st meeting the United Nations Security Council deliberated situation concerning Iraq. Here is the text (as prepared and delivered) of the briefing to the Security Council by SRSF for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert:

Mr. President,
Distinguished members of the Security Council,

I would like to begin by recounting my recent visit to a mass grave in the Samawah desert, alongside President Barham Salih. This burial site is a stark reminder of Saddam Hussein's horrific crimes against many people, his own people in this case the Kurdish people. It was a deeply moving experience, underlining once again that Iraq's violent and lawless past still impacts its present. Yet - it also made clear how extraordinary Iraq's transition is in this twenty-first century: from dictatorship to democracy. And yes, to truly take root democracy needs time, lots of time and lots of hard work.

Mr. President,

We must recognize that the ongoing political infighting is a costly obstacle. A full year after national elections, ministerial appointments have yet to be made to the key posts: Interior, Defence, Justice and Education. Political parties have not yet shown themselves willing to compromise. It should be understood, however, that political compromise is not a sign of weakness. In fact, it is a sign of political maturity – and a requisite for resilience.

Slowly but surely, chairs, deputies and rapporteurs are now being selected for parliamentary committees, a critical hurdle to clear for parliamentary work to get going. We are not there yet. Though, it is high time indeed as critical laws are still pending.

Turning to the KRG-formation negotiations, I am pleased to report recent important progress. After 218 days of negotiations, an agreement on the formation of a new Kurdistan Regional Government was signed on May 5. Barring further problems, the new government could be in place in June.

Mr. President,

It is no secret that the Iraqi authorities, institutions, mechanisms and systems continue to struggle with deep rooted problems, often hampering swift and robust responses from the government to pressing needs, such as reconstruction, development and security. These problems can be schematized, as a range of individual interests and argu-



ments, many of which arise from long-standing grievances and differences between communities, between political entities, between the federal and the Kurdistan Regional Government and all this becomes entrenched in the form of concealed, private networks of power operating independently pursuing narrow objectives and goals. In a way, this also explains why the many opportunities arising from so many reconciliation efforts are yet to be fully embraced.

Mr. President,

With this in mind it is also necessary to touch upon the scourge of corruption, pervasive at all levels in Iraq. Corruption takes money that should be spent on public services, placing it instead in private pockets, but it also deters economic activity, hindering business development which would result in much needed job creation. Now, as I stated last time I briefed the Security Council, I am encouraged by the Government's obvious engagement on this issue. Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi made it very clear: "Corruption distorts the image of the State - and its reputation, both locally and on the world stage". Very true indeed; it hampers not only Iraq's credibility but also its viability, responsiveness and effectiveness. Change will not come overnight, so it is important to spotlight the issue of corruption again and again. Achieving tangible results will be crucial, in so many ways, most importantly it will revive public trust which is essential for the further development of Iraq's democracy.

Mr. President,

The hydro-carbon sector is the backbone of Iraq's economy, with vast oil potential yet to be explored. But to at-

tain this, significant challenges will need to be addressed. Also, here and in short: the common good should trump private or partisan interests, enabling the whole country to benefit. Accordingly, I look forward to renewed engagement on the critical hydrocarbon and revenue sharing laws.

Mr. President, something else,

Iraq can only achieve its full potential with the active political, social and economic participation of women and youth. Recently, we witnessed, organised and participated in a variety of women and youth events throughout the country. While these were meaningful experiences for all those involved, I would like to warn against change as mere window dressing. At the end of the day, it is all about translating excellent intentions into positive action. Regrettably, Iraq is yet to appoint its first female minister.

On a different note, but of great relevance to women and girls: the Anti-Domestic Violence Law. An issue that is both sensitive and important for Iraqis. And I would like to commend Iraq's leadership for taking important steps towards the enactment of this law. This law would fully protect the legal rights and shelter needs of all victims of domestic violence. And by all victims, I mean all victims: not just women and girls. I sincerely hope that legislators will proceed with a law in line with the Iraqi constitution, which prohibits all forms of violence and abuse within the family.

Mr. President,

On an entirely separate and encouraging note: Baghdad is opening up. Very soon the Green Zone will no longer exist. Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi

Security Council deliberated situation in Iraq (continued)

has lived up to his promise from day one by removing T-walls and returning the city to its people. However, the security-situation will continue to require close monitoring. Not only in Baghdad, but throughout the country. Attacks continue, as seen with recent blasts and suicide bombings. Also very relevant: the ISIL-threat is still out there. As a Coalition representative recently said: ISIL is resurging. They rested, moved and are active.

Within this context, I am keenly aware of the importance of continued, wide-based international support, support to ensure that Iraq leaves its violent past behind, to ensure that Iraq does not slip back into the turmoil from which it so recently emerged. In other words: to prevent ISIL from regaining a strong foothold in Iraq a long-term approach is critical.

Equally important Mr. President, is the issue of returning ISIL-fighters from Syria to Iraq, along with their families. The return of thousands and thousands of people, Iraqis and non-Iraqis, raises not only significant security and capacity concerns, but also urgent human rights and humanitarian protection concerns. And all this, is not just an Iraqi problem. We know that certain states prefer to maintain a “strategic distance” with regard to their own nationals. But again, to be clear: this is not just an Iraqi problem. If poorly managed, the issue will impact us all in the region and beyond. Moreover, if we do not manage this adequately, we risk creating a new breeding ground for the next generation of terrorists.

Now, another dominant security concern is the issue of armed actors operating outside state control, engaged in illegal or criminal activities and exerting economic and social influence throughout the country. Clearly, the activities of these actors undermine state authority, they affect vulnerable communities, they weaken the national economy and sadly, they also prevent the peaceful return of displaced persons.

In my conversations with the Iraqi government, I welcomed certain actions, such as the closing down of so-called illegal economic offices. But the road will certainly be long. It will therefore prove crucial to hold to account all armed actors involved in criminal enterprise or illegal activity. More broadly, I welcome the Government’s efforts on security sector reform. However, much work remains to be done, and the reconfiguration of the ‘national security architecture’ is particularly important.

This notably includes the future positioning of the PMF and the reform of the Peshmerga into a single, regional security force.

Mr. President,

As we saw during last summer’s protests in the South, Iraq’s water shortages have the potential to ignite social unrest which if unchecked can reverse any gains made. Although this past winter saw extensive rainfall - including widespread catastrophic flooding - simple reliance on generous rainfall is not a solid national water strategy. In an era of severe climate change, it is of utmost importance to plan carefully for all weather extremes and thus to develop a comprehensive programme of water collection and management but also to strengthen the country’s infrastructure and better prepare for floods.

Mr. President,

I am pleased to report that Iraq’s leadership continues to reach out to international and regional counterparts, positioning itself as a reliable and capable partner. Indeed, Iraq could well be a stabilizing factor in a turbulent region and instead of an arena for conflict, Iraq could well offer a space for regional reconciliation, preparing the ground for a regional security dialogue. At the same time, we cannot ignore that Iraq faces serious challenges in preventing its territory from becoming the theatre for different competitions. So, to all those feeling challenged: placing a further burden on Iraq is truly, the last thing it needs.

Mr. President,

On April 29, the United Nations launched its 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan, in alignment with the humanitarian plans of Iraq. The humanitarian needs remain substantial. Many displaced citizens continue to face serious obstacles to return to their homes. These include lack of civil docu-

mentation, an unstable security situation due to clashes between armed groups and checkpoint harassment, they include damaged and contaminated houses, inadequate basic services, as well as discrimination. In other words: obstacles are varied, complex and inter-linked, painfully resulting in stalled returns on the ground.

In addition to our humanitarian efforts, we continue to support post-ISIL stabilisation and rehabilitation efforts in the worst-affected areas. Our Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) reached a major milestone by rehabilitating the first 1,000 out of the planned 15,000 houses in Mosul’s Old City. This builds on previous successful housing work in Anbar, where thousands and thousands of houses have already been rehabilitated.

In addition, FFS completed the rehabilitation of several structures, such as Mosul University – which currently hosts more than 20,000 students. Also, a third major bridge in West Anbar has been restored, allowing more than 75,000 people to access essential services, such as hospitals and schools.

Mr. President,

allow me to now turn to the issue of missing Kuwaitis, third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. I would like to thank Member States of the Tripartite mechanism for coming forward with satellite imagery that, in combination with witness testimonies, has been vital in identifying potential locations for missing Kuwaitis. After years of hard work by many, and on this occasion, I would like to flag recent efforts by the Iraqi Ministry of Defence in particular, I sincerely hope that we will be able to announce positive results soon.

Obviously, it is important that Iraq continues its efforts, including the identification of the missing Kuwaiti Na-



Security Council deliberated situation concerning Iraq (continued)

tional Archives and other property. We all recognise their importance as an integral element of Kuwait's national heritage.

Mr. President,

I would like to end by recalling my recent visit to Sinjar, which brings together many of the points I have just made. In Sinjar, I saw the horrific destruction. The work of ISIL almost five years ago. Unfortunately, little has changed since the liberation of Sinjar. Many people are still living in tents on the mountain to which they fled at the onset of the terror campaign. In August, the world will commemorate the horrific events of five years ago. But a single administration and the provision of security, as the very basis for the reconstruction of Sinjar, are yet to be realised. Frankly, a continued failure to make it happen is a clear injustice. Iraqi leadership, both in Baghdad and Erbil must now act urgently and decisively.

Finally, Mr. President, yes, the challenges for Iraq are manifold but in all of these challenges I would like to express - once again - our continued and strong commitment to assist and support wherever we can. President Barham Salih very recently

stated that the situation in Iraq is not good. Iraqis deserve far better. However, the situation is improving. It will take time but with great determination and concerted, decisive action we will succeed. So he said and how right he is. Thank you.



Security Council extends mandate of UNAMI for one year, until 31 May 2020

Baghdad, Iraq, 26 May 2019 – In a resounding statement of support for the Government and people of Iraq in the country's post-conflict recovery, the United Nations Security Council on 21 May 2019 extended the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for another year, until 31 May 2020.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2470 (2019) under Chapter 6 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council reaffirmed the independence, sovereignty,

unity, and territorial integrity of Iraq, emphasizing the importance of stability, prosperity, and security for the people of Iraq, the region, and the international community. It also confirmed its continued support for Iraq in addressing the challenges it faces as it continues its post-conflict stabilization efforts and increasingly turns to the tasks of recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation. The Council also called on the international community to remain strongly committed to supporting

Iraq's humanitarian, stabilization, reconstruction, and development efforts. The Council further decided, among other things, that the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and UNAMI will continue to support the country's Government and people in advancing inclusive political dialogue and national and community-level reconciliation, promoting accountability, as well as protecting human rights, judicial reform, the rule of law and women's empowerment, and in facilitating regional dialogue and cooperation, including on issues of border security, energy, the environment, water, and refugees.

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, as appropriate, of refugees and displaced persons, including through the efforts of the UN Country Team. The Mission was also called upon to promote, support and facilitate Iraqi and international efforts on economic reform, capacity-building and establishing conditions for recovery, reconstruction and sustainable development.



Karbala and Babil Governorates host “Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability” workshops

Karbala/Babil, Iraq, 4 May 2019 –

At two separate workshops in Karbala and Babil governorates, under the theme “Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability”, young Iraqi women and men discussed their role in promoting peaceful coexistence in their local communities and their potential involvement in the affairs of their governorates.

The 63 young women and men (33 in Karbala, including 17 women, and 30 in Babil, including 15 women) focused on developing contributions to local decision-making institutions and the establishment of youth advisory groups. Key challenges discussed included unemployment, improving local economies and encouraging investment, and other specific social challenges their communities face. They were joined on the final day of the workshops by local politicians, opening a valuable channel of communication for an exchange of views with their local authorities. In Babil, in particular, this led to a number of specific commitments by local politicians in support of the young people’s proposals.

Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General Alice Walpole explained that the sessions were an opportunity for young communities at the local level to address issues that are close to their hearts. “This is a tense and complex period for Iraq, where issues of reconciliation and national unity are going to feature prominently in any sustainable peaceful future. Inclusive and frank discussions must take place among



communities, to address past legacies and to build a stable future for Iraq. This cannot be done without the political, social and economic participation of young people,” Ms. Walpole said in remarks at the workshops.

A similar event was held in Basra governorate on 28 April 2019. Further workshops will take place in other governorates across the country over coming months. These workshops are organised by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in cooperation with the Higher Committee for Coexistence and Community Peace of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and the Iraqi Al-Amal Association. The activity is in line with UNAMI’s mandate to support youth and their valuable contributions to building Iraq’s sustainable future.



The officials of the UNAMI and UN Country Team in Iraq had intensive political consultations in May and June 2019.



Baghdad, 1 May 2019 - The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, hosted a meeting this afternoon with Christian members of the Council of Representatives, Mr. Emmanuel Khushaba Youhana, Mr. Hoshiyar Qaradah Yalda, Mr. Aswan Salim Sadiq Sawa, Mr. Burhan al-Din Isaq Alyas and Ms. Rehan Hana Ayoub Shukur. They discussed the latest political developments in Iraq, with a focus on preparations for the forthcoming provincial council elections.

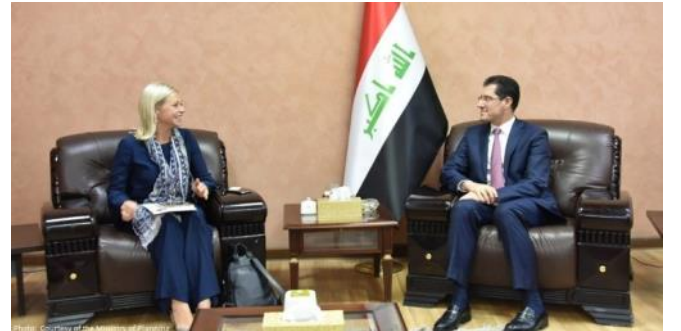


Baghdad, 1 May 2019 - The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, today received Her Excellency Ms. Tone Allers, Norwegian Ambassador to Iraq, and Mr. Knut Lein, Adviser on Security Policy at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with an accompanying delegation. During the meeting, they discussed the latest political developments in Iraq, as well as recent activities of the United Nations in Iraq.



Baghdad, 2 May 2019 - First Deputy Speaker of the Iraq Council of Representatives, Mr. Hassan Karim al-Kaabi, received today in Baghdad the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. They discussed the current political, economic and humanitarian situation in the country.

Photo courtesy of the Iraq Council of Representatives.



Baghdad, 2 May 2019 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met with the Iraqi Minister of Planning, Mr. Nuri Sabah Al-Dulaimi. They discussed humanitarian issues and possible ways to further support stabilization and recovery efforts in the liberated areas to create a secure environment, which contributes to the dignified return of the estimated 1.6 million internally displaced persons, including Yezidis in Sinjar district.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Planning.



Baghdad, 6 May 2019 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met with the Head of the Reform and Reconstruction bloc in the Council of Representatives, Sabah Al-Saadi, who delivered a copy of Sayed Muqtada al-Sadr's statement containing his concern about rising regional tensions, his vision of a regional role for Iraq in resolving disputes and proposals to end the armed conflicts and crises.

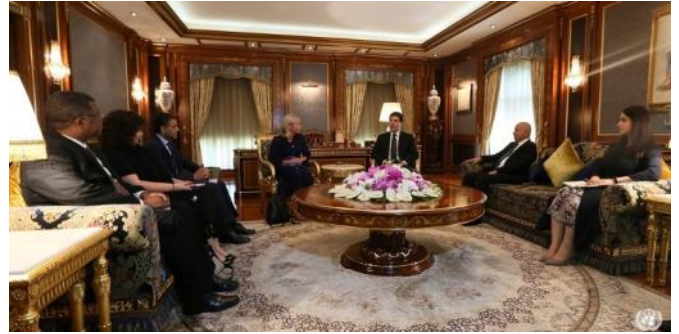
Photo courtesy of NINA.



Baghdad, 08 May 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Head of the Reform and Reconstruction Alliance, His Eminence Ammar Al-Hakim. They discussed the current political situation in the country.



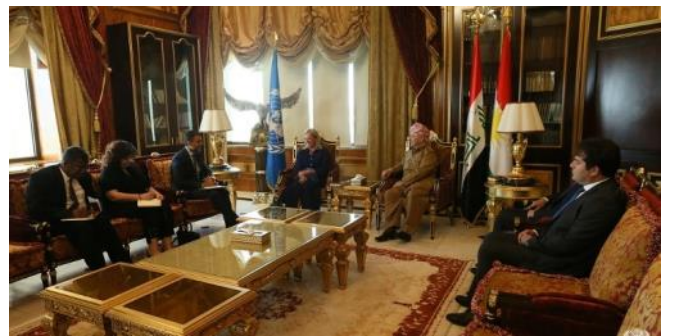
Baghdad, 12 May 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Iraq, H.E. Mr. Iraj Masjedi. They discussed the current political and security situation in the country and the region in general.



Erbil, 13 May 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Mr. Nechirvan Barzani. They discussed the political, economic, humanitarian and security situation in the country and the Kurdistan Region, Baghdad-Erbil relations and efforts for the formation of the Kurdistan Regional Government.



Erbil, 13 May 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Chancellor of the Kurdistan Region Security Council, Mr. Masrour Barzani. They discussed the political and security situation in Iraq and in the Kurdistan Region.



Erbil, 13 May 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), Mr. Masoud Barzani. They discussed the political, economic and security situation in Iraq and the region, as well as the recent efforts for the formation of the Kurdistan Regional Government.
Photo courtesy of Kurdistan24 News



Baghdad, 14 May 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Iraq, Mr. Zhang Tao. They discussed the current political, economic, humanitarian and security situation in the country and how PR of China, as a permanent member of the Security Council, can support United Nations efforts in the country for the benefit of Iraqi people.



New York, 20 May 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq to the United Nations, Ambassador Bahr Al-Uloom. They discussed the current political situation in Iraq and the region.

Photo courtesy of the PM of Iraq.



New York, 22 May 2019 – Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations hosted today a meeting with the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. Full support for work of UNAMI and need for continuous support for Iraq reaffirmed by regional and international participants.

Photo courtesy of the PM of the Netherlands.



New York, 23 May 2019 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, attended a working session with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Stef Blok, representatives of the NGOs and Permanent Representatives to the United Nations on legal modalities of achieving accountability for mass atrocity crimes committed by ISIS.

Photo courtesy of the PM of the Netherlands.



Kirkuk, 20 June 2019 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, visited Kirkuk Governorate today. She met with representatives of all components and minorities in Kirkuk, as well as security officials, and discussed outstanding issues. SRSR Hennis-Plasschaert encouraged constructive dialogue and offered UNAMI's support to all to achieve political stability, reconciliation and sustainable development.



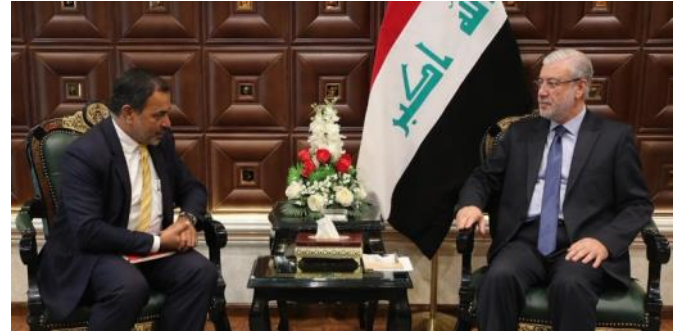
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Ankara, Turkey, 24 June 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis - Plasschaert, met today with Turkish Foreign Minister, Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu. During the meeting, they discussed the reconstruction efforts in Iraq and other issues. Photo courtesy of the Turkish Foreign Ministry.



Baghdad, 25 June 2019 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the former Prime Minister of Iraq, Dr. Haidar Al-Abadi. They discussed the current political, security and economic situation in Iraq. Photo courtesy of the Office of Dr. Al-Abadi.



Baghdad, 25 June 2019 - Dr. Bashir Al-Haddad, Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives, received today the Head of the Political Section of UNAMI, Mr. Manoj Mathew. They discussed the priorities of the work of the Council of Representatives, as well as the political and security situation in the country. Photos courtesy of CoR.



Baghdad, 26 June 2019 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, was received today by the Prime Minister of Iraq, H.E Mr. Adil Abdul-Mahdi. They discussed the current political, security and economic situation in Iraq. File photo.



Baghdad, 26 June 2019 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, Mr. Hamid Al Ghezzi. They discussed the current political, humanitarian and economic situation in Iraq. SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert expressed readiness of the United Nations to help Iraqi authorities in overcoming some challenges in the process of reconciliation, stabilization and reconstruction.

Security

OCHA in Iraq fielded a mission to Mosul Dam to assess the emergency preparedness mechanisms

Mosul, 7 May 2019 - The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Iraq

today fielded a mission to Mosul Dam to assess the emergency preparedness mechanisms.



The Mosul Dam management acknowledged that while the 2018-2019 winter had been among the wettest on record, current dam capacity is more than adequate to absorb any additional inflows. Two preparedness and safety plans are currently in place and a third contingency plan is being finalized in collaboration with the United Nations. Outflow measures are being closely monitored to mitigate risk to low-lying areas.

Mosul Dam's foundation and walls have been the subject of rigorous refurbishment that will be completed by July 2019. The dam has sensors installed that are monitored round the clock and are managed by both Iraqi and international partners. Over 2,000 families that reside in the villages within vicinity of Mosul Dam have now returned.

Erbil and Sulaymaniyah International Airports set up their Disaster Preparedness levels



Erbil, 21 April, 2019 - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the courier company DHL, in partnership with the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCCC) in Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) conducted a workshop on Getting Airports Ready for Disasters (GARD) for the period 14th to 18th April 2019.

The workshop aimed to prepare airports personnel to handle the logistical situations in post-disasters. The five-day workshop provided training to 30 staff from Erbil and Sulaymaniyah International airports and employees from relevant government agencies. The attendees jointly identified the areas that could potentially serve as key locations for disaster logistics operations in the two airports, the work-

shop also evaluated the airports' capacities for processing high volumes of passengers, cargos and warehousing relief supplies.

The Director General of KRG Joint Crisis Coordination Centre, Ministry of Interior, Mr. Hoshang Mohamed said: "We are very pleased with this partnership and we welcome this first-of-its kind initiative of "GARD" as it will further enhance our crisis management capacities to respond to disaster-affected people on time, through expediting and fast-tracking the importation and movement of relief items, and humanitarian assistance as well as the entry and exit of the humanitarian personnel. We extend our thanks to UNDP Iraq and DHL for conducting this programme".

Vice President, Humanitarian Services of Deutsche Post DHL Group, Mr. Chris Weeks said: "We at DHL see it over and over again – airports quickly get overwhelmed by the chaos of incoming relief aid, UN and NGO personnel, military organizations and the crowds of people trying to leave. Sometimes, humanitarian aids arrives faster than airport can arrange for it to get out, causing a massive bottleneck in the flow of relief logistics. Timing is critical during disasters and the more efficient an airport is at processing incoming aircraft, the faster aids can get out to those in need. We are really proud to conduct our first GARD workshop in Iraq".

Officer in Charge of UNDP Iraq Mr. Vakhtang Svanidze stated that: "the threat of natural disasters remain high. Recently due to torrential rains, the country continues to witness large scale floods which have claimed lives, displaced people and destroyed properties. The Dam of Mosul poses significant risks to the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable communities along Tigris flood plain".

Since 2009 nearly 50 GARD workshops have been held in 24 countries for nearly 1,160 trainees. In the Middle East, workshops were previously held in Tehran (2017), Almaty (2017), Aqaba (2016), Amman (2014), Yerevan (2013) and Beirut (2012). Through the joint work of UNDP and DHL, the GARD workshop is being conducted now in Iraq for the first time.

Gender

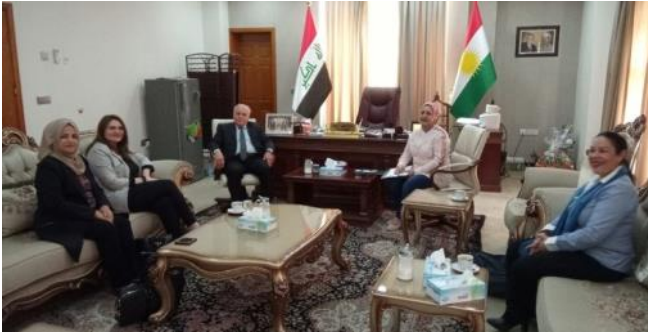
Foreign minister, UN Women representative launch women leadership course



Baghdad, 26 April 2019 – Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Ali Alhakeem and UN Women Representative in Iraq Dina Zorba attended the launch of the first training course for women leaders at the ministry's Foreign Service Institute.

Several women parliamentarians attended the course, which focused on protocol and mediation skills.

A section to train women leaders was created at the ministry's Foreign Service Institute in cooperation with UN Women with the aim of providing participants in courses with leadership, political and diplomatic skills.



Erbil, 29 April 2019 - The President of the Supreme Judicial Council of the Kurdistan Region, Mr. Bangin Qassim Muhamad, and the Head of General Prosecutor's Office, Mr. Azad Ahmed Khoshnaw, received today a delegation representing UN Women Iraq. Discussion focused on means to enhance bilateral ties in the area of capacity building and the possibility of conducting more workshops for judges and general prosecutors in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.



Fallujah, 30 April 2019 - The Women's Leadership Institute Safe Space in Fallujah organized an awareness workshop for 22 media practitioners in Fallujah on issues related to gender equality and gender-based violence. The workshop, convened on 28 April 2019, was part of the continuous awareness-raising activities carried out by WLI in the Anbar Province as part of the project "Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities in Iraq", which is supported by UN Women and the European "Madad" Fund. The workshop is part of an awareness program aiming to reach 100 men and boys in Anbar province.



Erbil, 1 May 2019 - UN Women Iraq representative, Ms. Dina Zorba, met today the General Secretary of Kurdistan Regional Government High Council for Women Affairs, Ms. Pakhshan Zangana. Discussion at the meeting, attended by UN Women Senior Program Officer, Laila Hatahet, and other UN Women team members in Erbil, focused on various areas of cooperation.



UN Women and REACH organize workshop in Baghdad to discuss conditions of conflict-affected women



Baghdad, 2 May 2019 – The Rehabilitation, Education and Community Health (REACH) organization, in cooperation with UN Women, conducted today a workshop for NGOs and government partners to discuss working conditions of conflict-affected women. The one-day workshop, which was part of the project "Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women, Girls and Host Communities in Iraq, which is implemented with the support of UN Women and the European "Madad" Trust Fund, focused on the working conditions of internally displaced, refugee and host community women across key sectors. Participants in the meeting were briefed on findings by a REACH study on the subject. Similar workshop was organized in Erbil on 18 April.

Workshop on management, establishment of small projects concludes in Baghdad

Baghdad, 2 May 2019 - As part of the project “Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women, Girls and Host Communities in Iraq”, which is implemented with the support of UN Women and the European “Madad” Trust Fund, Baghdad Women Association organized a training workshop on the management and establishment of small projects in the period 22-24 April 2019 at the Local Council Hall in Baghdad’s Al Risala District.

The workshop tackled issues related to the launch of projects, entrepreneurship, financial planning, accounting and marketing.

Participants in the workshop, who constitute the first group of beneficiaries from this program, presented project proposal at the conclusion of the workshop. A group of participants will start their small businesses which will be followed up by BWA staff.



Means to enhance women’s role in ending conflicts and achieving social peace discussed at workshops in Diyala and Al-Anbar

Baghdad, 13 May 2019 - As part of a UN Women-supported project to boost women’s role in peacemaking, the Iraqi Women Journalists Forum organized two sessions in Diyala and Al-Anbar governorates to discuss means to enhance women’s role in ending conflicts and achieving social peace.



Workshop on women's rights in national laws aiming to fight violence and achieve gender equality held in Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 14 May 2019 - The Women's Leadership Institute Safe Space in Kirkuk organized recently an awareness workshop for 30 participants on women’s rights in national laws intended to combat violence and achieve gender equality.

Participants in the workshop included university students, civil society activists, journalists, lawyers and volunteers

in women's rights organizations.

The workshop came as part of the continuous awareness-raising activities carried out by WLI in the Kirkuk Province in implementation of the project “Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities in Iraq”, which is supported by UN Women and the European “Madad” Fund.



Awareness sessions on gender-based violence in Duhok

Duhok, 15 May 2019 - Baghdad Women Association’s Listening and Consulting Center in Seiji, Dohuk, conducted awareness sessions on gender-based violence.

Sixteen women and girls displaced in the village of Seiji took part in the sessions, which were conducted as part of the activities of the project "Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities in Iraq", implemented with the support of UN Women and the European Trust Fund (MADAD).



How a small sewing machine made a big difference



Tikrit, 26 May 2019 - Ibtisam, 39 years old, and her three children used to live in Salah al-Din Province in Iraq. Following the destruction of her home when the Iraqi Army launched a battle to liberate the town from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), she and her family moved to the Qadisiya District in Tikrit.

In Qadisiya, Ibtisam and her children have been living in an unfinished house which was not safe. "Many nights I could not sleep because I was afraid for my children from insects that were entering the house from the openings in the walls." Ibtisam told a team from the Tajdid Iraq for Economic Development Organisation (Tajdid). The organization has been working in partnership with UN Women to build the resilience of Syrian refugees and host communities

in the area, under the regional programme "Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities in Iraq, Jordan and Turkey", funded by the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (the EU "Madad" Fund).

Divorced and unemployed, Ibtisam and her children had to live for years receiving help from others. "I could not buy them clothes for school, not even stationery, so I made their clothes myself. Every one of them wore hand-me-down clothing from their older sibling. I was not able to provide them with food so how could I buy them school stuff?"

All of this changed when Ibtisam became a recipient of a cash-for-work programme. A team from Tajdid visited Ibtisam at her home in January 2019. She greeted them with tears in her eyes

and told them of her wish to work and provide for her family.

"I hope to have a small amount of money to start my own project to cover my children's needs." Ibtisam told the team. She was then registered in the programme and started working as a cleaner at a local school.

A month later, she had already paid off her debt and saved enough money to buy a sewing machine to start her own project.

The purchase of the sewing machine has made a big difference to Ibtisam and to her children's lives. Some time later, Ibtisam visited the Tajdid centre to express her gratitude and proudly showed them clothes she had made.

"I am very happy that my project has begun to succeed and grow. I've become a strong woman. I used to be sad and depressed. Now, I am working and making a living. I can support my family."

So far, through the Madad programme, 196 women in Iraq have benefitted from cash-for-work opportunities. The programme aims to empower women by providing them with livelihood opportunities and vocational trainings, including entrepreneurship and business skills.



An awareness session on social diversity held in Seiji



Duhok, 27 May 2019 - Baghdad Women Association's Listening and Consulting Center in Seiji, Dohuk, held an awareness session on social diversity as part of the activities of the project "Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities in Iraq", implemented with the support of UN Women and the European Trust Fund (MADAD).

The session, attended by a number of girls from the village of Seiji, covered topics such as embracing diversity and respecting differences among people and coming together to build a strong cohesive society, particularly that Iraq is a religiously, culturally and socially diverse society. Taking this point into consideration, participant's in the centre's sessions reflect this diversity.

Thursday a special day for “Cash for Work” beneficiaries

Mosul, 6 June 2019 - Thursday is considered a special day for women benefiting from the project “Cash for Work”, which is part of the activities of the project “Strengthening the resilience of Syrian women and girls and host communities in Iraq”, implemented with the support of UN Women and the European Trust Fund (Madad). Once a week, the 24 women beneficiaries gather in the Women Support Center in Mosul to meet in a friendly environment with TAJDID social researchers who ask them about their life and

challenges they face at the personal, family or professional levels with the aim of extending any help possible to them.

Thursday is also the day when these women get their weekly wages. It is the time to see smiles on their faces. “We can see the pride in their eyes after obtaining their payments that they got in return for their hard work,” TAJDID employees remark, feeling as proud and as happy as these beneficiaries because of their positive contributions to the lives of these women.



