

UNAMI Herald

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'Political impasse' hampering change and reform in Iraq

New York, 24 February 2022 - Political leaders in Iraq must urgently overcome their divisions and work for the good of the people, the top UN official in the country told the Security Council on Thursday.

Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert reported that four months after parliamentary elections, politicians still struggle to form a government.

'Precious time' passing by

This prolonged phase could be forgiven "if we were witnessing vibrant exchanges on policy orientations, on development pathways and economic reform plans," she said.

"However, so far, we are observing quite the opposite: hampering the change and reforms the country so desperately needs."

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert added that as the "political impasse" continues, "precious time" is passing by.

"Behind the headline debate of a majority vs. consensus government, many Iraqis increasingly wonder whether the national interest is actually 'front and centre' in the ongoing negotiations - rather than access to resources and power, or how the pie of political appointments and ministries will be carved this time around."

'Not there yet'

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert, who also heads the UN mission in the country, UNAMI, updated ambassadors on recent developments since the October 2021 vote to decide the Council of Representatives, Iraq's 329-seat parliament, which in turn elects the President and confirms the Prime Minister.



Members met for the first time last month and elected a Speaker and two deputies. However, they failed to reach a quorum for the 7 February session to elect a President.

While the nomination period was re-opened for another three days, the Federal Supreme Court ruled in the interim that one candidate, former Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, is ineligible.

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert explained that once elected, the President will have 15 days to charge the Prime Minister-designate, the nominee of the largest parliamentary bloc, to form a Council of Ministers.

"Well clearly, the current situation suggests that we're not there yet," she remarked.

With the election long over, the UN envoy stressed that tackling the "long list of outstanding domestic business" must be prioritized.

Dangers of a 'weak home front'

Leaders also must focus on the people of Iraq, whose needs include gainful employment opportunities, safety and security, adequate public service

delivery, justice, and meaningful participation of women and youth.

"Moreover, and as I've pointed out countless times, a weak home front creates vulnerabilities. To Da'esh for instance, ready to take advantage of any political and security vacuum. But also to continued external interference. In the case of Iraq, not a hypothetical point," she said.

With people's patience wearing thin, the UN envoy warned of the potential consequences, recalling the October 2019 demonstrations against the lack of social, economic and political prospects.

"We know how that ended. Hundreds killed; thousands injured. The very least Iraqis may expect now is a sense of urgency from their elected representatives," she said.

"It is urgent for Iraq's political leaders to overcome divisions, to put aside partisanship and to bury personal vendettas."

By UN News.

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Security Council Press Statement on Iraq-Kuwait

New York, 28 February 2022 - The members of the Security Council welcomed the ongoing cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait in the search for missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals. They welcomed Kuwait's conclusion of the identification process of human remains recovered from Samawah in Iraq and transferred to Kuwait in 2019 and 2020. They noted that 59 sets of remains were identified as Kuwaiti and third country nationals. *More on page 6.*



Interfaith religious leaders from Diyala Governorate support social cohesion and reintegration of IDPs in Iraq

Erbil, 27 February 2022 – The United Nations Development Programme in Iraq (UNDP) under the auspices of the Council of Ministers Secretariat (COMSEC), the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MOMD), and the Governor of Diyala, and supported by the Government of Germany, has today concluded an interfaith conference for over forty religious leaders from Diyala Governorate.

The two-day conference gathered key religious leaders from Diyala from different sects to elaborate on how best to advance social cohesion, coexistence, and combat violent extremism within Diyala Governorate, as well as encourage the return and reintegration of displaced families. The religious leaders agreed to support community readiness and work together to prevent violent extremism in Diyala Governorate ... *More on page 7.*

Report on GBV and hate speech against female candidates in the October 2021 elections launched in Baghdad

Baghdad, 26 January 2022 – The Free Iraq Foundation, UNAMI implementing partner, organized today a conference to launch the report on gender-based violence and hate speech against female candidates in the October 2021 elections.

The text of the speech by the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, at this conference starts at page 13.

Executive Council of the Arab Women Organization held session in Baghdad

Baghdad, 22 February 2022 – The 15th meeting of the Executive Council of the Arab Women Organization was held in Baghdad on February 19 and 20, 2022.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Yousra Karim Mohsen, Director General of the Iraqi Women Empowerment Department, and President of the Executive Council of the organization in its current session, and the Arab member states of the organization participated in person and through the Zoom application. *More on page 17.*

SRSG Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert visits Mesopotamian Marshes, witnessing firsthand the challenges arising from climate change, water shortages and population growth

Baghdad, 1 February 2022 - As consistently reported by UN Iraq, drought and water scarcity are pressing concerns, and the marshlands of southern Iraq are among the worst affected areas. With annual evaporation varying from 2.5 to 3 meters, and starkly reduced riverine flows supplying the marshlands, the area covered by water has been substantially reduced. Moreover, increased salinity and mineral concentration directly impact human and animal health. Urgent action is required to address the lack of potable water and associated risks, including forced displacement. *More on page 58.*

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

SRSB Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert: “It is high time to return the spotlight where it deserves to be: on the people of Iraq”

New York, 24 February 2022 – On its 8975th meeting United Nations Security Council deliberated situation concerning Iraq.

Here is the text of the briefing by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis Plasschaert, at this meeting:

“Mr. President,
Distinguished members of the Security Council,

If you allow me, I will begin today’s briefing with an overview of recent developments concerning political appointments and government formation.

Following the ratification of electoral results, the parliamentary Speaker and his two deputies were elected on January 9. While this was initially contested, the Federal Supreme Court ruled on January 25 that the inaugural parliamentary session (during which the Speaker and his deputies were elected) was held in accordance with the constitution.

The next step is the election of a President of the Republic (according to the Constitution) within 30 days of the election of the Speaker.

However, and following an initial nomination period, on February 7 the parliamentary quorum - for a session to elect a President - was not met. Parliament decided to reopen the nomination period for another three days: the Federal Supreme Court has not yet ruled on whether this reopening was constitutional, but did rule one candidate ineligible.

Now, once the President is elected, he or she will (within 15 days, according to the constitution) charge the nominee of the largest parliamentary bloc, that is, the Prime Minister-designate, with the formation of a council of ministers, to be endorsed by Parliament.

Well clearly, the current situation suggests that we’re not there yet.

And while political consultations continue (or perhaps more accurately: the political impasse continues) time just passes by. Precious time.

Mr. President, behind the headline debate of a majority vs. consensus government, many Iraqis increasingly wonder whether the national interest is actually ‘front and centre’ in the ongoing negotiations - rather than access to



resources and power, or how the pie of political appointments and ministries will be carved this time around?

Needless to say: the priority should be to urgently agree on a programme of action that – immediately and meaningfully – tackles Iraq’s long list of outstanding domestic business.

So, what I am saying is: the elections are over four months behind us, and it is high time to return the spotlight where it deserves to be: on the people of Iraq.

The people of Iraq who continue to wait for gainful, productive employment opportunities, for safety and security, for adequate public service delivery, for the full protection of their rights and freedoms, for justice and accountability, for meaningful participation of women and youth – to name but a few.

Of course, one could be forgiven for being patient with a prolonged government formation phase, if we were witnessing vibrant exchanges on policy orientations, on development pathways and economic reform plans. If that was animating the negotiations, then indeed, patience would be a virtue.

However, so far, we are observing quite the opposite: hampering the change and reforms the country so desperately needs.

Moreover, and as I’ve pointed out countless times, a weak home front creates vulnerabilities. To Da’esh for instance, ready to take advantage of any political and security vacuum.

But also to continued external interference. In the case of Iraq, not a hypothetical point.

In the meantime, the patience of the Iraqi people is being tested. In October 2019, this patience found its limit and many, many Iraqis took to the streets, protesting a lack of social, economic and political prospects.

We know how that ended. Hundreds killed; thousands injured. The very least Iraqis may expect now is a sense of urgency from their elected representatives.

A sense of urgency to overcome internal divisions, to agree on a programme informing Iraqis on what they can expect in the next 4 years, to manage public expectations, and to rise to the challenge of meeting the aspirations of the 40 million people who call Iraq home.

Mr. President, a few words on the Baghdad-Erbil relationship. As you know, I have consistently emphasized the importance of a regular, structured and institutionalized Baghdad-Erbil dialogue - with specific timelines - to address the long, long outstanding issues.

And as I’ve said before: this is a mutual responsibility.

Fact is that the inability to overcome differences (or even the unwillingness to find agreements) it comes - sooner or later - at a cost.

Also true, if a political vacuum exists for too long, the judicialization of what are otherwise legislative or executive domains can suddenly be a fact of life.

Now, with a caretaker government in

SRSG Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert: “It is high time to return the spotlight where it deserves to be: on the people of Iraq” *(continued)*

office and political parties engaged in negotiations on the formation of a new government, a Federal Supreme Court case pending for 10 years was very recently adjudicated. Hence, this recent court ruling on the unconstitutionality of the KRG Oil and Gas law prompted questions by many, such as ‘why now?’

Fact is, it happened. Consequently, the importance of this ‘institutionalized dialogue’ has only increased. And not only that. The country needs its parliament to act.

More broadly, what I’m saying is: letting things slide is risky business, with potentially far-reaching consequences undermining Iraq’s stability in the short and long run.

So, once again, I call on all stakeholders to focus on what really matters, to unite instead of competing. Like it or not, but parties need each other to be their best. Hence, all efforts should centre on resolving outstanding issues, not by way of a power grab, but in a spirit of partnership and cooperation.

Mr. President, turning briefly to the economy: between a sharp rise in oil prices and a currency devaluation, the deficit has been reduced and foreign currency reserves have grown.

The safety net has been expanded, notably due to increased spending on social services in response to the pandemic.

At first glance, this can sound encouraging. But there is no denying it: with important governmental proposals and efforts actively being undermined, delayed or halted, these results cannot be considered a direct consequence of sustainable strategies.

Fundamentally, Iraq today is no less vulnerable to commodity price fluctuations, Iraq suffers no less from poverty or underemployment, and Iraq

witnesses no less corruption, than it did last year or the year before.

I again repeat myself, but durable, structural solutions can only come through meaningful reform. And yes, this is easier said than done. I realise that.

However, Iraq is running out of time. As an Iraqi official put it to me some time ago: even if we had started implementing the most urgent reforms the day before yesterday, it will take supra human efforts to sufficiently address today’s financial, economic and environmental challenges.

