

UNFPA IRAQ

QUARTERLY UPDATE

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UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND - IRAQ
صندوق الأمم المتحدة للسكان - العراق

UNFPA REPRESENTATIVE MEETS WITH THE FIRST LADY OF IRAQ

UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Oluremi Sogunro, visited with the First Lady of Iraq, HE Sarbagh Salih, on 23 January, to thank her for attending the launch of the national strategy to combat violence against women, in December 2018. The First Lady expressed her interest in working with UNFPA to lead advocacy on ending child marriage through investment in education.



UNFPA REPRESENTATIVE VISITS THE KOREAN EMBASSY



UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Oluremi Sogunro, met with the Korean Ambassador in Iraq Mr Kyung Wook Jang, to express appreciation to the Government of Korea for its support of US\$ 1.75 M to UNFPA in Iraq in the last two years, enabling the humanitarian response in the fields of reproductive health and gender-based violence.

CHILD MARRIAGE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IN DUHOK

As part of the advocacy and awareness campaigns run by UNFPA in Iraq, Volunteers and social workers at Women Community and Social Centres supported by the Fund launched this January an outreach campaign in Duhok on child marriage. The tent-to-tent approach targeted more than 206 women and 200 girls who benefited from seminars, awareness videos, recreational activities which relayed messages on the dangers of forcing little girls and boys to leave school and marrying them off at an early age. The sessions offered focused on the consequences of child marriages, such as domestic violence, maternal death and birth complications.



IRAQ FIRST LADY & THE UNSRSG VISIT TO THE WOMEN SHELTER IN BAGHDAD



Women subjected to violence often look for a haven: the women shelters provide refuge to survivors of gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence. In Iraq, UNFPA supports five women shelters across Iraq run and managed by the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs in the Federal Government and in the Kurdistan Regional Government.

On 20 February, the First Lady of Iraq, HE Sarbagh Salih, the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG), Ms Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the Political

Counsellor at the Canadian Embassy, Mr Andrew Turner, and UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Oluremi Sogunro, and high level ministerial delegation visited the shelter for women survivors of gender-based violence in Baghdad.

During the visit, they met with the survivors currently residing in the shelter who shared their stories, journeys, and heartbreaks. The three officials also discussed with the shelter management the challenges the survivors and staff come across.

THE UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR VISITS SULAYMANIYAH



The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms Marta Ruedas, visited Sulaymaniyah's Ashti camp and toured the World Health Organization's Primary Health Clinic where UNFPA supports one reproductive health clinic that serves more than 700 individuals per week.



The UN official also visited the women centre, funded by Canada, and met with women attending an awareness session on forced marriages. She asked them about the difficulties they face, their needs, demands, and expectations.

LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH SURVEY IN IRAQ

UNFPA is providing technical and financial support to the Federal Government in Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government in conducting the National Adolescents & Youth Survey. This survey will enable both governments to put in place robust policy framework and strategies and make

informed decisions on youth-related matters. Enumerators first conducted a pilot of the data collection that was followed by the official launch. A total of 54,000 individuals are expected to participate in the survey by 235 trained enumerators in 18 governorates.



A WOMEN EVEN HERE CAMPAIGN

On 21 February, UNFPA ASRO launched an eight-week campaign 'A Woman Even Here' to call for prioritizing women's needs in humanitarian response and invite partners, donors and the public to join our quest to protect women's right to dignity, safety and wellbeing where it is most needed. During the course of the campaign, a series of documentaries are released to tell the stories of five women from Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Gaza and show a glimpse of the disproportionate burden women have to bear during humanitarian crises.

UNFPA AT DUBAI INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AID AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2019

UNFPA Iraq participated, as part of the UNFPA Arab States delegation, in the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development (DIHAD) conference and exhibition on 12-14 March in Dubai. The theme of this year was: People on the Move.

UNFPA was invited as a keynote speaker at the high-level pre-conference workshop organized by OCHA under the theme 'Humanitarian Response for the Returning Population' on 11 March. Furthermore, UNFPA and IOM co-organized a side event on the 'Complementarity in Addressing Key Humanitarian Challenges and Innovative Approaches'.

UNFPA's participated in DIHAD's exhibition with a photo exhibit featuring its global humanitarian work. The exhibit received over 400 visitors and was rewarded with a certificate of appreciation for the second year in a row.



CELEBRATING WOMEN IN IRAQ



UNFPA and its partners in Iraq celebrated International Women's Day through a wide range of activities across a country. In Mosul and Duhok, a traditional dance was performed, handicraft was displayed, and women activists shared their success stories with the public.

In Sulaymaniyah, a celebratory event was held at a local mall to attract the general public and raise awareness. The event included music performances by internally displaced girl-groups, traditional music, dance numbers and award ceremony for female and male champions who

have challenged gender norms or have fought for gender equality.