Training workshop on gender-based violence in Baserma camp

Erbil, 11 June 2019 - The Women Empowerment Organisation held a training workshop on gender-based violence and case management in the period May 29-30 for staff members of various agencies operating in the Baserma camp in Erbil.

The workshop came as part of the project “Strengthening the resilience of Syrian women and girls and host communities in Iraq,” implemented with the support of UN Women and the European Trust Fund (Madad).



Awareness workshop for girls on right to education

Duhok, 11 June 2019 - The Baghdad Women Association’s Listening and Consulting Center in Seiji, Dohuk, organized an awareness session for a group of girls on the right to education. The session was held as part of the project “Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities in Iraq”, supported by UN Women and the European Trust

Fund (Madad).

The aim of the session was to raise legal awareness of the right to education in accordance with Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Education contributes significantly to the protection of the rights of girls by familiarizing them with their rights.



UN Women workshop for representatives of civil society organizations on means of improving access to justice by female survivors of violence opened on Erbil

Erbil, 17 June 2019 - UN Women Iraq office opened earlier today in Erbil a four-day workshop for representatives of civil society organisations on means of improving access to justice by female survivors of violence. The workshop aims to familiarize participants with means of designing and implementing efficient activities and programmes to combat violence against women. The workshop, in which 42 representatives of various non-governmental organisations are taking part, also aims to orient participants on women’s rights within the framework of Iraq’s interna-

tional commitments, raise awareness of challenges facing female survivors of violence and the need to enable them to access justice services and build the capacity of service providers to enable them to help survivors receive legal assistance.

The workshop is held as part of the project “Strengthening the resilience of Syrian women and girls and host communities in Iraq”, implemented with the support of UN Women and the European Trust Fund (MADAD) and also in partnership with other international organisations.



Training on Job placement activity held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 17 June 2019 - The Baghdad Women Association offered training to the first group of women in Baghdad on job placement in the period 11-13 June 2019.

The activity was part of the project "Strengthening the resilience of Syrian women and girls and host communities in Iraq", implemented with the support of UN Women and the European Trust Fund (MADAD).

It tackled subjects such as job searches, career goals, job description, job placement, CVs and interviews, among others. Participants in the training activity were given practical exercises that included doing their own CVs and having mock job interviews.

The training programme aims to offer employment opportunities to 120 women and girls through linking them up with potential trainers and employers

in the private sector. Those selected through interviews will get the chance to be working for employers for two months, and will be supported during

their training and initial employment by the project team who will help in providing them with a safe and cooperative working environment.



Enaas Taleb supports efforts to eliminate GBV

Erbil, 18 June 2019 – Renowned Iraqi actress Enaas Taleb expressed her support for efforts to enhance the role of Iraqi women and to eliminate gender-based violence (GBV).

Addressing participants in a four-day workshop organized by UN Women in Erbil for civil society organisations on means of improving access to justice by female survivors of violence, Taleb affirmed the importance of the media and drama in such efforts saying they can be very powerful means in boosting women's positive roles in society.

Taleb voiced her support for UN Women's endeavours to develop the capacities of service providers on means of improving access to justice by female survivors of violence.

UN Women Iraq representative Dina Zorba welcomed the Iraqi star and the other participants in the workshop and reiterated the importance of developing the capacities of CSOs as actors who are at the forefront of efforts to deal with GBV cases.

Outlining various projects carried out by UN Women in Iraq, Zorba dwelt on cooperation with various partners across the country, including the Iraqi Women Journalists Forum (IWJF).

IWJF President Nebras Al-Maamouri addressed the workshop outlining stereotypes of women in media and drama works.

The workshop is held as part of the project "Strengthening the resilience of Syrian women and girls and host com-

munities in Iraq", implemented with the support of UN Women and the European Trust Fund (MADAD) and in partnership with other international organizations.



The Statue of Women, Peace and Freedom was unveiled in Erbil

Erbil, 21 June 2019 - The Statue of Women, Peace and Freedom was unveiled in Erbil. The statue was designed by KRG High Council of Women Affairs in cooperation with the UN Women Iraq.



International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict marked in Erbil

Erbil, 19 June 2019 - The High Council for Women Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government in collaboration with the UN- Iraq, today, in Erbil, commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict under the theme “The Importance of a Survivor-centered Approach”. The event was attended by senior government officials, UN representatives, civil society activists and women human rights defenders.

UNFPA was represented by the Deputy Representative/OiC, Mr Himyar Abdulmoghni, who said:

“Despite the end of the war and the liberation of territories in Iraq, these survivors, in the majority, suffer from depression, crippling anxiety, or panic attacks: some even consider self-harm or suicide.

A holistic survivor-centered approach is

the most constructive way to build the resilience of survivors while minimizing the risk of re-traumatization, social exclusion, and stigma.

UNFPA and the UN family in Iraq, with donors and partners, will continue

to work towards addressing the needs of survivors in post-conflict Iraq and raising awareness on the need for a survivor-centered approach that empowers and amplifies the voices of survivors.”



Drafting of Iraq's 2nd National Action Plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security is progressing

Erbil, 21 June 2019 - Baghdad Mayor, Ms. Thikra Alwash, and KRG General Secretary of the High Council of Women Affairs, Ms. Bakhshan Zangana, co-chair coordination meeting to draft Iraq's 2nd National Action Plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security.



A workshop on means of improving access to justice by female survivors of violence opened by UN Women Iraq office in Erbil

Erbil, 24 June 2019 - A four-day workshop on means of improving access to justice by female survivors of violence was opened by UN Women Iraq office in Erbil today. The workshop, in which representatives of civil society organisations from various parts of Iraq are taking part, aims to familiarize participants with means of designing and implementing efficient activities and programmes to combat violence against women. The workshop also aims to orient participants on women's rights within the framework of Iraq's international commitments, raise

awareness of challenges facing female survivors of violence and the need to enable them to access justice services and build the capacity of service providers to enable them to help survivors receive legal assistance.

The workshop is held as part of the project "Strengthening the resilience of Syrian women and girls and host communities in Iraq", implemented with the support of UN Women and the European Trust Fund (MADAD) and also in partnership with other international organizations.



Focus groups held as part of the continuous efforts to monitor services provided to women beneficiaries across Iraq



Baghdad, 28 June 2019 - UN Women programme team on 20 June 2019 visited the safe space run by Tajdid Iraq Foundation for Economic Development in the city of Mosul, 400 kilometers north of Baghdad. The team conducted a focus group meeting with 12 women that benefitted from the skills development and cash-for-work programmes carried out as part of the project "Strengthening the resilience of Syrian women and girls and host communities in Iraq", which is supported by UN Women and the European Trust Fund MADAD. Overall, participants in the meeting said that they feel self-reliant and more economically empowered following their enrollment in the skills development programme. The visit by the UN Women team comes as part of the continuous efforts to monitor services provided to women beneficiaries across Iraq.

On 24 June 2019 UN Women programme team visited the Baghdad Women Association's centre in the village of Seiji, near Duhok, more than 490 kilometers north of Baghdad.

The team conducted a focus group meeting with 13 beneficiaries of the centre's cash-for-work services.

Participants in the meeting voiced satisfaction with the outcome of the cash-for-work project which over the past two years benefited 120 women and girls, offering them training and job opportunities to help them support themselves and their families.

The beneficiaries called for the sustainability of the project to enable them and other participants to benefit from the effort, which they described during the meeting as "very beneficial", "educational", "empowering" and "helpful."

Nora Farid, 25, said such programmes

should be offered to all Iraqi women. "This kind of training is very important to enable women to be self-reliant," Farid, a Yazidi who was displaced along with her family from the Sinjar region during the war with ISIS, said at the meeting, describing how she was able to help her family through the job she obtained during the programme. Shaha Ismail, 19, also a Yazidi originally from Sinjar, agreed, saying that the training and the job offered through the cash-for-work project made her "stronger than before."

On 26 June 2019 UN Women programme team visited the Erbil Women Shelter where they held a similar focus group meeting with 13 women and girls staying at the facility.

UN Women programme team also visited Baserma refugee camp, in the mountainous northeastern parts of the Erbil Governorate, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The team conducted a focus group discussion with 14 women and girls benefiting from the Cash-for-Work programme, carried out in the camp by the Women Empowerment Organization (WEO).

Participants in the meeting commended the programme which they said provided them with sewing skills and cash to enable them to buy essentials for their families. Some of them used part of the money to buy sewing machines.

A total of 48 women benefited from the programme in the camp in the months of December 2018 and January 2019.

The project, they said, was a life-changing experience for them, not only providing them with work and cash, but also a space outside the household where they feel empowered.

The participants, all from Kurdish areas in northeast Syria, said they used

the cash they obtained from the project to buy home essentials and pay for their families' needs. More important than the cash was the more and psychological support they received through the project.

"The project was a psychological boost for us. It changed our lives," said one refugee. "Before the training, we were just sitting at home since we had no reason to leave. Afterwards, we started to leave home to either work or visit other places in the camp."

Participants in the focus group meeting agreed that this work experience was empowering for them, giving them the chance not only to provide for their families, but also to have more say in their lives. "It gave women the chance to know their rights," said Diljan Ali, 25, who is married with one child. "A working woman feels she is strong, knows her value," she said. And surely so do her family and society.

On 27 June 2019 UN Women programme team visited Kirkuk Women Support Center which is run by the Baghdad-based Women Leadership Institute.

The team had a focus group meeting with 10 women beneficiaries from psychological support services and small businesses grants programme. Thirty vulnerable women benefited from these services and grants this year. Participants in the focus group meeting used grant funds to start or improve on existing projects such as sewing, hair-dressing and producing home-made food.

At the start of their enrollment, they were given a four-day training course on business development skills, which they described as essential and empowering.

Other participants noted that the society finds it shameful for women to work, and that they had to break psychological and social barriers to be able to get started.

"I am not ashamed any more of doing business and selling food. I even put my cell phone number on cards and stickers to get new customers," said Raghda, a single parent supporting two children.

She added that her two children are proud of her work as she managed to improve their living conditions since starting in January 2019.

These visits by the UN Women team are part of the continuous efforts to monitor services provided under various projects to women beneficiaries across Iraq.

Increased cooperation between the UN Iraq family and Women's Advisory Group to advance women issues



Baghdad, 27 June 2019 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas, and representatives of UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, discussed with members of the Women's Advisory Group increased cooperation to advance women's issues in Iraq. They focused on the challenges facing women and their role in the country's politics, the economy and society in general, and also addressed the specific problems of displaced women finding economic opportunities and obtaining civil documentation, particularly those with perceived ties to Da'esh (ISIL). Speaking at the interactive session, Ms. Ruedas, who is also the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, urged the Women's Advisory Group to spear-

head efforts aimed at generating a change of culture to advance women's empowerment. Highlighting the support of the United Nations for initiatives that address gender inequalities, Ms. Ruedas said that despite the enormous obstacles facing women in Iraq, there are still opportunities to include more women in institutions. "I urge you to find innovative ways of engaging with existing power structures to promote cultural and political mindsets that could advance women's voices and participation in different levels." Ms. Ruedas agreed with the attendees on concerns about the continued inadequate representation of women in leadership positions.

Ms. Ruedas welcomed the initiative of the Women's Advisory Group and noted

that the UN Country Team was keen to draw on their perspectives, experience and knowledge. Further, Ms. Ruedas stated that UN Women and the UN-AMI Gender Unit were working closely to support their efforts.

The Women's Advisory Group for Iraq was established in October 2018 and officially launched in January 2019. The Group is composed of 20 Iraqi women leaders from different governorates in the field of politics, academia, media and civil society activism. Initially, the Group was established as a lobby for better representation of women in reconciliation and political processes but has since expanded its advocacy work to cover broader issues within the women, peace and security agenda.



Workshop for judges, prosecutors on combating violence against women concluded in Erbil



Erbil, 29 June 2019 – UN Women on Saturday concluded its the third workshop of the year for judges and prosecutors on means to combat violence against women. The two-day workshop tackled types of violence, local and international laws and conventions on combating violence, obstacles to achieving justice and means of overcoming these obstacles. Judges and prosecutors taking part in the workshop represented various parts of Iraq.

The workshop was held as part of the project "Strengthening the resilience of Syrian women and girls and host communities in Iraq", implemented with the support of UN Women and the European Trust Fund (MADAD) and in partnership with other international organizations.

World Press Freedom Day celebrated in Baghdad as Iraq plans to establish a National Mechanism to Protect Journalists

Baghdad, 4 May 2019 – World Press Freedom Day this year promises to be a milestone for journalists in Iraq, with the Government expected to establish a National Mechanism for the safety of journalists and ending impunity for crimes related to targeting the freedom of expression, after positively responding to the Voluntary National Review of Safety of Journalists and Access to Information.

At an event on the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day, the Iraqi National Committee on Safety of Journalists, together with the Iraqi Journalists' Syndicate, UNESCO, the United Nations at large, and the International Federation of Journalists focused on the global theme for this year "Media for Democracy-Journalism and Elections in Times of Disinformation" and the overall goal of defending and protecting journalists.

The event, hosted by the Iraqi Journalists' Syndicate in Baghdad, brought together media professionals, senior government and parliamentary officials as well as international and local NGOs active in the field of freedom of expression. It came in the context of the multiple challenges facing the safety of the Iraqi media profession: journalists operate in an extremely volatile environment, reporting from the remaining conflict zones and from the areas liberated from Da'esh, and face threats to their lives.

On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, said that on this day we reflect on the challenges that journalists face and to stress the importance of ensuring that press freedom remains a pillar of every democratic and open



society, that journalists are protected, have access to information and are able to do their job properly.

"The press and media in general can act as a bridge for peace by focusing on what brings people together rather than on what divides them. A free press – even if opinions are contested, rejected or disliked – is necessary to help safeguard the public interest and protect democratic values".

Mr. Paolo Fontani, Director of the UNESCO Office for Iraq, said that although the country continues to suffer from problems affecting the safety of journalists and their standards of work and professionalism, efforts are being made to address these issues. He commended the Iraq National Committee on the Safety of Journalists for its efforts towards finalising the Voluntary National Review (VNR), and the Iraqi authorities for submitting their second

official report on the killing of journalists and judicial follow-up, and for their upcoming establishment of a strengthened national mechanism for the prevention of, and protection against, threats and attacks relating to the freedom of expression.

"With this progress, Iraq has the potential of becoming a unique model in the region by dealing with issues of press freedoms, access to information and freedom of expression through this national committee, especially if the protection mechanism is approved by the government," Mr. Fontani said at the event.

UNESCO has a global mandate to monitor and report on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. The next report on this topic will be presented by the UNESCO Director-General to the 41st session of the UNESCO General Conference (October 2019).

NUIJ celebrates World Press Freedom Day

Baghdad, 4 May 2019 - The National Union of Iraqi Journalists (NUIJ) celebrated today the World Press Freedom Day at an event in Baghdad. The event, which was marked under the banner "A Free Media.... An Objective Media", was attended by officials, diplomats and activists. In his speech, the President of the NUIJ, Mr. Yassir Al-Saalim, called for an end to impunity and an environment that allows journalists to work freely. The meeting was also addressed by representatives of the Minister of Culture and the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights.



UNMAS welcomed more than 20 journalists, representing international and national news organizations, to view and report on its work

Baghdad, 3 May 2019 - Freedom of expression may be a right guaranteed to all by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but who keeps us all honest in our era of social media and “fake news”? Journalists do by reporting facts to strict standards which is why UNMAS welcomed more than 20 representing international and national news organizations to view and report on its work in Iraq in the past 12 months alone. What better way to prove your worth? What better way to tell your story to the world? Where better to argue your case in the court of public opinion than on the Op-Ed page of a respected publication? What better way to demonstrate accountability to constituents?

It is important that we recognize those who deliver the facts without embellishment or compromise. There is no

higher calling than the journalist’s pursuit of truth. Better than congratulations, we offer to all journalists our

simple, respectful “thank you.”
Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager, UNMAS Iraq



The heavily destroyed Old City district of Mosul, where ISIS militants were cornered, is still littered with unexploded ordnance. Ivor Prickett for The New York Times

UNESCO develops a handbook for the protection of journalists in field

Baghdad, 30 June 2019 - UNESCO, in partnership with the Iraqi Communication and Media Commission (CMC), and the Ministry of Interior (MoI), organized the first roundtable with media outlets directors on preparing a new handbook on the relationship between journalists and police officers in field.

Recognizing the gravity of the safety of journalists issue, CMC and UNESCO hosted a one-day roundtable on preparing this handbook in co-operation with the representatives of media outlets, Ministry of Interior and Safety of Journalists Committee. This event is funded by the International Programme for the Development of Communication

(IPDC)-Netherlands, in the context of the promulgated recommendations, which emphasize the role of law enforcement authorities, legislatures, and the media in ensuring safe working conditions for journalists.

In the opening of the roundtable, the special adviser of the head of CMC, Muthad Ahmed, stated, “This roundtable will pave the way for the production of a practical guide for coordination between journalists who are working in the field and police officers, often in checkpoints to reduce the number of violations against journalists”. In his opening remarks, Mr. Ahmed noted that the significance of having both the MoI and media owners’ participants to



share experiences and discuss challenges faced by the journalists and media workers in the field is a great opportunity for real reform.

Major General Saad Maan, the representative of the Ministry of Interior, said in his speech “The Ministry of Interior hopes that this handbook will raise the level of awareness among both parties highlighting the multiple duties of both journalists and police officers. The challenges and problems that have occurred in the past can be avoided through such activities”.

Dhea Subhee, UNESCO Iraq Office, said “These are the main challenges faced by journalists in the field and the suggested solutions by the media owners. UNESCO will ensure that great care is paid to these considerations as part of the safety of journalists mechanism”.

This handbook, and the recommendations it contains, conceived by participants, with the invaluable support of IPDC, is considered one of the activation steps of the journalists protection mechanism in Iraq.



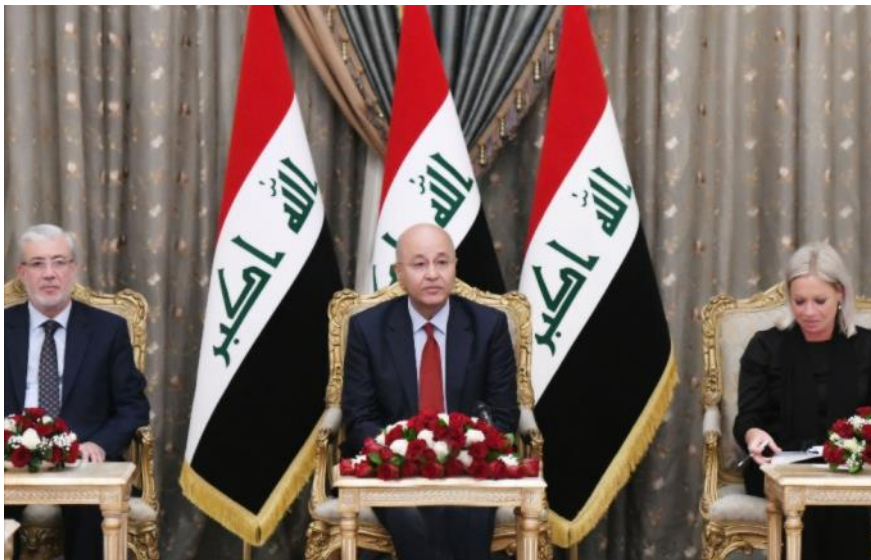
UNAMI Human Rights Office conducts workshop on sexual violence in conflict in Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 29 April 2019 – At a two-day workshop in Kirkuk City, representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) discussed their role in furthering the implementation of the Joint Communiqué on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence.

The event was organized by the Human Rights Office (HRO) of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), and was attended by 15 participants including 11 women. Over two days, the participants had an interactive discussion on the challenges facing survivors of sexual violence in conflict, including the difficulties they encounter in reintegrating into society.



UN welcomes Iraqi leadership's support for enactment of Anti-Domestic Violence Law



Baghdad, 6 May 2019 - The United Nations welcomes the Iraqi leadership's support for steps towards the enactment of an Anti-Domestic Violence Law that fully protects the legal rights of all victims of domestic violence and serves as a deterrent, preventing impunity for perpetrators. Legislators were urged to adopt a law that is fully aligned with the Constitution of Iraq.

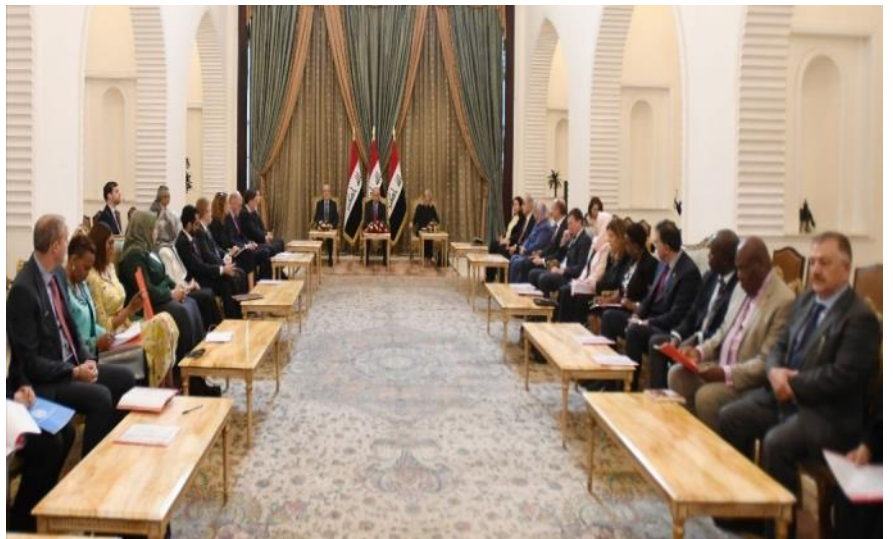
Under the auspices, and in the presence, of the President of the Republic, H.E. Barham Salih, an advocacy meeting to sensitize decision-makers to need to endorse of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law in the Council of Representatives was held at the presidential palace on 5 May 2019. Also in attendance were Iraq's First Lady Serbag Salih; Second Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Dr. Bashir Haddad; the Director-General of the Women

Empowerment Department at the General Secretariat of the Council of Minis-

ters, Dr. Ibtisam Aziz; the British Ambassador to Iraq, Jon Wilks, representing the donor community; other diplomats and UN officials.

Addressing the meeting, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert welcomed the Iraqi leadership's support for the law and for engaging in consultations aimed at consolidating the inputs of many stakeholders.

"We encourage a law that conforms to international human rights standards and norms, in line with the Iraqi Constitution which prohibits all forms of violence and abuse within the family," Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert said in remarks at the meeting. She offered UN technical assistance for a draft law which, she stressed, will fully be aligned with the Iraqi Constitution and protects the most vulnerable.



UN Human Rights Iraq met with FIKR NGO

Baghdad, 05 May 2019 - UN Human Rights Iraq met with FIKR NGO who highlighted their advocacy work on the rights of widows, orphans, divorced women, and persons with disabilities. Concerns were also raised by FIKR about the growing impact of drug abuse on Iraqi society.



UNAMI Human Rights Office conducts training on national and international fair trial rights

Kirkuk, 28 May 2019 - The Human Rights Office (HRO) of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Iraqi Bar Association-Kirkuk Chapter jointly conducted a training session on "Understanding national and international fair trial guarantees" on 27 May 2019. Seven practicing lawyers, including one woman, participated in the training, which was followed by an interactive plenary discussion. The training is the second of a series of training sessions lined up this year for members of the Iraqi Bar Association in Kirkuk. The training included a presentation on the rights of an accused person under

Iraqi law and procedure, which was delivered by a recognised criminal law expert, local lawyer Muyad Obaid Alezzi. It also included a presentation by HRO on the international fair trial guarantees as provided for in Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iraq is a state party.

The training stressed the protection of human rights while countering terrorism is an obligation of States, and that the protection of human rights is a condition for an effective counter-terrorism strategy. It was also demonstrated that all counter-terrorism measures must comply with States' international hu-

man rights obligations, including the right to a fair trial. This is essential in ensuring the proper administration of justice.



UNAMI Human Rights Office supports the reinstatement of Faili Kurds citizenship

Baghdad, 29 May 2019 - UNAMI's Human Rights Office (HRO) in Baghdad convened today the second roundtable discussion on the rights of minorities in Iraq, in line with its mandate to support the Government to fulfil its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). The discussion was aimed at enabling a structured forum for advocacy on the implementation the CERD Committee recommendation made to the Government of Iraq in January 2019, to accelerate the process of reinstating the citizenship of some Faili Kurds which was lost in the 1980s.

Participants included government representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior; Iraq High Commission for Human Rights as well as representatives of the Faili Kurd minority community.

Danielle Bell, Chief of UNAMI HRO welcomed the 'discussions to lay the foundation for the development of concrete strategies which will enable the Government of Iraq to fulfill its obliga-

tions under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination'.

Participants proposed strategies such as working with line ministries, IHCHR, High Judicial Council, Civil Society and the UN to: i) amend the Iraqi Nationality Law to remove the requirement to present records of the 1957 Census as proof of Iraqi nationality; ii) advocate for the creation of an electronic database for the Faili Kurd 1957 census records in the Ministry of Interior instead of reference to old tattered physical files; iii) in the alternative to census records, reference should be

made to academic, employment and property records to prove Iraqi citizenship; iv) advocate for the creation of a committee in Ministry of Interior dedicated to Faili Kurd citizenship; v) raise public awareness against reference to Faili Kurds as Iranians and vi) enactment of a law specific to Faili Kurds issues.

HRO will use these strategies to advocate with relevant stakeholder, to remove discriminatory civil documentation procedures in reinstating citizenship to the Faili Kurds by encouraging the removal of administrative obstacles.



UNAMI HRO conducts information-session and consultation with Kirkuk journalists

Kirkuk, 17 June 2019 -- UNAMI HRO conducted today an information-session on “The Role of Journalists in the Promotion of Human Rights” at the Kirkuk Governorate Building in Kirkuk City. Eight journalists, including three women, from the Kirkuk Journalists Syndicate participated in the session.

HRO delivered a 45-minute presentation on freedom of expression and of the press, and the journalists’ responsibility to understand human rights and to report human rights violations. HRO

stressed the need to incorporate the “human rights angle” to a news story, if warranted. The session was followed by a consultation meeting where the participants discussed the problems and challenges they face while doing their work as journalists, including safety and access issues.

HRO and the Kirkuk Journalists Syndicate agreed to hold regular consultation meetings on the state of press freedom in Diyala, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din.



UN emphasizes importance of a survivor-centred approach towards victims of ISIL abuses



Baghdad/Erbil, 26 June 2019 – A tailored and robust response to the needs of survivors of sexual violence in conflict perpetrated by ISIL (Da’esh) is needed to assist victims’ recovery and contribute to lasting peace in post-conflict Iraq, the United Nations in Iraq said, marking the annual International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The day was observed by the United Nations, together with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, in events in Erbil and Baghdad on 19 and 26 June, respectively, under the theme “The Importance of a Survivor-Centred Approach”.

Speaking in the capital Baghdad on behalf of the United Nations family in Iraq, the Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, urged the Iraqi government to implement a survivor-centred approach to the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2467 on women, peace and security, adopted on 23 April 2019.

“For more than three years during the conflict with the so-called Islamic State

of Iraq and the Levant (Da’esh), women and girls were subjected to the most atrocious forms of violence, including sexual violence, as a weapon of war. They suffered horrific and prolonged sexual abuse. They were imprisoned, beaten, sold, burnt, raped and tortured,” said Ms. Walpole.

“It is widely agreed that a holistic approach is the best way to start rebuilding the resilience of survivors, minimising the risk of re-traumatisation, social exclusion and stigma. A survivor-centred approach ensures that the safety and welfare of survivors remain paramount,” she added, underlining that the United Nations in Iraq will continue to support the government in protecting the rights of gender-based violence survivors, including survivors of sexual violence in conflict, as part of its commitment to advancing human rights and facilitating the achievement of sustainable peace and stability in Iraq.

Ms. Walpole welcomed the current efforts of the Government of Iraq in drafting legislation in support of Yazidi survivors of Da’esh, including female survivors of sexual violence. She called for public recognition, too, of survivors

from other communities, and for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, “who endure a particular burden of shame and stigma”.

Speaking in Erbil, Kurdistan Region, UNFPA Deputy Representative Mr. Himyar Abdulmoghni stressed the need for action: “Despite the end of the war and the recapture of territories in Iraq, these survivors, in the majority, suffer from depression, crippling anxiety, or panic attacks: some even consider self-harm or suicide. UNFPA, with donors and partners, will continue to work towards addressing the needs of survivors in post-conflict Iraq and raising awareness on the need for a survivor-centred approach that empowers and amplifies the voices of survivors.”

The United Nations Iraq – UNAMI, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, UNDP, UN Women, and OHCHR - stands ready to provide the necessary support to ensure a comprehensive implementation of resolution 2467, including medical and psychosocial assistance; sexual and reproductive health care; educational, economic, and livelihood support; justice for survivors and their children; and the end of impunity for perpetrators.



UNAMI Human Rights Office continues to showcase human rights and minorities related short movies to diverse audiences in Iraq

Baghdad, May - June 2019 – UNAMI Human Rights Office (HRO), in cooperation with local partners, continues to showcase human rights and minorities issues in Iraq related short movies to diverse audiences all around the country. Twenty-four short films were originally shown at the 3 By 3 Film Festival held in Baghdad in early March 2019.



At the **University of Babil**, on 28 April 2019, 100 Fine Arts students and academics, the human rights section of Babil University, NGO staff, artists, and the Babil branch of the Iraqi High Commission of Human Rights (IHCHR) joined UNAMI HRO in celebrating the Minorities and Human Rights Film Festival.

In advance of the screening, the Dean of the Fine Arts Department emphasized that Iraq's young generation want peace and reconciliation.

The UN Human Rights Chief for Iraq, Ms. Danielle Bell, agreed and highlighted the important role of youth in peace building and social cohesion, noting that human right films may provoke much needed discussion on sensitive topics affecting Iraqis. This exchange of views may build trust, transparency and peaceful coexistence.



The festival audience watched short films, made by Iraqis, on human rights concerns including forced marriage, enforced disappearances, child marriages, lack of access to education, displacement, violence against women and children.

Babil IHCHR highlighted human rights concerns in Babil including unemployment coinciding with crime and drug abuse.



In the **Al-Zubair neighborhood of Basra**, on 30 April 2019, 90 women and 40 men from the African descent Iraqi community, and the Sabeen, Sunni and Shi'a communities, including police officers, human rights activists, civil society organizations members, artists and youth attended the film festival.

The most popular films, according to the audience, were 'Give Me My Chance' and 'Cinderella' (joint winners), with 'Colors' and 'Black Lens' receiving almost as many votes.



At the **Kirkuk Cultural Centre**, on 30 April 2019, 75 men and women from Turkmen, Kurdish, Arab, Christian, Kakai, Shia and Sunni communities, including members of civil society, government, youth, tribal and religious leaders, human rights defenders, academics and artists, including film directors, joined the film festival.

The films generated a vibrant discussion on women's rights, access to education, freedom of expression, the exodus of minorities from Iraq, and the rights of the marginalized and displaced. Once again, "Cinderella" was chosen by the audience as the best film.



The tour continued at **Al-Iraqiya Uni-**

versity, Baghdad, on 2 May, where over 100 women and men, including academics and students from the Arts Faculty of the Al-Iraqiya University attended the festival.

Following the screening of the films, all made by Iraqis, audience engaged in a lively discussion of issues including children's rights, due process, peaceful co-existence of communities, harassment and discrimination against women and other difficulties encountered by women in everyday life, prisoners' rights, and obstacles to exercising the right to work and accessing basic services. The most popular films, according to the audience, were 'Cinderella' with 'Colors', 'Give Me My Chance' and 'My Music' also attracting many votes.



On 8 May 2019, The **Tikrit Castle of Culture and Arts**, Salah al-Din Governorate, celebrated the Minorities and Human Rights Film Festival with 45 participants including Tikrit's Director of Police and representatives of Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Health, the Provincial Council, Tikrit Community Police, Police Protection of Family and Children Unit, NGOs, as well as academics from Tikrit University, women activists, journalists, human rights defenders, actors, a musician, and a film director.