And while I’d like to think in terms of the “glass is half full”, his remarks are not to be taken lightly.

Also, with regards to environmental challenges: they present a looming threat that is far too often considered less urgent, but is ultimately one of the greatest global challenges we collectively face.

A few weeks ago, I visited Iraq’s Marshlands in southern Iraq. A dramatic, beautiful landscape whose biodiversity is equalled only by its cultural significance.

However, water scarcity in this region is not just a threat on the horizon, it is a present danger. As is the case for other parts of the country, the salinization of water and soils, desertification and the disappearance of arable land are nothing less than existential environmental concerns.

Moreover, water scarcity, as we all know, is a threat multiplier. With it come heightened risks of poverty, displacement, instability and conflict.

Much, but not all of this scarcity can be explained by climate change: water flows are also actively being reduced by neighbouring countries.

Further, potable water and irrigation infrastructure and maintenance are

significantly lagging behind. Iraq’s water resources have been ineffectively managed for too long.

In other words: Iraq is acutely vulnerable to the effects of water scarcity due to climate change and reduced inflows from its rivers.

While I know that this is a priority for the current caretaker government, I would like to emphasize that shared ownership of this crucial file across the political spectrum will prove essential.

Mr. President, something else: camps and prisons across the border, hosting many, many Iraqis, in North-eastern Syria to be precise.

All of us will have closely followed recent events. Events that have made the risks associated with this slow-moving catastrophe yet again clear.

The situation in these camps and prisons presents unprecedented challenges, with implications for the region and far beyond. Ticking time bombs.

Over the past 3 years, you’ve heard me repeat that the legacy of yesterday’s fight against Da’esh, could very easily turn into tomorrow’s war, that we should not wait for young children to come of age in a camp like al-Hol.

These children, living in dire circumstances, never asked to be part of this mess. However, they find themselves deprived of their rights. These children find themselves at risk of forced recruitment and exposure to violent extremism.

Of course, I recognize that a number of states have upheld their responsibilities by taking back children and, in some cases, also limited numbers of women. And I can only hope that other states will soon follow suit. As a growing number of countries have shown: this can be done successfully.

Fact is, the current situation is not sustainable. And keeping people indefinitely in the restricted and poor conditions of these camps ultimately creates greater protection and security risks than taking them back in a controlled manner.

Meanwhile, Iraq has demonstrated courage. So far around 450 families, or some 1,800 persons, have been repatriated to Iraq. And as thousands of Iraqis are still out there, the Iraqi authorities do realize that they cannot stop there.

Mr. President, turning from al-Hol camp to the suspected ISIL combatants currently in custody in North-eastern Syria. Again, an unsustainable



SRSB Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert: “It is high time to return the spotlight where it deserves to be: on the people of Iraq” *(continued)*

situation.

Moreover, and as is the case for a camp like al-Hol, these facilities fuel resentment and also inspire terrorists: from breakout operations to large-scale attacks, as we have seen.

Also, the fact that some fighters (and associated family members) have been able to make their way out, suggests it would be better to control the situation and manage returns, rather than take the chance of missing them as they slip back - undetected - into any country.

Also here, Iraq deserves to be commended. The Iraqi government did not only make a start with the repatriation of Iraqi families in al-Hol; it has also begun repatriating Iraqi ISIL combatants.

Essentially, what I’m saying is: in the interest of everyone, the ultimate security argument (as opposed to the

short-term political one) is to recognize that a continued status quo is the riskiest option.

To appease festering grievances, to prevent the emergence of new conflicts, and to defuse ticking time bombs: it is important to anticipate and mitigate, it is important to step up and get things done.

Mr. President, turning now to the issue of missing Kuwaiti, third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives.

On February 16, UNAMI facilitated the return (from Kuwait back to Iraq) of the last 6 human remains that were determined not to be part of the Kuwait or Saudi Arabia lists of missing persons.

With this transfer, the identification process of all human remains

discovered in Samawah, Muthanna Governorate, in 2019 and 2020, has been concluded.

As I’ve stressed before, it is imperative for the Government of Iraq not to lose this momentum, but instead to take advantage of the experience gained so far and thus to move towards the overall conclusion of this important humanitarian file.

Mr. President, in closing: let me reiterate the importance of a sense of urgency. It is urgent for Iraq’s political leaders to overcome divisions, to put aside partisanship and to bury personal vendettas.

You know, Iraq truly has immense potential! If only this potential were fulfilled. How bright Iraq’s future could be.

Thank you.”

Iraq makes final reparation payment to Kuwait for 1990 invasion

New York, 9 February 2022 - More than 30 years after the UN Compensation Commission (UNCC) was created to ensure restitution for Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion of 1990, the reparations body announced on Wednesday that it had processed its final claim, amounting to \$52.4 billion in total.

Around 1.5 million successful claims were awarded, out of a total of around 2.7 million lodged with the Commission. If all the claims had been found legitimate, that would have meant a total pay-out of \$352.5 billion.

With the final payment made on 13 January, all compensation has now been paid in full, the UN Office at Geneva said in a press release.

Marking the moment

The UNCC’s Governing Council convened a special session to mark the conclusion of the reparations process, ending the process for the individuals, companies and governments, able to prove they had suffered damages from Iraq’s unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait, under former dictator Saddam Hussein.

Delegations from Iraq and Kuwait addressed the session during the opening plenary meeting, which was held under the Presidency of Ireland.

Almost 31 years ago, the Commission was established in Geneva – as a subsidiary organ of the Security Council under its resolution 687 (1991) – to process claims and pay compensation for losses and damages

suffered as a direct result of the Gulf War from 1990 to 1991.

Making reparations

The \$52.4 billion that has gone to successful plaintiffs, was paid out from the UN Compensation Fund, which received a percentage of the proceeds generated over the years by the export sales of Iraqi petroleum and petroleum products.

This percentage, originally set at 30 per cent, was reduced over time under various Security Council resolutions and Governing Council decisions.

Most recently, under Governing Council decision 276 (2017), it was set at three per cent.

Chapter closed

During the special session, the Governing Council adopted decision 277 (2022) declaring that the

Government of Iraq had fulfilled its international obligations to compensate all successful claimants for the losses and damages they suffered as a direct result of Iraq’s unlawful invasion of Kuwait.

In adopting the decision, UNCC recognized and thanked Iraq for its cooperation with the Commission and commitment in meeting its obligations, despite extraordinary security and economic challenges.

It also thanked the Government of Kuwait for supporting and cooperating with the Commission.

Later this month, the UNCC President will present the final report of the Governing Council on the Commission’s work to the UN Security Council in New York.

By UN news.



Security Council Press Statement on Iraq-Kuwait

New York, 28 February 2022 - The members of the Security Council welcomed the ongoing cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait in the search for missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals. They welcomed Kuwait's conclusion of the identification process of human remains recovered from Samawah in Iraq and transferred to Kuwait in 2019 and 2020. They noted that 59 sets of remains were identified as Kuwaiti and third country nationals. They also noted that Kuwait transferred to Iraq the 6 sets of remains that were not matched against

its missing persons database.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their deepest sympathy to the families of the missing and expressed their condolences for the lives lost.

The members of the Security Council commended the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Tripartite Mechanism, and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) for their role in facilitating the implementation of resolution 2107 (2013) to resolve outstanding issues related to missing

Kuwaiti and third-country nationals. They welcomed the sustained commitment of the Government of Iraq to return all remaining Kuwaiti property and encouraged the Government of Iraq to continue its search for the missing property, in particular to reinvigorate its search for the missing Kuwaiti national archives. The members of the Security Council expressed their appreciation to the Government of Iraq for its efforts to fulfil all remaining obligations in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions.

Social Cohesion

Putting the pieces back together: Finding unity in Tuz Khurmatu

Baghdad, 11 January 2022 - Tuz Khurmatu is a small city in the north-east of Salah al-Din Governorate, north of Baghdad, in Iraq. It is a home to a multi-ethnic population of over 100,000 people. After the fall of Mosul to ISIL in 2014, Tuz soon followed, and thousands of residents fled Tuz Khurmatu and remain displaced today. To encourage those displaced throughout Iraq to return, UNDP has been supporting local peace mechanisms to create an environment that supports reintegration and unity.

With the ongoing implementation of the Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration Project supported by the Government of Japan, the community of Tuz Khurmatu and the returning Internally Displaced Persons, including families perceived to be affiliated with ISIL, will benefit from a full socio-economic reintegration package. A project to enhance livelihood and economic opportunities has been launched, as well as a project to provide psychosocial support to those in need, in addition to the ongoing rehabilitation of 200 houses in the area. As a part of this package, UNDP has implemented a capacity-building programme for community leaders in the areas of return on practical applications of mediation and conflict resolution techniques, and for local government and security officers to build their capacity in reintegration and community preparedness and acceptance of returns. The aim is to equip the community leaders with tools and skills for the prevention of any potential communal tensions resulting from the return of families to their communities.

"This project is considered as an



important step to reintegrate the community and displaced families. These families face marginalization and vulnerability, which leads to more destruction. This project plays a positive role for its impact on the community and acceptance of these families." - Adel Shakour Mosa Al-Amerli, Mayor of Amerli District.

Aala* is a divorced woman who lives alone. She returned to Tuz Khurmatu in late November 2021, following over seven years of displacement. In 2014 she left Tuz Khurmatu, relocating to Kirkuk to live with her sister during the conflict with ISIL. She has two sons who were affiliated with ISIL and killed during liberation operations.

"It is up to people to choose whether they wish to return or not. But my advice is that the best way to live is to merge with the community again."

Zeineb* has seven children under eighteen years old. Her family left Tuz Khurmatu after ISIS gained control in 2014 and moved to Al Hol Camp. For her, life in the camp was one of hardship, with little assistance. They returned back to Tuz Khurmatu at the end of 2019.

"Society understands that my children are innocent, and they are not guilty of wrongdoing just because their father

was associated with ISIL."

There are eleven members in Aisha's* family, and no source of income. The family moved to Baghdad during liberation operations and suffered from various problems due to a lack of proper identification cards. They returned to Salah al-Din in 2018, eventually settling in their original home in April 2021. Aisha's husband was associated with ISIL and was killed, leading to her family facing harassment and blame.

"I encourage other families to return home to live again in peace and improve the security situation."