In Baghdad, International Women's Day was commemorated in the presence of high level representatives from the Government of Iraq and its different entities as well as representatives from the international and donor community and the civil society. Discussions acknowledged the important roles played by Iraqi women in society, and reconfirmed the commitment to promote women's empowerment, which is also critical for reconstruction and peace-building of Iraq.

GROUNDWORK FOR THE FAMILY PLANNING STRATEGY FOR IRAQ



On 13 March, UNFPA and the Ministry of Health organised a meeting to lay the groundwork for a national family planning strategy for Iraq in presence of the First Lady of Iraq and the Minister of Health. The attendees discussed the best practices of international strategies on the topic and how to best include the different government entities, the civil society and religious leaders in the drafting of the strategy and at a later stage its implementation. Some of the points discussed focused on “task shifting” through the empowerment midwives and nurses to play a bigger role in the family planning in response to the country’s 3.6 fertility rate.

As a follow-up to that meeting, a brainstorming workshop was organised on 20 March with stakeholders to gather the relevant documentation and studies that will be used in the drafting process of the strategy to embed family planning as a human right in the reproductive health strategy in Iraq and more specifically the family planning strategy.

WAYS FORWARD TO ENACTING THE ANTI-DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAW IN IRAQ



To ensure that the promise made at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, 25 years ago, to protect and empower women and girls and improve their lives is kept, UNFPA, together with the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) and Women Empowerment Directorate (WED), organised on 26 March a consultative workshop to support the enactment of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law in Iraq. The workshop was attended by 42 people including judges, government partners and

representatives from the diplomatic corps and the UN agencies in Iraq. The discussions focused on the importance of adhering to the Law once enacted while the WED officially requested the SJC to review the draft Law, with the technical support of UNFPA, to accelerate its enactment. As final step before the submission of the bill to the Parliament, UNFPA will organise a 3-day technical workshop mid-April to review and finalise the draft.

UNFPA AND SPAIN JOIN EFFORTS TO ENHANCE ACCESS TO PSYCHOSOCIAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN IRAQ



The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) joined efforts with UNFPA to improve access to psychosocial, mental health, & GBV services to women & girls in Iraq through a contribution of EUR 400,000 to the programme. This contribution will enable UNFPA to improve the capacity & access to these much-needed

services, including legal support & referrals, to more than 1,800 women and girls in the country. It will also will strengthen UNFPA's mental health interventions through the improvement of the access to psychologists & counsellors who provide vital care & support for women suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome, depression, & anxiety.

PROTECTING GIRLS IN IRAQ FROM FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is one of the most inhuman acts of gender-based violence in the world. On the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, we reaffirm our commitment to end this violation of human rights, so that girls who are still at risk of being mutilated do not experience unnecessary pain and risk.

According to the UN-supported 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) for Iraq, a

total of 7.4 per cent of girls get mutilated every year. Although the numbers are relatively low in comparison to the region, one is too many: our goal is to protect all girls from such harmful practices. In some identified areas of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where FGM still occurs on a higher rate, the UN is working with government institutions and local NGOs to prevent such harmful practices through awareness campaigns.

THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN STAND BY WOMEN IN IRAQ WITH A US\$ 1.3 MILLION CONTRIBUTION TO UNFPA



The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) extends its gratitude to the Government and People of Japan for the generous contribution of US\$ 1,339,285 to increase access to reproductive health services and strengthen the response to gender-based violence across Iraq. This new commitment will ensure increased access to emergency obstetric and newborn care as well as regular

reproductive health services through the financing of 21 reproductive health clinics across the country. The contribution will also go towards providing survivor-centred case management & psychosocial support to gender-based violence survivors at the UNFPA-supported women centres, capacity-building of service providers as well as community mobilisation for gender-based violence prevention.

JOINT STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



While the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government have taken significant steps towards acknowledging women's rights, women and girls are yet to be given the opportunity to contribute more effectively in shaping policies and making changes, especially at a time when the country recovers from three years of conflict. On this International Women's Day, UNFPA & UN Women call upon

both governments to invest further in the great potential of the women in Iraq to boost economic and social development of the country. We renew their commitment to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in the areas of social protection and access to public services across the country to improve the lives of women, adolescents and youth, enabled by population dynamics and human rights.

Despite the current reconstruction and development efforts in Iraq, the need for humanitarian assistance persists. UNFPA Iraq organised a series of donor visits to delegations from Norway, Sweden, the EU, and Australia to showcase the impact of the Fund's interventions and the amount of humanitarian aid still needed for the internally displaced and refugees in camps across the country in the reproductive health and gender-based violence sectors.

Further to the advocacy efforts with the donors, UNFPA Representative continued to meet high Presidential officials, including the First Lady of Iraq, and Governmental officials to advocate for women's reproductive rights, the end of gender-based violence, and the enhancement of the role of young people in shaping the future of the country.