The films triggered lively panel and audience discussions of human rights issues raised in the films.

Once again, the most popular film, according to the audience, was Cinderella (on poverty and orphanhood due to war) followed by Colours (discrimination against minorities). Black Lens (corruption) and Give Me My Chance (displacement and access to education) also polled strongly.

In **Diwaniya City**, on 12 June 2019, over 100 members of civil society, youth, minorities including Christian and Sabeen community members, member of the ISF, PMUs, academics, and elders, were hosted by the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights for the film festival. The films, all by Iraqi directors, triggered a lively discussion

UNAMI Human Rights Office continues to showcase human rights and minorities related short movies... (continued)

on important issues that need to be addressed in Iraq including enforced disappearances, discrimination against minorities, forced marriage, access to education, identity, and corruption and its impact on human rights.



Over 120 members of civil society, minorities (including Bahai, Turkoman and Kakai) as well as human rights defenders, women activists, the representative on coexistence in the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Endowment, students, Kurdistan Independent Board of Human Rights, NGOs and media, celebrated the **Erbil short film festival** on 15 June 2019.

Panelists noted that the Iraqi short films screened at the festival reflected the reality in Iraq.



UNAMI Human Rights Unit in Kirkuk held the "3x3 Film Festival" on human rights and minorities at **Baba Gurgur** institution for education in Kirkuk City on 17 June 2019. A total of 23 women from different ethnicities from the management and teachers working at the mentioned institution participated in the show.



The guests strongly appreciated the interesting short films idea made by



Iraqis on human rights concerns in Iraq, including mainly negative impact of corruption on human rights situation in general. An interesting discussion and exchanging of ideas during discussion on child and women rights followed.



At the **Lalish Yazidi Cultural Centre**, on 17 June 2019, 65 participants including Yazidi community members, NGOs working on human rights issues, youth, civil society activists, a Yazidi provincial councillor, a member of parliament, persons with disabilities, orphan children, government employees from different sectors, and media joined the festival in Duhok.

The films sparked a vibrant discussion about human rights issues in Duhok that need to be addressed.



On 18 June 2019, UN Human Rights held a Short Film Festival on Minorities and Human Rights at the Directorate of Education in **Amedi district, Duhok**. Some 70 participants, including Christians and Kurdish Muslims, NGOs working on women's rights and other human rights issues, youth, human rights activists, a female Kurdish member of parliament, government employees from different sectors includ-

ing the elimination of violence unit within the Ministry of Interior, and Kurdish media, joined the festival. The films sparked discussion about human rights issues in Amedi including child marriage and access to education.



In **Suliamaniyah**, on 24 June 2019, the movies were shown to 114 women and men from civil society, Yezedis, Kakai, and Jewish minorities, human rights defenders, staff from the Kurdistan Independent Board of Human Rights, NGOs, journalists and media, Sunni religious scholars, the head of the Suliamaniyah Provincial Council, the head of the Suliamaniyah police unit on combatting violence against women, and the head of the joint coordination committee for Kurdistan Region government.

Panelists discussed various human rights concerns - including those affecting minorities - raised in the short films and others in the Kurdistan Region.

In **Kalar**, on 26 June 2019, HRO conducted a festival with 217 men and women from civil society, representatives of the Kakai and Jewish minorities, human rights defenders, NGOs, journalists and media, imams, the mayor of Kalar and staff of the directorates of education, endowment and religious affairs, sport and youth, and combating violence against women, and the chief of the police unit responsible for the protection of the forests of Garmiyan.

Panelists discussed various human rights concerns raised in the short films and others in the Kurdistan Region. This was the 31st screening of the films as HRO continues to show the best short films on minorities and human rights from the 3By3 Film Festival to audiences across Iraq.



UNITAD reports the conclusion by Iraq's national authorities of the exhumation of 12 mass graves in Kojo, Sinjar region, Iraq

Baghdad, 30 April 2019 - UNITAD reports the conclusion by Iraq's national authorities of the exhumation of 12 mass graves in Kojo, Sinjar region, Iraq. All exhumed remains are securely transported to the facilities of the Medico-Legal Directorate for forensic analysis and identification. UNITAD Iraq continues to support national authorities and local communities in the quest for accountability for the perpetrators of these horrific crimes.



UNITAD and Niger cooperate in fight for accountability of Da'esh / Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant



Niamey, Niger, 5 May 2019 - The Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), Mr. Karim A. A. Khan QC, completed his official visit to the Republic of Niger, establishing modalities for cooperation in the implementation of the mandate of the Investigative Team. The Special Adviser also engaged with senior officials to emphasise the role of formal processes for accountability as a key pillar in the fight against Da'esh.

During his visit, the Special Adviser was received by His Excellency Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger. The President underlined his support for the work of the Investigative Team as well as the mandate of the Special Adviser to promote accountability throughout the world for acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide committed by Da'esh. The President further noted the relevance of the work of UNITAD and the Special Adviser, considering the affiliation between Da'esh and terrorist groups presently operating in Niger, in particular Boko Haram.

The Special Adviser was also grateful

for the opportunity to meet with their Excellencies the Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior and Minister of Justice, as well as receive operational briefings from national authorities responsible for the prosecution and investigation of crimes committed by ISIL-affiliated groups in Niger.

At the conclusion of the visit, and pursuant to the Terms of Reference regarding the activities of the Investigative Team, the Special Adviser and His Excellency Mr. Marou Amadou, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Niger, signed a Cooperation Agreement,

providing a framework for collaboration in support of the implementation of the mandate of the Investigative Team including the potential transmission of relevant evidentiary material to the Team in support of its investigative work in Iraq.

The Special Adviser expresses his gratitude to the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Niger for his support in facilitating the visit and for his commitment to working with UNITAD in pursuit of accountability for ISIL crimes.

Note: Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), UNITAD is mandated to support domestic efforts to hold ISIL (Da'esh) accountable by collecting, preserving, and storing evidence in Iraq of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed by the terrorist group ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq. In addition, the Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team is mandated to promote accountability throughout the world for acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide committed by ISIL (Da'esh). UNITAD also works with survivors, in a manner consistent with relevant national laws, to ensure their interests in achieving accountability for ISIL (Da'esh) are fully recognised.



Prime Minister of Iraq endorses UNITAD's Iraqi Chief of National Engagement and Support

Baghdad, 13 May 2019 - The Special Adviser of UNITAD (United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL) was today received by His Excellency Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi in Baghdad, Iraq. The Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team, Karim A. A. Khan QC, introduced His Excellency to Dr Sallama Al Khafaji, the newly appointed Chief of National Engagement and Support.

Dr Al Khafaji, a former parliamentarian in Iraq, will effectively work as the deputy to the Special Adviser. In this capacity she will work closely with counterparts within national authorities to further the work of UNITAD in delivering accountability for the survivors and victims of Da'esh/ISIL crimes. H.E. the Prime Minister once again expressed his full support for UNITAD and welcomed the appointment of Dr Al Khafaji by the Special Adviser, in consultation with the Government of Iraq. H.E. the Prime Minister also called upon all Government departments to cooperate with UNITAD and its mandated work, pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), and its corresponding Terms of Reference regarding the activities of the investigative team.

The Special Adviser expressed his gratitude to H.E. the Prime Minister and Government of Iraq for their continued support and facilitation of the team's investigative activities across the country.

H.E. the Prime Minister was informed that with the appointment of the Iraqi Chief of National Engagement and Support, UNITAD now intended to proceed with recruitment of other Iraqi

experts who will work in the investigative team.

From his side, H.E. the Prime Minister stated that he looked forward to further consultations with the Special Adviser once the recruitment process had concluded.

The Special Adviser affirmed once again that UNITAD remains committed to delivering against its mandate in service of the Iraqi people.



UNITAD submits biannual report to the UN Security Council; reports substantial progress

Baghdad, 22 May 2019 - The Second Report to the United Nations Security Council on the activities of UNITAD (the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL) was issued today, detailing the progress made by the Investigative Team in the implementation of its mandate in supporting domestic efforts to hold Da'esh/ISIL accountable by collecting evidence of war crimes, crimes against humanity



and possible genocide committed by the group in Iraq. The Special Adviser will present the report in person at the Security Council in early June.

Established pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), UNITAD has informed the Council through its Report that its core staffing, facilities and evidence-collection practices are now in place in Iraq, while initial documentary, digital, testimonial and forensic material is being collected in line with its investigative strategy.

During the reporting period, UNITAD launched its initial forensic evidence-gathering activities in the village of Kojo in the Sinjar region. Commencing on 15 March 2019, this process has involved the exhumation of a series of mass graves in the village, with work conducted in close cooperation with Iraqi national authorities, notably the Mass Graves Directorate within the Martyrs' Foundation, and the Medico-Legal Directorate within the Ministry

of Health. Specialised support and guidance has been provided by UNITAD specialists.

Working closely with local community and survivor advocate groups, the exhumation of 12 of the 16 identified grave sites in Kojo has now been completed. The Investigative Team has also worked to ensure that all evidentiary material collected from these sites is stored in line with international standards.

UNITAD also reports that channels for the effective use of gathered evidence have begun to be identified, including through consultations with several States with respect to the use of evidence collected in ongoing domestic proceedings related to the crimes of ISIL.

The Government of Iraq and regional authorities, including the Kurdistan Regional Government, have expressed and demonstrated their support for UNITAD, headed by Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC. The Special

UNITAD submits biannual report to the UN Security Council; reports substantial progress *(continued)*

Adviser has met with their excellencies the President, Prime Minister, and Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, as well as the Speaker of Parliament, Chief Justice, and other ministerial figures relevant to UNITAD's work. The Special Adviser has commended the support and facilitation provided by the Government, which has allowed UNITAD to move forward rapidly with its field-based operations.

This support from authorities has been mirrored by wide support from senior leadership figures from ethnic and religious groups in Iraq, including Sunni, Shi'a, Christian, Yazidi, Kaka'i, Shabak, and Turkmen.

The dynamic implementation of the mandate has also seen diversity and inclusion form a central part of UNITAD's ethos, where currently 55% of the substantive team are female, along with more than 50% of senior management positions. All geographic regions of the United Nations are represented within the workforce. Moreover, to build a true partnership between the international community and the communities of Iraq for whom UNITAD's mandate is designed, Iraqi nationals account for more than one third of professional staff members.

On 13 May 2019, the Prime Minister of Iraq and the Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team formally announced the appointment by the Special Adviser of Dr Sallama Hasson Al Khafaji as Chief of National Engagement and Support, the most senior national position within the Investigative Team.

Following this appointment, and in

consultation with the Government of Iraq, the Investigative Team is now moving forward with the recruitment of all other positions allocated for national experts, which are currently advertised.

UNITAD continues to grow its team and expand its operations in Iraq, working to promote accountability for crimes committed by Da'esh/ISIL.



Statement from UNITAD Special Adviser on the fifth anniversary of Camp Speicher massacre

Baghdad, 12 June 2019 - Five years ago today, on 12th June 2014, Da'esh/ISIL fighters captured and murdered at least 1,500 Iraqi Air Force cadets outside Tikrit Air Academy (formerly known as Camp Speicher). This brutal massacre against these unarmed cadets is one of many instances of ISIL's disregard of the laws that bind humanity together. Those killed were overwhelmingly Shia Muslims. Today we pause to remember their lives, as we do on other days to remember those many members of the Christian, Yazidi, Sunni, Shia Turkmen, Kakai and all other communities who were targeted by Da'esh.

UNITAD's words of respect and remembrance are combined with sincere efforts and actions. We are deploying our technical, legal and investigative resources pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), so that accountability is delivered for ISIL crimes which may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide.

Independent and credible investigations and fair trials are central to the delivery of meaningful justice for the victims of the crimes of ISIL, and their relatives. Such investigations and judicial proceedings are also essential to Iraq and humanity at large. We commend the Government of the Republic of Iraq for its ongoing cooperation and support of UNITAD and its mandate.

We will continue to conduct independent investigations in order to promote accountability here in Iraq and globally, so that the true nature and extent of ISIL criminality – and the responsibility of those that committed such acts – may be authoritatively and finally determined in fair and independent trials. The demands of justice require nothing less.



UNITAD team hosted in Ramadi, Al-Anbar Province to promote bilateral cooperation



Baghdad, 17 June 2019 - UNITAD Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team Karim A. A. Khan QC and his team were hosted by the Depu-

ty Governor of Al Anbar Province, Mustafa Al Ersan, along with senior officials from the military, police and other agencies. They discussed the mandate and work of UNITAD and the importance of investigations in Al Anbar, pursuant to UNITAD's mandate.



After that meeting, the Special Adviser travelled to the Council of Tribal Leaders of Al Anbar, presided over by the Head of the Council, Sheikh Rafi Al Fahdawi.

More than 300 tribal leaders attended the meeting with Special Adviser Khan, representing more than 29 regional tribes. The Special Adviser emphasised that UNITAD would follow the evidence and investigate crimes against all communities in Iraq, noting that Sunni tribes, as well as other Sunnis, Shi'a, Christian, Yazidi, Kaka'i, Shabak and Turkmen Shia had all endured

great suffering at the hands of Da'esh. Whilst acknowledging the right to justice, the Special Adviser also emphasised the responsibilities of all leaders in Iraq – from whatever community they belong – to encourage witnesses, victims and those with information to approach UNITAD and provide it with such material, in order to render more effective the investigations into Da'esh/ISIL crimes.

In this regard, he applauded the support from the Central Government with respect to UNITAD's mandate.

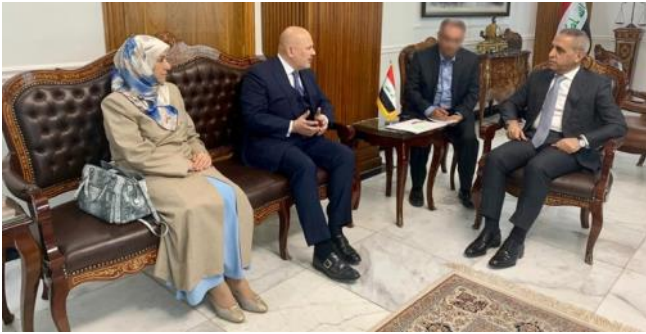
Between December 2013 and 2017 ISIL attacked and occupied Al Anbar Province, causing widespread loss of life and damage to infrastructure and property. Reports indicate that many men, women and children were executed or otherwise lost their lives at the hands of Da'esh/ISIL. Special Adviser Khan reiterated that every victim or survivor of Da'esh crime has the right to proper investigations and accountability for those responsible.

Special Adviser Khan stated:

"We are grateful to the regional authorities, local community groups and tribal leadership for hosting UNITAD today and taking the time to update us on various matters. Iraqi citizens have withstood hardship and suffering with real resilience as well as with remarkable dignity. I have witnessed this dignity and poise in all the various communities in Iraq with whom I have had the honour to engage.

"All victims and survivors have a right to justice, which includes proper investigation and fair and independent trials. The leaders of all tribes and all communities have a responsibility to help heal the wounds and help facilitate justice. This requires cooperation with UNITAD so that all the available information relevant to Da'esh crimes may be collected to help ensure that those most responsible are identified and subjected to independent, impartial and credible trials that will stand the test of time."

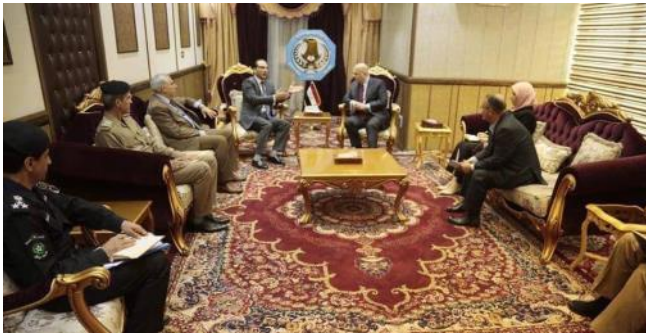




Baghdad, 14 May 2019 - H.E. Judge Faiq Zaidan, Chief Justice and Head of the Supreme Judicial Council, welcomed UNITAD Special Adviser, Karim A.A. Khan QC, and newly appointed Iraqi Chief of National Engagement and Support, Dr Sallama Al Khafaji. They discussed the judiciary's continuing support for UNITAD's work in Iraq.



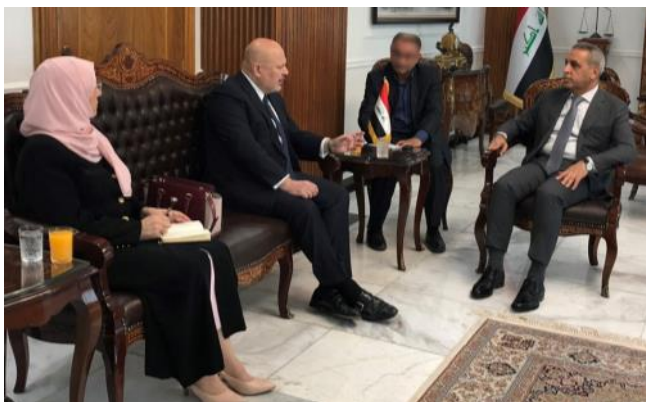
Baghdad, 1 June 2019 - Special Adviser and Head of the UNITAD, Karim Khan QC, met with the Australian Ambassador to Iraq, Joanne Loundes, to discuss UNITAD's ongoing work and ways in which Australia could assist UNITAD, Iraq and the quest for accountability.



Baghdad, 1 June 2019 - UNITAD Special Adviser, Karim Khan QC, met with the Deputy Minister of Interior, Dr. Aqeel Khazaali. They discussed joint cooperation in the development of the investigation and criminal and justice work on terrorism and ways of consolidating and analyzing data and information.



Baghdad, 12 June 2019 - Special adviser Karim Khan QC with a delegation from UNITAD, met with Head of Marytr's Foundation Mrs. Najeha AlShammari who praised the team's work. Mrs. AlShammari welcomed UNITAD and both parties agreed on the mutual cooperation for promoting accountability for acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide committed by ISIL (Da'esh).



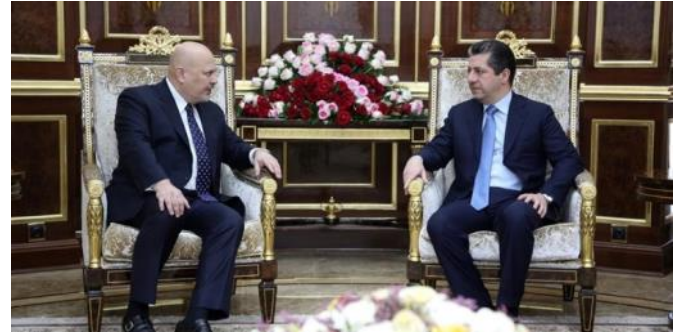
Baghdad, 12 June 2019 - Special Adviser Karim Khan met with H.E. Judge Faiq Zaidan, President of the Supreme Judicial Council, and discussed practical requirements for the implementation of the mandate and how to best facilitate accountability UNITAD.



Erbil, 18 June 2019 - H.E. the President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party Masoud Barzani expressed full support to the Special Advisor, Karim A. A. Khan QC, and the mandate of UNITAD. He emphasised that while Da'esh had been defeated on the battlefield, there is no room for complacency. President Barzani underlined that creating an evidence based record and holding fair trials in accordance with international standards was a prerequisite for peace and stability and in order to prevent the re-emergence of Da'esh.



Erbil, 19 June 2019 - Kurdistan Regional Government Minister of Interior Mr. Karim Sinjari received UNITAD Special Adviser Khan and his team today in Erbil. Their meeting focused on effective collaboration between the Investigative Team and the Ministry of Interior and its related entities



Erbil, 19 June 2019 - UNITAD Special Adviser Khan appreciates the support extended by H.E. Prime Minister of Kurdistan Regional Government Mr. Masrour Barzani during their meeting today and was pleased to discuss various matters including practical modalities to strengthen cooperation.



Erbil, 19 June 2019 - President Nechirvan Barzani hosted UNITAD's Special Adviser Karim Khan today in Erbil and congratulated him on his presidency and discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation to deliver accountability to the victims of ISIL crimes



Erbil, 19 June 2019 - The Kurdistan Minister for Martyrs and Anfal Affairs, Mahmood Salih, hosted UNITAD Special Adviser Khan in Erbil today, where they discussed ongoing cooperation on matters related to the identification of victims of ISIL crimes in areas of Northern Iraq and Kurdistan.



Kojo, Iraq, 21 June 2019 - Special Adviser Khan returned to Kojo, Sinjar with Netherlands Ambassador Wolters Matthijs inspecting UNITAD's work with national authorities on the ongoing exhumation of mass graves of ISIL victims from the village. The UNITAD team updated the Ambassador on the technical processes involved in the exhumation and forensic analysis of victims' remains, and plans for next steps in the investigation.



Tal Afar, 21 June 2019 - Sheikh Tawfeeq Wahab hosted UNITAD Special Adviser Khan and his team at his residence in Tal Afar, where the team heard from community members, including Turkmen Shia, about their experiences of ISIL crimes. Special Adviser Khan also met with officials including Mayor of Tal Afar Mr. Qassim Mohammed Shareef, Tal Afar Police Commander, General Mohammed Ali, and Assistant Director of National Security, Mr. Ali Mohammed Abdulqader. They discussed matters related to the security situation in the area.



Mosul, 22 June 2019 - Sheikh Zaid Mohammed Al-Jaboury hosted UNITAD at a gathering of Mosul Sunni tribal leaders. The team heard from the community about their experiences of life under ISIL. UNITAD is committed to engaging with community groups from all diverse communities affected by ISIL crime.



Mosul, 22 June 2019 - In Mosul, UNITAD's delegation was also hosted at the Military Intelligence Directorate by its Director, along with the Governor of Mosul, and affiliated entities. UNITAD was taken through the process of intelligence gathering, evidence collection, and analysis conducted by the Directorate.



Mosul, 22 June 2019 - The Special Adviser and team were hosted by Judge Raed at the Counter-Terrorism Court of Tel Kaif, Mosul, where they received a tour of the facilities and a briefing on the recent developments. Judge Raed also gave the Special Adviser and UNITAD team an overview of the investigation and analysis procedures employed in building case files on ISIL suspects, designed to safeguard evidence-led criminal investigation processes.



Erbil, 23 June 2019 - H.E. Mr. Qubad Talabani, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Iraq, hosted UNITAD in Erbil this morning. The Special Adviser updated H.E. on recent developments & ongoing investigative work to ensure accountability for victims of ISIL crimes.



Bartella, 23 June 2019 - In Bartella, UNITAD visited the St Shamouni Church & Church of the Virgin Mary, as well as the Bartella Culture Centre, where they were shown the damage wrought by ISIL. The UNITAD delegation met with survivors from the Bartella Christian community and were shown the locations of private residences belonging to Christians which were destroyed by ISIL.



Bashika, 23 June 2019 - UNITAD met with the Mayor of Bashika, in the presence of 47 dignitaries and representatives from the Christian, Shabak, Yezidi communities, and members of the local Government Council, at the Bashika Council Headquarters. The community representatives shared their experiences of life under ISIL, and updated UNITAD on the variety of criminality the people of the area were exposed to. UNITAD is committed to working with all Iraqis affected by ISIL crime.

IOM White met with the Chair of Karbala Provincial Council

Karbala, 25 April 2019 - IOM Iraq Chief of Mission, Mr. Gerard Waite, met with the Chairman of the Karbala Provincial Council, Hon. Nassif Jassim, to discuss internal displacement and return movements. Hon. Jassim expressed his appreciation for the cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the programmes that support IDPs and returnees in the governorate.

The chairman presented an overview of the economic, political and cultural aspects of Karbala governorate and how the governorate has been supporting IDPs in the last few years. Mr. Waite expressed his willingness to continue to support as much as possible the governorate in providing necessary humanitarian assistance.



IOM Iraq Chief met with Najaf Governor

Najaf, 25 April 2019 - IOM Iraq Chief of Mission, Mr. Gerard Waite, met Najaf Governor Hon. Louay al-Yasiri at the governorate's headquarters, where the two discussed issues related to IDPs in the area. Mr. Waite thanked the Governor for his excellent cooperation and support to ensure the most vulnerable displaced persons receive humanitarian assistance.

Displacement due to drought in some areas of the south were also discussed and the solutions to address this crisis. The Hon. Governor and Mr. Waite stressed the need for continuous cooperation in the province to support the displaced while finding durable solutions to their displacement.



Joint field visit to Al-Haidariyah IOM Community Center

Baghdad, 28 April 2019 - The Japanese Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Naofumi Hashimoto, and IOM Chief of Mission in Iraq, Mr. Gerard Waite, conducted a joint field visit to an IOM Community Centre for IDPs in Al-Haidariyah, Najaf, and visited displaced families in their homes in the neighborhood.

IOM provides essential humanitarian assistance, including psychosocial support to vulnerable IDPs and host communities. Mr. Waite expressed his gratitude to the Government of Japan for the financial support to IOM programmes in Iraq.



UN Special Representative for Iraq visits Dohuk and Sinjar, urges efforts to achieve progress on IDPs' return



Baghdad, 3 May 2019 – Although the military defeat of Da'esh in Iraq was announced in December 2017, more than 1.6 million Iraqis remain displaced. With that alarming statistic in mind, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, travelled to Ninewa and Dohuk governorates to assess the situation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in protracted displacement and to meet with authorities at local and governorate level as well as community and other leaders.

SRSO Hennis-Plasschaert visited Hassan Sham IDPs Camp and met with the camp management and residents. In an open-hearted conversation, residents explained the problems they face in their daily lives as well as the obstacles that prevent them from returning to their hometowns. She also met with the Governor of Dohuk, Mr. Farhad Saleem Atrushi, to discuss the challenges the governorate faces to continuously host large numbers of IDPs, many of whom

are Yezidis who face a range of serious obstacles to their return home such as an unstable security situation including clashes between armed groups and checkpoint harassment, damaged and contaminated houses, inadequate basic services, as well as discrimination. SRSO Hennis-Plasschaert: "Obstacles are varied and often complex, painfully resulting in stalled returns on the ground".

Before heading to Sinjar, the Special Representative called on Baba Sheikh, the Yezidi Supreme Spiritual Leader and member of the Yezidi Spiritual Council, and other Council members in Shekhan. Soon after, SRSO Hennis-Plasschaert made her way to Mount Sinjar to further discuss the challenges and obstacles with community leaders and members. "The Yezidis have suffered immensely during the reign of Da'esh, who committed untold atrocities in their attempt to annihilate the community. I was shocked to see that now, nearly five years after the capture of Sinjar by Da'esh and the area's sub-

sequent liberation, many people are still living in tents, on the very mountain top they fled to at the onset of the terror campaign," the Special Representative said, adding that all internally displaced people in Iraq deserve our support.

"In August the world will commemorate the horrific events of five years ago. A single administration and the provision of security and services is the very basis for the reconstruction of Sinjar. A continued failure to provide these, is a travesty of justice and creates the perfect breeding ground for a new wave of violence and instability. With this in mind, I call upon the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to consult with the local leadership in Sinjar district and to establish stable governance and security structures without delay, and so facilitate the reconstruction of affected areas and the return of displaced persons from Sinjar," Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert said.



Heavy floods in Iraq's southern governorate of Missan leaves over 100,000 children in need of urgent assistance

Baghdad, 5 May 2019 – Heavy rains in Iraq and neighbouring Iran have resulted in floods that left over 100,000 children and their families without access to clean water and sanitation in Missan, a governorate in Iraq's south. A further 20,000 people, including children have been displaced.

Vulnerable communities have resorted to using flood water for their basic needs which poses a significant health risk.

“UNICEF is working around the clock to support children and their families with safe drinking water and sanitation services, providing buckets, hygiene kits and prefabricated toilets,” said Hamida Lasseko, UNICEF's Representative in Iraq.

“We are also working with the commu-

nity to raise awareness on proper hygiene and sanitation. We are doing everything we can to prevent the outbreak of diseases,” she added.

Schools have also been affected by the floods, especially in Maimona, Amara, Al Salam and Ali Al Gharbi sub-

districts. As part of the emergency response, UNICEF is providing 4 prefab classrooms, washroom facilities, and water supply tanks. UNICEF will also fund the building of mud barriers around a number of existing schools in order to isolate them from flood water.



IOM Community centers across Iraq provide support to displaced families

Baghdad, 5 May 2019 - “This place is very important to me. It is from here that I get the motivation to continue knitting -- particularly when other IDPs encourage me. They keep me going! I also enjoy selling the clothes. I have been working for a very long time, but because of the conflict I had to close my business and leave everything behind. Coming to the community centre motivated me to get back to work,” said Amira, who was displaced from Telafar to Najaf in 2014.

The IOM community centre in Haidariyah, an informal settlement on the outskirts of Najaf, provides support to families displaced from northern Iraq as a result of the ISIL crisis and families displaced from southern Iraq as a result of the water crisis. Alongside MHPSS activities, IOM carries out social cohesion activities to build trust between the two groups of IDPs.

The new IOM community centre in Kirkuk will serve as a safe space for youth, women, and local NGOs to interact, spend time together and participate in joint activities. It includes facilities for training, group discussions, staff meetings, innovation programmes,

reading clubs and more. The centre was inaugurated on 5 May 2019, in a ceremony attended by local authorities, international organizations, leaders and members of the community. The community centre is supported by the Kingdom of the Netherlands.



IOM published a new report: "Everyday sites of violence and conflict: Exploring memories in Mosul and Tal Afar"

Mosul, 5 May 2019 - In a new report, "Everyday sites of violence and conflict: Exploring memories in Mosul and Tal Afar" IOM Iraq looks at everyday “places and spaces” such as schools, markets, and houses which are now imbued with memories of violence which require acknowledgement as part of a balanced approach to reconciliation.

The report considers the role and fragility of memory in post-conflict Iraq and looks at ways in which it might be tak-

en into consideration while working in areas where trauma related to experiences of conflict and displacement obstructs social cohesion.

Based on this report, IOM - UN Migration will scale up memorialization activities in areas of return and explore storytelling initiatives (such as letter exchange) which may help to bridge the gap in trust and understanding between populations in camps and in their areas of origin.

Read the report: <https://bit.ly/2H1VVSU>



Nobel Peace Laureate Nadia Murad addresses Paris signing ceremony for a New Humanitarian Admission Programme

Paris, 10 May 2019 - 2018 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Nadia Murad, attended a ceremony today marking the signing of an agreement between the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and France to provide safe passage to the country for vulnerable groups from Iraq. Initiated by Murad and French President Emmanuel Macron in October 2018, the agreement will help to provide protection and admission to France for up to 100 Yazidi women and their families as part of a Humanitarian Admission Programme. IOM teams in Iraq and France will support these families in their journey to France by providing health checks, pre-departure information, movement assistance, the provision of operational escorts and other forms of departure and arrival assistance. Upon arrival in France, families will be referred to local NGOs providing social, medical and administrative support during the first



year.

The initiative is coordinated by the French Ministries of Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Interior, as well as Nadia's Initiative, a foundation advocating for victims of sexual violence. It is funded by France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"This new initiative is the result of solidarity and the expression of an international responsibility-sharing mecha-

nism for the protection of the most vulnerable," said Sara Abbas, IOM France Head of Office.

"The Humanitarian Admission Programme is based on a strong partnership between the French and Iraqi governments, international organizations and civil society organizations," she continued.

The overwhelming scale and complex nature of global displacement has drawn the international community's focus to the need for safety and protection for forcibly displaced communities. Globally, Humanitarian Admission Programmes ensure safe, regular and sustainable migration. As a complementary pathway established by States, the programmes offer protection and solutions for particularly vulnerable groups. They are based on non-discriminatory and protection-sensitive approaches and complement already existing resettlement programmes.

IOM assists over 130 Yazidis to resettle from Iraq to France

Erbil, 22 May 2019 - One hundred thirty-two members of Iraq's Yazidi community left Erbil International Airport today (22/05) for Toulouse, France, the latest resettlement effort by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), part of the Humanitarian Admissions Programme launched by President Emmanuel Macron.