Through the Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration Project, UNDP will facilitate the return of 9,000 families to four areas of Iraq along with a complete reintegration package. The project supports return and reintegration of IDPs including families perceived as affiliated with ISIL in Anbar, Ninewa and Salah al-Din and those affected by increased gender-based violence and harsh economic conditions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been possible thanks to support from the Government of Japan.

*Names changed to protect the identities of those interviewed.

IOM Iraq organized two workshops to support the development of a local Preventing Violent Extremism Action Plan

Baghdad, 21 February 2022 - Four years after the military defeat of ISIL, preventing violent extremism (PVE) remains a key priority in Iraq's post-conflict recovery and stabilization. Last week, IOM Iraq organized two workshops to support the development of a local PVE Action Plan to be implemented in Ninewa Governorate's Tel Afar district. These are part of a series of IOM consultations with community leaders, civil society organizations, community-based organizations and national and local government officials across the country to identify drivers of violent extremism and tailor responses to local contexts. "It is necessary for IOM to be aware of the conditions in the rest of Tel Afar

through the upcoming workshops, not just the center [of the district]," said Qasim Muhammad Sharif, Mayor of Tel Afar. "In terms of preventing violent extremism, the government officials in Tel Afar district are doing their best to spare the district of any extremist ideology," he continued. "The participation of international organizations in a comprehensive program to prevent violent extremism will enhance the efforts of the Government of Iraq, the local government in Ninewa and the government of Tel Afar in this regard." These workshops were made possible with support from USAID - US Agency for International Development.



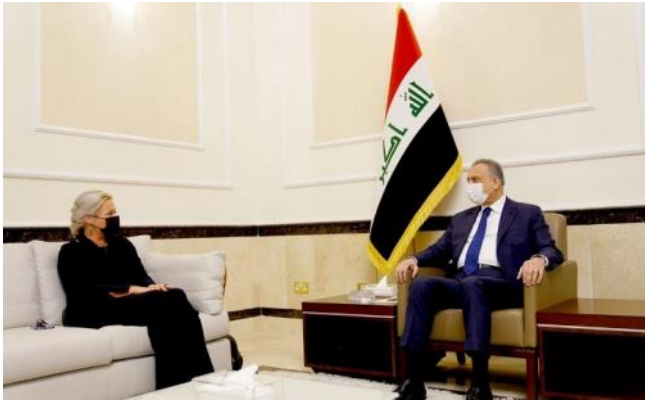
Interfaith religious leaders from Diyala Governorate support social cohesion and reintegration of IDPs in Iraq

Erbil, 27 February 2022 - The United Nations Development Programme in Iraq (UNDP) under the auspices of the Council of Ministers Secretariat (COMSEC), the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MOMD), and the Governor of Diyala, and supported by the Government of Germany, has today concluded an interfaith conference for over forty religious leaders from Diyala Governorate. The two-day conference gathered key religious leaders from Diyala from different sects to elaborate on how best to advance social cohesion, coexistence, and combat violent extremism within Diyala Governorate, as well as encourage the return and reintegration of displaced families. The religious leaders agreed to support community readiness and work together to prevent violent extremism in Diyala Governorate. The conference is part of a series of conferences held previously for the governorates of Anbar, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din, within a programme undertaken by UNDP with interfaith religious leaders which contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (Goal 16). UNDP Iraq Resident Representative, Zena Ali-Ahmad, states, "To promote social cohesion and work towards durable solutions in Iraq, UNDP is committed to creating an environment conducive to return and reintegration and the prevention of violent



extremism within Iraqi communities. We are very pleased to work alongside COMSEC, the MOMD, and at the governorate level, to establish this important network among key religious leaders." The Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Ministers Secretariat, His Excellency Mr. Jasim Alhambousi, states, "Religious leaders play an important role in influencing society. Moderate religious discourse is the foundation for coexistence and contributes to encouraging the return and reintegration of IDPs, and a move toward societal peace. This is important in the diverse communities of Diyala." The Deputy Minister of Migration and Displaced, His Excellency Mr. Karim Hussein Ali Al-Nuri, emphasizes, "It is

very important to work with religious leaders because of their influence on society. Through their speeches they can be messengers of peace, unity, and cohesion. This engagement will encourage moderate religious discourse." The Governor of Diyala, His Excellency Mr. Muthanna Ali Al-Tamimi states, "Focusing on ensuring community readiness for return and reintegration is an important topic in Diyala Governorate and engaging religious leaders is vital for peacebuilding in Iraq." In 2020, UNDP Iraq launched a dedicated five-year Social Cohesion Programme to promote stronger, peaceful, and more cohesive communities in all areas of Iraq.



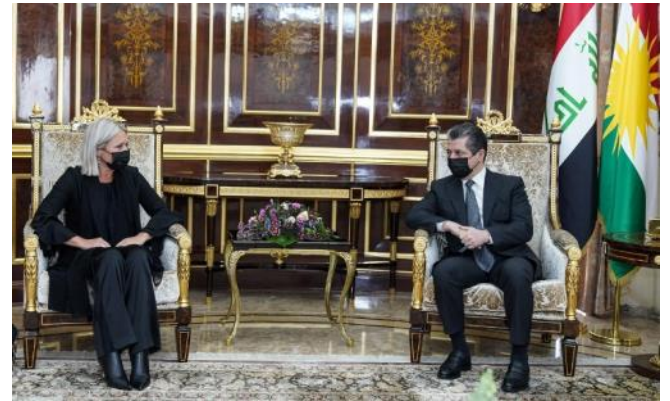
Baghdad, 13 January 2021 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. They discussed the current political situation in the country.
Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Prime Minister.



Baghdad, 13 January 2021 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the head of the Wisdom (Hikma) Movement, Sayyed Ammar al-Hakim. They reviewed recent political developments in the country.
Photo courtesy of the Hikma Movement.



Karbala, 18 January 2022 – The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, visited Karbala. In her meeting with the Governor, Mr. Nassif Al-Khattabi, she discussed the current political situation. The DSRSG also met with representatives of civil society, visited a hospital in the city as well as the Holy Shrine of Imam Hussain.



Erbil, 20 January 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Erbil with the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region, Mr. Masrour Barzani. They discussed current political situation in the country and the region.
Photo courtesy of the Media Office KRG.



Erbil, 20 January 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met in Erbil with the Minister of Interior - Kurdistan Regional Government, Mr. Réber Ahmed. They discussed the current political situation and the need for durable solutions (IDPs and refugees) as well as the urgency of implementing the Sinjar agreement.
Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Interior KR.

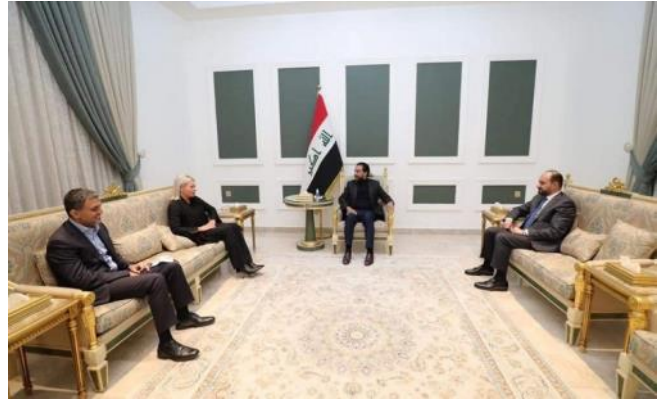


Erbil, 20 January 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Erbil with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region, Mr. Qubad Talabani. They discussed current political situation in the country and the region.
Photo of the Media Office KRG.



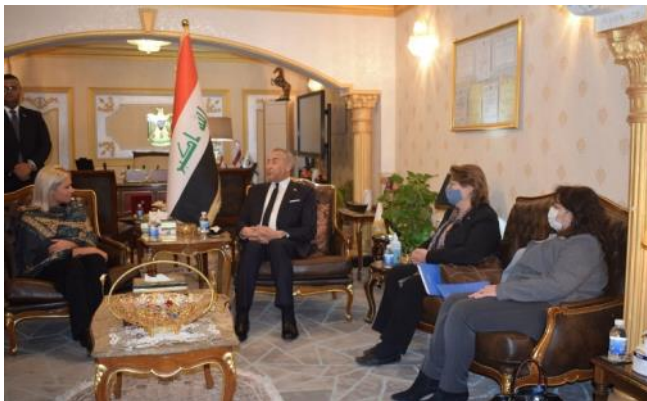
Erbil, 21 January 2022 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the President of the Kurdistan Region, Mr. Nechirvan Barzani. They discussed political situation in the country, and the need for timely elections in the Kurdistan Region.

Photo courtesy of the Media Office of KRP.

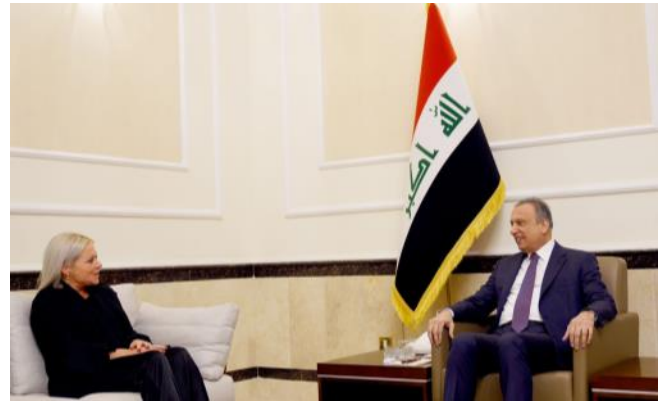


Baghdad, 26 January 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met in Baghdad with Iraqi Council of Representatives Speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi. They discussed the political and security situation, stressing the importance of calm and restraint at this critical phase.

Photo courtesy of the CoR Media Office.



Baghdad, 27 January 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, accompanied by the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq/ Resident Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, and the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Program in Iraq, Ms. Zena Ali Ahmed, met today with the Technical Undersecretary with the powers of the Minister of Environment, Dr. Jassim Abdel Aziz Hammadi. They discussed the issue of climate change and how the UN family can collaborate with Iraq on addressing this important file.



Baghdad, 29 January 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi. They discussed the political and security situation as well as cooperation between Iraq and the United Nations. The SRSRG reiterated UN support for Iraq in facing the challenges.

Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Prime Minister.



Baghdad, 29 January 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met with Mr. Haider Elias, President of Yazda non-governmental organization. Discussion focused on the plight of Yazidis in Sinjar and the conditions of those still living in IDP camps.