European Union
Civil Protection and
Humanitarian Aid

The ECHO Commissioner Christos Stylianides and the Belgium Deputy PM Alexander De Croo visited the UNFPA-supported primary health clinic and women centre in Mosul.

A delegation of the European Union to Iraq and the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management (ECHO) in Iraq visited the Kerbala Maternity Hospital & the Imam Zain al-Abideen hospital.



**Australian
Aid** 

A delegation from the Australian government and the Australian embassy visited the UNFPA-supported women centre in Bahirka camp. The delegation also checked the reproductive health clinic which receives more than 65 women or girls for consultation per day.



Mr Kyrre Holm from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs & a delegation from the Royal Norwegian embassy in Iraq at UNFPA-supported reproductive health facility in Khazir camp. The delegation visited the UNFPA-supported women centre in Hassansham camp.



Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Dr Oluremi Sogunro, UNFPA Representative to Iraq, visited today HE Salem al-Zamanan, Ambassador of Kuwait in Iraq, with whom he discussed the 2020 census for Iraq and the Kuwaiti support to the health sector in Iraq.

Dr Sogunro and HE Mr al-Zamanan agreed on the importance of the census in planning the future of Iraq and the ways forward towards rebuilding the country after the devastating war.



Norwegian Embassy



A delegation from the Royal Norwegian embassy and the Swedish embassy visited the UNFPA-supported Women Centres and reproductive health facilities, funded by the two countries, in the camps for internally displaced people in Duhok, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

UNFPA DONORS

UNFPA is extremely thankful to its donors for their contribution this year towards humanitarian and development programmes and response in Iraq. Below is the list of donors that contributed to UNFPA interventions this quarter.



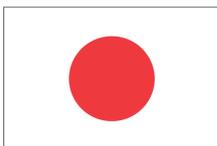
European Union
Civil Protection and
Humanitarian Aid



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF DENMARK



From
the People of Japan



United Nations
MPTF Office



#AWOMANEVENHERE: THE STORY OF NADIA FROM IRAQ



Nadia was only 16 when she grabbed her toddler and fled her house in Huwaija, Iraq, while five months pregnant. ISIS had taken over their town two years earlier and, on this fateful night, persistent bombing drove Nadia and many other families out from their houses in the middle of the night.

"I was afraid I was going to miscarry, and I soon ran out of milk for my son," Nadia recalled, "After five hours of walking, we heard ISIS fighters set up a trap to capture us and we knew they would kill those who are caught. So, I turned around and went home. Our fear got the best of us."

Growing up, Nadia had pictured a very different future for herself. She had a single, simple dream: to become a school teacher. But the fighting forced her out of school. One year after ISIS's arrival, she was married off to an older man.

"I was forced. I was just a child, only 15 years old. I didn't want to be married," Nadia said as anger flashed briefly across her young face.

Eight months into the marriage, her husband was taken by ISIS and she never heard of him again. She was already pregnant when he disappeared. She was married again soon after, this time as a second wife. She was 16 when she became pregnant for the second time and had to embark on that first failed attempt to flee her home.

Soon after, she decided to make one more attempt to reach Debaga camp for the internally displaced- a 15-hour walk. She left with her toddler and her husband and many more families from Huwaija. Halfway to Debaga, they stopped, too scared to move forward and unable to turn around. They set up an impromptu encampment in the middle of nowhere where they stayed for a few months.

"There was no food and no water, and our children got sick," Nadia said, "Most families were ruined."

Nadia was getting closer to her due date. So, Nadia's family decided to make a final push for Debaga despite the fear and they finally made it to the camp.

Upon arriving in Debaga, Nadia went to the UNFPA reproductive health clinic where she delivered her second child: a daughter she named Sewar. She also frequents a safe-space for women and girls in the camp where she learns sewing and has a chance to socialize with other mothers.

Nadia is one of millions of women and girls in the Arab region whose lives, dreams and plans for the future were unexpectedly interrupted by wars they didn't start. In such situations, Nadia's predicament is not a rarity. Girls are more likely to leave school than boys their age when disasters strike. They are also 90% more likely to drop out of school than girls who live in conflict-free countries.

Child and forced marriage rates tend to rise in humanitarian emergencies as families pressure their daughters to marry for protection or to alleviate the economic hardship that is a staple of conflict-torn communities. The medical complications of pregnancy and childbirth come hand in hand with child marriage. Such complications are the leading cause of death for adolescent girls aged 15-19.

Pregnant women on the move and in difficult-to-reach areas run a higher risk of maternal mortality and morbidity. Overall, a woman dies every 3 minutes from pregnancy and childbirth complications in humanitarian emergencies. This means over 500 women losing their lives every day for mostly preventable causes.

Four years after fighting first broke out in her small town, the 18-year-old Nadia now finds it difficult to speak of the future.

"I don't know how to describe my dreams to you," Nadia said, "Life in the camp is sometimes good and sometimes not, but I dream of going home."



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