President Macron has pursued this policy with the support of 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Nadia Murad, who has advocated for vulnerable Yazidi women worldwide.

The initiative was the subject of a signing ceremony between IOM and the French Government attended by Ms. Murad two weeks ago in Paris.

"Today we have come to see you off on your new journey to France," Dominique Mas, the French Consul General in Erbil, told the Yazidi families as they boarded the aircraft.

"In France you will receive protection, security, education, as well as medical and social support," he continued.

The 28 Yazidi families are moving to France five years after the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as ISIL, swept through Sinjar, the stronghold of Iraq's Yazidi community. Since those attacks, a significant portion of the community remains displaced, including hundreds of families who fled to Mount Sinjar in 2014.

"We are grateful for the French government's support to this vulnerable group



of Yazidis, some of whom have gone through a terrible ordeal," said Gerard Waite, IOM Iraq's Chief of Mission. "IOM Iraq continues to assist all displaced Iraqi citizens, including Yazidis, both in areas of displacement as well as in their hometowns, to facilitate their sustainable reintegration."

Prior to their departure, IOM assisted the families with transportation from Dohuk to Erbil, accommodation in Erbil and medical check ups. The teams also organized cultural orientation sessions and are facilitating their travel to France.

"As this group of Yazidi families touch down in Toulouse and surrounding areas, local nongovernmental organizations are ready to assist them to facilitate their integration in the host communities," said Ambassador Eric Chevallier, Director of the French Crisis Center, before boarding the plane alongside the families on their journey.



Rebuilding trust between ethno-religious groups in Hamdaniyah



Baghdad, 13 May 2019 - Najlaa, a schoolteacher, returned to her home district, Hamdaniyah, Ninewa, in 2017 after it was retaken from ISIL. She returned with much enthusiasm and hope, feeling responsible for contributing to the reconstruction of the district after years of ISIL control and destruction.

She went back to the school where she used to teach, Zawraa; she was proud of this school because the students come from different ethno-religious groups, reflecting the district's diversity.

"Our school is like a mini Iraq; like a bouquet of colorful flowers. I want all of us in the school to celebrate this diversity. This is what we need in Iraq, especially in the current circumstances," Najlaa said.

However, as soon as she started teaching and interacting with the students during the first school year, one thing was immediately obvious: there was a behavioral change in the students.

"Unlike before ISIL, aggressive behaviors, such as cursing and fighting, had become widespread among the students, and there was more tension between the different groups – for example, children would say to one another, 'you are Christian or Muslim and I don't want play with you'. Even during sports activities, the students would automatically polarize into Christian and Muslims teams."

Najlaa explained that this could be attributed to what the children saw, including ISIL violence, and what they went through during their time in displacement. In displacement, many families concentrated in one location and lived in cramped, poor conditions. The destruction that ISIL left behind in Hamdaniyah also impacted people as they returned.

Nadine, a 15-year-old student who returned to Qaraqosh with her family, was shocked at the level of destruction and

damage in the town that she grew up in. "We arrived to find that everything had been destroyed, burned, and plundered. The town was completely empty, streets full of rubble, and there were no signs of life. The dynamic felt strange and had a negative impact on my mental health because I grew up in Qaraqosh. I am attached to it as my place of origin and the home of my neighbors and close friends," she said.

Nadine managed to overcome her mental health problems with support from her parents and through her participation in community activities, such as cleaning campaigns and planting trees that volunteers at IOM's community center in Hamdaniyah organized.

Back at Zawraa school, Najlaa decided to do something about her students' behavioral change – something that would set an example for other schools in the district.

"We wanted to change their psychological state to help them build trust and overcome their issues and sensitivities. So, I talked to the school's principal and he dedicated a room as a friendly space for psychosocial and mental health support activities." The support includes both mental and physical activities, such as reading a story together or watching an animation movie and discussing the story afterwards.

"I saw the students were drawn to these activities; they were different from the usual classes. The activities helped them relax, alleviate stress, and build trust. Additionally, I was able to identify those children who needed special attention,"

"After six months of activities, things changed dramatically. One student who did not accept sitting and playing with students from other ethno-religious groups was now interacting, playing, and sharing the same desk with students regardless of their backgrounds,"

"It is very important for our kids to have these friendly spaces. Our kids are psychologically exhausted; they really need this,"

Teachers from other schools are encouraged to follow the same model, building on Najlaa's successful example and the Hamdaniyah Department of Education's support.

"Najlaa's model is 100% effective. Students sit in classes doing the same thing every day; seeing the same white board, pens, notebooks, and desks becomes boring. When you set up a room that facilitates fun, educational activities and provides psychosocial support, children will not just enjoy the activities, but mentally relax. We fully support this model," said Nibras Khaddo Shaba, Teaching Coordinator at Hamdaniyah Department of Education.

"IOM's training arts therapy sessions were effective and fruitful in improving the relationships between the students and teachers and between students from different groups. We were able to organize a big arts and sports exhibition this year as a result of improvement in the students' psychosocial and mental states," he said.

Najlaa also recalls how her school held its first graduation ceremony last year since people began returning to Hamdaniyah, a sure sign that the schools' social cohesion activities were having a positive impact.

"It was the most wonderful event. Students wore Qaraqoshi dresses, Kurdish and Arabic costumes, and traditional dresses from the Kakayi, Shabaki, and other groups. During the ceremony two students – one Christian and one Muslim – exchanged costumes as a show of love and acceptance. This was very heart warming,"

With support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), IOM provides support to social cohesion efforts in 12 schools in Hamdaniyah. One particularly popular activity are the weekly art therapy sessions that strive to prevent segregation and restore trust between communities in the post-ISIL era.

On 4 April, students from the 12 schools who had gone through art therapy held an arts and crafts exhibition in Maryam Al-Athraa high school to promote peace and social cohesion. The event drew a sizeable audience from officials and the local community, who enjoyed hand-crafted items on show, drawings about peace and hope for the future, and musical and gymnastics performances, amongst other.

Written by Raber Y. Aziz, with contribution from Sarah Ali/IOM Iraq

Arab social media influencers meet displaced Iraqi and Syrian refugees at Hasan Sham and Al Khazar IDP camps (UNHCR Zakat campaign)

Baghdad, 16 May 2019 - Iraqi Social media influencers recently visit displaced and refugee families in Iraq, helping UNHCR campaign #ZakatforRefugees this Ramadan 2019. UNHCR launched the Zakat Refugee Fund to help facilitate donations to refugees from across the world from both individuals and institutions. The aim is to raise USD \$26 million in 2019 in Zakat funds for vulnerable families both refugee and displaced in Iraq, Jordan, Yemen and Lebanon, Mauritania and Egypt which is lifesaving support. From this Ramadan, the Refugee Zakat Fund aims to channel lifesaving support to 24,000 of the most vulnerable refugee and displaced families from

Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. Since 2014 the fund has helped over 34,440 poor refu-

gee families with USD \$14.4 million raised.



IOM Iraq Chief meets the Minister of Migration and Displacement

Baghdad, 16 May 2019 - IOM Chief of Mission in Iraq, Gerard Waite, met with the Iraqi Minister of Migration and Displaced Hon. Nofal Bahaa Mousa. The two officials discussed the joint work of IOM and the Ministry in support of internally displaced persons and returnees.

Waite stated that IOM is ready to support the Ministry in matters related to the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme (AVRR).

Waite also reiterated that IOM is playing an important role in supporting voluntary returns from abroad and in assisting returnees through its programmes in Iraq.



IOM distributed emergency non-food items and sealing-off kits to floods affected families

Basra, 24 May 2019 - IOM distributed emergency non-food items and sealing-off kits to families affected by the floods in the north-eastern villages of Basra. Most of the affected families left their homes as the water rose and escaped to a safer place. However, their living conditions were tough: “We could not take any household items; we escaped at night, when we realised that our area was being flooded,” said Um Zahra, from Al-Helichat village. “My children and I slept on the floor. We did not have anything to protect us from snakes. Now, we have plastic mats, beds and sealing-off kits as well as other emergency items that will help us through this ordeal,” Um Zahra added.



IOM's Camp Coordination Camp Management team rehabilitated the bathrooms in Al Ahal Camp

Baghdad, 10 June 2019 - "Water and sanitation facilities were not in good conditions. Most doors of the public bathrooms had no locks and facilities were not gender segregated," said Athra'a Ali, 50, displaced from Al Qaim, Anbar, to Al Ahal Camp in Abu Ghraib - Baghdad Governorate. IOM's Camp Coordination Camp Management team rehabilitated the bath-

rooms and now all doors have locks.

"This has given us privacy. IOM also distributed cleaning tools and detergents, and now the sanitation facilities are clean and they rehabilitated some of the bathrooms, so they are accessible to people with disabilities," adds Athra'a. This project was supported by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.



EU provides additional EUR 2M to IOM Iraq for critical infrastructure improvements in camps

Erbil, 14 June 2019 - Five years after the onset of the ISIL crisis and the subsequent massive internal displacement, over half a million Iraqis continue to live in camps.

The European Union (EU) has awarded an additional EUR 2 million to IOM in Iraq to make critical infrastructure improvements in camps for internally displaced persons. This brings the total EU humanitarian contribution IOM Iraq has received in 2019 to EUR 5 million.

With this additional allocation, in coordination with the Government of Iraq and local authorities, IOM will be able to improve the living conditions of camp residents. IOM will rehabilitate deteriorating road and drainage networks in three Jad'ah camps, near Mosul in Ninewa governorate.

The Jad'ah camps currently host over 8,600 households, around 35,000 individuals, the majority from the districts of Hatra, Mosul, Al-Ba'aj and Telafar in Ninewa. These families are among the most vulnerable in Iraq; return to their areas of origin is not feasible in the near future for a variety of reasons, including damage to their houses, continued insecurity, limited access to employment opportunities, and limited basic services in their hometowns.

"While many displaced families have been able to return, we cannot forget about those who remain in camps. Ensuring that those displaced by fighting have access to humanitarian assistance remains a priority for the EU in Iraq," said Christos Stylianides, the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management.

During the height of the 2014–2017 crisis, IOM and humanitarian partners in Iraq developed camps to house tens of thousands of families fleeing ISIL, often constructed quickly due to pressing emergency circumstances. Infrastructure in those camps has since become worn and needs upgrades and

repair.

"With our contribution we hope to improve the living conditions of Iraqis who are still in protracted displacement, and we encourage other partners in the humanitarian community to do the same. In 2019, we look forward to continuing to address these pressing needs in partnership with IOM," Commissioner Stylianides added.

This humanitarian contribution by the EU will complement the previous allocation of EUR 3 million, received in March 2019, being used to conduct critical maintenance activities in camps across Iraq, to replace basic household items for camp populations and provide basic relief kits, including kitchen sets, blankets and mattresses.

"The conditions in many camps in Iraq have worsened over the last year due to natural wear-and-tear and limited investments. Camps have remained in service for longer than initially expected and now need upkeep and improvement," said IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Gerard Waite.

"This additional allocation from the EU will enable IOM to provide much needed support in some of the most populous camps, which are housing displaced families who are among the most vulnerable, with no immediate or medium-term prospect of returning

home."

Return is especially difficult for vulnerable families, including those in a situation of protracted displacement, who after years of displacement have exhausted their resources and are not able to afford to rebuild their homes.

The EU, through its EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid department, and IOM Iraq have been in a strategic partnership to provide camp management, camp maintenance, infrastructure upgrades and shelter and non-food items response in and out of camps in Iraq since 2014, with a total budget of over EUR 36 million, assisting altogether more than 700,000 direct and indirect beneficiaries.

Both organizations continue to play a leading role in advocating for continued support to families in protracted displacement while coordinating to find longer-term solutions for these internally displaced populations.

Across Iraq, more than 1.6 million Iraqis continue to be displaced following the conflict with ISIL. Of those who were displaced, more than 4.2 million have been able to return to their areas of origin, according to IOM Iraq's Displacement Tracking Matrix.

For figures and analysis on displacement in Iraq please visit: <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/>



Local government officials and NGOs visited IOM - UN Migration's Community Resource Center (CRC) in Qaraqosh

Mosul, 19 June 2019 - Local government officials and NGOs visited IOM - UN Migration's Community Resource Center (CRC) in Qaraqosh, near Mosul, to learn about the function of the centre as a referral hub to provide information on emergency, recovery and stabilization services.

Once it was a bullet-riddled building in Qaraqosh, until IOM turn it into another up-and-running CRC, providing services at the community level in areas receiving large numbers of returning internally displaced persons.

With operational support from the Iraqi government, and funding from USAID - US Agency for International Develop-

ment, the Qaraqosh centre will assist former and current IDPs in the return

and reintegration process within their communities.



UNHCR commends PR of China for their contribution of USD 2 million in support of Palestinian refugees

Baghdad, 26 June 2019 - The People's Republic of China made a generous contribution to UNHCR of USD 2 million over the past two years which provided protection and assistance for Palestinian refugees in Iraq.

Over 7,500 Palestinian refugees have benefitted from this contribution in health care, education, and through the rehabilitation of a community centre (Haifa Community Centre) in Baghdad. The community centre for Palestinian refugees and the host community in Baghdad play a major role in helping to foster peaceful co-existence. The newly improved community hall, nursery, sports facilities and equipment helped in providing a friendly space for community members to have sports activities, family gatherings and a space for social cohesion and interaction among the members of both communities.

Lina is a 26 year old Palestinian student who lives in this community, she bene-



fitted from Tertiary education under this project. Over a year ago, Lina was about to drop out of university due to extreme financial constraints, hindering her from continuing her university degree. However, through receiving a scholarship under the education element of the project she was able to pursue her passion for arts in the Fine Arts department at the University of Baghdad.

UNHCR continues to support Palestini-

an refugees' basic needs through the provision of essential items and projects that promote social cohesion, self-resilience, and access to education. Sharing the burden has been a key theme for UNHCR in the relationship with its donor, this is exemplified in the support by The People's Republic of China. Such important contributions allow UNHCR to continue to extend assistance to the refugees in Iraq.

Perceptions on return and reintegration among stayees, IDPs and returnees

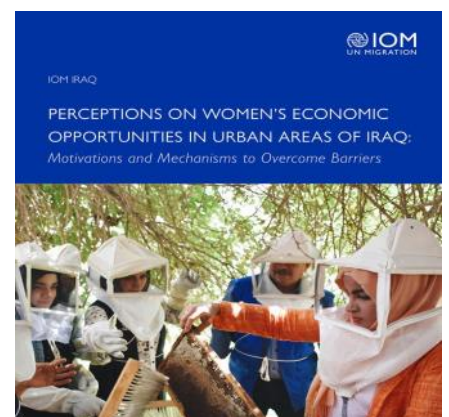
Baghdad, 30 June 2019 - Although 18 months have passed since the Iraqi government officially declared victory over the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the city of Mosul – and particularly west Mosul, which was the group's final stronghold in Iraq – is still facing significant challenges that hinder the return and reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDPs), many of whom are now living in or at-risk of protracted displacement.

IOM Iraq's Community Stabilization Unit commissioned this study to better understand the social fault lines which

have emerged since the ISIL crisis, and identify how to rebuild trust and promote social cohesion in west Mosul, with a focus on three main groups: "stayees", IDPs, and returnees.

This report, based on interviews and focus groups with a total of 110 Iraqi men and women in west Mosul and three nearby IDP camps, provides a rapid assessment of current barriers to return and the challenges that IDPs face if and when they decide to return to west Mosul.

Full report is available at <https://bit.ly/2Jj7drP>



Magic and Beauty



Geneva, 7 June 2019 - Even in the middle of a war zone, Bruno Geddo manages to light up the room, make people smile, maybe even laugh. He is somebody who really deeply appreciates different cultures in the world and sees beauty in the ugliest of times. He is unstoppable.

He may sound like he's just been on a long and magical holiday, but Bruno has been helping the victims of conflict in the world's most dangerous places with UNHCR, for 30 years now. His most recent posting was to Iraq, from where he spoke about the impact of the violent battle with the Islamic State.

Melissa Fleming (MF): Even in the middle of a war zone, Bruno manages to light up the room, make people smile, maybe even laugh. He is somebody who really deeply appreciates different cultures in the world and sees beauty in the ugliest of times. He is unstoppable.

My name is Melissa Fleming and I am the spokesperson for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. This is *Awake at Night*. In this episode, we meet Bruno Geddo, someone who is a true force of nature.

MF: Bruno, thank you so much for coming into the studio for taking part in this podcast. Tell me, just reflecting back, and kind of the first thing that comes to your mind: What is it that keeps you most awake at night – that you just can't get out of your head?

BG: Well, it has been in phases. During the Mosul preparation for this massive urban evacuation campaign, you know, what definitely kept me awake at night was the anxiety, in a way. Are we going to be able to deliver, in such a massive disaster, which we had the chance to be able to anticipate, and prepare for? But it also means that, you know, it is com-

ing, and therefore your level of stress is much higher.

MF: So this was when Mosul, Iraq was liberated from ISIS.

BG: Exactly, exactly.

MF: There was no way to get in and see what the situation was before. You only heard rumours or reports of what was going on. You had to prepare to go in and help the people who'd been trapped.

BG: Exactly. And this was, you know, basically since I joined Iraq in 2015 until the end of the military campaign, which lasted nine months. It finished in August 2017. I must admit, in Iraq we are having a problem, because experts argue that the entire Iraqi population is probably the most traumatized in the world, because they have been living in a state of off-war on-war, you know, for the last 40 years, since the late '70s in fact. There is a level of need, which goes well beyond our standard ability to deliver psychosocial counselling. So as a protection agency, we have been facing this dilemma: How far can we go to make a meaningful contribution, beyond the individual compassion that you feel and you show and you share when you meet these persons? How far can we go? And the answer was, we just don't have that level of expertise. I remember, I went twice to meet ISIS "cubs", the young boys brainwashed by ISIS in the juvenile, try to get close and to understand, but this is a human being to a human being. So, we'd rather focus as our master, in terms of protection intervention on documentation. Why? Because by issuing documents, up to one third of documents might have been lost, confiscated, destroyed, shredded during the war. You enable the people to retrieve a kind of sense of belonging, of citizenship, you enable

them to cross check-points without the fear of being arrested. It will help at least the people to feel safer from the legal point of view, which is quite important in a place as volatile as Iraq and then they would take it from there and build upon it.

MF: Bruno, you're probably one of the most positive colleagues I know, even though you're living in some of the most difficult places, where there are things that are happening to human beings that are just atrocities, appalling. How do you stay so positive?

BG: I must say, in Iraq, it has not been easy. Because of the unspeakable atrocities perpetrated by ISIS, I would read them every day, in the media monitoring. That is something that I had never experienced before. I could not accept this. And you know, I was constantly upset, and just traumatized by reading the types of things that they were doing, to punish people and to intimidate other people. And of course I would not mention any of this, because it's too gruesome, and cruel and unsettling. But overall, I don't think I am a hero. You know, it comes very naturally to me. You know, when I was in the Central African Republic, I started to love the deep forest – the second largest Earth basin of green, after the Amazonia, is the Congo Basin – so I was seeing the fisherman doing things that they had done for millennia, along the Congo River, watching them from my window and marvelling every day of the beauty of the sunrise and the sunset and the storm, and the fog, and these men always doing things that had been done the same way, with the boats and the nets, for centuries.

MF: You've been in Iraq, during some of the most troubled times, in recent years... violent times. And you were also dealing with the victims of Islamic State, when, for example, Mosul was liberated. What did you see and what did you hear, when people started to be evacuated and you were able to help them?

BG: I did have some shocking experiences. And again, because I had matured, I kept quiet. I still remember one day, in a camp for displaced Muslawis east of Mosul. I engaged in a conversation and these men, middle-aged men, started to say: "You know, we were just fine in this, until the bombs started falling. And there was no issue". And I said: "But what about the blood? And the killings every day? You know, in the streets, and the people hanging from the lamp posts?" "Oh, the bombs that dropped from the sky, they killed

Magic and Beauty *(continued)*



many more”. So I realized that, in that narrative, you cannot win. And I didn’t even try to fight. I said, these are sympathizers, I’ll leave them alone. I felt a deep anger inside me, but I did not argue.

Another terrible revealing moment came when I met the wives of ISIS fighters, foreign wives, widows now. We had been in our reception centre, in the south of Mosul, for three weeks before they were put in a detention facility elsewhere. This was something that I probably should not raise, such as... the emotional toll on me. I was sitting with two extended families, all women and children. Through and through, it was always making up excuses: “Women in Islam cannot think for themselves. They don’t know what they are doing, they don’t know where we are taken. They are not told what the plan is for them. We are ignorant. We didn’t know anything of what happened to us. We had been taken to Turkey, then to Syria and then, we didn’t even know we had been taken here. We just wanted to live under the caliphate. And then the bombs started falling.” Did you see something?” “No, no, no I didn’t see anything”. So that level of brainwashing was shocking, to me. No sense of remorse. No sense of compassion. No regret. And remember, there was a morality police for women! And I must tell you this anecdote: The morality police for women, one day, came across a girl playing in the streets, without veil. I cannot determine the age of the girl. It could have been pre-pubertal or pubertal, I’m not sure. They called out the mother and they told the mother: “This girl should not be playing like this, in the open. We must punish her.” So the mother said: “What is the punishment going to be?” They said: “We

will bite her”. And the mother, without thinking too much said: “Okay, you can bite her.” So the lady put on an iron glove on her hand, with poison in the nails, grabbed the neck of the girl, squeezed her and the girl died of bleeding. So, the women I was sitting with, some of them, had committed crimes against humanity, as members of the morality police. The best I could get that tragic day, because I kept on going, and looking almost desperately for someone who would show signs of remorse, was when I ended up with a Kirghiz lady, married to a South Korean man. She was in a state of utter distress, so we didn’t sit down. We were just standing. I didn’t want to linger too long with her. And so this lady was constantly on the verge of crying. But even this lady could not come clean when using the word “wrong”, by saying “things went wrong” or “I was wrong”. The bottom line was that she equivocated between the two. “Things went wrong” or “was I wrong?” And she was constantly on the verge of crying, so I left her alone. But this is as close as I got, to a sense of remorse, of regret. People who committed crimes against humanity... The level of brainwashing was so comprehensive, so radical, so total that there was no going back.

If you want, I can also cite another reflection. This is I had when I went to see the ISIS “cubs”, twice. Very young age adolescents and up to 18 years old. There again, I had the same feeling, that people did not even realize the gravity of what they had been doing. They, again, claimed that they had not seen anything, not directly, some were smuggling cigarettes, doing porters’ jobs. But what I noticed, the difference between these young boys – obviously also many of them brainwashed – they

were cheerful. Somehow, there was a sense of a chance for them to move on. These ladies... it was gloomy... through and through. And then I did my own research, just out of curiosity, speaking to a psychologist friend in Italy, and she told me that when you are brainwashed, you give up your previous identity and you join the group identity for the group which has brainwashed you. So it is literally, when you do so as an adult, almost impossible to revert to your previous identity, because it would be equivalent to killing yourself. That is why, we find it so difficult to de-traumatize people who had been so profoundly radicalized. But she also told me that when you have been radicalized when you are still in your formative years, then you may stand a better chance to be retrieved as an individual identity, from the group identity, because even if you killed your previous self, your self was still in formation. So you can still retrieve your self as an adult. And I saw this positivity in the ISIS “cubs”. I didn’t see it in these women, which was a truly shocking experience.

MF: Bruno, thank you so much for speaking to us for this podcast. I wish you all the best.

BG: Thank you, it was a pleasure.

MF: Thank you for listening to *Awake at Night*. To find out more about the series and see pictures of Bruno in the field, do visit unhcr.org/awakeatnight. You can find us on Facebook @UNHCR. On Twitter we are @refugees and I am @melissarfleming. Please spread the word about the series using #awakeatnight.

Thanks to the fantastic design and studio teams here at UNHCR, and to my producers Bethany Bell, and Laura Sheeter of Chalk and Blade. The sound design was by Pascal Wyse and the original music for this podcast was written and performed by Nadine Shah – and produced by Ben Hillier.

These are excerpts of the interview. Full transcript is available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/awakeatnight/season-2-episode-3-bruno-geddo/>



UN Women job fair provides unique networking platform for job seekers and employers

Erbil, 29 April 2019 - UN Women Representative in Iraq Dina Zorba and Iraqi President Advisor for Gender and Civil Society Khamim Latif, and the Module Team Leader of Kurdistan Region of Iraq Ms. Jenny Horinsch from GIZ opened a job fair in Erbil. Supported by GIZ-funded Qudra pro-

gramme, the job fair, in which 50 companies took part, attracted more than 900 individuals.

The event, also attended by UN Women partners, aimed to provide graduates and other job seekers with opportunities to meet and discuss business opportunities with local business owners.



Launch of the Yarmouk Park rehabilitation project in Mosul



Mosul, 2 May 2019 – Mosul local authorities and citizens gathered in Al Yarmouk Park in West Mosul today to launch the rehabilitation works that will be conducted under the programme Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development. The programme, which will target nine governorates, is funded by the European Union (EU) with €47.5 million over 4 years, and implemented by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

Along with the rehabilitation of damaged housing, public facilities and secondary infrastructure in conflict-affected areas, the recovery of open spaces and public amenities for citizens emerged as one of the key priorities listed in the Provincial Recovery Plans developed by the governorates of Nineveh, Salah al Din and Anbar, under the flagship Local Area Development Programme (LADP II) that was also funded by the EU and concluded in mid-2018. In the city of Mosul, the programme will be investing USD 2 million in Al Yarmouk Park and adjacent residential area.

Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Iraq, Mr. Tomas Reyes Ortega, stated: “The rehabilitation of Al Yarmouk Park is a great example on how we can contribute to the quality of life in cities in inclusive and participative ways. I look forward to coming

back in a couple of years and seeing this project become a reality as part of the reconstruction of Mosul to which the EU is firmly committed.”

Speaking on behalf of the Nineveh Crisis Cell, Dr. Qussay Al-Assaf, Advisor to Governor, stated: “We support all the activities and projects carried out by the organizations within the governorate, including UN-Habitat. The agreement to launch the programme was recently signed in Erbil in the presence of 9 Iraqi governorates. In Nineveh, the EU-funded programme will be implemented in two phases: first in Mosul District and then in Tal Afar District.”

Qa'im Maqam of Mosul, Mr. Zuheer Al-Araji, said: “We are pleased to be here today in such a place in the center of the city of Mosul that is truly in need of attention and care. I thank and appreciate the efforts and great cooperation between the service departments of Mosul Municipality and the departments of Sewerage and Water, besides the high-level of coordination with UN agencies. My thanks and appreciation to UN-Habitat for their presence in areas that really need housing rehabilitation assistance and today is for the parks rehabilitation.”

Head of Mosul Municipality, Mr Radhwan Ahmed Suliman, acknowledged the generous support of the European Union and spoke about the on-going one-day cleaning campaign that en-

gaged more than 100 daily workers and 60 volunteers from Su'ad Mosuliya in a joint effort to remove garbage from the park and adjacent residential area: “We are very pleased that UN-Habitat has chosen this area within low-income overcrowded areas that have not been visited by many organizations and thus not receiving much upgrading assistance. We strongly support this effort and these projects and, God willing, will be working alongside UN-Habitat in all future projects.”

Head of UN-Habitat Iraq Programme, a.i., Ms. Yuko Otsuki, said: “The rehabilitation of Al Yarmouk Park will be the core of a wide range of public initiatives, environmental actions, cultural events, recreation and sport activities that will benefit Mosul citizens of all ages. In UN-Habitat, we believe that public space plays a crucial role in the creation of socio-economic value, improved health and quality of life in urban areas, as well as a unique opportunity to enhance social inclusion, cohesion and peace-building in cities affected by a recent conflict.”

The manager of the programme, Ms. Anna Soave stated that “Al Yarmouk Park has immediately drawn our attention because of its unique size and very dilapidated conditions, in a city where public green space per capita is notoriously well-below average and recommended standards. Public space is a vital component of a prosperous city because of its positive impact on its economy, environment, safety, health, and strong contribution to community cohesion. By involving youth in its redesign as a multi-functional space, Al Yarmouk Park has a strong potential to enhance civic identity, social interaction and cultural expression.”

A Yarmouk Cleaning Day was launched in the early morning, as a joint initiative of Mosul Municipality, UN-Habitat and Su'ad Mosuliya. Prior to embarking in the cleaning of the park and adjacent streets, municipal workers and volunteers attended risk education sessions delivered by UNMAS and IH-SCO.

The milk and yoghurt production lines at Mosul's dairy factory

Mosul, 5 May 2019 - "This factory used to produce sterilized milk, skimmed cheese, soft cheese, ghee and other dairy products. We had 207 employees and produced five tonnes of milk, two tonnes of cream, one tonne of ghee and two tonnes of cooked cheese daily; it all worked really well until ISIL occupied Mosul. The factory was severely damaged, the production section was almost completely destroyed and the machines were stolen. We managed to extract what was left of the equipment from under the rubble and with the support of IOM, began to rehabilitate a separate part of the destroyed building to set up two production lines, the cream and the yogurt, and go back to work.

Currently, 139 employees are working again, and we produce milk and cream

that we distribute in Mosul's markets as well to government departments, schools and local markets," said senior engineer Naofal Al Obaidy.

IOM rehabilitated the milk and yoghurt production lines at Mosul's dairy factory with support from the Government of Canada in Iraq.



Norwegian-Swedish Delegation visited UNDP's Iraq stabilization projects

Baghdad, 6 May 2019 - Representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway and from the Swedish Embassy in Iraq visited UNDP's Iraq Stabilization projects in Ramadi, including a Vocational Training Center which helps more than 2,000 people per year to learn new skills and increase their chance of employment.



UN-Habitat Iraq implements a programme to support Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights and claims for IDPs and returnees in Ninewa

Baghdad, 7 May 2019 - UN-Habitat Iraq implements a programme to support Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights and claims for IDPs and returnees in Ninewa and work with the national and local governments, IDPs, and community members to enhance their capacity to address HLP rights. Specifically, UN-Habitat deals with unresolved HLP claims in Sinjar, provide legal assistance for property compensation in Mosul, and support IDPs to resolve property disputes arising from secondary occupation in Hamdaniya and Telkaif. UN-Habitat also works on awareness-raising on HLP, particularly among marginalized and vulnerable population. Through these actions, and in collaboration with the community, UN-Habitat supports peacebuilding and reconciliation in Iraq.



Labor market opportunities and challenges



Baghdad, 9 May 2019 - Following the end of hostilities against ISIS, the return of millions of Iraqis is threatened by the large presence of harsh conditions in areas of return. The work of Return and Recovery Unit (RRU) within IOM Iraq is to improve the conditions for sustainable recovery across 15

governorates through rehabilitation of community infrastructure, livelihood assistance, community engagement, and other support aiming to facilitate sustainable solutions to the internal displacement crisis in Iraq.

With sub-offices across Iraq, jointly managed Community Resource Centres (CRCs), and a presence within Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA's) sub-offices, IOM has a field presence that allows for a community-driven approach to recovery and development. Under its livelihoods programming, IOM works with a system of community engagement that has been refined through an interactive learning process, and relies on stakeholder consultation throughout the design of sustain-

able livelihood activities. Recognizing that the private sector is an engine for growth, IOM works to create inclusive markets at the individual, community and institutional level.

In order to design market-led development interventions, a series of Labour Market Assessments (LMAs) were conducted. The LMAs are based on individual interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Survey tools included a mix of quantitative and qualitative exercises, conducted with key informants, jobseekers, youth, consumers, and employers.

These assessments are intended to provide actionable recommendations for the assistance that IOM provides, for multiple districts throughout Iraq.

Painting for pupils: Beautifying Mosul's schools

Mosul, 9 May 2019 - Mother-of-five Samia, 37 is stationed at Al Mansour Primary School for Boys, repairing old desks for its students as part of a UNDP Cash-for-Work program. Her husband was injured in an explosion in 2004 and now suffers from a disability, leaving Samia as the main breadwinner.