Baghdad, 15 February 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance), Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, today visited the Independent High Electoral Commission where she met with Judge Jalil Adnan Khalaf, Chairman of the IHEC Board of Commissioners. Discussion focused on the ongoing work and activities of the Electoral Commission.

Photo courtesy of IHEC.



Munich, Germany, 18 February 2022 - On the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, Mr. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, met with Kurdistan Region President, Mr. Nechirvan Barzani, and KR Prime Minister, Mr. Masrour Barzani. They discussed the latest developments in Iraq.

Photo courtesy of KRG Media Office.



New York, 23 February 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Ambassador Nicolas de Rivière. France, permanent member of the Security Council, fully supports UNAMI in its work with government partners and civil society to promote an inclusive political dialogue and stability in Iraq.

Photo courtesy of the Permanent Mission of France to UN.

Security

UNAMI on Twitter

Baghdad, 13 January 2022 - Rockets targeting embassies, causing injury among Iraqi civilians, are callous attempts to destabilise the country. Peace and security are prerequisites to tackle urgent domestic priorities and reaffirm Iraqi sovereignty.

A child being hurt is a child too many

Baghdad, 14 January 2022 - Statement by Ms. Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq:

“A child being hurt is a child too many. A child and a woman were injured, and a school was damaged, in a rocket attack last night in Baghdad.

Children must be protected from attacks at all times. Schools and homes must be safe at all times.

We wish the injured child and woman a

speedy recovery. Nothing justifies attacks on civilians, including children and women. UNICEF calls on all parties to fulfil their obligation, under international law, to protect children at all times. All children in Iraq deserve to live their lives without the constant threat of violence.

Schools should be protected. They are a place of sanctuary for children to learn and fulfil their potential. Attacks on

schools and education facilities are one of the six grave violations against children. As per the Safe Schools Declaration, endorsed by Iraq in May 2015, attacks on schools expose students and education personnel to harm, deny large numbers of children and students their right to education and so deprive communities of the foundations on which to build their future”.

UNAMI on Twitter

Baghdad, 17 January 2022 - We strongly condemn the bombings in Baghdad in recent days. We call upon the authorities to hold the perpetrators accountable, and urge stakeholders to confront these blatant attempts to destabilize by exercising restraint and intensifying dialogue to tackle Iraq's crises.

Baghdad, 21 January 2022 - The terrorist attack in Diyala, which took the lives of Iraqi troops and injured others, is a painful reminder that Dae'sh (ISIL) remains a threat. Vigilance and unity are certain to defeat these cowardly attempts to destabilize.

Baghdad, 26 January 2022 - We condemn rocket attack near Speaker Halbousi's Anbar residence, injuring civilians: a cowardly attempt to create chaos. We urge authorities to intensify efforts to prevent such acts and apprehend perpetrators. Calm and restraint must prevail to thwart attempts to destabilize.

Baghdad, 2 February 2022 - Following airstrikes in Ninewa with civilian casualties reported, we reiterate that Iraqi sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected at all times. Local populations must be protected, disputes should be addressed through dialogue and cooperation.

UN Security Council press statement on recent terrorist attack in Iraq

New York, 24 January 2022 - The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the recent cowardly terrorist attack in Diyala province, Iraq, on Friday, 21 January 2022. The attack resulted in at least 11 deaths.

The members of the Security Council expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government of Iraq, and they wished a speedy and full recovery of those who were injured.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their support for the independent, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, democratic process and prosperity of Iraq.

The members of the Security Council

reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

The members of the Security Council underlined the need to hold perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice, and urged all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with the Government of Iraq and all other relevant authorities in this regard.

The members of the Security Council reiterated that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable,

regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed. They reaffirmed the need for all States to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

The members of the Security Council reaffirmed their support for Iraq's security and the continued fight against terrorism, including against ISIL/Da'esh.



UNAMI statement on the recent attacks in Iraq

Baghdad, 28 January 2022 - The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) is deeply concerned by the current wave of attacks targeting political party offices, residences as well as businesses in Iraq, and most recently the rocket attack on Baghdad International Airport.

These despicable attacks have caused injuries and material damage, harming peaceful citizens whose only wish is to

go about their daily lives without fear of attack or death.

Although strongly condemned across the political spectrum, the perpetrators and rogue groups behind these callous attacks appear to enjoy impunity, acting recklessly and exposing the country to disastrous consequences.

It is therefore essential that all stakeholders move beyond condemnations and swiftly pull

together to expose those behind it. At the same time, dialogue must be intensified to find solutions to any political dispute.

Once again, all stakeholders are called upon to exercise restraint and avoid falling into the trap of creating chaos amid a critical yet delicate transitional period.



Gender

Women bring power to peacebuilding: UNDP holds a forum for Iraqi women community leaders

Baghdad, 10 December 2021 - The active participation of women in peace processes is essential for sustainable development and leaving no one behind in Iraq. On 10 December, over 50 representatives from the Women for Peace Groups supported by UNDP Iraq participated in a networking and coordination meeting together with the focal points of the Iraqi Women Empowerment Department in their respective governorates. The women discussed how to strengthen communication among the groups and with the Women Empowerment Department and reviewed their past initiatives implemented in 2021. Participants agreed on recommendations to extend their influence within their communities in



the areas of peacebuilding and social cohesion, including to hold regular coordination meetings for knowledge sharing and to plan joint initiatives. UNDP Iraq, with support from the

governments of Denmark and Germany, works on capacitating five Women for Peace groups with 100 members total in the governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and

Women bring power to peacebuilding: UNDP holds a forum for Iraqi women community leaders *(continued)*

Salah al-Din. These women work within their communities to develop and implement peacebuilding initiatives based on their interests, expertise, and community needs.

"I want to advise women to start engaging in volunteer work early in life to build their capacity and make a change in their community. Women need to engage in these activities and contribute actively to society." - Yasamine, Anbar Women for Peace Group Member.

"My focus is mainly on the mental health issues that have resulted following conflict with ISIL. I want to implement an initiative related to psychosocial support for women, men, and children. In my community, men are taken more seriously than women. I want to work to help women to trust themselves and have a stronger role in their communities. I am also interested in raising awareness about the dangers of drug use." - Tabarak, Diyala Women for Peace Group Member.

"Women in Ninewa are now living in a closed society following the war with ISIL. They are afraid to leave their homes due to security concerns. I want to focus on social media campaigns that indicate that women need to work, deserve to work, and have a responsibility to contribute to their community." - Nardeen, Ninewa Women for Peace Group Member.

"I want to work with children to focus on ensuring the next generations of Iraqis is prepared to lead. I want to focus on empowerment and educating

them on their rights." - Alaa, Salah al-Din Women for Peace Group Member.

"I noticed a problem in the courts in Iraq when it comes to divorce. Usually, women have no understanding of the procedures, and I want to establish an office to educate women about their rights and help them to defend themselves in court. I am also interested in starting a TV programme to discuss women's rights. I am working on a manual to give women legal advice so that those who have faced violence will have the legal knowledge to support themselves. The environment is what creates the leader. I care to build a good environment for women in Iraq to promote leadership." - Sausan, Kirkuk Women for Peace Group Member.

"The most important component for women is advocacy and empowerment. Most women do not know about the regulations and rules that preserve their rights, especially the laws related

to families and women. We will link our volunteer groups to implement joint initiatives. We will support with getting approvals from the government to help these groups implement their initiatives." - Intisar Kareem Abdullah, Legal Consultant and Kirkuk Women Empowerment Department Focal Point.

"We have a center in Ninewa and we can use it to implement initiatives and small projects, and also as a gathering point for the women group to meet and discuss and plan. There is a lot of room for coordination to help the groups achieve their planned goals." - Rafia Mohammed, Ninewa Women Empowerment Department Focal Point.

With support from the governments of Denmark and Germany, UNDP Iraq's Social Cohesion Programme is working to empower women in Iraq through the creation of local peace platforms and women's forums.



On gender-based violence against girls and their right to be safe

Baghdad, 28 December 2021 - UNICEF is deeply concerned by the media reports on the sexual violence suffered by a seven-year-old girl child in Baghdad, along with the kidnapping of her younger brother.

UNICEF condemns all acts of violence against children and calls on all stakeholders and members of society, following Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), of which Iraq is a signatory, to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, including sexual abuse. This commitment to protect children is reinforced by Article 30 of the Constitution of Iraq.

During the 16 Days of Activism, UNICEF, as part of the UN system in Iraq, stressed the need to continue working with the Government and local actors, to improve services for women

and girl survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), including access to healthcare, survivor-centred case management and legal assistance. This case is a sad reminder that there is still much more to be done to protect children.

UNICEF commends action from the authorities to arrest the alleged perpetrator. UNICEF calls on the Government to strengthen concrete measures to bring perpetrators of such crimes to justice and safeguard the life of children. Children in Iraq need a safe environment, free from violence and conducive to the development of their full potential.

However, harm to children suffering from violence and GBV can be even more severe when their information is exposed. In this case, several social media channels and media outlets have

shared private information of the girl, putting her at greater risk.

The CRC, on its Article 16, ensures that every child has the right to privacy. In the spirit of Article 16, UNICEF reiterates the need of all media and social media sites to respect children's privacy and not publish the children's photos or any associated information to preserve their dignity and prevent any further damage.

UNICEF will continue to support the Governments in both Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region with a shared vision that by 2024 children, adolescents and women, especially the most vulnerable, are protected from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, in accordance with national legal and policy framework and international standards.

The final conference of the project “A suitable environment to enhance the roles of women in peace and security” held in Baghdad



Baghdad, 28 December 2021 - With the support of the UN Women and Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund, Sawtuha Network for Women Human Rights Defenders held the final conference of the project “A suitable environment to enhance the roles of women in peace and security”. The conference covered a review of the results of the study prepared by the network, which focused on the main issues and challenges facing women in Baghdad and the provinces, in the presence of the Director General of the NGOs Department Ashraf Al-Dahan and a representative of the Department

of Women Empowerment, in addition to academic, human rights and media organizations and personalities.

The conference presented the results of the field study conducted by the academic research team consisting of Dr. Tariq Hafez, Dr. Nibras Al-Mamouri, and researcher Nour Nabih, which covered the social, economic, political, health, legal and cultural issues, analysis and recommendations to be adopted as a future road map, especially with the imminent implementation of the second national plan of Resolution 1325.