She stands among a group of six women, all shrouded in their protective gear of high-visibility vests and masks. They are hard at work: drilling, welding, sanding and painting, and contributing to the repair of almost 25,000 desks across the city.

Samia is a natural. "It's not the first time I've picked up a power tool," she says, laughing. "Because of my husband's situation, I'm used to doing jobs around the house, so this work is easy for me.

The income she earns is critical for her family — she plans to spend it on alleviating the USD 1,500 of debt she accumulated when ISIL took control of Mosul as she was unable to work during

this time.

She is passionate about her job and it shows.

"I love working for the children — I feel they are my own. And I like bringing joy and colour to their lives," she says.

For Samia — and for many women working in UNDP's Cash-for-Work program — working inside buildings like schools and hospitals puts them at ease. They are seen safe spaces where women feel empowered.

"Working inside a school makes me comfortable. We don't feel intimidated here," she says. "We take a lot of pride in our work."

Meanwhile at Al Taliea Al'uwlaa School for Girls, Manal, a 22-year-old graduate from Mosul's Institute of Fine Arts stands outside the school, painting a message of peace on the entrance wall: "We are all Iraq."

She's one of 50 graduates from fine arts institutions across Mosul (including Mosul University's College of Fine Arts) that have been employed to paint the murals.

Inside the school, more walls are adorned with vibrant artworks — again with important messages like the need to take care of the environment and how to deal with explosive hazards.

Like many others her age, Manal was forced to leave her studies when ISIL took control of Mosul and was home bound for nearly three years. While she kept herself busy learning crochet, writing poetry and looking after her sick grandfather, she longed to continue painting and sculpting. "It was hard," she laments. "I felt imprisoned." Three years later, she was able to return to her passion — and get paid for it. "I love colours — I love working on anything related to colours," she says.

"Art is my passion, so I was really happy to hear about this job opportunity. It's the first job that I've had related to my field of study, so it's really important to me."

With no children or family obligations, she will use the income she earns just like any other 22-year-old: on buying clothes and hanging out with her friends.

Manal is ambitious and already has plans to build her art career and put local female artists on the map. "I'd like to get a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts at Mosul University. And in the meantime, I am currently working on a little project, developing an art exhibition with some of my friends. It'll have paintings, drawing, sculptures and other forms of art, for everyone to enjoy."

This project is administered through UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization and financed by Germany's Ministry for Economic Cooperation through KfW.



Iraqi Minister of Planning briefed the Diplomatic Corps in Baghdad today on the challenges facing the country in the post-conflict phase



Baghdad, 12 May 2019 - Iraqi Minister of Planning, Dr. Nouri Sabah al-Dulaimi, briefed the Diplomatic Corps in Baghdad today on the challenges facing the country in the post-conflict phase. These challenges include the return of the internally displaced people, economic, structural, environmental issues and climate change. The minister outlined the government's plans to address these issues and create an enabling environment for invest-

ment, re-energize the economy and create jobs for the increasing number of youth. The minister stressed the return of the displaced, including the Yezidi community, reconstruction and creating employment opportunities are key issues. He acknowledged the limited economic role of women in Iraq, adding that he aspires for a more robust role for women. The minister underscored the need for continued support by the International



community, in particular on the files of the return of the internally displaced people, stabilizing and providing services in the liberated areas, and ensuring logistical and training assistance for holding a national census. The briefing was hosted by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) at its headquarters in Baghdad.



DSRSG Ruedas reaffirmed the commitment and readiness of the United Nations family in Iraq to support strategic government priority areas for social economic development under the general framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Baghdad, 14 May 2019 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and United Nations Resi-

dent and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas, met with the Minister of Planning of the Republic of

Iraq, Dr. Nouri Sabah Al-Dulaimi, to discuss development cooperation between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations Country Team.

DSRSG Ruedas reaffirmed the commitment and readiness of the United Nations family in Iraq to support strategic government priority areas for social economic development under the general framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

On his part, while appreciating the key role of the United Nations in Iraq, the Minister expressed his support and willingness to continue working closely with the United Nations to achieve economic development objectives as determined by the people of Iraq in collaboration with its international partners.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Planning.



7 reasons why UNDP's housing work in Mosul is important

Mosul, 14 May 2019 - Mosul's Old City was decimated by Daesh. At the time of liberation, it was estimated that 10 million tonnes of rubble – equivalent to three Giza pyramids – was left in the city. Today, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is working to rehabilitate 15,000 homes in the area. UN Resident Coordinator in Iraq Marta Ruedas explains why this project is crucial in bringing this once-vibrant city back to life.

Marta Ruedas: Violent extremism can flourish in environments that lack social services, basic infrastructure and employment opportunities, and in instances where people are subject to sub-standard living conditions like tents in camps. By rebuilding homes, we set the foundations for more stable living conditions in communities, ensuring residents can return home safely and with dignity.

Damage to a person's home is one reason why people are reluctant to return. Those who do return often find their entranceways engulfed by rubble, their possessions stolen, and the walls of their home torched. In some areas, people have found mounds of dirt in their living rooms, left over from elaborate underground tunnel networks built by Daesh.

Explosive hazards also pose a huge problem, especially in the Old City. To date, UNDP rubble removal crews have found 92 explosives in homes – and counting. We work with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to ensure these are removed safely so work can continue

Our project in Mosul builds on the successful housing work rolled out in other areas of Iraq – Across Ramadi and Fallujah, UNDP has already restored 14,733 homes. Another 3,000 are close to being finalized in the Ninewa Plains. Soon, another few thousand will be rehabilitated in Baiji and Western Anbar – the last area to be liberated from Daesh. Our work in Mosul is complimented by other housing rehabilitation projects implemented by UN agencies and NGOs, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Habitat and Human Appeal on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These activities are all coordinated through a central group made up of representatives across the housing sector called the Shelter Cluster.

Our impact is clear

I've had the opportunity to visit Mosul and hear firsthand from beneficiaries how the rehabilitation of their home



has given them hope for the future. I've met families who've had their homes for several generations, never thinking they would ever be able to return. I've met women who have had to live in a tiny room with five or six of their children, sometimes for several years. The stories are devastating and often harrowing. But people always manage to tell them with a smile, and coming back to not just a house – but a home – is one of the reasons why.

We focus on the people who need it most

Priority is given to the most vulnerable groups in Iraq. Female-headed households, households run by a minor, people living with a disability, and households where the breadwinner has not had employment in the last three years are at the top of our list.

Our approach is considered and consultative

Neighbourhoods in Mosul were selected alongside the provincial government and Mayor's office, based on the numbers of returnees to an area and the level of damage sustained to homes.

Before work commences, all housing

repairs are agreed to by the homeowner and the local Mukhtar. The work helps to make a house livable again – things like rebuilding and plastering walls, securing windows and doors, undertaking electrical work and restoring sanitation. Additional items for people living with a disability, such as ramps and seated toilets are also included. To ensure the work is carried out efficiently and ethically, it is closely monitored by UNDP, third party and government-appointed committees.

We preserve the unique character of the Old City

The streets of Mosul's Old City are dotted with architectural gems like old mosques and churches, Ottoman-era designs, and precious marble columns. To retain Mosul's character, charm and architectural brilliance, we work with the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage as well as UNESCO to ensure as many elements as possible are preserved.

We provide thousands of jobs

Almost 7,000 new jobs will be created as part of the Mosul housing project. Firstly, local citizens are employed to clear rubble from the streets and houses, literally paving the way for rehabilitation work to start. Workers are employed on a two-or-three-month basis and receive USD 20 per day. Residents from the local area are selected to ensure that people have an opportunity to rebuild their own city. On top of this, contracting agencies undertake the restoration work, employing thousands of painters, plasters, masons, carpenters and site engineers. We also have a team of UNDP staff to monitor the work and facilitate the conversations with homeowners.

By Global Coalition



UNDP in cooperation with Council of Ministers Secretariat is providing technical support to various ministries on Institutional Performance Improvement of Government



Erbil, 14 May 2019 - UNDP in cooperation with Council of Ministers Secre-

tariat (CoMSEC) is providing technical support to various ministries on Insti-

tutional Performance Improvement of Government. Twenty – two senior officials from the ministries of Culture, Agriculture, Higher education and Scientific Research, and also staff from Karbala Governorates are receiving practical exercise and peer to peer exchange knowledge on the public sector performance evaluation and how to improve it through a group workshop is ongoing now in Erbil from 12 to 16 May 2019.

This workshop is part of a joint programme between UNDP – Iraqi Public Sector Modernisation Programme (IPSM) and the Council of Ministers Secretariat (CoMSEC) to provide a series of seminars on Institutional Performance Improvement of Government targeting 24 Iraqi Ministries.

Economic empowerment and rehabilitated basic services build resilience in Dohuk



Baghdad, 22 May 2019 - Between 2018-2019, UNDP Iraq supported an estimated 524,000 people to access improved basic services and more than 900 individuals to receive livelihood support in Dohuk.

“The most precious one is my mum” – a tribute to his mother who passed from Breast Cancer, this young boy was able to express himself with help from Khairy, a passionate barber, and a fellow IDP living in Sharia Camp for IDPs, just outside Duhok. “Barbering has always been my hobby, I started when I was a small boy,” explains Khairy, a Yazidi man, who fled his home in Sinjar in 2014.

Khairy, like many others, had struggled to find livelihood opportunities to support his 10 kids, while living in the

camp. Previously he had accepted employment in a barbershop belonging to another IDP, but with little flexibility and restricted access to assets – due to camp restrictions, Khairy was often left without a wage to support his family.

Now, each day he opens to doors to his own barbershop inside the camp, with all the necessary equipment to master his craft. “When I have more income and more flexibility, I have many ideas to develop and expand my work and the shop,” he added. “I am always trying new things.”

Much like Khairy, Amira, a 23-year-old Yazidi woman, and Khalaf, a 40-year-old father of six, have both been residing in Sharia camp since 2014, when they fled the ISIL Occupation of Sinjar. Today, they both operate small mini-

markets, selling cold drinks, sweets, toiletries and other basic goods inside the camps they call home.

Each of these businesses were established through an asset replacement programme, funded by the Government of Japan, and through UNDP Iraq’s partnership with Zakho Small Villages Projects (ZSVP). 150 beneficiaries – 70 of which are IDPs experiencing protracted displacement - were selected to receive asset grants that would enable them to open and operate small businesses of their choice.

“I live with my parents and three younger brothers, but I am the only one able to work,” explains Amira. “I was only in 9th grade when I had to leave Sinjar, and although I went on to study health in Duhok, I couldn’t find work as a nurse,” she added. Now that she is able to support her family – who often join her in the store to serve customers, she hopes to raise more money and expand the shop and the products she is able to sell.

On-going security crisis in Syria and many regions across Iraq – including Sinjar, continues to prevent the return of IDPs and refugees, whether concerned for the safety of their families or with such severe damage to their homes, that they have no access to suitable shelter.

Today, the governorate of Dohuk is still hosting more than 320,000 IDPs [1] and 88,262 Refugees [2] – both in-camp and living in various host communities. This not only requires the investment

Economic empowerment and rehabilitated basic services build resilience in Dohuk (*continued*)

of government to provide access to basic services for a greater number of people, but it creates greater competition for shelter, food, water and jobs.

This is why, in addition to asset replacement, UNDP Iraq's partnership with ZSVP also encompasses a job placement programme, placing 120 refugees, IDPs and host community members in sustainable jobs with a variety of private sector partners.

Bafreen (18), Danar (20) and Payman (23), were all recently selected to work with a local company, processing meat and meat products for delivery to stores across Dohuk and Erbil. A small factory, employing 12 people, the management welcomed the young workers to help with the preparation of products and the packaging of ready-to-sell kebab, tka and potata chap.

Despite not having been able to finish high school, Danar is happy that he can now support his family and improve their quality of life, "Other than me, only my brother works in a store in Dohuk, but together we can support our parents and siblings to provide everything we need at home."

But what is a business without access to electricity and water? In addition to its ongoing support for improved livelihoods in Dohuk, UNDP Iraq also works in collaboration with the Governorate of Dohuk to ensure that all the small, medium and large businesses operating each day, can do so without interruption.

"People were experiencing interruption to their flow of electricity before - people with workshops, small factories or shops, and now they can work more

comfortably and have greater productivity, because of the more continuous supply of electricity," explains Aubbaidulla Sleman Taha, head of the Electricity Directorate in Shekhan District, Dohuk. "Many transformers were overloaded and could not take the capacity of the power supply," he added.

With funding from the Government of Germany, UNDP Iraq, in collaboration with the Governorate of Dohuk have completed 12 infrastructure projects between 2018-2019, rehabilitating roads, sewerage, water, electricity networks, education, and environment, for improved access to services for an estimated 524,000 community members – including IDPs and Refugees. "Rehabilitation of infrastructure has multiple positive impacts, including supporting people who depend on these services for their livelihoods," described Hazim Mohammed Uthman from the Planning department of the General Directorate of Electricity in Dohuk.

UNDP Iraq has led the early recovery and resilience agenda in Iraq since 2014/2015, using a holistic, integrated and community-driven approach to set the stage for full recovery, and to prevent further deterioration of post-crisis situations and rebuild peoples' lives. Resting on the idea of "build back better", UNDP Iraq's Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme uses the opportunity of restoration and recovery to shape a sustainable environment and equip communities to better manage future crises through ensuring access to basic services, contributing to local economic recovery through livelihoods diversification, promoting civic

engagement and increasing confidence in state institutions.

"Rehabilitation of infrastructure has multiple positive impacts, including supporting people who depend on these services for their livelihoods," said Hazim Mohammed Uthman from the Planning department of the General Directorate of Electricity in Dohuk.

Between 2018-2019 UNDP Iraq supported an estimated 524,000 people to access improved basic services and more than 900 individuals to receive livelihood support in Dohuk and the surrounding villages and camps.

With funding from the Government of Japan, and in partnership with ZSVP ORG, Oxfam Iraq & REACH, 900 individuals were supported through job placement and small business grants – including refugees, IDPs and host community members.

In addition, with funding from the Government of Germany, UNDP Iraq, in collaboration with the Governorate of Dohuk, have completed 12 infrastructure projects between 2018-2019, rehabilitating roads, sewerage, water, electricity networks, education, and environment.

These activities are implemented as a part of UNDP's Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP), a 5 component programme designed to provide immediate and medium-term support to IDPs, Syrian refugees and host communities, to ensure access to basic services, contribute to local economic recovery through livelihoods diversification, promote civic engagement and increase confidence in state institutions.

General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of Iraq and UNDP organized a workshop on Audit mechanisms of contracting

Baghdad, 28 May 2019 - "The study of International Accounting Standards and the Audit of projects and contracting is crucial for modernizing the public sector, especially after the perceived security stability and the flow of capital to Iraq," said Said Ali Mohammed, Account Manager Service- Administrative and Financial, General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

In collaboration with the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of Iraq, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized a 5-day workshop on Audit mechanisms of contracting, targeting 26 senior Iraqi officials from the Federal Board of Supreme Auditors and the Administrative

and Financial department.

National trainees from Baghdad and Mustansiriyah universities shared their academic knowledge and experiences and then highlighted the practical steps they can take to understand how to audit projects, improve collaboration in Planning & Conducting the Audit, and cost-effective way Project Progress Monitoring, mechanisms of contracting, enable project delivery to time, cost and quality objective.

Also, the exercises and activities were given practically and predominantly based on real-life case studies or situations, that drive to efficient delivering government services and increase citizen satisfaction and also reduce costs.



Iraq Public Distribution System (PDS) goes digital

Baghdad, 28 May 2019 – The Ministry of Trade launched the first E-distribution supported by World Food Programme (WFP) technology. After decades of manual, paper-driven and overwhelming food distribution processes, today Iraqi citizens started receiving their food entitlement provided by the government through biometrically protected smart cards.

The event was attended by the Iraqi Minister of Trade Mohammed Hashem Al-Ani and other senior government representatives, who expressed their enthusiasm around this initiative and were impressed by the national capacities who were well trained to run the distribution independently. The Minister also mentioned that digitising the Public Distribution System – PDS – will eliminate fraud and corruption cases and improve transparency and accountability towards citizens of Iraq. WFP smart cards are being used to manage citizen's data and entitlements. The distribution will expand to 10 more



locations impacting around 35,000 citizens as part of the trial phase that was jointly launched by WFP and the Iraqi Ministry of Trade to digitise the national PDS, i.e. the biggest social protection system providing food entitlements to 39 million citizens.

WFP will continue to support the government throughout the trial phase, while working simultaneously on citizen's empowerment through developing a smart mobile application that enables citizens to update their data, and access government services conveniently.

MoU signed during the 1st UN-Habitat Assembly to develop a regional agenda for sustainable recovery, regeneration and reconstruction for the Arab region

Nairobi, Kenya, 30 May 2019 - UN-Habitat, World Green Building Council and Chatham House signed an MoU during the 1st UN-Habitat Assembly to develop a regional agenda for sustainable recovery, regeneration and reconstruction for the Arab region. The MoU was signed by Mr. Mohamed Asfour, Regional Head, MENA Network, World Green Building Council and Dr. Erfan Ali, Director of the Regional Office for Arab States, UN-Habitat.

The MoU will lay the groundwork for a regional agenda for sustainable recovery, regeneration and reconstruction in which the re-built environment contributes to healthy, resource-secure and climate-resilient societies. This regional agenda will be aligned with principles of sustainable development and build back better anchored in the UN Agenda

for Sustainable Development 2030, the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement and other global agendas. Research into past experience, local cultural practices and inspiring adaptive examples will be coupled with intensive cross-sector dialogue to develop geographically appropriate principles and actionable guidelines for sustainable post-conflict reconstruction in Arab cities.

Urban areas and essential infrastructure across Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Gaza have suffered large-scale damage and destruction due to multiple, recent and on-going conflicts. These countries also face severe levels of water stress and environmental degradation overlaid by climate change. Extreme temperatures coupled with lack



of access to power are already exacerbating inequalities across the region. Reconstruction is already taking place and is likely to do so largely in a vacuum of environmental regulation, reducing countries' long-term prospects for the inclusion of returnees, social stability and economic recovery.

Streets in Ninewa damaged by ISIL are getting a makeover

Mosul, 10 May 2019 - Streets in Ninewa damaged by ISIL are getting a makeover. This road in Mosul will provide access to the Al-Shifaa hospital complex, meaning residents can get important healthcare services quickly and safely.



ESCWA signs technical cooperation memo with Iraq



Beirut, 30 May 2019 - United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Rola Dashti, today signed a Technical Cooperation (TC) framework with the Iraqi government, represented by the Minister of Planning, Mr. Nouri Al-Dulaimi, for the period 2019-2020.

The TC framework revolves around fourteen guiding areas, including the assessment of the climate change impact; strengthening food security; providing technical support in the fields

of technology, statistics, and transport and road safety; developing a national multidimensional poverty index; achieving financial sustainability and stimulating the labour market; and developing standard economic models.

In remarks following the ceremony, Dashti said that the TC framework covers concerns of the Iraqi people, including the creation of job opportunities, combating poverty, facing climate change and its impact on water and other issues, as well supporting youth and women and using technology to improve governance.

This comes in line with the efforts of ESCWA to support member States in adopting strategies aimed at achieving sustainable development, founded on social justice, equity, equality and poverty reduction; and in support of member States' international commitments, especially implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For his part, Al-Dulaimi expressed his hope in a fruitful cooperation with ESCWA over the next two years, adding that it aims to provide better services to Iraqi citizens and improve environment in Iraq.

It also covers supporting government efforts to establish a social fund for development; supporting rural development; measuring the impact of legislation and laws on development; providing technical support to empower women and achieve gender equality; preparing a "model programme" for "rehabilitating people in liberated areas"; and supporting decentralization to localize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It is worthy to note that ESCWA has similar TC frameworks signed with Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, and Syria.

Restored houses bring families back home to Batnaya

Batnaya, 30 May 2019 – The first 10 families are returning home to Batnaya in Iraq's Ninewa Plains after fleeing ISIL, thanks to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) housing rehabilitation efforts.

The housing project – implemented by UNDP and financed by Germany's Ministry for Economic Cooperation through KfW – includes the rehabilitation of 400 houses in Batnaya and will enable about 1,600 people to return.

"Batnaya, like many of its surrounding areas, is a special place, as it's home to many of Iraq's ancient minority communities who suffered terribly at the hands of ISIL," says UNDP's Resident Representative Zena Ali Ahmad.

"The project will not only help bring a sense of normalcy back to the area for

communities who have been away from home for more than four years, but it's also critical to maintaining the unique social fabric that the Ninewa Plains is proud of and known for," she adds.

Ms. Ali Ahmad also thanked Germany for their continued support in bringing stability to Batnaya, and Iraq generally.

"As our biggest donor, our work across the country wouldn't have been possible without the generous contributions made by Germany over the past few years, so we're extremely grateful for their support," she adds.

"This housing project is not our first in the area; we're building on the success of other housing projects in Bartela and Bashiqa where 2,600 homes have been rehabilitated and handed back to their

owners," added Head of UNDP Stabilization Dr. Mohammedsiddig Mudawi.

As part of the housing works, essential elements such as rebuilding and plastering walls, painting, securing windows and doors, undertaking electrical work and restoring sanitation are included.

The project is anticipated to be completed by the end of this year.

Approximately 19 stabilization projects have either been completed or are underway by UNDP in Batnaya, including rehabilitation of the main water network which provides 250 houses with reliable running water, three schools, a healthcare centre and the rehabilitation of the electricity network, which includes 21km of cables and wires. These activities have been financially supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Fourteen local shops have also been rehabilitated with support from the Government of New Zealand.

Across the Ninewa Plains, 469 projects are complete or underway. The projects also focus on restoring water and electricity networks, rebuilding educational institutions and healthcare facilities, and providing job opportunities for residents.



UNDP completes some rehabilitation projects in Mosul

Mosul, 3 June 2019 - Gharbiya School for Boys is complete! This iconic school was built in 1938 and was badly damaged when ISIL took control of Mosul. UNDP rehabilitated the school, including 18 classrooms and a new basketball court and football playing area. Principal Bashar Abdallah has worked at the school for 14 years. "I'm looking forward to seeing the students love this school again, and their country." Thanks to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs for supporting this project. Rehabilitation of the vetting Centre in Ghizlani district in Mosul is nearly complete. The centre has an important job for the city's 180,000 residents: It is responsible for vetting public sector employees, ensuring they are not connected to ISIL or extremist groups.



Innovation for development

Baghdad, 7 June 2019 - Innovation for development is building the capacities of young people and related institutions in the field of Entrepreneurship and Innovation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project is developing a set of training activities to enhance the ecosystem and facilitate partnerships among stakeholders.

Innovation Team is a group of 35 volunteers from different backgrounds, specializations and various skills, working together to implement the action plan we have developed to achieve the objectives of the Innovation for Development project for 2019.

The innovation team has been working since 2015, with 2500 participants and

over 100 institutions in Iraq. The action plan for 2019 includes different activities that aim to prototype and test three tools; a training manual, an online platform, and a simulation

game. Those tools are being designed to benefit individuals and institutions working or interested in the field of innovation, entrepreneurship and business in general.



67 Yazidi women participated in female-only awareness raising sessions on Housing, Land and Property rights

Sinjar, 11 June 2019 - Recently, UN-HABITAT held awareness raising sessions in Borek, Sinjar, to discuss about housing, land and property rights. The sessions specifically invited Yazidi women so that they can learn and discuss about their rights.

Since the beginning of the project in September 2018, the program titled "Support to HLP rights for IDPs in Nineveh" has held seven awareness raising sessions in Sinjar, reaching 549 Yazidi men and women from the community. In May 2019, a female-only session was organized to inform 67 female participants about their housing, land and property rights, how their rights are relevant to them and their families, and how the program can support them through various activities.

Female head of households receive special attention under this program, in line with its inclusive and gender-sensitive approach.

Female-only sessions are intended to offer a space for female participants to address topics that are relevant for them in an environment that makes them feel safe to express their opinions and concerns. Promoting an open discussion enhances the possibility of addressing community issues in a more inclusive, effective way.

Awareness raising being a cornerstone for empowering communities to access their human rights, the program intends to strengthen the knowledge on housing, land and property rights among marginalized and vulnerable population. Through these activities,

UN-Habitat aims at contributing to stabilization in Iraq by promoting safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable returns and reintegration of internally displaced population.



Toyota Iraq, UNDP and Oxfam support technical training for sustainable livelihoods celebrating the graduation of 16 IDP's in automotive mastery



Erbil, 11 June 2019 - Toyota Iraq, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Oxfam celebrated the graduation of 16 young trainees from the Toyota Technical Development Program Training. This group is the 5th batch of internal displaced people (IDPs) who have successfully completed Toyota certified training.

Through an on-going partnership, Toyota Iraq has contributed to the people and society of Iraq by successfully training 53 young men and women in automotive mastery, customer service and skills and spare parts. This training batch was the biggest in size, as well as in duration – with training commencing on 17th of February and concluding on 30th of May. The extensive 3 months of continuous training delivered not only technical knowledge but also introduced the ‘Toyota Way’ and our corporate shared values, followed by inclusive technical training and an on-the-job experience for one month at Toyota Authorized Dealers in Erbil, Cihan Motors and SAS Automotive.

The successful collaboration of program partners - UNDP, OXFAM, the Government of Japan and Toyota Iraq, ensured that the latest training cohort were all able to complete training and receive recognition at Tuesday's graduation ceremony. Mr. Sardar Al.Bebany, president, Toyota Iraq, said, “This program is one of the ways we provide support to local society. Through this program I have witnessed that when IDP's are given equal opportunity for employment, they are empowered to change and improve their lives. We had total of 10 individual IDP's now working with Toyota Iraq, as well as many others now working with other automobile companies”.

Vakhtang Svanidze, Deputy Country Director, UNDP Iraq, also commented on the power of livelihood recovery for building resilient communities, “Enhancing livelihoods and employment opportunities is one of the key elements for self-reliance and early recovery of conflict effected communities. UNDP is grateful for the support of Toyota and Oxfam to provide technical training for young men and women IDPs originating from areas across Iraq – including Mosul, Anbar and Salah al-Din, improving their employability and enabling them to access the job market with invaluable experience. This project would not be possible to implement without generous financial support by government of Japan “ Reinforcing a commitment to provide on-going support for to the young men and women of Iraq, and to invest in the

leaders of tomorrow, Toyota and UNDP renewed their partnership in early 2019, marking three years of collaboration in training and committing to a further two.

Toyota's commitment is reflective of their core principles and dedication to support the local communities in which they work, "By respecting the culture and practices of each country and region and engaging in business activities with close community ties, we are working to create an enriching society while promoting measures that support labor and education”.

Likewise, the Government of Japan shares this interest to develop and build resilience in nations around the world, “We consider the Human Resource Development utmost priority allocating more than \$ 350,000,000 to support in a variety of development programs around the world,” commented Japan Consul in Erbil, Mr. Moriyasu.

The conclusion of the graduation ceremony was marked by Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Shinsuke Fujimoto, who expressed on behalf of all Toyota Iraq, a proudness for the great achievement of each graduate and and well wishes for their success in the next step of their career.

This programme was launched on the 25th of October 2016 as a flagship joint project between UNDP and Toyota Iraq to give internally displaced young people opportunities to enter the automotive industry, with the partnership renewal as of 28th of January,2019.



Prospects for peace in Iraq

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) are investigating how WFP's activities contribute to improving the prospects for peace in the world.

Baghdad, 12 June 2019 - The signs of war are all around as we drive past the squat, surly walls of Abu Ghraib prison, out along the motorway from Baghdad towards the wild west of Anbar province: shattered buildings, collapsed flyovers and piles of rubble by the roadside.

Against this backdrop, the talk in the vehicle is not so much about conflict as about the peace which is tentatively establishing itself in Iraq. People are returning to their communities, picking up their lives and, where possible, their livelihoods. But there are still 1.8 million people displaced, nearly half a million of them living in camps. Corruption is rife, social services are scant, paramilitary groups abound. Islamic State (IS) may have been defeated but few believe the threat is over.

What chances of peace, then in such circumstances? That is the question being turned over by three of the passengers: Rachel Goldwyn and David Branca from the World Food Programme (WFP) and Gary Milente from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The two organizations last year formed a partnership to investigate what contribution WFP might be making to improving the prospects for peace in the world. As a first step, experts have visited four countries affected by conflict or the risk of it: Mali, Kyrgyzstan, El Salvador and Iraq. I've joined them on the Iraq mission with a cameraman to document their research on video.

"Iraq's a really interesting case," says Gary. "It has a number of challenges, tribal challenges, ethnic challenges, governance reform challenges. These are all places where WFP can contribute to peace through their activities."

The destination today is Ramadi, the town which probably suffered more destruction than any other in Iraq during the war against Islamic State. The researchers have been invited to a gathering on the banks of the Euphrates River to mark the completion of a WFP project to rehabilitate kilometers of irrigation canals destroyed in the closing stages of the war. They want to hear the voices of those involved in the project.

While the research team is conducting interviews, I talk to a couple of farmers who've worked on the project. Mohammed Jama'a and Mitib Ibrahim fled Ramadi with their families as IS advanced on the town in 2015, only returning after its liberation the following year. Knowing how crucial the canals were to their future, the two men joined the work teams who received cash from WFP while cleaning out the channels and repairing the pumping stations which had been trashed by retreating IS fighters.

"When families returned to this area, there was no contact between them," Mohammed tells me. "But after this project, they started working together. My friend beside me"—he indicates Mitib with a nod of his head—"he's from a different tribe and we've got to know each other through the project."

I want to accompany the two men back to their farms and film them in their fields but time is tight and we're soon back on the road, driving to our next destination. On the way, I tell Rachel about the farmers and ask how such testimonies might relate to their inquiries.

"We're trying to identify how we might be contributing to peace," she says. "We call that a theory of change. For example, a canal project might have its own objectives—bringing water to people's farmlands. We're trying to understand if there were wider results from that canal being repaired. Perhaps working together has helped them break down old animosities. These are the sorts of changes we're trying

to find out about when we talk with the communities."

If such principles can be established across a range of research, then it might be possible to design and implement humanitarian programming more effectively—a priority for WFP since the UN Security Council last year passed an historic resolution acknowledging that hunger can never be eliminated from a world at war.

But there is another equally—if not more important—concern for WFP and other humanitarian organizations.

"We're really on two journeys," Rachel explains. "While we're looking at our contribution to peace, we need to make sure we don't make mistakes and get caught up in conflict. We call this being 'conflict-sensitive'. And, right now, we don't really have the foundations for that in place."

As if to underlie the complexity of this challenge, we arrive at Amriyat Al Falujah, a camp of white tents stranded in the sun-blasted wastes of Anbar where the team is to interview families displaced by the war and who for various reasons—lack of security, lack of services, lack of employment—are unable to return home. There are people from different tribal background here. Some families are tainted by an association with IS because a relative has been involved with the extremist group.

Providing humanitarian assistance in such an environment is challenging. Against the imperative to help the most vulnerable must be balanced the importance of not favouring—or not being seen to favour—one section of the community over another. Getting it wrong can be disastrous for all concerned. Awareness of such issues and of the principles guiding them is vital if humanitarians are to make a real contribution to building peace in the world. The research now being undertaken by WFP and SIPRI is an important step in that process.

By David Orr for WFP Insight

Europe Day in Baghdad marked with a panel discussion about water management, agriculture and environmental preservation

Baghdad, 16 June 2019 – Ms. Marta Ruedas, Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the Secretary-General and

Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, spoke during a panel discussion about water management, agriculture,

and environmental preservation organized by the European Union on the occasion of Europe Day held at the Al-Mansour Theatre complex in Baghdad. She was joined on the panel by the First Lady of Iraq and other officials and experts to summarize key challenges and solutions. During her talk, the DSRSG/RC/HC emphasized both the supply and demand problems facing Iraq with water management and structural issues that the Government of Iraq needs to overcome in reducing pollution and waste, improving enforcement and cooperation between ministries, and changing harmful agricultural practices.