Adolescent girls must be empowered to speak up for their rights

Baghdad, 17 January 2022 - Adolescent girls must be empowered to speak up for their rights and develop their self-confidence and autonomy to take control of their lives and be effective drivers of positive change in their communities.

Today, Ambassador of Spain to Iraq, H.E. Pedro Martinez Avial, and UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Rita

Columbia, met with young girls at the UNFPA-supported women centre in Harsham camp.

With the girls, the delegation talked about the lessons they learn through the #AdolescentToolkit, their aspirations and ambitions and the way forward for them to reach their full potential.



Report on GBV and hate speech against female candidates in the October 2021 elections launched in Baghdad



Baghdad, 26 January 2022 – The Free Iraq Foundation, UNAMI implementing partner, organized today a conference to launch the report on gender-based violence and hate speech against female candidates in the October 2021 elections.

Here is the text of the speech by the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún

Gísladóttir, at this conference:

“Dr. Yusra Karim, Director-General, Women’s Empowerment Directorate, General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers,

Dr. Ahlam al-Jabiri, Commissioner, Independent High Elections Commission, Ambassador Jonas Lovén, Swedish Embassy, Ambassador Rend al-Rahim, President, Free Iraq Foundation,

Ms. Faryal Al Kaabi, NGO Representative

Ms. Dina Zorba, Country Representative, UNWOMEN, Newly-Elected Members of Parliament,

Former Members of Parliament, Members of the International Community,

My colleagues in the UN family, Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen,

First, I thank the Free Iraq Foundation, our implementing partner for organizing this conference to launch the report on gender-based violence and hate speech against female candidates in the October elections. The project is part of fulfilling our mandate in promoting women’s full and equal participation in political and electoral processes. I recognize the efforts of other entities who contributed to promoting women’s participation in the October elections including the Directorate for Women’s Empowerment at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, UNW and local NGOs and civil society. That shows

Report on GBV and hate speech against female candidates in the October 2021 elections launched in Baghdad *(continued)*



that women's political advancement is achievable through our joint efforts.

I congratulate Iraqi women for their exemplary performance and winning 95 seats in the Council of Representatives. Before the elections, I interacted with Iraqi women leaders, members of the Women Advisory Group and civil society representatives online and in physical meetings in Baghdad, Mosul, Kirkuk and other locations to hear their views and concerns regarding the elections. From that engagement, I understood that female candidates were facing many challenges. There are

numerous hurdles that women face when they come forward and request their fair share of power, and the obstacles are not limited to elections. Women are faced with practical challenges, cultural-related challenges, and security-related challenges. We will hear more about gender-based violence and hate speech that some of the candidates faced in the conference today.

We should not let Iraqi women down. I urge political actors and relevant entities to translate the exemplary performance of women in the elections into better and more opportunities for women's representation and participation in other areas of governance for example at the executive level.

For Iraqi women who won, do not let your constituents down. I urge you to use your time and service in Parliament to fully bring women's concerns and interests at the heart of legislation to the extent possible alongside male MPs that support women's rights. As we are aware, one critical piece of legislation that remains

pending is the Anti-Domestic Violence Bill. Here, allow me to acknowledge the efforts of former women MPs and the leadership of the Committee on Women, Children and Family Affairs which made efforts to push for bills to advance women's empowerment. Your experiences and lessons learnt are valuable to the new MPs.

Following the issuance of the report on gender-based violence and hate speech against female candidates in the last elections, I urge the Government of Iraq, political parties, and other relevant entities to consider the recommendations therein and to take concrete steps to create a safe environment for women to enable them to participate in future electoral processes. Only once politically and socially active women are protected and safe, Iraq can claim to be making real progress towards women's rights, equality, and empowerment.

As UNAMI, we remain steadfast in providing the requested support to enhancing women's political participation within our mandate. Thank you."

France contributes US\$ 1,539 M for women protection services through UNFPA Programmes in Iraq

Baghdad, 27 January 2022 - The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Iraq welcomes the French Government's new contribution of US\$ 1,539,000 to strengthen the prevention of and response to gender-based violence in Anbar, Baghdad, Basra, and Nineveh governorates.

The new commitment will focus on increasing access to services for gender-based violence survivors by establishing new women protection centres in Anbar, Basra and Mosul and refurbishing the existing women shelter in Baghdad.

The women protection centres and the shelter will provide women and girls in need with medical, psychosocial and legal support as well as livelihood sessions to support their reintegration into society or reconciliation with their families.

Speaking during the event, the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Dr Adel Al-Rakabi, called on partners to support the Ministry in creating a solid infrastructure to protect and assist survivors of gender-based violence. He highlighted the need to establish similar centres in other



governorates and have systems that address the root causes of gender-based violence.

For his part, the Ambassador of France to Iraq, Dr Eric Chevallier, said: "I set the issue of GBV at the top of my priorities. France has been working to find ways to support UNFPA's programmes against gender-based violence in Baghdad and across the country, in partnership with dedicated local NGOs. I call on the new parliament and the future government to put this issue high on their agenda to ensure that women and girls have the opportunity to thrive and become stronger contributors to society".

UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Rita Columbia, thanked France for its trust in UNFPA and called the Government of Iraq to endorse legislation that

protects women and girls from violence. "We are grateful to the French Government, represented by the French embassy in Iraq, for supporting Iraqi women and girls to live lives free of violence. The establishment of women protection centres is a step forward in the path against gender-based violence in Iraq. They should become an integral part of the Government's response to gender-based violence to make sure that women and girls have a safe haven to seek protection," she added.

UNFPA will work closely with local authorities, the Women Empowerment Department and relevant ministries to support the implementation of the proper legal framework and standard operating procedures to ensure a survivor-centred approach when dealing with survivors.

The event was attended by the Governor of Nineveh, Mr Najm Al-Joubouri, and representatives of the Governors of Anbar and Basra, the Secretary-General of the Women Empowerment Department, Dr Yousra Al-Allak, and representatives of relevant ministries.

First Gender-Based Violence Strategic Plan launched in Iraq

Baghdad, 2 February 2022 - The Ministry of Health in Iraq, together with the World Health Organization (WHO), launched the first Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Strategic Plan 2022-2026 on 31 January 2022. The plan will provide the strategic vision and the operational directions for better implementation and coordination of sustainable interventions related to the health system response to GBV to reduce its short and long health consequences.

Dr Rana Mohammad Ali, GBV Officer for WHO Iraq, indicated that the strategic plan aims to integrate comprehensive and well-coordinated GBV health services into health facilities at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

"The plan also intends to increase community awareness on the prevention of GBV and strives to fight stigmatization while strengthening the integration of GBV into the humanitarian and emergency health response," she added.

The strategic plan is designed to gradually cover all provinces of Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region-Iraq (KR-I), with a flexible and ad-hoc plan tailored to each province's specific needs and situation.

"This strategy focuses on reducing the impact of gender-based violence by ensuring adequate physical and mental care is available and accessible for all GBV survivors," said Dr Ahmed

Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq. "We will need to work collectively on correcting the root causes of the violence itself and ensuring that our girls and boys are educated correctly and sensitized on the respect for one another."

Gender-based violence worsens during humanitarian crises as vulnerability increases, especially when accountability decreases. Furthermore, the pre-existing gender and social inequalities affecting women and girls were further exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic and increased different forms of GBV, particularly domestic violence.

The Minister of Health H.E Dr Hani Bader Al-Aqaby assured the importance of having a strategic plan for GBV as it is considered the main pillar through which we can provide curative, preventive, and psychological services to survivors of gender-based violence.

"Ministry of Health is committed to be

an active part of an institutional change to approach GBV prevention and response in coordination with WHO and civil society organizations," said H.E Dr Hani Bader Al-Aqaby.

In Iraq, some 1.32 million people are estimated to be at risk of different forms of GBV and more than 75% of them are women and adolescent girls. 77% of GBV incidents are linked to domestic violence. The recently-launched WHO global violence against women report estimates that a prevalence of 26% of lifetime intimate partner violence among ever-married/partnered women aged 15-49 in Iraq.

The United Nations defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."



UNFPA, IOM, UN Women support strengthening legal frameworks for female survivors of violence

Erbil, 7 February 2022 - The Women Empowerment Department, in collaboration with the Arab Women Organisation, organised a two-day conference on 3-4 February to discuss the legal frameworks for female survivors of violence in Arab countries affected by armed conflicts and war.

Delegates from Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Sudan, Palestine and Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region, attended the conference, supported by UNFPA, UN Women and IOM. The participants discussed and shared the lessons learnt, the road to recovery for survivors of gender-based violence, and the importance of applying the survivor-based approach for effective response to gender-based violence.

Guest panellists from the Arab countries presented their countries' progress regarding the UN resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Representatives of Iraq and the



Kurdistan Region shared the national and regional policies and legislation to help survivors of gender-based violence, including the Law on Support to Female Yazidi Survivors.

Several survivors, including survivors of sexual violence in war, shared their stories. They highlighted the importance and impact of mental health and psychosocial support in

their journeys to recovery and reintegration into society.

The meeting resulted in recommendations for strengthening women representation, building platforms for implementing 1325 Resolution, and improving legislation to combat violence against women ensuring survivors centred approach.

It was a whole year full of pain

Erbil, 8 February 2022 - "I was kidnapped by ISIL as my family and I fled Sinjar in 2014. They killed my husband and kept me in captivity for a whole year. I ran away from them in 2015. I don't want to talk about what I experienced during that year. It was a whole year full of pain," said Siham, Hajji a 25-year-old survivor of ISIL's genocide against the Yazidi people.

Siham attended a two-day conference in Erbil to discuss legal frameworks for female survivors of violence in Arab countries affected by armed conflicts and war. Conference was supported by UNFPA and funded by the British Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

Several survivors, including survivors of sexual violence in war, shared their stories. They highlighted the importance and impact of mental health and psychosocial support on their journeys to recovery and reintegration into society.

"When I returned, my psychological situation was tragic. Living in the camp was also difficult – during summer the heat was killing us, and during winter it was freezing cold. Now I have no work, no source of livelihood nor any

support, and we hope that the [Yazidi Female] Survivors Law will help us as survivors by providing us the necessary support to find jobs and allocating us salaries," continued Siham.

"I feel as if it is too late to establish a law for the survivors because we have already lived through all types of pain and need over the past eight years. Still, we hope now that it will be done – the application of this law and provision of psychological and economic support to the survivors," added Siham.