European Union supports recovery of agricultural livelihoods in northern Iraq



Baghdad, 17 June 2019 - Farming families in northern Iraq's Nineveh Governorate will benefit from a European Union contribution of €15 million to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to recover agricultural livelihoods. The area, which includes the city of Mosul, was known as the country's 'breadbasket' before conflict caused widespread damage and displacement.

This project is expected to directly benefit almost 10,000 vulnerable farming families (around 60,000 people), as well as flow-on benefits for local service providers and labourers.

"As part of the EU's commitment to the whole of Iraq, supporting the regions so tragically devastated by the recent conflict remains a high priority. By reviving agriculture in Nineveh, a key sector of the economy, this new project will help communities and returnees in rural areas, increasing their income and employment opportunities," said Ramon Blecua, European Union Ambassador to Iraq.

"We are grateful to the European Union for this generous contribution to help us rehabilitate key agricultural facilities and equipment. Getting these services operational again will be a big help for farmers and local businesses," said Mustapha M. Sinaceur, FAO Representative a.i. in Iraq. "Creating jobs in the heartland of agriculture, where so many jobs depend on the rich soils of Nineveh Governorate, is vital for community stabilization," he said.

The impact of conflict on the agricultural sector has been devastating and includes damage to water systems, irrigation facilities and other agricultural infrastructure, disruption of value chains and losses of personal assets, crop and livestock production, and food

supplies.

Since the Iraqi government announced the defeat of Islamic State, also known as Da'esh, a year ago, many people have returned, encouraged by the efforts to ensure a secure and safe environment. However, some areas still lack basic services and job opportunities for both returnees and those who remained.

FAO and the EU working together for family farmers

The EU-funded project supports smallholder farming families to diversify incomes, increase resilience, and provide nutritious and healthy diets.

The project will support vulnerable smallholder farmers to resume vegetable production, introduce efficient irrigation water use and management, encourage agri-food processing, improve small-scale dairy processing and marketing, and boost animal fodder production and conservation.

Women, in particular, will be supported

to participate in home-based vegetable and dairy production and processing. Unemployed young agriculture graduates will be encouraged to benefit from training to gain employment as agri-food processors, farmer field school and farmer business school facilitators, community animal health workers, market information system operators, and food security and nutrition data collectors and analysts.

Together, these activities will respond to families' immediate needs for food and essential non-food items as well as restoring agricultural livelihoods that generate income and employment over the longer term.

At the same time, the project aims to restore vital government infrastructure and support services to the agriculture sector that have been destroyed, damaged, or looted.

The project is an EU contribution to the UN's Recovery and Resilience Programme (RRP) in Iraq. It is part of a larger package of support (€ 184.4 million euros) the EU has contributed to support stabilization and humanitarian efforts undertaken by the UN in support of the Government of Iraq since 2016.

FAO's response in Iraq

Under the Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan 2019, FAO is working to ensure rural families have the resources to re-establish and secure their agricultural livelihoods and build their resilience into the future. FAO's work, in close coordination with the Iraqi government, supports families returning to retaken areas, internally displaced families, host communities and refugees from Syria.



“We want Iraqis to rebuild Iraq”, UN Iraq Resident Coordinator assures @Coalition Twitter followers

Baghdad, 20 June 2019 - On Tuesday 18 June, the United Nations' Iraq Resident Coordinator, Marta Ruedas, Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, took over the @Coalition Twitter account to answer the public's questions about UNDP Iraq stabilization efforts – the progress, the challenges, and the processes.

Followers from Baghdad to London to Ottawa participated in the Q&A. The majority of the questions focused on education, infrastructure, and service provision.

On the topic of education, particularly in Sinjar and Ramadi, Ruedas assured that “education is a top priority,” specifying that “more than 1/3 of [UNDP's] projects across Iraq focus on education” because “More education equals a more stable Iraq.

” Ruedas further noted that the UNDP works with the Iraqi government to identify and prioritize the rehabilitation of schools and universities.

Followers were also curious to know what work was underway in specific liberated cities, including Mosul, Sinjar, Ramadi, and Kirkuk.

Ruedas provided valuable specifics on project targets and updates. In West Mosul, for example – which Ruedas identified as a focus area over the next year – UNDP has rehabilitated 2,000 houses, but plans to rebuild a further 13,000.



The Global Coalition @coalition · 5m

Hello everyone! Live from Baghdad, I'm Marta Ruedas, the UN's Iraq Resident Coordinator, ready to answer your questions on @UNDPinIraq's #IraqStabilization work. Use #AskUNDP to participate!



This work has been complimented by a further 332 projects in water, electricity, health, education and other infrastructure.

UNDP has planned for 43 projects in Sinjar, 31 of which have been completed, including the restoration of 11 schools. The remaining 12 focus on important basic restoration efforts, such as constructing new health centres and electricity networks.

Ruedas also noted that UNDP projects are built by contractors who are “chosen through a transparent & competitive bidding process,” and the emphasis is always on local labour. “We want Iraqis to rebuild Iraq,” she said.

One Twitter user aptly asked what the UNDP was doing to empower women in their stabilization efforts. According to

Ruedas, 3 million women and girls have benefited from UNDP stabilization efforts. UNDP is committed to empowering and providing opportunities for women, in both education and work, and employs many engineers, project managers, and other female staff members.

Ultimately, helping to clear IDP camps and facilitate Iraqis returning home is the main driver behind UNDP's stabilization work. And it is where they have seen the most impact: “Our goal is to get people back home and we are achieving it: 4.2 million people have returned so far.”

For more information on the UNDP's stabilisation efforts in Iraq, follow @UNDPinIraq and #IraqStabilization on Twitter.

IOM rehabilitated the electricity grid in Abu Akash community and installed new transformers

Fallujah, 23 June 2019 - Abu Akash community in Fallujah, Anbar, with a population of 2,000 individuals, was hard-hit during the conflict with ISIL,

and most residents were displaced to safer areas.

When they finally came back to their hometown, returnees found that there

was no electricity, which also caused severe water shortages. To obtain electricity, people had to use the grid of neighboring areas, which overburdened the network and caused tensions between communities.

IOM rehabilitated the electricity grid in Abu Akash community and installed new transformers. Thanks to this project, more than 350 families now have electricity supply, including many widows and other vulnerable groups that were suffering the most from the lack of basic services.

Through this and similar infrastructure rehabilitation projects, IOM Iraq supports the Government to improve conditions for sustainable recovery and facilitate a resolution to the displacement crisis in Iraq.



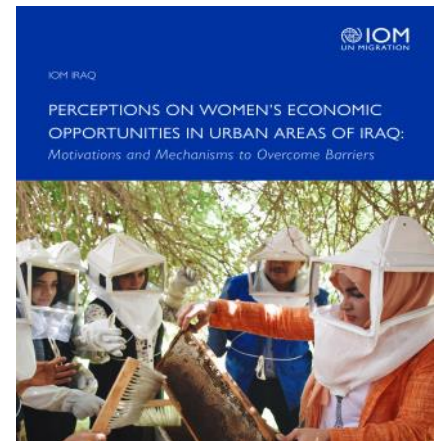
Perceptions on women's economic opportunities in urban areas of Iraq: motivations and mechanisms to overcome barriers

Baghdad, 24 June 2019 - International sanctions and cycles of conflict since 1990 and the subsequent security and economic consequences have pushed Iraqi women into more traditional roles inside the household and left them with limited viable economic opportunities. This study explores the barriers women face when attempting to access and participate in economic opportunities from which they benefit both financially and in personal self-fulfillment. The research identifies existing mechanisms women use to become employed and the motivations behind overcoming such barriers. Data was collected

through focus group discussions held in four major urban areas: Mosul, Kirkuk, Baghdad and Basra.

To overcome existing barriers by making use of existing mechanisms in the community, IOM recommends advocating for more flexible work shifts or job sharing to accommodate women's schedules. Transportation services, job trainings for at-home work and community job aggregators are also points of entry for programming to help reduce barriers to workforce participation.

Full report is available at <https://bit.ly/2Y6B24J>



Preparations of Iraq's Voluntary National Reviews are underway

Baghdad, 25 June 2019 - As part of supporting the Iraqi Government towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals, the first draft of Iraq's Voluntary National Reviews was discussed in order to set its final version, which will be presented during the High-Level Political Forum on next July.

UNDP experts highlighted some important notes related to the report in order to set the final version and set a timeframe to complete the final draft.

The Government of Iraq has taken advanced steps to finalize its first Voluntary National Reviews, with the purpose of targeting the most vulnerable groups, especially in most deprived areas. During a conference held in Baghdad last May, the Ministry of

Planning presented the first draft of the VNR. The report reflects the com-

mitment of the Iraqi Government towards achieving the SDGs.



Access to drinking water in Sinjar reestablished

Sinjar, 26 June 2019 - The main water network in Sinjar was heavily damaged during the conflict with ISIL, leading to severe water shortages. IOM Iraq has rehabilitated a large part of the network, giving 445 households, mostly Yezidi returnees, access to drinking water.

As part of the project and in coordination with the Sinjar Department of Water, IOM Iraq has launched a campaign in the town to inform and guide the community on how to connect their houses to the network.

"I used to pay over US\$30 a month to get clean water from private water tank trucks and it was becoming a financial burden. But thanks to this project, I can now spend that money on my family", said Waleed, a Yezidi returnee and father of five children.



Through this and similar infrastructure rehabilitation projects, IOM Iraq supports the Government to improve condi-

tions for sustainable recovery and facilitate a resolution to the displacement crisis in Iraq.

Endorsement of the “Iraq Housing Reconstruction Strategy” hand in hand with UN-Habitat’s support

Baghdad, 25 June 2019 - Today, the Council of Ministers chaired by Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Adel Abdul-Mahdi, approved the National Housing Council’s recommendations proposed during its fifteenth meeting. These recommendations included the approval of the “Iraq Housing Reconstruction and Housing Development Strategy in the Liberated Areas”, developed and finalized with support from the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat). Ministries and relevant authorities have been tasked to coordinate with each other to prepare detailed procedures and an operational plan to initiate the implementation of the Strategy. The Council of Ministers also endorsed the National Programme’s Roadmap to increase, maintain and effectively manage the country’s housing stock. The Roadmap was prepared and presented by UN-Habitat in harmony with the Iraq Housing Reconstruction Strategy. The Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, His Excellency Mr. Hamid

Al-Ghazi, expressed his “thanks and appreciation for UN-Habitat’s efforts in supporting the return of displaced persons, and in so doing, strengthening their resilience through rehabilitating houses in conflict-affected areas.” Ms. Marta Ruedas, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, mentioned “The United Nations is working with the Government of Iraq to create an environment where displaced families can return safely and rebuild their

lives. The Housing Reconstruction Strategy is a critical guideline for rebuilding and development in Iraq, which tackles housing challenges faced by conflict-affected people and proposes practical solutions to achieve a better urban future.”

Dr. Erfan Ali, Regional Director of Arab States, UN-Habitat, highlighted the importance of approving the Housing Reconstruction Strategy in Iraq at this juncture. Dr. Ali explained that the Strategy will frame and direct the efforts of all stakeholders to accelerate the recovery of damaged houses through tried and tested approaches as well as best practices to provide adequate housing for those affected by the conflict. These measures include the rehabilitation of damaged houses, construction of low-cost housing units, and the upgrading of informal settlements through two main mechanisms: providing building materials to affected persons, and secondly, organizing and managing home loan schemes for affected persons.



Security Sector Reform

Community Policing Forum panel on early marriages

Baghdad, 30 May 2019 - How much do you know about early marriage? It happens all around the world, including in Iraq, and it can lead to many mental, physical and social challenges. The Community Policing Forum in Duhok, supported by IOM, in collaboration with activists, civil society organizations and media outlets, organized a panel discussion to share legal, health and social information about this complex issue. Over a hundred people attended, including community members and internally displaced persons living in nearby camps.



Who are the people making your community safer?

Mosul, 30 June 2019 - In Mosul, youth leaders from Y-Peer IRAQ, with the support of IOM - UN Migration, collaborated with the Alkhadraa Community Police Forum (CPF) and 20 civil society organizations to hold a festival aimed at raising awareness on working together for a better society. During the festival, organizers explained how the CPFs work, how people can discuss their community concerns with CPF members to find appropriate solutions, making their communities safer and more cohesive.

“After Mosul was retaken, many youth volunteer teams were established and have done great work in the city, such as cleaning campaigns and efforts to support families in need. Youth are a reflection of their society, so we chose to target and involve them through seminars in schools and universities. We wanted to explain what community policing is and what we do, and we received a great response from youth everywhere”, said Captain Ziad Salah, a community police officer in Ninawa.



Iraq's Ministry of Interior inaugurates new criminal investigation procedures



Baghdad, 2 June 2019 – On 28 May 2019 senior officials of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, together with representatives of The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the German Embassy, convened to inaugurate the recently adopted Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Criminal Investigations. The event also served as kick-off for its implementation phase to have those procedures properly applied by police investigators throughout the country.

The inauguration event was chaired by Major General Ziad Al-Abbasi, head of the Training and Qualification Directorate. He presented the new booklet containing the SOP and stated that it will be used in all training facilities of the ministry on the conduct of criminal investigations and highlighted the importance of its successful implementation: “It is crucial that all future police investigators are made familiar with

the SOP to make crime investigation more reliable and efficient” said Major General Ziad.

“The new internal police regulations for criminal investigations constitute an essential pre-condition for Iraqi police transition from a ‘force’ to a ‘service-oriented’ public security provider in the post-Da’esh context”, said Chamila Hemmathagama, head of the security sector reform programme of UNDP Iraq.

The deputy head of the German Embassy, Jochen Möller, stated that the Embassy is delighted to hear that the Iraqi expert group that travelled to Berlin was able to get valuable insights and ideas for drafting the Iraqi SOP from how German police and prosecutors investigate crimes. “The Embassy is pleased to be able to assist in this important work and wished the Ministry of the Interior all success for the implementation phase”, added Mr Møl-

ler.

Andreas Kirsch-Wood, senior criminal justice advisor of UNDP, outlined the content of the SOP and stressed that “the new procedures recognise the role of police investigators as proactive stakeholders who carry out all the initial investigations in a manner by which they can be held accountable by investigating judges”.

In support of the implementation of the SOP by the Interior Ministry, UNDP will convene provincial level orientation workshops with police investigators and investigating judges.

UNDP will further hold courses for police trainers to enable them to teach police investigators on the new requirements of the SOP. UNDP will also help to appraise the functions of the police stations under the new procedures to support their upgrade so that they are able to put the SOP into effect.

Major General Ziad and Chamila Hemmathagama both commended the continuous commitment and generous funding from the Government of Germany for this important work.



Karama Police Directorate rehabilitated by UNDP

Mosul, 30 June 2019 - Maintaining law and order for communities in Mosul is a high priority for UNDP. The recently rehabilitated Karama Police Directorate was inaugurated by the Minister of Planning - Mr. Nouri Sabah Al Dulaimi, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers - Mr. Hamid Al Ghizi, the Governor of Ninewa - Mansour Al-Mareid, and General Hamid Yassin, Ninewah Police Commander. It serves about 36 neighborhoods and more than 70,000 residents.



Relationships between national and international mine action actors strengthened

Baghdad, 7 May 2019 - Since being appointed to fill the role of Director General DMA, Dr. Hasan's personal leadership and mine action background have played an essential role in strengthening the relationships between national and international mine action actors. In particular, Dr. Hasan's proactive and direct engagement with all mine action stakeholders is proving instrumental in streamlining the tasking, coordination, and implementation processes, whilst ensuring that humanitarian and international mine action standards are adhered to in line with

DMA strategy.

The positive results in recent months have been clear and have better enabled humanitarian partners to undertake live-saving explosive hazard clearance activities in support of the Government of Iraq, ultimately with the goal of facilitating the safe return home of those displaced. In addition, Dr. Hasan's commitment to supporting risk education activities and pushing for further national capacity enhancement activities is very much benefiting the broader Iraqi mine action community.



UNMAS and UNDP recently distributed risk education gloves

Baghdad, 11 May 2019 - As part of its mandate to offer risk education at the community level, UNMAS, in coordination with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and in support of stabilization, recently distributed risk education gloves to complement risk education sessions to UNDP cash-for-work workers in Western Mosul and to serve as a reminder of risk messages. UNDP cash-for-work workers serve as a front-line for contact with explosive hazards, cleaning the rubble of houses damaged during the war to retake areas previously under Da'esh control. The distribution of these gloves serves as a constant reminder to the beneficiaries of the underlying threat of explosive hazards and equips them with simple safety precautions and contact information of relevant authorities that are potentially life-saving.



"I found the sessions and accompanying risk education gloves to be extremely fruitful, in particular as they are as crucial safety gear that we need to wear. This way, so long the gloves are worn, the safety messages we learned

will always be imprinted in our minds," said Mahmoud Ibrahim, one of UNDP's cash-for-work workers.

UNMAS would like to thank all donors for their continuous support towards risk education activities in Iraq.

New graduates from UNMAS trainings

Baghdad, 12 May 2019 - In collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, and funded by the European Union and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, UNMAS Iraq recently celebrated the graduation of 16 police officers from its Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and 10 police officers from its Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) training courses at Salman Pak.

The trainings were administered to cross-unit police officers representing the Anbar, Kirkuk, and Ninewa Governorates, providing EOD/IEDD training to novice-level police officers.

Commenting on the event, Mr. Tomas Reyes Ortega, Deputy Head of Mission for the European Union, said: "Clearance of explosive hazards is a precondition for stabilization activities

in the liberated areas in Iraq. It allows the safe return of men, women, and children to their places of origin. I commend the police officers who decided to acquire new competences in such a relevant area for Iraq and who today receive their diplomas."

"This course is crucial because it trains police officers from the most affected and contaminated areas post-Da'esh, and allows them to correctly identify and undertake proper procedures when in contact with explosive hazards. For this particular training course, we've incorporated a new medical element with simple yet life-saving measures to take, an important skill to have especially when your job places you the front lines of contact with civilians," said Mr. Fran O'Grady, UNMAS Iraq Head of Projects.

UNMAS in Iraq would like to thank the European Union and the Federal Republic of Germany for their contribution to capacity enhancement initiatives and the organization of this training.



UNMAS hosted a French delegation; visited active clearance sites

Baghdad, 13 May 2019 - UNMAS recently hosted a French delegation comprising representatives from the National Commission for Elimination of Anti-Personnel Mines (CNEMA), the National Assembly, the Senate, and the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs in Mosul and Fallujah cities in Iraq.

The visits included meetings with the Mayor of Mosul, Mr. Zuhair Al-Araji, and the Mayor of Fallujah, Mr. Issa al-Issawi, discussing explosive hazard contamination in their respective cities and surrounding areas. Delegation participants received an extensive brief on the security situation, including challenges and opportunities for clearance, reconstruction, and rehabilitation activities.

Following the meetings, the delegation received a tour of UNMAS active clearance sites and attended UNMAS risk

education sessions at schools in both Mosul and Fallujah.

UNMAS would like to take the opportunity to thank the French Republic for

its continuous support towards creating a safe environment and enabling stabilization and humanitarian initiatives in Iraq.



Head of UNMAS Iraq met UAE Chargé d'Affaires

Baghdad, 16 May 2019 - UNMAS Senior Programme Manager, Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, recently met with Mr. Mohammed Al-Tunaiji, Chargé d'Affaires at the United Arab Emirates Embassy in Baghdad, to discuss UNMAS clearance activities in Iraq.

Mr. Lodhammar briefed Mr. Al-Tunaiji on the UNMAS programme in Iraq in support of stabilization, highlighting the various areas of intervention and support.

The United Arab Emirates has played a pivotal role in rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Iraq, and has been a staunch supporter of humanitarian initiatives in the country. Post-Da'esh, the United Arab Emirates has been an essential contributor to initiatives facil-



itating the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) back to their homes.

The extensive contamination in areas retaken from Da'esh control continues

to impede humanitarian and stabilization efforts in the country. Before any such efforts can be undertaken, the areas must first be cleared of explosive hazards.

EU Delegation, DMA meeting held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 18 May 2019 - UNMAS recently facilitated and joined a meeting between Dr. Hasan, acting Director

General of the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA), and Mr. Tomas Reyes Ortega, Deputy Head of Mission, Head of

Political, Press and Information Section and First Counsellor of the European Union (EU) Delegation in Iraq, who also chairs the Explosive Hazard Management Stabilization Working Group. For the EU, this meeting was an opportunity to meet with the DMA leadership and get an understanding of Iraq's current mine action priorities while emphasizing on the importance of clearance in support of stabilization efforts. The excellent collaboration between UNMAS and DMA was also highlighted during the discussions. UNMAS in Iraq would like to further reinforce its support to DMA and thank the EU for its continuous contribution to mine action in Iraq.



Did you know that honey bees do more than produce honey?

Baghdad, 20 May 2019 - #WorldBeeDay Did you know that honey bees do more than produce honey? Researchers in Croatia and other places have done amazing things training honey bees to locate landmines to 'sniff out' trace amounts TNT during normal foraging flights passing over contaminated areas for later search, clearance and safe disposal by experts. Experts watch the bees with their special equipment, triangulate our coordinates, and bingo, they know precisely the location of the threat. Why not sniffer dogs instead? Bees have a comparable sense of

smell and because they hover over a site, there is no danger of an accidental detonating the landmine. The bees sense of smell is so sensitive that they can detect substances one part per trillion, equivalent to detecting a grain of salt in an Olympic size swimming pool. Bees learn to detect by associating 'bee candy' – sugary food they can't resist – at feeding stations associated with trace amount of trinitrotoluene (TNT) in the vicinity. After the training, bees can detect a landmine from 4.5 kilometers away and with 97.5 percent accuracy.



A Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) delegation visited Iraq

Baghdad, 20 May 2019 - A Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) delegation, led by its Director, Ambassador Stefano

Toscano, visited Iraq to strengthen the cooperation between the Centre and the Iraqi authorities, the United Nations and the operators working in Iraq.

The Iraq visit was made possible thanks to the support provided by both the Iraqi authorities and UNMAS Iraq.



EU-Danish-Swedish delegation visits Sinjar

Sinjar, 28 May 2019 – The head of the European Union Delegation to Iraq, Ambassador Ramon Blecua visiting Sinjar with the Danish and Swedish Ambassadors and the deputy minister

of Health and environment to check progress of demining program run by UNMAS. He was very impressed by the participation of young Yazidis in the mixed male/female teams. The visitors

concluded that there was an urgent need to support clearing of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in order to facilitate the return of internally displaced persons.



UK's Department for International Development continues to support explosive hazard management and risk education activities in Iraq



Baghdad, 9 June 2019 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq would like to highlight the role of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) as a key facilitator of stabilization and humanitarian efforts through the support of explosive hazard management and risk education activities in the retaken areas of Iraq.

More than two years after the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) retook areas previously under Da'esh control, the presence of explosive hazards continues to act as one of the primary inhibitors for the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) back to their homes. The scale, density, and complexity of explosive hazards is unprecedented, making Iraq one of the most contaminated countries in the world.

Support from the United Kingdom through DFID has a significant impact on clearance efforts in the country, al-

lowing for the continuation and expansion of UNMAS activities in the retaken areas of Iraq. In collaboration with its implementing partners and the Government of Iraq, UNMAS has coordinated a humanitarian response framework that tackles explosive hazard contamination through three different strategies: direct explosive hazard management through clearance measures, enhancement of government capacity through advanced trainings, and provision of risk education to vulnerable and displaced communities.

Risk education is a key activity supported by the United Kingdom since inception. Life-saving messages are delivered to affected communities via sessions mostly organized in IDP camps, schools and community centers. To extend the reach of risk education messages, creative tools such as the screening of TV clips, the printing of life-saving messages on taxis, date packages, water bottles and gloves as

well as the use of virtual reality goggles have also recently been developed and used. These initiatives are essential to avoid accidents caused by explosive hazards.

British Chargé d'Affaires in Baghdad John Tucknott said: "The UK is the largest contributor to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Mine Action in Iraq. UK aid supports UNMAS in clearing explosive hazards, educating vulnerable communities on how to stay safe and helping to train Iraq's National Demining Authority. It also supports search and clearance teams clearing important infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and roads, enabling Iraqis to safely return to their homes. We are particularly pleased that in Sinjar these teams are gender-balanced and include members belonging to different religions and ethnicities."

"Explosive hazards continue to have an adverse effect on afflicted communities in Iraq. Our primary mandate is to facilitate the safe and voluntary return of IDPs to their homes. We cannot do that when an estimated 70 per cent of explosive hazards still lie underneath the rubble," said Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager of UNMAS in Iraq. "Risk education and the clearance of explosive hazards always come together. To avoid accidents, it is crucial to teach affected communities which behaviours to adopt when encountering explosive hazards," added Pehr Lodhammar.

Support from the Government of Germany proves crucial in continuing UNMAS life-saving activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 11 June 2019 – With a total contribution of EUR 51.2 million (USD 58 million) to date, the Government of Germany is the largest contributor to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq and supports explosive hazard management and capacity enhancement initiatives to mitigate the threat posed by explosive hazards, thus enabling the provision and facilitation of humanitarian and stabilization activities.

"Removing explosive hazards is a key precondition for a safe return of IDPs and is therefore rightly at the heart of the stabilisation efforts in Iraq", said Dr. Cyrill Nunn, the German Ambassador in Iraq. "UNMAS and its implementing partners do crucial work in that regard, and we appreciate their close coordination with the Iraqi au-

thorities. Germany is proud to support these efforts."

"It's been more than a year since the Iraqi Security Forces retook all areas from Da'esh control, and yet their presence continues to linger through the many explosive hazards that continue to permeate Iraq today. They are both unconventional and unexpected, evoking fear of return within IDPs," said Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager of UNMAS in Iraq. "It is crucial to note that prior to any rehabilitation or reconstruction tasks can take place, survey and clearance is the essential 'first step.' The continuous support we receive from Germany will go a long way in facilitating explosive hazard management, capacity enhancement, and risk education activities in Iraq, thereby enabling the safe and

dignified return of IDPs to their homes," added Pehr Lodhammar.

Approximately 1.7 million people are still estimated to be internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Iraq, equating to 18 per cent of the Iraqis who live in conflict-affected areas, and more than five percent of the overall population. According to an assessment carried out in early 2019, on average and across affected areas, 37% of IDP households who reported having concerns about safety in their area of origin cited the fear of explosive hazard contamination. This makes explosive hazard contamination a key inhibitor of the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of IDPs in Iraq. (National Intention Survey lead by the CCCM Cluster and facilitated by REACH, February 2019).

Since the beginning of the year, UN-

Support from the Government of Germany proves crucial in continuing UNMAS life-saving activities in Iraq *(continued)*



MAS, operating through its implementing partners and through coordination with local and federal government authorities, has surveyed approximately 12,000,000 m² of high-priority areas, cleared about 600,000 m², and removed more than 300 explosive hazards in

Iraq. UNMAS has also delivered approximately 8,500 risk education sessions to more than 158,000 beneficiaries in key areas in the country.

In addition to explosive hazard management activities, UNMAS in Iraq, with support from the Government of

Germany and the European Union is also providing Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) training courses to the Iraqi Police. The trainings are administered to cross-unit police officers representing the Anbar, Kirkuk, and Ninewa Governorates. Amongst the participants, 16 police officers recently graduated. It is crucial to train police officers from the most affected and contaminated areas post-Da'esh, and allow them to correctly identify and undertake proper procedures when in contact with explosive hazards. A new medical element with simple yet life-saving measures was added to the last training, as this is an important skill to have especially when police officers are at the front lines of contact with civilians.

The Government of Canada supports institutional capacity enhancement and gender mainstreaming activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 25 June 2019 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) welcomes a new contribution of CAD 5 million (approximately USD 3.75 million) from the Government of Canada to facilitate and enhance gender mainstreaming initiatives in the mine action sector, while simultaneously developing institutional capacity enhancement in the country.

The presence of explosive hazards, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in areas retaken from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), continues to endanger the lives of women, men, boys, and girls and hinder the return of displaced communities.

This contribution from Canada will strongly support the promotion of safe, orderly, voluntary, and sustainable return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) back to their homes. Gender mainstreaming initiatives will ensure that the needs of women, men, boys

and girls are taken into primary consideration in the Government of Iraq, mine action implementing partners and UNMAS activities in pursuit of this effort. Specifically, through workshops, training and dedicated support to Government stakeholders, this project will raise awareness and strengthen processes, knowledge and skills to mainstream gender in explosive hazard management operations. The development of action plans will work to ensure gender is integrated into coordination, planning and prioritization of explosive hazard response, as well as in relevant standard operating procedures.

In addition, through institutional capacity enhancement, government entities will receive comprehensive training and up-to-date tools that are internationally recognized and abide by global standards. This paves the way for future self-reliance and equips Iraqis

with a well-established system to mitigate the threat posed by explosive hazards.

This new contribution was announced at a “Safe Home” photo exhibition in Baghdad sponsored by the Government of Canada, highlighting the behind-the-scenes personnel, specifically the women who continue to impact their surrounding communities with clearance, risk education, and capacity enhancement efforts.

Mr. Paul Gibbard, Ambassador of Canada to Iraq, said: “Canada recognizes that mitigating explosive hazards risks in Iraq is vital for the country’s long-term development. For the past several years, Canada has been proud to support efforts to remove explosive hazards in affected areas, as well as programs to aid their victims. This work with UNMAS will complement those efforts by developing the capacity of Iraqi institutions to manage these challenges and address this key priority in a way that meets the needs of all affected women, men, girls and boys.”

“Canada is an essential contributor to the UNMAS programme in Iraq, and is especially supportive of our efforts to mainstream gender across all of our activities. Whether through direct human resource matters or indirect policies for our field operations, ensuring that we have a diverse and more inclusive team is one of our top priorities, and we are happy to have the support of Canada in this process,” said Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Senior Programme Manager in Iraq.



UNMAS Iraq Safe Home Exhibit showcased in Geneva



Geneva, Switzerland, 28 June 2019

- UNMAS Iraq held its Safe Home exhibit in Geneva during the 2019 UN Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC) Humanitarian Affairs Segment to highlight clearance activities as a critical enabler of humanitarian and development efforts.

- From 1 January to 30 April 2019, about 510 surveys of explosive hazards were conducted in Al-Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din and Ninewa Governorates in support of high priority stabilization and humanitarian interven-

tions.

- Removed approximately 240 explosive remnants of war (ERW) and 70 improvised explosive devices (IED), 50 IED main charges and 20 suicide belts in retaken areas.
- Conducted 40 clearance tasks enabling UNDP and the Government of Iraq to move forward with the rehabilitation of critical infrastructures such as hospitals, schools, bridges etc. and humanitarian actors to move forward with urgent life-saving interventions.

- Coordinated and completed 3 joint assessment missions enabling the UN and humanitarian partners to deliver humanitarian aid as soon as retaken areas became accessible.
- 160 police officers, including 10 females trained in First Response to identify, mark and report explosive hazards, 140 UN security staff, including 40 females trained in Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments (SSAFE) and 580 students including 170 females trained in IED awareness.
- 3,750 UNDP cash-for-work employees, 430 Governmental staff and 130 NGO staff trained to recognize and behave safely in the presence of explosive hazards while working in high-risk environments such as Mosul.
- 198,500 people received risk education and risk awareness training in schools, internally displaced person (IDP) camps, and other high priority areas.
- *Please note that all figures are rounded.

Mixed Yazidi teams in Sinjar - bringing women and men at the frontlines of clearance efforts in Iraq

Baghdad, 30 June 2019 - The sound of gunfire could be heard at a distance, growing louder with every minute. Explosions run in parallel, like a well-rehearsed symphony. Close to the village, signs of havoc appear. There is little time to escape from the impending chaos, and 17-year-old Naeemeh and her family barely manage to pack their belongings and drive to the distant mountains.

3 August 2014 was a different kind of Sunday. For the quiet village of Kojo, a

small town in the Sinjar district in Northern Iraq, the sound of war rarely eclipsed the tentative peace, not since the withdrawal of American troops in 2011. Yet, on that particular Sunday, the sound of live ammunition was startling. Rumors of an unknown militant group taking over Mosul had begun to spread. For the residents of Sinjar, the news of Peshmerga being overrun by the invaders was especially alarming, and only those who managed to outpace time were able to escape.