"In this workshop, we discussed the exposure of women and their children [during] displacement and ways to mitigate this, as well as their return and reintegration into their communities," said Saeed Al-Jaiyashi, Strategic Affairs Advisor with the Iraqi National Security Advisory.

"We mentioned the social and psychological rehabilitation centers that were established, as well as the law on Yazidi female survivors. I think that there are many procedures to come regarding women who are still in captivity, too," Al-Jaiyashi continued. "We hope that this file will be closed and that humanitarian, legal and security operations will take place to



facilitate their return and reintegration. Legal processes have been arranged for the children and the female survivors' personal situations, as well."

The meeting produced recommendations for strengthening women's representation at large; building platforms for the implementation of UN resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; and improving legislation to combat violence against women and ensure survivor-centred approach.

The conference was made possible with support from the Government of the United Kingdom.

UNFPA is proud to support the Directorate of Combatting of Violence against Women (DCVAW) in Duhok

Duhok, 8 February 2022 - UNFPA is proud to support the Directorate of Combatting of Violence against Women (DCVAW) in Duhok and thanks them for the work and passion in the protection of women and girls in the Governorate.

Talks today between Dr Aram Atrushy, Head of DCVAW in Duhok, with UNFPA Representative, Dr Rita Columbia, focused on the 119 helpline and the community awareness and response to gender-based violence, including domestic violence.



UNFPA Representative in Iraq visits Basra

Basra, 16 February 2022 - UNFPA Representative in Iraq, Dr Rita Columbia, held several meetings today in Basra with the Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs and the Directorate of Youth and Sport discussing the model female youth sports centre as well as the effective ways to offer skills

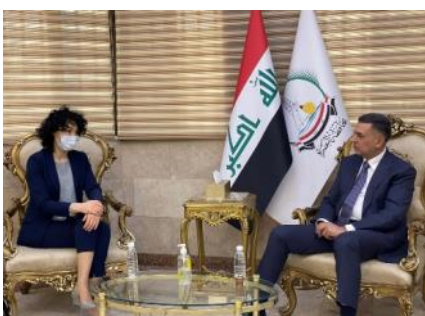
to empower young people across the Governorate.

UNFPA met with the Governor of Basra, Mr Asaad Al-Idani, to discuss the establishment of a Women Protection Centre in the Governorate, with funding from France, aiming at strengthening the measures for

preventing gender-based violence (GBV) in Basra. The centre will provide a safe space for women and girls survivors of GBV.

UNFPA team also met with tribal and religious leaders. Dr Rita Columbia thanked the Basra Tribal Council for its willingness and support for women empowerment and the tribes' commitment to preventing GBV.

'Tribes and religious leaders have a major and crucial role in maintaining a peaceful environment and promoting equal opportunities for women and girls in Basra and across Iraq. UNFPA will continue to engage with all actors to make sure women and girls are accessing their rights', said Dr Columbia.



Government agencies and civil society organizations have a critical role to play in the monitoring & implementation of INAP II

Baghdad, 16 February 2022 - The capacities of the Divisions for the Department of Women Empowerment representing 18 governorates were strengthened to effectively monitor the implementation of the INAP II. The 2-day workshop focused on revisiting the main outcomes of the INAP and introducing the newly developed comprehensive M&E framework which highlights the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, ministries, non-governmental entities and civil society. The M&E tool aims to support in developing localized plans for the governorates which would feed into the overall monitoring framework of the INAP.

33 Civil society organizations from various governorates participated in a similar workshop aimed at identifying their role in monitoring the implementation of the second Iraqi National Action Plan. The M&E framework was introduced and participants were engaged in working sessions to determine potential CSO interventions.

Dr. Yusra Mohsen, Director of the Department of Women Empowerment expressed her support to civil society organisations and added that they have

a critical role to play in the monitoring and implementation of INAP II. His excellency Matti Lassila, Ambassador to Finland, supported this event and stressed on the importance of participation of all relevant stakeholders to succeed. Edvard Thorfinn George, Programme manager at SIDA representing the Swedish government, added that implementing action plans requires active participation of both men and women and that WPS is at the top of the agenda for the Swedish government. Dina Zorba, UN Women representative,

acknowledged the importance of involving CSO's and appreciated the commitment of the Iraqi government and the contributions provided by Sweden and Finland in advancing the implementation of the NAP II.

These events were done in partnership with the government of Finland and the Department of Women Empowerment under project "Advancing the Implementation of the Second Iraq National Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security" funded by the government of Sweden.



Executive Council of the Arab Women Organization held session in Baghdad

Baghdad, 22 February 2022 – The 15th meeting of the Executive Council of the Arab Women Organization was held in Baghdad on February 19 and 20, 2022.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Yousra Karim Mohsen, Director General of the Iraqi Women Empowerment Department, and President of the Executive Council of the organization in its current session, and the Arab member states of the organization participated in person and through the Zoom application.

Dr. Yusra Mohsen, in her opening speech, welcomed the honorable attendance, and considered that holding the meeting in Baghdad is an important step in the path of Iraq's resumption of its pioneering role in promoting joint Arab action and comes in line with the orientations of Iraqi foreign policy and its openness to Arab countries.

She added that in light of what was approved by the constitution and laws and in line with human rights principles and conventions and charters on women's rights, the Iraqi government's effort was focused on promoting women's rights and empowering them, and this resulted in the Iraqi government achieving many goals by developing strategies, plans,



procedures and coordination with government and legislative bodies. These efforts culminated in the participation of women in the October 2021 elections, when Iraqi women won 95 parliamentary seats, which is higher than the quota limit of 83 seats; That is an increase of 12 seats. Women have proven their ability to win electoral seats without the need to

apply a quota, as 57 women won by their voting power.

She added that within the framework of planning and future vision, the Department of Women's Empowerment, in cooperation with state institutions and with the support of the United Nations Women, is working to develop the national strategy for Iraqi women for the

Executive Council of the Arab Women Organization held session in Baghdad *(continued)*

years 2023-2027..within a set of objectives and pillars based on identifying the gaps and challenges facing Iraqi women.

In her speech, Dr. Fadia Kiwan, Director-General of the Arab Women Organization, saluted all the members of the Executive Council and the delegations participating in the meeting by physical or virtual attendance via Zoom, and also thanked the Republic of Iraq for hosting the work of the meeting.

She stressed that the Arab Women Organization is an organization that carries a noble message towards women and that it is aware of its message through cooperation with relevant governmental institutions in the Arab countries, as well as through partnership with civil society institutions and non-governmental organizations, and that this cooperation aims to enhance awareness and a woman-friendly culture and dismantle stereotypes. Negativity about gender roles and the establishment of equality between them in opportunities to achieve the renaissance of entire societies, by carrying men and women together and hand in hand all family, social and national burdens.

The Director-General of the organization noted the progress made by Iraqi women

in the recent elections, which indicates that women have become more courageous and self-confident in running for elections, in addition to the fact that Iraqi society encourages women to assume public responsibilities.

Dina Zorba, the representative of the United Nations Women in Iraq and Yemen, expressed her happiness to participate in the opening session of the fifteenth extraordinary meeting of the Executive Council of the Arab Women Organization, and thanked the organization for the pioneering programs and projects it has adopted in relation to issues of gender equality and the rights of women and girls. In the Arab region, she praised the long-term partnership between the organization and UN Women.

She conveyed to the attendees the greetings of Ms. Susan Mikhail, Regional Director of UN Women.

She pointed out that the developments that took place in recent years in a number of Arab countries showed the positive and main role that women play in achieving development, growth and development in their society.

She also praised the success of Iraq, despite the political, economic and social

conditions that it has experienced during the past years, in achieving a qualitative and exceptional leap regarding gender as a basis for development, which could not have been achieved without the support of the Iraqi government and the intensive efforts of the Department of Women Empowerment in the General Secretariat of the Prime Minister The Women's Council in the Kurdistan Region and civil society organizations,

She pointed out that Iraq ratified United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1325 on women, security and peace, and was the first Arab country to adopt its implementation and to develop national plans aimed at achieving increased participation of women in decision-making positions, reconciliation committees and peace-building negotiations, amending legislation and laws, empowering women and promoting its capabilities,

She affirmed the continuation of support and assistance to Iraqi women, the government and civil society in order to achieve equality and justice and to create and consolidate the appropriate environment for the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Program as stated in Resolution 1325.

Human Rights

UNAMI Human Rights Office builds capacity of IHCHR in Ninewa

Mosul, 20 January 2022 - Twelve staff of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) in Mosul participated in a one-day training on human rights and humanitarian law, organized by UNAMI's Human Rights Office. Participants discussed among other topics the concepts of human rights and humanitarian law, their applicability in Iraq as well as available accountability mechanisms relevant for the country.

Yasir Thia, the director of IHCHR Mosul Office, said: "After two years of pausing in-person capacity building activities due to COVID-19, IHCHR in Nineveh is very pleased to resume



training with support of UNAMI. We aspire to cooperate more closely and build on today's training to further

develop the skills for our staff, and thereby improve the reality of human rights in Nineveh province."

UNAMI on Twitter

Baghdad, 25 January 2022 - The UN Iraq Human Rights Office welcomes the cooperation with the Ministry of Interior on rights of suspects, accused and detained persons in Iraq. <https://bit.ly/3rQjdae>

Nasiriya, 26 January 2022 - Today, UNIraq Human Rights Office chief Danielle Bell met with authorities at Nasiriya central prison. They discussed measures to improve health conditions and reduce overcrowding. The delegation also toured the facility.

UNAMI on Twitter

Baghdad, 3 February 2022 - Appalled by murder of transgender woman in Dohuk. We note Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) efforts in pursuit of suspect. Hate, discrimination and so-called “honour” killings have no place in a democratic society. Investigation and accountability are critical to prevent such horrific crimes, under any pretext.

UNAMI’s HRO delivered a training to the Iraqi Interior Ministry’s media officers on human rights obligations placed upon authorities in their reporting

Baghdad, 3 February 2022 – UNAMI’s Human Rights Office delivered a training to the Iraqi Interior Ministry’s media officers on human rights obligations placed upon authorities in their reporting. The two-day training in Baghdad, organized by the Ministry’s Directorate for Relations and Information, aimed to inform and hone the reporting skills of staff

relating to human rights and technical language when drafting press releases on security matters. Discussions focused among other topics on the duty of authorities to inform the public while at the same time taking into account the rights of suspects and the right to privacy.