That day marked a turning point in Iraq's political trajectory. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), or Da'esh, prompted a mass exodus and a political crisis unprecedented in recent history. For minorities, and Yazidi residents of Sinjar in particular, the aftermath of the Sinjar invasion preceded a humanitarian crisis. The United Nations reported that approximately 5,000 Yazidi civilians, mostly men, were killed in the August offensive. However, this was only the beginning for Da'esh. Yazidi women suffered sexual violence, were enslaved or shot, marking the start of a genocidal campaign of the ethno-religious minority.

Now, years after the defeat of Da'esh by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), their legacy continues to live on – in mass graves around the city, on school walls filled with photos of missing family members and in the remnants of houses once standing.

Among the problems afflicting the Yazidi community post-liberation, nothing is more dangerous than the enduring presence of explosive hazards. Improved explosive devices (IEDs) and explosive remnants of war (ERWs) are



Mixed Yazidi teams in Sinjar - bringing women and men at the frontlines of clearance efforts in Iraq *(continued)*

everywhere; their presence continues to threaten the lives of Yazidis, and impedes the safe return of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

In November 2018, approximately 200,000 Yazidis were estimated to remain displaced throughout refugee camps in Northern Iraq, with about 6,000 families having returned home. The majority of those who have decided to return live in dire conditions: in ghost towns with minimal reconstruction efforts and lack of fundamental services such as water and electricity. Faced with military operations to reclaim the Sinjar territory in 2014, Da'esh members deliberately booby-trapped Yazidi residences, ensuring IEDs continue to haunt the city long after they had left.

These remnants of war are a significant obstacle to all rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. No humanitarian projects can begin if critical infrastructure such as hospitals, power plants, schools, bridges, and roads are littered with IEDs - often barely visible to the untrained eye. There is an urgent need for explosive hazard management (EHM) activities throughout all retaken areas of Iraq, especially in the Anbar and Ninewa governorates, where Sinjar is located.

To lead, coordinate, and facilitate EHM, risk education and capacity enhancement activities in formerly Da'esh-controlled areas, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) was established in Iraq in 2015 upon the request of the UN and the Iraqi government. Since then, UNMAS Iraq has been at the front lines of the conflict, entering liberated territories to coordinate an EHM response.

An assessment conducted in July 2018 in Sinjar underlined the heavy presence of IEDs in residential areas and along roads and grazing land. The Mayor's office and other stakeholders advised that approximately 4,000 homes in the area, in addition to public infrastructure such as hospitals, cemeteries, and schools, need survey - to assess contamination, and clearance - to remove threats, before returns are possible. This will require a significant number of operators and mechanical assets, and will be an incredibly lengthy process.

UNMAS Iraq coordinated a gender-responsive approach that safeguards and integrates the needs of women, men, boys and girls into EHM, by forming its very first mixed team of search-

ers in Iraq and ensuring partners are trained and responsive to particular gender considerations in EHM, such as safety equipment designed for women. The teams comprise both Yazidi and Muslim women and men from Sinjar itself, highlighting the personal and emotional connection of the work to many of the team members.

UNMAS first trained clearance teams in Bartella, a few hours west of Sinjar, prior to the start of operations in April. The course ran for two months, and was delivered by highly-skilled instructors working for one of UNMAS implementing partners. The training incorporated advanced skillsets and technologies that respond to international humanitarian mine action standards.

While the facts on the ground are indeed telling, nothing is as inspiring as the personal stories shared by the mixed team of searchers, members of the Sinjar community. For UNMAS Iraq, these provide a human connection to the work conducted in the field. Here are some of the stories that have moved us and motivate our work.



Naeemeh

Four years after the brutal Da'esh attacks on Sinjar, UNMAS implementing partners trained certain members of the community as searchers and IED Disposal (IEDD) operators.

Some of the team members involved in the project are among the thousands still living in IDP camps and are eager for their families, friends and communities to return home, so they can rebuild their lives and live in a safe, explosive hazard-free environment. The searchers and IEDD operators are trained to locate and dispose of explosive items in a systematic way, aided by the use of specialist equipment, and under the supervision of international mentors.

Naeemeh, a 22-year-old survivor from Kojo, is one of more than 20 women pursuing this unique endeavor. She remembers well the attack of 3 August 2014.

"We were told the Peshmerga were

being overrun by invaders, we jumped in cars and left. There was much gunfire and explosions, it was very frightening. Many of my friends and family didn't manage to escape to the mountains with us; we still don't know what happened to some."

The arduous training in which Naeemeh enrolled in involved long days, with each building or piece of ground posing different risks and problems. Maintaining focus and awareness of the ever-changing surroundings at all times is key, while the use of specialist search equipment such as metal detectors and locators is well practiced. Confidence in their ability is required, but over-confidence could be a matter of life and death.

Now employed in the area where she grew up, Naeemeh is enjoying being fundamentally involved in her community's future.

"As well as being able to financially support my family, the skills I have learnt will help me, and looking forward, my children will have a much brighter future in this area. This is something a few months ago I never imagined possible. The Mayor of Sinjar visited us and told us we are all the future of Sinjar. I realized then, more than ever, how important the job we are trained to do really is."



Noura

Noura is one of 21 women out of the 38 staff involved in the clearance project and is immensely proud to be part of the group. She is extremely pleased her village is one of the first to be chosen for clearance.

"When I was told we would be returning to Hatimiye, I was so excited. I have many good memories of growing up there, and also sad ones about what happened. Myself and the rest of the team, some also from here, want to show that this has made us stronger, with an opportunity to make new memories for us and our families."

The demanding course involved vast

Mixed Yazidi teams in Sinjar - bringing women and men at the frontlines of clearance efforts in Iraq *(continued)*

amounts of new information including IED make-up, where and how IEDs are placed, recognition of explosive hazards/ERWs, and the use of specialist search equipment. The hard work has paid off, Noura says.

“There was a lot of information; the most important to remember was to know that our eyes and brain are the most vital piece of search equipment. I am so pleased to now be using the training to clear my village of Hatimiye of explosive hazards.”

“Clearing my old school made me very proud; to know that perhaps my children could be educated there is very rewarding...People are now willing to return knowing that we are removing hazards within the village.” Noura is keen to be a facilitator of the rebuilding process that will take place once clearance is complete.



Nathem

As the only surviving member of a family of eight, Nathem has moved to Zakho in the Dohuk Governorate in Iraqi Kurdistan, living with his friends in a rented apartment. Some of his immediate family members have been found buried in mass graves, with the remaining others still missing and whereabouts unknown. His extended relatives are dispersed in different locations – some in villages north of the Sinjar mountain, with others having fled the country all together. While Nathem still maintains contact with them, he cannot fathom himself leaving Sinjar.

“Sinjar is where I was born and where I belong. I cannot see myself living anywhere else, and I look forward to moving back home in the near future.”

Nathem understands that currently, the majority of Sinjar remains uninhabitable. Explosive hazards are scattered everywhere, and until cleared, continue to hinder the safe return of his community.

With this as his primary motivator, he joined the mixed team of Yazidi search-

ers, working with UNMAS implementing partner to clear his district of explosive hazards.

So far, it has been a great experience for him: “Working with my female and male colleagues every day, especially with our shared experiences, to clear our own homes, schools, and communal facilities makes the danger in my job worth it. It gives purpose to what I’m doing.”

“It is also very rewarding to work alongside my female colleagues – as equals. This allows us to exchange our knowledge and capabilities, and learn from one another. In our individual and collective capacities at work, as men and women, we complete each other.”

In its drive to contribute in changing gender norms in Iraq while opening up equal opportunities to employment, UNMAS Iraq is especially proud of the men and women of the Sinjar team. Employment in mine action has enabled them to improve their families’ livelihood and become important actors in rebuilding their communities, thus transforming the narrative of Yazidis from victims to role models.

Many challenges still remain for the team and their communities. As Sinjar operations are remote and hard to reach, there are significant implications for logistics, such as access to locations and driving time, as well as staff welfare. The security dynamics are complex, with local security forces sometimes denying access to sites despite official permissions to work. In addition, IDPs wish to return only once services such as electricity and water are restored; those who have returned add a layer of increased risk, as clearance of their areas of living is still often

needed. To mitigate the threats to returnees, UNMAS is continuing its push for authorization for operations in private dwellings, to conduct safe residential clearance.

In addition, understanding that the majority of the searchers have experienced the conflict with Da’esh and grave repercussions on their family, friends, and communities, UNMAS is working within the existing regional health care network to provide psychosocial support to all search and clearance personnel. With the full acceptance that the same experiences that motivate the team to produce their best work can sometimes trigger memories of previous or ongoing events, UNMAS is keen to ensure that both the physical and mental health of all its teams are in good standing.

The work conducted by UNMAS mixed teams in Sinjar provide a blueprint for future mine action operations in Iraq. UNMAS is committed to mainstream gender across all its activities in country. Accounting for the needs of women, men, boys and girls into EHM response is pivotal in ensuring the equality and dignity of vulnerable communities, and enabling the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of IDPs back to their areas of origin.

UNMAS in Iraq would like to thank the Governments of Australia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Sweden and the United Kingdom for offering equal opportunities to women and men as well as supporting gender mainstreaming initiatives in mine action.



More health care delivered to people in return areas of Ninewa



Baghdad, 10 May 2019 – As WHO strives to support the government of Iraq to increase access to health care for thousands of people who have returned to Ninewa, the agency has established a third primary health care facility in Ninawa governorate to meet the life-saving health needs in Telefar district serving both Zummar and Rabeea sub-districts.

Positioned in the one of the most re-

mote area of Tal Marak Center, located 60 km to the west of Mosul city, this health facility will serve a catchment population of over 150,000 people. It is offering Emergency and Maternity health services. Other services offered include, laboratory, pharmacy, referral services, and health promotion activities. The Early Warning Alert and Response Network covers this catchment area.

The health facility has been staffed and equipped by WHO and targets to serve the most urgent and critical health needs of returnees in the area of Talafar. In addition to operational support that will be provided to the health facilities, WHO is committed to providing the needed essential medicines, support supervision and disease surveillance and reporting. More than 1481 people have benefited from this health facility since it commenced operations in April 2019.

The health facility is being run by WHO's implementing partner DARY and funded by a generous contribution

from the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance. Currently, WHO remains the major agency supporting health services in areas of return; including Sinoni, Ba'aj town, Shandokha village near Al Kasak junction and Al Wahda sector inside Talafar City after all, the primary health care centers were destroyed during the crisis that ended more than 1 year ago.

Telefar district has one general hospital with limited capacity and accessibility for all people in the district. WHO's intervention aims to support far reaching villages of returnees in Zummar and Rabeea sub-districts with services other than the Primary Health Care, that is the emergency and maternity.

WHO will continue to support the Ministry of Health and directorates of health to cover critical gaps in service delivery, however, given the rapid pace of resettlement, the needs are enormous. This range from ensuring that primary health care coverage to all areas with damaged health centers and hospitals in Ninewa is available.

Taking necessary measures to save new-borns

Baghdad, 12 May 2019 - Nermin was only 21 years old when she was uprooted from her Syrian hometown of Qamishli in 2012. With her parents and siblings, she walked away from the life she had made for herself, running from a devastating war that engulfed the country, and travelled for hundreds of kilometres looking for refuge in Duhok, a city within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

"I never thought I would have to start over. I was studying Arabic literature at university and was planning to become a teacher. I had it all figured out, except that God had different plans for me," she said. "The war forced me to choose between my dream and my life. Even if it meant spending my uncertain

future in a tent, the choice was evident and heart-breaking."

"I had a difficult time adjusting to my new life. I would barely sleep during the night, and I would force myself to stay awake because the moment I close my eyes, I would see the faces of all those who were killed in front of me. It was haunting. I felt it was the end of the world for me and that I was never going to have a normal life again," she explained.

Nermin lived with her family for one year before her fate changed: "I was sad for a long time. I couldn't comprehend that I was never going to see my friends, colleagues and loved ones. Against all the odds, one day, as I was reading a book outside our tent, I met a man, and I fell in love that same moment," she explained.

"A few months later we got married and settled in Domiz 2 Camp in Duhok. We now have two beautiful children: Salim, who is three years and a half, and Samer, almost two years," she added. "I am also currently pregnant," she continued, cradling her belly with affection. The soon-to-be mother of three lives in a tent in Domiz 2 camp, home to close to 8,700 Syrian refugees. In the camp, UNFPA operates one maternity unit, a reproductive health clinic, a youth centre and a women's social centre. She gave birth to her second child, Samer, at the UNFPA-supported ma-

ternity ward, one of the eight health facilities funded by Norway.

"I get very emotional recalling that day," explains Nermin. "The medical team at the hospital saved my child. Samer's umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck. The doctor kept reassuring me that it wasn't serious, but all I could think of was that I was losing my child. At that moment, I felt the world just stopped and the few minutes that passed felt like an eternity. I couldn't feel my heart beating anymore and broke into heaving sobs while the medical team was asking me to breathe. I only felt alive again when I held Samer in my arms. He was so small and beautiful."

"After my delivery, I sat with the gynaecologist who explained to me the importance of regular visits to the health clinic during pregnancy. Now that I am pregnant with my third child, who I hope is a girl, I conduct regular visits to the reproductive health clinic to anticipate any possible problems to improve the chances of having a healthy baby and safe delivery."

"This, however, will be my last child, for now," she added. "After I give birth, my husband and I agreed to visit the clinic and receive family planning sessions. Life is complicated in the camp, in the tent, and this is not the environment where I wish to raise my children."



WHO mobile medical clinics reach displaced persons in Kalar district, Sulaymaniyah Governorate, Iraq

Baghdad, 16 May 2019 – More than 8000 internally displaced Iraqis living in camps and villages in Kalar and Kifri districts in Garmian, south east of Sulaymaniyah Governorate now have access to basic primary health services provided by WHO-supported mobile medical teams.

Following the closure of a primary health care in Tazade and Qoratu, internally displaced persons (IDP) camps earlier this year, thousands of men, women and children were left without access to medical care. Together with the Directorate of Health (DOH) and Civil Development Organization (CDO) a local Non-Government Organization, WHO established two mobile medical teams, each consisting of a medical doctor, a nurse and a pharmacy assistant. WHO also provided three ambulances to facilitate referrals of emergency patients.

The mobile clinics serve IDPs in camps in Tazade and Qoratu, as well as IDPs and host communities throughout Kalar and Kifri districts. Many of these areas are located more than an hour away from Kalar hospital, the closest available secondary health facility.

Services offered in the clinics include consultations, medicines, and referrals of emergency cases. The most common ailments treated include upper respiratory tract infections, diarrhea, and chronic diseases, including hypertension and diabetes. The medical teams also provide awareness raising sessions



on prevention of communicable diseases and good health practices.

“The mobile clinics are important because they also provide services such as nursing care and consultations which our community workers cannot provide,” said Dr Sirwan M Jamal, Health Director, Garmian Director of Health. “Without this support from WHO, we would not have been able to reach these locations, conduct 24/7 referrals as well as pay the incentives for the drivers and nurses working in the ambulances due to limited resources at our disposal,” Dr Sirwan added.

Seven-month pregnant Bashtapa Mohammed and a mother of three children has lived in Qoratu camp for 5 years after being displaced from Diyala following an armed conflict. “There was a

primary health care center here but it closed 2 months ago. I am happy that health care is one of the services that we continue to receive in this camp, because health is important,” she said. Those displaced are mainly from Anbar, Diyala and Salahadin and its unknown when they will return. Both Kalar & Kifri districts share territories with Dyala and Salahaddin governorates.

WHO thanks its partners and donors, the Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) and European Union Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) for their continued cooperation and support to displaced men, women and children and those returning to locations from which they have previously been displaced.

World Health Organization in Iraq responds to allegations reported by local media

Baghdad, 10 June 2019 – Opposite to what was reported by local media, the World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq confirms that the Health Ministry’s plans, programmes, and policies have actually increased immunization coverage in Iraq. The organization also notes that last year the Ministry embarked on a plan to provide hospitals with essential medicines.

WHO Country Representative in Iraq, Dr Adham Rashad Ismail, says that immunization levels in Iraq are increasing, with citizens responding to immunization campaigns that are launched every year based on the Ministry’s National Immunization Programme. He notes that the success rates of regular immunization campaigns against measles and polio are higher than average as Iraq moves to-

wards a country free from communicable diseases. Dr Ismail further notes that WHO is a key partner of the Ministry of Health in the effort to provide health services, improve the health situation in Iraq and overcome the obstacles of the past.

Dr Ismail stresses that the Ministry of Health is currently implementing a plan to fully provide hospitals with essential medicines. He disputes reports that the Ministry is able to provide only 50 percent of these essential medicines as claimed by the media. “These media reports are simply targeting the country’s health system without fact,” says Dr Ismail. “His Excellency the Minister of Health has made exceptional efforts to secure extraordinary decisions to ensure adequate drug provision. WHO expects remarkable pro-



gress in this regard in the near future as the Ministry works with its key partners,” concludes Dr Ismail.

WHO delivers ten ambulances to support medical services in hard to reach areas

Baghdad, 12 June 2019 – The World Health Organization has delivered 10 fully equipped ambulances to Iraq in order to provide uninterrupted referral services in four governorates of Salahadeen, Dahok, Erbil and Ninewa.

“Referral services in camps and areas of return have been compromised due to the shortage of ambulances, exacerbated by the increasing number of returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in need of emergency referral services,” said Dr Adham Ismail, WHO Representative for Iraq.

“WHO’s priority is to prevent avoidable loss of life and further medical complications by ensuring timely referral of women, men and children in need of urgent emergency medical care, especially those in remote areas,” added Dr Ismail.

Conflict in Iraq resulted in the destruction and damage of hundreds of ambulances. People resettling back face difficulties in accessing referral services including using private rented vehicles without any medical assistance, with



long delays at the security checkpoints and using out-of-pocket expenses.

To date, WHO has donated 151 ambulances to the Directorate of Health in Ninewa, Dahuk, Kirkuk, Salahadeen, Anbar, Erbil, Baghdad and Sulymania to transport both emergency medical and trauma patients to health facilities.

An additional 20 ambulances are expected to arrive in the country over the coming months.

The procurement of the latest shipment of ambulances was made possible with the generous funding from USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster (OFDA).

IOM’s focus is on support and strengthening the role of the Iraqi NTP to fight TB and reduce the burden of TB on the health system

Baghdad, 12 June 2019 - “In March 2017 there were very bad health changes for me. I had a lot of coughs and fever, especially at night. I went to the medical clinic to do checkup, but my clinical diagnosis was not clear. At first all the X-ray investigation did not show anything suspicious. After several lab tests, x-ray and visits to doctors I found out that I had tuberculosis, I lost one school year because of this disease. Thankfully I have been able to return to school, but more determined than before to complete my studies. I feel there is hope.”

IOM supported me with food packages and transportation from my home to the TB center and back to check my status by the doctors in the center and

to do the necessary test and receive medicines to complete the treatment,” said Rahma, 14, a school girl in Baghdad

“After few months, I noticed there a significant positive change in my health thanks to the IOM staff, for food package, transportation and support in follow up and treatment for the TB cases,” add Rahma.

Iraq’s Ministry of Health has 19 NTP centers across the country. IOM’s focus is on support and strengthening the role of the Iraqi NTP to fight TB and reduce the burden of TB on the health system. IOM supports the procurement of TB medications, laboratory supplies, training for NTP staff, Food package, DOTs and medical equipment. IOM’s

14 mobile medical teams (MMT), which supported the anti TB activities, operated -in 2018- in 13 governorates that have been affected by conflict and displacement.



UNFPA works with the Iraqi Ministry of Health on the development of the National Family Planning Strategy

Baghdad, 12 June 2019 - In 1994, Iraq adopted the actions plans of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) which called for all people to have access to comprehensive reproductive health care, in-

cluding voluntary family planning, safe pregnancy and childbirth services.

UNFPA works with the Iraqi Ministry of Health on the development of the National Family Planning Strategy, with the support of Embassy of Canada

in Iraq.

Today, was the second day of the review workshop of this strategy to enable families across Iraq to make informed decisions on when to have children and the spacing between them.

EU commits €2.5 million to emergency reproductive health services in Iraq



Baghdad, 17 June 2019 – While close to 4 million people have returned to their homes, more than 1.5 million individuals in Iraq remain in dire need of humanitarian assistance, including protection and reproductive health. The European Commission has announced a contribution of EUR 2.5 million in humanitarian aid for UNFPA. With the new EU funding, UNFPA will be able to reach over 100,000 women and girls with life-saving emergency

obstetric care and emergency supplies, including support to 23 health facilities in the central and western part of Iraq. The funding will also ensure specialised services to gender-based violence survivors, namely the clinical management of rape, case management and psychosocial support, with the integration of these services within the health facilities for ease of access and timely referral.

“Ensuring that those displaced by

fighting have access to medical humanitarian assistance, such as reproductive health services and assistance to victims of gender-based violence, remains a priority for the EU in Iraq,” said Christos Stylianides, the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. “In 2019, we look forward to continuing to address these pressing needs in partnership with UNFPA.”

Dr Oluremi Sogunro, UNFPA Representative to Iraq said: “The impact of the war in Iraq continues to take a devastating toll on the population, especially women and girls in hard-to-reach areas and camps for the internally displaced. We thank the European Union for this contribution, which will allow us to help hundreds of thousands of women and girls in need of these life-saving interventions across the country.”

The EU has been a strategic partner to UNFPA in Iraq since 2015 with a total contribution of EUR 23.5 million to the Fund's reproductive health and gender-based violence interventions.

Vaccines are safe, effective, and save lives -It is the only way to keep children free from vaccine-preventable diseases

Baghdad, 20 June 2019 - The World Health Organization (WHO) reaffirm its commitment to continue working with and supporting the Ministry of Health to ensure that the children in Iraq continue to receive all the required vaccines that are safe and needed to promote healthy lives in earlier years of age.

Over several decades, WHO has supported the Government of Iraq along with other areas of health, immunization of children through routine vaccinations and supplementary immunization days targeting vaccine-preventable diseases like polio, measles, and others. This support saw Iraq being declared a polio-free country in 2015. This gain should be maintained, and the WHO is committed to ensuring that this status stay as is.

“Children’s health is a top priority for WHO and its partners. In January 2016, the Ministry of Health, Iraq switched from the use of pentavalent to the use of hexavalent vaccines, a move that was the sole decision of the Ministry of Health. However, the Ministry has decided to switch back to pentavalent based on internal reviews, technical analysis, efficacy and cost-effectiveness, a decision which WHO

welcome,” said Dr Adham Ismail, WHO Country Representative for Iraq. Both pentavalent and Hexavalent vaccines protect children against five diseases, including tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough, hepatitis B, and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib). However, Hexavalent protects against a sixth disease, polio. One noted difference between pentavalent and hexavalent vaccines is that hexavalent contains a type of pertussis vaccine that is less immunogenic compared to the type of Pertussis vaccine in other non-inactivated polio vaccines (IPV) containing combinations such as Penta or DPT. Immunogenic refers to substances are that can produce an immune response. Based on these facts, WHO supports the government of Iraq in the choice of vaccines that they intend to use.

For over 30 years, WHO has supported the Ministry of Health in Iraq to ensure children under 5 years receive all doses of vaccines, are fully immunized and protected from vaccine-preventable diseases by providing technical support, developing guidelines and technical materials, training managers and vaccinators in delivering immunization services, monitoring and reporting the

vaccination coverage. The overarching aim is to ensure that children are reached even in hard to reach the areas of this country.

In the last vaccination campaign held in April, WHO supported health authorities in reaching out and vaccinating more than 5.5 million children with Oral Polio Vaccine throughout Iraq and work continues to ensure the country remains polio-free.

WHO wants to reiterate that vaccines are safe, and the best and only way to keep our children safe to protect them against vaccine-preventable diseases, which are killing, crippling and causing sufferings of children.



FAO and WHO mark the second World Food Safety Day in Iraq under the theme "Food Safety, everyone's business."

Baghdad, 22 June 2019 - As the world commemorated its first World Food Safety Day under the theme of "Food Safety, Everyone's Business", the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) renewed their commitment to support the Government of Iraq in ensuring all Iraqis have access to safe, nutritious food security by 2030.

The United Nations General Assembly on 20 December 2018 announced 7 June of every year as the World Food Safety Day in order to reduce the problems posed by food safety issues and to ensure that this goes hand-in-hand with all the UN development goals.

In Iraq, FAO and WHO are working alongside the government to assess functional gaps, and needs for food quality control improvements in the country. In particular, FAO is supporting the government of Iraq to promote its food safety emergency preparedness through the FAO Emergency Prevention System for Food Safety (EMPRES Food Safety) that rapidly shares information during food safety emergencies

through the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN).

WHO on the other hand has supported the Ministry of Health and Environment to assess the Food safety system in Iraq and provided concrete recommendations to strengthen the sector. As a follow up of the assessment, meetings and a joint workshop on Food Safety and Quality Assurance was conducted to disseminate findings aimed at mitigating the risk of food-borne illness in the country. The agency has also continues to work with health authorities at the national and local levels to strengthen the basic foodborne disease surveillance.

Due to the newly acquired scientific knowledge, conflicts, technology and climate-related aspects, FAO and WHO are prioritizing their assistance towards building capacities of the national food regulatory control systems in Iraq.

Access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food is key to sustaining life and promoting good health for all to eliminate hunger and achieve food security by 2030. Unsafe food poses global

health threats, endangering everyone. Infants, young children, pregnant women, the elderly and those with an underlying illness are particularly vulnerable.

FAO and WHO commit to continue working with health authorities and partners in Iraq to ensure that all the people enjoy safe food at every stage of the food chain from production to harvest, processing, storage, distribution, all the way to preparation and consumption. In line with this the agencies plan to conduct capacity building workshop for all government entities, starting with the Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Environment, and Trade and conduct health education and awareness message for communities and all responsible officials on food safety.



Culture

President Salih received UNESCO Representative to Iraq

Baghdad, 9 May 2019 - UNESCO Representative to Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani, was received today by His Excellency President of the Republic, Mr. Barham Salih. They discussed cooperation in the area of culture. Cultural advisor to the President, Maysoon Al Damluji, also attended the meeting.



UNESCO Representative met with the Archbishop of Baghdad

Baghdad, 9 May 2019 - UNESCO Representative in Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani, met today with Mr. Jean Sleiman, Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Baghdad, to discuss cooperation in the rehabilitation of the Church of Our Lady of the Clock in Mosul with support from the United Arab Emirates.



Minister of Culture receives UNESCO Representative to Iraq

Baghdad, 19 May 2019 - The Iraqi Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities, Mr. Abdul-Amir Al-Hamdani, met today with UNESCO Representative in Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani, on the occasion of International Museum Day. This year's theme is "Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition". The meeting was held at the Iraqi National Museum, where Mr. Fontani discussed with Mr. Abdul-Amir UNESCO's ongoing projects in Iraq. Mr. Fontani also visited the photo exhibition and the exhibition of ancient coins in the Iraqi Museum, which represents the history of the country and the region from different eras.



UNESCO Representative visited Mosul University

Mosul, 21 May 2019 - The Director of UNESCO, Mr. Paolo Fontani, paid a visit to the University of Mosul where he met the President Dr. Qusai Al Ahmadi. They discussed means of cooperation and joint coordination between the University of Mosul and UNESCO. Mr. Fontani accompanied by the team in charge of the Mosul initiative #RevivetheSpiritofMosul, toured the facilities of the university that were damaged as a result of conflict.



Restoration of Kirkuk Citadel symbolic for governorate's post-conflict recovery and prosperity

Kirkuk, 22 May 2019 - Today, a UNESCO delegation inspected the Citadel of Kirkuk and expressed readiness to support the Government of Iraq to restore the historical landmark as a symbol of recovery. The mission, facilitated by UNAMI Development Coordination Office (DCO), was headed by the representative of UNESCO in Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani, and included the architect responsible for the reconstruction of

cultural heritage sites in Mosul and representatives of UNAMI Kirkuk Regional Office.

The UNESCO delegation also met with the Acting Governor of Kirkuk, Mr. Rakan Saeed Al-Jubouri. The interlocutors stressed that a fully restored Citadel would be a portent symbol of recovery in Kirkuk, create job opportunities for artisans, craftsmen and construction workers, while boosting tourism and religious pilgrimages.

UNESCO expressed readiness to support the Government of Iraq to restore the Kirkuk Citadel to its former glory. The UNESCO delegation was briefed by the Directorate of Antiquities on the existing studies and masterplan for the Kirkuk Citadel restoration, conducted by the local government and UNESCO that built upon the previous assessments in 2010 and 2018.



UNESCO offers full support to the preservation of Erbil historical sites

Erbil, 23 May 2019 - The governor of Erbil, Mr. Nawzad Hadi, received the Director of UNESCO in Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani. They discussed progress in the rehabilitation of the Citadel of Erbil

which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Mr. Fontani offered his full support to the governor on preserving historical sites in the city. During the day, Mr. Fontani, visited

the historical citadel of Erbil with Dara Al Yaqubi, head of the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalization. The Erbil Citadel dates back thousands of years, to the first settlers of Erbil.



UNESCO Representative visited Sulaymaniyah

Sulaymaniyah, 23 May 2019 - Director of UNESCO Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani, met with the governor of Sulaymaniyah, Dr. Hafal Abu Bakr, representatives from the University of Sulaimaniya and Department of Antiquities to discuss UNESCO's possible involvement in the safeguarding of historical buildings in the old city of Sulaymaniyah.



UNESCO representative discussed the current status of the historical site in Babyl with the community leaders and experts

Babyl, 20 June 2019 - Head of UNESCO Iraq office, Mr. Paolo Fontani, visited the archaeological sites in the city of Babyl and discussed the current status of the historical site with the community leaders and experts.



Training of Trainers completed as part of the “Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education” in Mosul pilot project



Erbil, 5 May 2019 - The Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education (PVE-E) in Government Primary Schools in Mosul pilot project funded by the Government of the Netherlands and implemented by UNESCO in collaboration with ZOA and the Iraqi Institution for Development (IID), aims to build the capacity and pedagogies to build primary school learners' resilience to violent extremism ideologies and strengthen their commitments to non-violence and peace through appropriate educational strategies.

In recognition of the devastating impact of ISIL/Da'esh in terms of psychosocial impact on thousands of children and young people in Iraq, the Conference “Education after Da'esh” held in

Baghdad in March 2017 identified the importance of the role of education in preventing violent extremism and addressing radicalization of youth. It called upon support in developing educational capacity in Iraq to integrate PVE in school programmes and educational policies.

Teachers have an important role to play in the development of a generation that is now scarred by violence and loss; they contribute to shaping the future of Mosul's children. The Director General of Teacher Preparation, Training and Educational Development at the Ministry of Education in Baghdad, Dr. Saad Ibrahim Abdulrahim said 'It is now clear that it is of particular importance to give a role to schools and to

the teachers in confronting the phenomena of extremism and violence.'

Developing the more immediate capacity of primary school teachers is key to foster among learners a range of supporting cognitive socio-emotional and behavioural skills, concepts such as critical thinking, multi-perspectivity, respect for diversity, understandings of complexity and peaceful coexistence.

After a 2-week PVE-E Training of Trainer's Programme delivered by International Center for Prevention of Violent Extremism (ICPVE), a diverse group of 26 motivated and qualified participants including delegates from the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education in Nineveh and IID selected trainers from Mosul are equipped with the necessary skills to train primary school teachers in Mosul in the next project phase starting beginning of June 2019.

This 2-week training covered a wide range of concepts, approaches and tools to better understand the challenges and issues related to violent extremism in the context of Mosul. The participants discussed practical elements and approaches for trainers on how to develop teachers' ownership of the provided pedagogical tools aimed to strengthen resilience and critical thinking skills in pupils.

Britain's Lord Jack McConnell visits UNICEF-supported schools and projects for children impacted by armed conflict in Iraq

Baghdad / Erbil, 6 June 2019 – Lord Jack McConnell, a member of the British House of Lords and Vice President of UNICEF UK, has completed a 5-day visit to Iraq and met with children and

families who survived the brutal conflict that has left 1.6 million people—half of them children—displaced from their homes.

During his trip, Lord McConnell visited a UNICEF-supported school in west Mosul—one of the areas most affected by conflict and where children's needs remain immense. He also visited camps hosting Syrian refugees and displaced people from Sinjar and Mosul.

“For years, children in Mosul and areas that were under the so-called Islamic State control were deprived of their right to education. Now with the support of UNICEF, nearly 2000 schools have reopened and children have finally been able to resume their studies,” explained Lord McConnell.

“As Mosul is rebuilt, we need to help people rebuild their lives. Let's replace fear with hope and ensure that children in Iraq have a better future,” he added. Lord McConnell, who is also Chair of the McConnell International Founda-

tion met with UN agencies and NGO partners to ascertain the overall humanitarian needs in Iraq. He also met with UNICEF Representative to Iraq, Ms. Hamida Lasseko, to discuss the difficulties facing Iraqi children.

“Large-scale conflict may have ended, but the situation for children and young people in Iraq remains bleak and their future under threat. Approximately 2.6 million are either out of school or at risk of missing out on their education as result of poverty or displacement,” said Ms. Lasseko.

“We are grateful to Lord Jack McConnell for visiting Iraq and shining a light on the needs of children,” she also said.

UNICEF is supporting the Government of Iraq to provide basic services, including education, water and sanitation, health and nutrition and protection to vulnerable children and their families in camps as well as in areas affected by conflict.



Meeting some of Iraq's best and youngest on a football pitch in southern Iraq: A day with ThiQar's all-girls' football team



ThiQar, Iraq, 06 April 2019 - This used to be an abandoned, unpaved, run down space in ThiQar, one of Iraq's poorest governorates in the country's south.

Then UNICEF came in and installed lights, floors, air conditioning, and benches, and the space was transformed into Hussein Neighbourhood Hall, an action-filled sports arena.

The hall opened in November 2018 and it is and one of the only places for boys

and girls in ThiQar to do physical activity. It's open seven days a week, and on the day we visited, ThiQar's All-Girls' Football Team was getting ready for a game. The girls had been coming here to play for three years.

Fatma poses for a photo in the locker room.

"In the past we were forced to play on cement, I would injure myself whenever I would fall", explained 13-year old Fatma.

Fatma says after the renovations, she can play safely. She dreams of one day traveling and competing internationally.

Adia - also 13 - is as passionate about the Beautiful Game as Fatma is. And although the two girls are friends in real life, they play for rival teams on the pitch. Adia's team won the last match.

"I am happy and still celebrating," Adia told us, beaming with pride.

We asked the girls who their favourite international team was.

"Real Madrid, Madrid!" shouted some. "Barcelona!" responded others.

We decided to take a vote: we first asked the girls to raise their hands if they supported Real Madrid, then we asked those who support Barcelona to raise theirs.

Final Score:

Barcelona - 4

Real Madrid - 7

But they were all in agreement that support for Iraq's national team comes first.

By Zeina Awad, UNICEF Iraq

Youth and local communities at the heart of the rebuilding of Mosul

Baghdad, 2 May 2019 — The second Joint Steering Committee for the UNESCO project "Reviving the Spirit of Mosul by Rebuilding its Monumental Landmarks" was convened on Thursday 2 May 2019 in Baghdad at the Prime Minister's Guest House, chaired by H.E. Dr. Abdul Latif Al Heymem, President of the Sunni Religious Endowment of Iraq, in the presence of Ms. Salma Al Darmaki, representative of the Ministry of Culture of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The meeting discussed strategies to ensure consultation and engagement of the local community and youth in the reconstruction process and the return of internally displaced persons to Mosul. A work-plan was presented drawing up plans for the coming years of the project. The following four years will focus on the restoration and historically faithful reconstruction of the Leaning Minaret, the Al-Nouri Mosque and adjacent buildings, as well as the Al Saa and Al Tahira Churches.

In his opening address, H.E. Dr. Al Heymem reiterated his gratitude to the UAE for their financial support and to UNESCO for deploying the technical expertise on the ground in Mosul to begin work on the reconstruction of the

Al Nouri Mosque and Al Hadba Minaret, destroyed in 2017. "We are very pleased to see that work has begun to secure the monument, provide fencing, guards and establish offices on site for the reconstruction of the Mosque", said H.E. Dr. Al Heymem.

In her opening address, Ms. Salma Al Darmaki, Assistant Undersecretary for Knowledge and Cultural Policies and representative of the Ministry of Culture of the UAE, expressed her support for the ongoing activities and the methodology for reconstruction presented by UNESCO. Ms. Al Darmaki said that "The UAE is proud to support such an important initiative which involves not only the reconstruction of a globally significant historical monument and religious site, but includes training and promotion of livelihoods for Moslawi's who have endured much hardship during recent years".

The Representative of UNESCO in Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani, said that "There is much work to be done. We have only just begun to take the first visible steps after the tragic destruction, but we are confident that under the leadership of the Iraqi authorities and the support of the community and of our generous partners we will be able

to deliver on this great task".

The Joint Steering Committee of the UNESCO-led project for the reconstruction of the Al Nouri Mosque and Al Hadba Minaret includes representatives of the Iraqi Ministry of Culture, UNESCO, UAE, of the Iraqi Sunni and Christian Endowments, of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) Regional Office in Sharjah.

The second meeting of the Joint Technical Committee was organized in Erbil on April 30th last. The Technical Committee which is comprising of the concerned technical Iraqi institutions, UNESCO, ICCROM-ATHAR and two international experts is tasked to advise on the management and coordination of the project. The Committee also identifies any points requiring attention, and any deviations in implementing the project's work plan and proposes solutions.

A day prior the Technical Committee meeting, the international team also traveled to Mosul and visited project sites as well as other sites in the Old City of Mosul which are currently included in the restoration-rehabilitation

Youth and local communities at the heart of the rebuilding of Mosul *(continued)*



plan of the Mosul Initiative in the field of cultural heritage.

This project, signed in 2018 between UAE and UNESCO, aims at the restoration and reconstruction of the historic

landmarks of Mosul, notably the emblematic Al-Nouri Mosque, and its celebrated, leaning Al-Hadba Minaret, built more than 840 years ago. This project has been recently expanded to

include two churches in the Old City of Mosul. Through rebuilding and restoration of cultural heritage in the Old City of Mosul, the project will contribute to job creation, the return of displaced Mowslawis, skills development and important steps towards reconciliation. This iconic project is an important part of the UNESCO flagship initiative “Revive the Spirit of Mosul” which was announced by the Director-General of UNESCO at the International Conference on the Reconstruction of Iraq (Kuwait City) in February 2018. With the full support of the Government of Iraq and of the UN Secretary-General, UNESCO will coordinate international efforts in the restoration and rehabilitation of cultural heritage and the revival of cultural life and educational institutions.

Many peaces in Iraq: creating a foundation for conflict transformation through peace studies

Baghdad, 3 May 2019 - “We heard children singing ISIL songs, and saw them role play executions in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp playground. We were distributing humanitarian aid. It was then that I realized, if we don’t do anything about this ... a new, more extremist generation will be born,” Ziena, 27 years old.

Ziena graduated from one of six youth-training workshops hosted by UNDP Iraq partner, Iraqi Al-Amal Association, in 2018. Focused on preventing violent extremism (PVE) and conflict transformation, Ziena is one of 146 university students and youth activists who have been supported to carry out creative community-based activities in their universities and local communities.

Struck by her own experience in an IDP Camp, Ziena created a children’s song-

book; filled with words of peace and ideas that support a non-discriminative, gender equal, and non-violent future for Iraq. Each page of the book is decorated with the artwork of IDP children, which today, Ziena and her team of volunteers take to IDP camps to share. She hopes that music and song will guide these children toward a culture of peace and a future free from divisive ideologies.

But, whilst her story is heartwarming and her hands are those working to directly mend the hearts of conflict-affected communities, Ziena is addressing just one layer of conflict in Iraq’s peace-building process. She is instrumental in building a bridge between academic ideas and concepts required to frame a new culture of peace in Iraq, and the tangible actions made in her community, where she encounters survivors of conflict every day. Both aspects are necessary, and indeed complementary, but there is another layer which is critical to ensuring sustainability of peace in Iraq — the structures that enable peace. For this, the active engagement of the government is crucial.

Recognizing the complexity of this task, the UNDP-funded project, “Education for Peace in the Iraqi Higher Education System,” implemented by national NGO Iraqi Al-Amal Association and the UNESCO Chair for Peace Studies at the University of Innsbruck’s Unit for Peace and Conflict Studies, is designed

to address all three levels of conflict — grass-roots, middle and high-level — through a combination of community level programming, curriculum development with the Iraqi Universities Consortium for Peace Studies and government engagement through the Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research (MOHESR).

Between October 2018 and March 2019, this culminated in the development of the first national Diploma for Peace and Conflict Studies, which will be piloted at the University of Baghdad later this year. Such an endeavor required an in-depth reflection about the potential meanings of peace and the impact of different notions of peace in the Iraqi context.

Defining Peace

UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) calls for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development — providing justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. In the same vein, on the International Day of Peace 2018, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres stated, “There is more to achieving peace than laying down our weapons.”

Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.

So, what are the potential meanings of peace beyond the absence of war and direct violence? The preamble of the UNESCO constitution provides a helpful reference point: “Since wars begin in



Many peaces in Iraq: creating a foundation... *(continued)*

the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.” Such an understanding of peace opens up a possibility to think about the idea of peace beyond a single universal notion that could be applied in all places and all times, regardless of the respective socio-political and cultural circumstances.

Wolfgang Dietrich, UNESCO Chairholder for Peace Studies at the University of Innsbruck, proposed the idea of “many peaces;” a concept that suggests that there are as many interpretations of peace as there are human beings in the world. This perspective provides an alternative avenue to universalist notions of how peace ought to be. By contrast it introduces a human-centered approach that puts people and the diversity of their lived experiences at the center of conflict transformation work. In the Iraqi context, which has long experienced external interventions, this makes the radical shift of agency to Iraqi citizens, who are now considered the central agents for formulating their own understandings of peace.

A Catalyst for Change

The development of a national pilot curriculum for a “Diploma of Peace and Conflict Studies” is an intervention that has come after many years of armed conflict. At the beginning of this project, promoting peace education in the Iraqi higher education sector was the goal, but how can you continue academic life in a context marked by war, where lecture halls and libraries have been destroyed or burnt to the ground? And beyond material damage and destruction: How do you continue academic work and life in a meaningful way after experiencing the kind of atrocities that put all meaning of life into question?

Whilst the circumstances in post-ISIL Iraq are in many ways different from the political, cultural and social situation in Europe post-World War II, there are also certain parallels. Most strikingly we see a new-found momentum to establish a foundation of Peace and Conflict Studies as an academic discipline — and a recognition that the neighboring discipline of International Relations, founded after World War I, was largely unsuccessful in finding the answers to prevent genocide and the use of weapons of mass-destruction. This had a direct effect on the development of a broad range of applied conflict transformation methods, which have been of utmost use for transform-

ing conflicts in a non-violent manner, and which, with the right methodologies, may achieve positive results in Iraq too. This consideration was at the heart of the “Education for Peace in the Iraqi Higher Education System” project. But why academia? Because Iraqi academics have collectively demonstrated a desire to actively contribute to national reconciliation, with a strong will to work together to address the questions of peace and conflict transformation through establishing Peace and Conflict Studies as a new discipline in Iraq.

This culminated in the formation of The Iraqi Universities Consortium for Peace Studies, between 2016-2017, with support from Iraqi Al-Amal, UNDP Iraq and Eastern Mennonite University. The Consortium — comprised of academics from the Universities of Baghdad, Tikrit, Anbar, Basra, Karbala, Kufa and Mosul — became a vocal advocate for the development of Peace Studies in a post-conflict Iraq and actively participated in capacity building activities to train academics and in-turn contribute to the development of a context appropriate curriculum.

MOHESR recognised the need to institutionalize peace education, which was encouraging for the Consortium when taking the first steps to address gaps. In May 2018, the Government of Iraq endorsed the development of a Diploma in Peace and Conflict Studies, establishing new research centers and units in universities, as well as deciding to integrate peace education in university educational curricula. In 2019, they officially approved the establishment of the first Iraqi Higher Diploma for Peace and Conflict studies, based on the curriculum developed by Iraqi academics, in partnership with UNDP, Iraqi Al-Amal and the University of Innsbruck.

This is why UNDP Iraq, Iraqi Al-Amal and the University of Innsbruck consider it critical to continue building youth capacity and to give them space to take initiative and do community-based activities — both through continued youth-training and formal university education.

Iraqi Al-Amal have been implementing youth-training workshops with UNDP since 2016, focusing on PVE and Conflict Transformation. Participants are taught both the theoretical concepts and practical advocacy and conflict transformation skills, with selected youth also supported to develop and implement small innovative community

projects — bringing their ideas for social cohesion at the community level to life. The story of Ziena was just one example. In many communities, young people now lead regular sports, music and theatre groups or have created communal spaces for individuals to engage and exchange ideas — like community gardens or small libraries.

This approach to working across the three levels of conflict ensures that it is highly inclusive and promotes cultures of peace across all Iraqi communities, including multi-faith, multi-ethnic and multicultural — and for the benefit of both women and men. This sense of inclusion increases ownership, and makes people believe that they can build peace and that it’s a collective responsibility to do so.

Peace Education in 2019

UNDP’s Iraqi Crisis Response and Resilience Programme — under which, with the support of the Government of Japan, the Diploma for Peace and Conflict Studies was developed — rests on the idea of “build back better.” This approach uses the opportunity of restoration and recovery to shape a sustainable environment and equip communities to better manage future crises. It’s holistic, integrated and community driven, addressing the key areas of government coordination and crisis response, basic services, livelihood recovery and social cohesion.

As a key pillar of the peace building process, the Diploma for Peace and Conflict Studies is being launched at a critical juncture. As the rebuilding process continues — both physically and in the mind — Peace Education is enabling the collective ownership of yesterday, the collective effort of today, and the collective peaces of tomorrow.

In this phase of the project the focus will be on building the individual capacities of Iraqi teaching staff for the new Diploma, and institutional capacities on Arabic literature in this field; with the overarching goal of the project to ensure that sustainable cultures of peace can be established and that the path toward achieving SDG 16 can become a little shorter for this post-conflict nation.

Only through recognising and addressing the many experiences of individuals at all levels of society can a pluralistic culture of peace be established and sustainable economic and social development be achieved.

by co-authors Aala Ali, Adham Hamed and Muntather Hassan (Impakter)

The transformative power of youth in Iraq

Dohuk, 10 May 2019 - With the emergence of a more stable security picture in Iraq, many internally displaced people (IDPs) have had the confidence to return to their homelands and begin rebuilding their lives. Sadly, many IDPs return only to see their homes, businesses, workplaces and schools at best dilapidated and at worst in ruins. Consequently, the thrust of GOAL's work here concerns itself with stimulating economic and community activity at local level through our livelihood programming.

Based in Dohuk, the Kurdish region of Iraq forms the kernel of GOAL's operation in-country. Adjoined by the Syrian conflict, the region has undergone a number of acute shocks over the past number of years, including a decline in oil prices, an economic recession, and waves of displacement generated by conflict on both sides of the Iraqi-Syrian border.

In March this year, with the support of UNDP, GOAL concluded a project which provided IDPs, refugees and host communities in Misureek, Dohuk with a holistic range of activities to develop livelihood opportunities, encourage community development and improve social cohesion.

Consistent with our approach to programming generally, GOAL sought to engage and empower the community to drive the project forward. Two members of the host community in Misureek: Aveen Ibrahim Ismail and Hassan Yassin Hassan, were engaged

by GOAL as volunteers to support the project.

Commenting on the initiative, Aveen said "In each activity we tried to engage IDPs, refugees and host community members together. The most effective activity in my opinion was the showcasing of women's art, which allowed women to be involved in a big event for the first time, but was also a great opportunity for bringing people of different cultures within the community together to learn about each other's food, habits and culture. Thank you to GOAL for supporting us in organizing this".

Hassan said "For the first time in Misureek women were engaged in an activity of this kind (referring to the young women's volleyball match). It was definitely a great start for the people living in this community to appreciate and accept the role of women and that they are able to partake in such

activities. It was honestly surprising to learn that 105 young women were registering for this match, which showed us that they want change and that all they need is support".

When GOAL has worked in regions of prior conflict before, one of the most powerful mechanisms we have witnessed in the rebuilding of communities is the engagement of youth. Our experience is that youth tends to be less bound by the animosities of conflicts past, and more questioning of divergent cultural and social practices. GOAL is realising the potential of harnessing the hopeful power of youth as a vibrant conduit for the political, social and economic regeneration of a country. We hope to build on the relative progress of events such as the Misureek initiative, and post many more stories of how Iraqi youth is leading the way to a more peaceful, tolerant and prosperous nation.



10th meeting of the Steering Committee of the European Union Funded TVET reform project held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 23 May 2019 – The tenth meeting of the Steering Committee of the European Union Funded Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) reform project was held in Baghdad. At the meeting an important debate was held on the draft TVET law and its progression through Parliament. The meeting was attended by the representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Planning, senior representatives of the business community, European Union Delegation in Iraq and it was chaired by the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee.

The chairman of the steering committee Dr Hamid Ahmed thanked the EU, UNESCO and all participants for their hard work and continuing commitment.



DSRSG/HC/RC Ruedas: “Gender inequality in Iraq is increasing and there are direct effects of this on women’s education”

Palma de Mallorca, Spain, 28 May 2019 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas, made a presentation today at the Third International Conference on Safe Schools, hosted by the Government of Spain.

In her speech on a panel entitled Gender Perspective on Attacks to Education and the Use of Educational Infrastructure for Military Purposes, DSRSG Ruedas described how hundreds of schools in Iraq were damaged and destroyed by ISIS during the 2013-17 conflict. She also noted attacks on higher education facilities, students, and personnel. Ms. Ruedas observed that gender inequality in Iraq is increasing and there are direct effects of this on women’s education. She urged everyone at the conference to “to reaffirm our commitment to keeping these environments as safe spaces, where children can be children, and where their greatest worries should be their next exam.”

The conference was organized for states and other stakeholders to focus attention on the issues of attacks on, and

military use of, schools and universities, using the Safe Schools Declaration as a framework for the discussions. The Safe Schools Declaration is an inter-governmental political commitment to support the protection of students, teachers, and schools during times of armed conflict. In May 2017, United Nations Secretary-General, António

Guterres, urged all Member States to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration. As of May 2019, 89 countries have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, which remains open for additional countries to join.

Photo courtesy of UNICEF Spain and Entreculturas.



On the 30th anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, UNICEF launches an online petition asking decision-makers to invest more in Iraqi children

Baghdad / Erbil, 25 June 2019 - This week, UNICEF Iraq launched its #Pledge4Children petition to kick off its celebration of the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, or CRC.

The CRC is the most ratified human rights treaty in history and the most comprehensive set of rights for children. When world leaders came together, in a rare moment of international unity, to adopt the CRC, they committed themselves to fulfilling their obligations by ensuring that every child and adolescent is able to exercise his or her full rights.

The Government of Iraq signed up to the convention in June 1994.

“By ratifying the convention, Iraq committed itself to making sure every child is protected, educated, and able to lead a healthy and fulfilling life,” explained UNICEF Iraq Representative Hamida Lasseko.

Tremendous progress has been made since then, despite years of conflict and instability in the country. More, howev-

er, still needs to be done to ensure that children in Iraq are protected and have their full rights as enshrined in the CRC, including their right to education, play, freedom, and safety.

In order to do so, UNICEF Iraq is asking the Iraqi public to endorse its #Pledge4Children online asking decision-makers to reaffirm their commitment to children’s rights.

“We are calling on all of you to show your support for children and adolescents in Iraq. Every voice counts. We want you to add yours to our campaign by signing our petition and pledge for children today,” added Ms Lasseko.

The pledge calls for decision-makers to:

- Increase public investments in quality health care, quality education, and safe water, so that every child and adolescent has a fair chance to reach his or her full potential
- Listen to children and adolescents impacted by our policies and services and take their voices into consideration when formulating policies that impact their lives

• Ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence and abuse

#Pledge4Children is part of UNICEF’s year-long run of activities, workshops and partnerships to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the CRC and raise awareness about children’s rights in Iraq.



UNESCO supported hospitality sector training programme ended in Erbil

Erbil, 10 June 2019 - A ceremony was held today in Erbil to award master trainers and students participating in UNESCO supported hospitality sector training programme. The programme, part of EU funded TVET Reform Project, recognised students who completed a six month competency-based qualification linked to employment opportunities in the tourism sector. The programme was delivered in partnership with the KRG Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Erbil Polytechnic and the Kurdistan General Tourism Board of the Ministry of Municipalities, Travel and Tourism.



Baquba bicycle marathon sought to promote peaceful coexistence, challenge stereotypes

Diyala, 30 June 2019 - Yesterday's bicycle marathon in the diverse city of Baquba, southwestern Diyala, saw more than 200 Iraqi youth engaged in a 1.5 km ride across the city. The marathon, organized by IOM with the support of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, sought to promote peaceful coexistence, challenge stereotypes, and provide Iraq youth with a sense of agency and hope for the future.

"This is the first event of its kind in Diyala. It created a beautiful atmosphere, and there were many smiling faces," said Manar, a volunteer involved in the organization of the event. "I feel happy when I see my peers - especially girls - out in the streets of Baquba, with the confidence to ride their bicycles."

The event was supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs

and Trade, and organized by IOM, in cooperation with local volunteers and officials.

In 2014 and 2015, IḳSIL attacks in the

countryside south of Baquba city caused large numbers of people to flee the district. To date, 223,632 people are estimated to have returned to the area.



Timeline

UN Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert wishes Iraqis a peaceful, joyful Ramadan

Baghdad, 6 May 2019 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, extends her greetings to all the Iraqi people, particularly Muslims, on the onset of the holy month of Ramadan.

"Ramadan is a month of peace and reflection, where families and friends get together. It is when Muslims give and forgive, turn their thoughts to the less fortunate and those who are suffering.

On this occasion, we particularly feel

for those Iraqis who are celebrating without their loved ones who they lost to the conflict or who are awaiting the return of the missing. We feel for those who remain displaced, living in camps or unable to return home.

I sincerely hope that the spirit of the holy month will bring an additional sense of positivity to this country and its good people. I wholeheartedly wish you a peaceful and joyful month. Ramadan Kareem."



Ramadan Nights

Talafar, 15 May 2019 — “We had a lot of fun playing traditional Ramadan games with my neighbors; and I got to meet new people. Such events help us expand our social network. We do not have friends in this city, and we have beautiful memories of Ramadan evenings in Talafar, before we were displaced. Now we can build positive new memories too.” Said Hameed, who was displaced from Talafar in 2014 to Kerbala.

With funds from the Government of Australia, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is organizing a series of “Ramadan nights” events for IDPs from Ninewa and the host community in Karbala Governorate. The aim of these special evenings is to promote trust and social cohesion, as well as to strengthen community ties and promote cultural exchanges.



Nadia Murad appointed as an Advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Paris, France, 9 May 2019 - Congratulations to Ms. Nadia Murad, who was appointed today as an Advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres.

These 17 influential public figures are committed to raising awareness, inspiring greater ambition, and pushing for faster action on the SDGs, which were adopted by world leaders on 25 September 2015.



Happy International Day of Families!

Baghdad, 15 May 2019 - From our family to yours, the UN team in Iraq wishes the people of Iraq a happy International Day of Families.

This year, we highlight the important role of families, as the basic unity of society, in climate action. Families have a key role to play in preserving the environment and combatting climate change.

In a country whose social fabric has

been strained by conflict - many families remain displaced - and where climate change poses real threats, it is essential that the Iraqi family plays an active role in ensuring the sustainability of the land and livelihoods.

The UN family across Iraq stands shoulder to shoulder with the Iraqi people in pursuing the shared aspirations of a greener, cleaner and brighter future for all.



FAO inaugurates its new offices in Sulaymaniya



Sulaymaniya, 15 May 2019 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, inaugurated its new office in Sulaymaniya under the patronage of the First Lady of Iraq - Ms. Serbagh Saleh; and with the participation of the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas; FAO Representative a.i. for Iraq Mr. René Verduijn; the Governor of Sulaymaniyah Dr. Hafal Abu Bakr; the Head of the Provincial Council Azad Mohammed Amin; and the Director General of Sulaymaniyah's Directorate of Agriculture.

The meeting was addressed by the First Lady who thanked FAO for its leading and effective role in combating famine and securing food around the world and in Iraq. She also highlighted the importance of promoting bio-diversity in the region.

Also speaking at the ceremony, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordina-

tor for Iraq, Ms. Ruedas, said that, "the inauguration of the new FAO Office symbolizes the interest of the UN to support the people of Sulaymaniya in achieving long-term, sustainable development."

"It also shows the importance of investing in the Agriculture and Water Sectors, but we should be reminded to also reduce the water pollution the sector generates," she added.

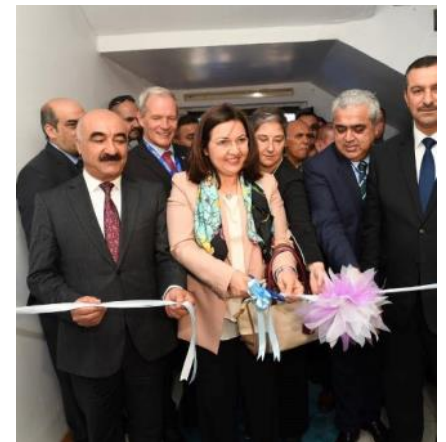
On his part, the FAO Resident Representative, a.i., Mr. Verduijn, expressed his gratitude to the First Lady for her contribution to promoting bio-diversity, in particular her work as a co-founder of the Kurdistan Botanical Foundation that is committed to establish a gene/seed bank in Sulaymaniya and her efforts as an activist in defense of women's rights.

"FAO in Iraq is keen on promoting agriculture to help achieve economic growth, a stable society, food and nutrition security for all and improving bio-

diversity. We feel strongly towards supporting Iraq in face of the numerous challenges it faces in terms of agriculture and water through promoting Good Agriculture Practices and improving smallholder farmers' livelihoods", said Mr. Verduijn.

The new office comes at a significant moment as the country moves away from emergency towards more development to provide structural support to the sub-sectors, and people's livelihoods.

The new UN office is located within the Directorate of Agriculture in Sulaymaniyah. In April, FAO celebrated its 40th anniversary of the establishment of FAO in Iraq in 1979. Assistance has targeted a wide range of sub-sectors, including crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry, and has proved to be successful in supporting agricultural research and extension institutes over years of stability, sanctions and conflict. The inauguration of the new office is another landmark in the organization's efforts to reinforce its technical programs for the benefit of the people of Iraq.



SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert congratulates to Mr. Barzani for being elected as the President of the Kurdistan Region



Baghdad, 28 May 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, offers her congratulations to Mr. Nechirvan Barzani for his election as President of Kurdistan Region. The UN family in Iraq looks forward to working closely with him.



The World Press Photo Exhibition opened in Baghdad

Baghdad, 1 June 2019 - The World Press Photo Exhibition opened in Baghdad today, with a powerful display of award-winning photos from across the globe from 2017 through 2019.

The three-week exhibition, located in the front courtyard of a Baghdad shop-

ping mall, aims to encourage Iraqi photographers to provide their own entries for the next annual competition in December, Ambassador of the Netherlands H.E. Matthijs Wolters said at the opening ceremony.

Among the diverse photos displayed

were pictures showing post-combat operations and the plight of civilians in Mosul, one of sea turtles entangled in plastic waste, others of the aftermath of gang violence in central America and other displays from many countries from all corners of the world.



A poetry evening in Kerbala to mark the holy month of Ramadan

Karbala, 3 June 2019 - With the funding of the Government of Australia, IOM - UN Migration organized a poetry evening in Kerbala as one of a series of special events to mark the holy month of Ramadan. Well-known poets, IDPs,

and members of the host community took part in the event, which sought to foster social cohesion and trust between different groups.

“It was a wonderful evening. The poetry was beautiful, and I had the chance

to meet new people. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, and because we are in the month of Ramadan, I was reminded of our days in Ninawa, back home,” said Ahmad Ali, who displaced from Tel Afar to Kerbala in 2014.



UN Iraq Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert wishes Iraqis a peaceful and prosperous Eid-ul-Fitr

Baghdad, 4 June 2019 - On the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, extends her warmest wishes of peace and prosperity to all Iraqis, particularly the Muslims.

“Eid-ul-Fitr marks the end of a month of fasting and prayer, and is a joyous occasion to celebrate our shared values

of community, dialogue and cooperation,” Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert said.

“This is a time to reflect on our common challenges and find solutions in the values we hold dear. Let us meet division with solidarity, disputes with understanding, and displacement with compassion and charity.”

Eid Mubarak to one and all.”



The UNESCO Iraq participated in the EU Day celebration in Baghdad

Baghdad, 16 June 2019 - UNESCO Iraq took part today in the EU Day celebration that was held at Al Mansour theater in Baghdad. UNESCO participation aimed to emphasize the cooperation between the EU and UNESCO and to highlight the importance of the projects funded by

the EU: #RevivetheSpiritofMosul through culture and education, Improve Access to Education for Children, managing a reform of the technical and vocational education sector geared towards skills for employment and a comprehensive survey on water in Iraq. UNESCO displayed its ongoing projects

throughout Iraq at an exhibition in the main hall and a short video. The celebration was attended by the First Lady of Iraq, Mrs. Sarbagh Salih, Iraqi officials, representatives of UN-AMI, UNCT, of the diplomatic corps in Iraq and citizens of Baghdad.



World Refugee Day marked in Baghdad



Baghdad, 20 June 2019 - The United Nations community in Iraq, led by UNHCR Iraq, marked today the World Refugees Day at its compound in Baghdad in the presence of the representa-

tives of Iraqi authorities, diplomatic officials and Iraqi citizens. Many refugees face dire conditions when they flee their homes, crawling under barbed wires and crossing bor-

ders to save their lives. Participants of the celebration took the obstacle course challenge and felt #WithRefugees on the #WorldRefugeeDay

Refugees walk 2 billion kilometers every year to reach safety. Today there are 70.8 million refugees and displaced persons.

Participants took the challenge and walked 1 km and registered their distance on www.stepwithrefugees.org in support of refugees. The aim is to gather global support and to raise awareness in solidarity with families forced to flee their homes.

Guests also enjoyed an artistic cultural evening with the participation of Iraqi popular bands and a fashion show of civilizations of Iraq through the ages. A traditional Baghdad neighborhood was assembled with street vendors, handicrafts makers and traditional Iraqi treats.



UNAMI representatives joined Indian Embassy in Baghdad in celebrating the 5th International Yoga Day

Baghdad, 22 June 2019 - Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India. The word 'yoga' derives from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolizing the union of body and consciousness. Today it is practiced in various forms around the world and continues to grow in popularity.

Recognizing its universal appeal, on 11 December 2014, the United Nations proclaimed 21 June as the International Day of Yoga by resolution 69/131.

The International Day of Yoga aims to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practicing yoga.

Today, UNAMI representatives joined Indian Embassy in Baghdad in celebrating the 5th International Yoga Day.



Can you imagine living in a world without trees?

Kirkuk, 30 June 2019 - On World Environment Day, a group of youth held several activities in Kirkuk under the slogan "Plant a Tree – Prevent Pollution" to highlight the importance of protecting the environment. "There are many factories and vehicles

in my city, which cause air pollution and reduce oxygen levels, adversely affecting our health and our climate," said Abdulhadi, 22, who performed during a silent play in Kirkuk about protecting the environment. "We wanted to convey a message to raise aware-

ness about the importance of protecting the environment, of planting trees instead of deforesting," he added.

The event was supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Iraq.