Basra, 9 February 2022 - Danielle Bell, Chief of UNAMI’s Human Rights Office, met today with Mehdi Al-Tamimi, Head of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights office in Basra, to discuss human rights issues in Basra.

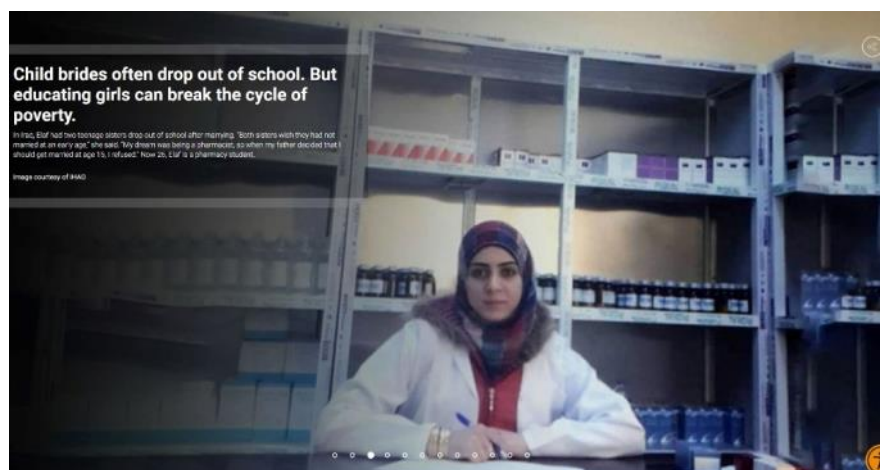
Baghdad, 16 February 2022 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary -General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, accompanied by the Head of the UNAMI Human Rights Office and Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Danielle Bell, met today with Ambassador Dr. Hisham Al-Alawi, Head of the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They discussed mutual cooperation in the field of protection and promotion of human rights in Iraq.

The annual #IDONT campaign is a vow to help end child marriage

Baghdad, 14 February 2022 - Every Valentine’s Day since 2015, UNFPA has called on the international community to say #IDONT to show support for girls the world over who say “I do” against their will. The annual #IDONT campaign is a vow to help end child marriage.

Child marriage is a human rights violation that denies a girl her bodily autonomy. It marks the end of childhood and choice when marriage should be the dawn of a new beginning. It is a picture of dashed dreams when marriage should be a symbol of hope.

Learn more : <https://www.unfpa.org/idont>



National training for Iraq on human rights at international borders in the context of counter-terrorism held in Baghdad



Baghdad, 17 February 2022 - United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Human Rights Office together with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the

International Organization for Migration (IOM) organized a “National Training for Iraq on Human Rights at International Borders in the Context of Counter-Terrorism”. The three-day

training was hosted by the Al-Nahrain Centre for Strategic Studies in Baghdad from 15 to 17 February 2022. This training, organized in the framework of the existing and growing partnership cooperation between UNOCT, IOM and OHCHR, gathered over 17 senior officials engaged in border management issues. The objective of the training was to enhance the capacities of national officials to better understand and apply internationally recognized standards and applicable human rights instruments, protocols and guidelines not only to ensure the protection of human rights while preventing cross-border movement of suspected or known terrorists and foreign terrorist fighters but also safe, orderly and regular migration.

Living with Disabilities

IOM organized awareness sessions about the rights of persons with disabilities and the importance of disability inclusion

Basra, 10 January 2022 - Continued support for the work of persons with disabilities is crucial as they strive to improve their realities and assert their rights in Iraq.

As part of ongoing initiatives supported by IOM Iraq, Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPD) members and disability activists from Basra and Thi-qar conducted awareness sessions to teach their communities about the rights of persons with disabilities and

the importance of disability inclusion. The sessions targeted school students and university staff in Thi-qar and Basra, respectively.

In delivering these sessions, OPD members and disability activists used knowledge gained through an IOM capacity-building programme dedicated to fostering a more inclusive and accessible society in Iraq, made possible through the support of the Government of Bulgaria.



IOM training aiming to strengthen OPD members' ability to advocate for inclusive humanitarian and development programming



Baghdad, 13 February 2022 - Consulting Organizations of Persons

with Disabilities (OPDs) is a crucial but often neglected step in the design and

implementation of humanitarian and development programmes aiming to address the specific barriers experienced by persons with disabilities in Iraq.

In January 2022, IOM Iraq conducted a five-day training for 21 members of OPDs from across 13 governorates. The training focused on the role of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the humanitarian system, aiming to strengthen OPD members' ability to advocate for inclusive humanitarian and development programming.

This activity was made possible with the support of the Government of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

UNITAD psychologists continue with trainings for experts serving minority communities targeted by ISIL

Duhok, 19 January 2022 - UNITAD psychologists conducted a 2-day training in Duhok for Caritas Iraq PSS experts serving minority communities targeted by ISIL. The training covered dealing with child trauma, adolescent emotional disorders and impact of trauma on SGBV (sexual and gender-based violence) survivors and other psychosocial issues.



Baghdad, 26 January 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher met with president of Yazda Organization Mr. Haider Elias in Baghdad today. They discussed ongoing cooperation between UNITAD and Yazda Organization regarding investigations into crimes ISIL committed against the Yazidi community and mass graves excavations.



Baghdad, 2 February 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher met Dr. Issam Al-Saadi Deputy of Iraq's National Security Advisor today and discussed ISIL accountability efforts. The Special Adviser reiterated his vision for enhancing cooperation with Iraqi authorities and was grateful for the constructive discussions and warm hospitality he received.

Chief Justice Zidan and Special Adviser Ritscher commend the work of Iraqi Judges to hold ISIL members accountable for international crimes

Baghdad, 6 February 2022 – During a ceremony organized by the Iraqi High Judicial Council and the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Daesh/ISIL (UNITAD) in Baghdad today, Judge Faiq Zidan and Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Mr. Christian Ritscher congratulated Iraqi Judges who completed basic and advance courses in International Criminal Law and International Humanitarian Law.

The five-month online training course included forty lectures and was developed in cooperation with the Australian National University. It aimed to deepen the knowledge and expertise of members of the Iraqi judiciary in areas related to International Criminal Law and International Humanitarian Law.

These legal aspects are vital given the nature of ISIL's crimes in Iraq, as international crimes. Such capacity building of the Iraqi Judiciary would

open the door to prosecute ISIL perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Iraq once an appropriate legal framework is adopted in Iraq.

Special Adviser Ritscher underlined the

importance of this project saying “this capacity building project aims to establish a new class of Iraqi experts in international criminal law and humanitarian law that will not only benefit Iraq but the region as well.



Chief Justice Zidan and Special Adviser Ritscher commend the work of Iraqi Judges ... *(continued)*

Members of the Iraqi judiciary, now vested with expertise in international criminal law and international humanitarian law, can play a pivotal role in holding ISIL perpetrators accountable for international crimes committed in Iraq, adding that seeing such trials take place in Iraq is our common objective".

Speaking on behalf of the Council and

the participating judges, the President of the Supreme Judicial Council Judge Faiq Zidan thanked UNITAD and the Australian National University for what they provided during this course, which contributes to developing the capacities of the judges. He further welcomed that more of these similar courses be organized.

As part of its mandate and commitment

to capacity building in Iraq with the aim of supporting domestic efforts to hold ISIL accountable, UNITAD was pleased and proud to have assembled a group of international lecturers who are not only eminent experts but are all Arabic speakers. This was especially important during the inter-active discussion sessions that followed each lecture.

UNITAD's continuous support to Iraqi national experts to assist in identifying the victims of ISIL crimes

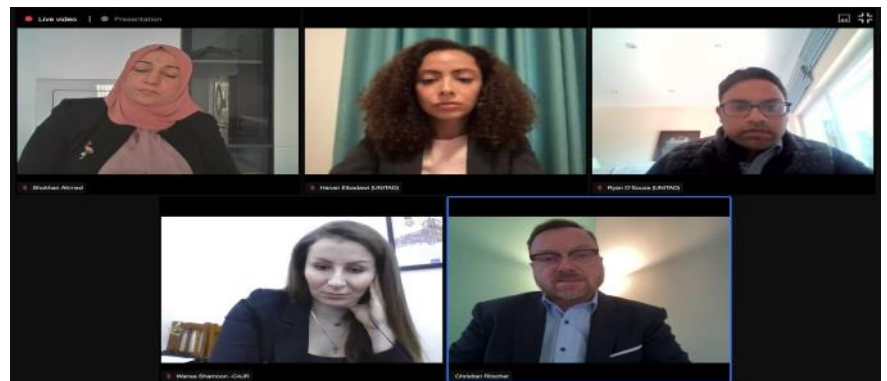
Baghdad, 15 February 2022 - With UNITAD's support, Iraq's Medico-Legal Directorate and Mass Graves Directorate specialists will conduct an outreach campaign in Karbala from 15-17 February 2022 to collect information on missing persons and DNA reference samples from families of the Badoush

prison victims of ISIL. The campaign is part of UNITAD's continuous support to Iraqi national experts to assist in identifying the victims of ISIL crimes, hold perpetrators accountable and return victims' remains to their families where they could receive a dignified burial.



Third Biannual Plenary Roundtable meeting of the UNITAD-NGO Dialogue Forum held recently

Baghdad, 18 February 2022 - The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) held its Third Biannual Plenary Roundtable meeting of the UNITAD-NGO Dialogue Forum. In his opening remarks, Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Christian Ritscher provided an overall update on the work of UNITAD, since he assumed his responsibilities in October 2021, and highlighted key priorities for the Investigative Team.



UNITAD provided a training to to enhance the capacity of documentation for staff

Erbil, 18 February 2022 - UNITAD psychologists provided a 2-day training to Shlomo Organization for Documentation in Erbil to enhance the capacity of documentation for staff to adopt a trauma-informed approach in their work with survivors of ISIL crimes.

Such an approach maximizes the likelihood of gathering complete and accurate responses, as well as avoiding re-traumatization while conducting interviews with vulnerable victims and survivors of ISIL crimes.

PSS trainings are supported by Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq.



UNITAD presents Iraq's Medical Legal Directorate an advanced Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)

Baghdad, 22 February 2022 – The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) hosted a ceremony in Baghdad to mark the official handover of the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) including a DNA matching module MatchMaker to the Medical Legal Directorate's (MLD) DNA laboratory.

"This ceremony is the culmination of a joint process that began in May 2021 and is the result of extensive cooperation and collaboration between MLD and UNITAD. We are committed to continuing this crucial partnership between UNITAD and the Iraqi government and strengthening the capacities of national counterparts", said Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Christian Ritscher.

Mr. Ritscher underscored the importance of this system highlighting how it will enable Iraqi authorities to accelerate the process of DNA identification of the victims of ISIL crimes underpinned by a robust evidence management process, namely the step-by-step tracking of the handling of the forensic evidence, the scientific procedures performed and maintaining chain of custody in line with international standards. These are key components to ensure admissibility of the forensic evidence in judicial proceedings.

The LIMS, which will be installed at the premises of the MLD, will support the MLD team in its efforts to establish robust scientific identifications of the remains of victims recovered from ISIL mass graves across Iraq.

Dr. Zaid Ali Abbas, Director General of MLD, expressed his thanks to UNITAD, praising the partnership between the Team and Iraqi national

institutions, which promotes the capacities of national experts. He also pointed out that this system "will significantly enhance our capabilities to match and identify the remains of ISIL victims more effectively and quickly". He further explained that the MLD, in cooperation with UNITAD, continues to conduct campaigns to collect information on victims and missing persons from their families.

The MLD's DNA scientists have played a leading role in realizing this initiative, as they identified the need for this system based on their expertise and their deep understanding of the scale of the challenge to identify all victims of ISIL crimes in Iraq.

Dr. Timm Zörgiebel, Managing Director of qualitytype GmbH, which developed the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS), accentuated: "It is a big honour for us to become part of the mission of UNITAD. This really adds to the purpose of our company and pushes the motivation of our people. It is a pleasure to support with our deep

expertise in genetic analysis and digital laboratory management. Especially the MatchMaker module, will enable rapid search for individuals in a large database of DNA profiles."

Dr. Zörgiebel underscored that the MatchMaker module not only identifies direct matches it also finds relationships between individuals. "By enabling you with these superpowers I really hope we can contribute to the success of your mission in a meaningful way."

Supporting Iraqi capacities is at the heart of UNITAD's mandate towards achieving the common objective of pursuing accountability for ISIL international crimes, and achieving justice for victims and survivors. The cooperation between UNITAD and qualitytype GmbH to provide the LIMS including the DNA MatchMaker application will advance Iraq's national capabilities to account for persons missing as a result of ISIL crimes, and subsequently support domestic proceedings to hold ISIL members accountable.



Migrations

Voices of return

Baghdad, 10 January 2022 – IOM supports people who voluntarily decided to return to Iraq. Here are some of their stories:

Sipar Abdul Karim is a 33-year-old who decided to voluntarily return to Iraq with her family after emigrating to Germany in 2016 in search for a better life.

Back then, Sipar was living in Erbil, and she feared for her children's future because of the danger posed by the

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), particularly because her husband was a police officer.

"We left in June 2016, bringing our hopes and dreams to Germany, looking for law, justice and work, so we could live in dignity. Most of all, we wanted a better future for our children. The journey was uneventful as we flew from Erbil. After we arrived, we claimed asylum and eventually ended up staying

in a camp, the four of us living in one room. We found this accommodation arrangement very uncomfortable, because the children needed space and more comfort. We thought this would be temporary, but we ended up living in these conditions for over ten months, at which point the authorities told us that our asylum application had been rejected.

We did not want to stay there any longer

Voices of return *(continued)*

as life was becoming difficult for us. To build a good and stable life in Germany, you need time and effort. We were also



our friends, and we did not like all that distance between us. It is nice to be with family and feel their warmth," she recalls.

Sipar believes that her migration experience was not worth all the sacrifices she made.

"It was a useful experience for us, we explored a new, different culture, but if I had known that our request would be rejected, we would not have gone to Europe, and we would not have spent all that money and made all those sacrifices. We returned to Erbil in April 2017. It was great to be among our family again. The feeling of being home was heartwarming, but we had to start our lives over from scratch, as my husband could not return to his old job. We were concerned since we did not have a source of income and were worried about providing for our children. IOM helped us through this difficult time by paying for our daily expenses with cash assistance. I am now looking for a job to regain the stability we lost and to secure a decent life for my children," Sipar concludes.

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Twenty-eight-year-old Seve Saido from Sinjar is one of the Iraqi refugees who emigrated to Germany legally as part of IOM's Family Assistance Programme.

"When the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) occupied parts of Iraq in 2014, they robbed us of life. This was the main reason we decided to emigrate to Germany. In 2018, my husband and I managed to join our son who had emigrated to Germany with his uncle three years before. My husband and I emigrated regularly, but my two younger children did not get approval at the time, so they stayed in Iraq. One of the hardest moments of my life was leaving my country and the homeland of my ancestors and going to Germany. I left everything behind, including my other children.

The trip to Germany, however, was very easy and I felt comfortable because we had emigrated legally and never had to experience camp life, unemployment or economic hardship. We were not stressed because there was no risk of being

rejected; we received our residency permit soon after and everything was perfect.

In Germany, I fulfilled my dream of enrolling in school and holding a pen. I had not received any education in Iraq because my father did not have the means to send me to school, although I had always wanted to learn. Before arriving in Germany, I was illiterate; a few months into our arrival, I could read and write, and had achieved my dream without having to ask for favors – for free.

But I was terrified for my children who stayed behind in the camp because it was



and forth between Germany and Iraq to check on them, as well as his mother.

Eventually we decided to return to Iraq for good because we could not leave his mother alone, and she was sick. The immigration laws in Germany do not allow a mother to be reunited with her adult son, so we had no other choice. It is part of our tradition to take care of the elderly; it was our duty to return. We left our lives in Germany for her.

On 25 October 2020, I returned with my family to Iraq.

For those who can study, get a certificate and build a stable future, there is nothing better than one's homeland. Nothing is more beautiful than being with family in our homeland. Had we not been tortured by ISIL, we would never have left, even if we were poor. Home is the most precious thing one can have, and even if you live in a camp, you feel psychologically at ease among your family and your people.

My greatest concern now is my children's future. This worry is motivating me to look for work every day, so they can have a better future; I will strive for that as long as I live."

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Nizar Hajo is one of the many Iraqis who chose to emigrate irregularly in search of solutions to the social and economic problems that hit Iraq with the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Most people who choose to migrate irregularly are not aware of the dangers of trusting smugglers and human traffickers. There are rarely happy endings to such situations. This was the case with Nizar Hajo, a 21-year-old from

Sinjar, who recalls his migration journey:

"I was 15 years old when I decided to emigrate from Dohuk city, where I lived with my parents and two sisters after being displaced from Sinjar. On 24 June 2015, I left for Turkey on my own, full of hopes and dreams that I could complete my studies in Germany, help my family emigrate and change their lives. But my decision to trust the smugglers exposed me to great risks.

After four days in Turkey, a smuggler escorted a group of us on a trip that lasted for more than two weeks. It was very scary and difficult. We crossed through various countries and were exposed to many scammers. They were never honest. They lied to us about the distances we traveled on foot. In one of the countries, they told us that to cross the border, we would have to walk for four hours through the woods. We ended up walking for two days, and without food! No one was prepared for such a strenuous hike, and I was terrified. The only thing that kept me moving forward was that I could not go back. Seeing



children and women go through such suffering was painful.

I finally arrived in Germany and found it to be

a beautiful country. I was able to go to school and got an internship when I turned 18.

I started the family reunification procedures, and we were reunited in Germany. However, the reunification programme did not accept my older sister, so my father decided to go back to Iraq. After a while, my mother returned as well. She could not stand being separated from my father and sister. I also decided to return. I could not bear to be alone without my family, and my father needed someone to look after him and take him to the doctor regularly because he has a chronic disease.

I felt that I had a good life in Germany and would have had a better future if I had stayed, but I decided to return to help my family and stand by them. After my return to Iraq, life is difficult again. Now I sit at home and have no work, and it has been almost a year since we returned.

In Germany, I had what I needed: health insurance, studies and work. I hope to go back again, but I would do so in a legal way, so as not to go through the pain and suffering of the illegal migration journey again.

By Sarah Ali, IOM Iraq

IOM Iraq and KfW German Development Bank met with the Undersecretary of the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement

Baghdad, 24 January 2022 - Representatives of IOM Iraq and KfW German Development Bank met with the Undersecretary of the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MOMD), Dr. Karim Al-Nouri, and the Director General of the Branch Affairs Department in the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, Mr. Ali Jahakir, at the Ministry's headquarters in Baghdad. The participants discussed displacement, voluntary return, repercussions of irregular migration, and the response to protracted displacement, as well as programming to support the vulnerable in line with MOMD's vision.



IOM Iraq collecting input from representatives of the Technical Working Group on migration and technical task forces

Baghdad, 6 February 2022 - Migration within and across borders is a defining feature of our globalized world, and managing it requires a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach in cooperation with international actors. The Global Compact for Migration (GCM) is the first inter-governmentally negotiated agreement covering all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. Last year, Iraq expressed solidarity with the GCM and the United Nations Network on Migration by joining the Champion countries initiative.

Today, IOM Iraq held a meeting in Baghdad to collect input from representatives of the Technical Working Group on migration and technical task forces – including officials from Iraqi government ministries – for Iraq's voluntary



national review (VNR) under the GCM. The VNR is a report that will detail Iraq's progress on the implementation of the GCM's 23 objectives.

In recent years the Government of Iraq has made important strides towards improving migration governance,

notably through the development of a National Migration Strategy.

This meeting was made possible with support from the Government of the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants curriculum developed under GLO.ACT adopted

Baghdad, 10 February 2022 - The adoption and institutionalization of a training curriculum can go a long way in ensuring its sustainability. Recently, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Iraq met with the General Director of the Training and Preparation Directorate who confirmed the adoption of the Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants curriculum developed under Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants (GLO.ACT).



IOM Iraq supported two intensive trainings on the use of IOM-developed Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS)

Baghdad, 20 February 2022 - Along Iraq's highly porous border with Syria, border controls have been adversely impacted by years of war and sanctions.

In July 2021, IOM provided Iraq's Ministry of Interior with the IOM-developed Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) – a high-quality, cost-effective and fully customizable border management information system.

To support ongoing efforts to build government capacity in its use, IOM Iraq supported two intensive trainings for participants from the Directorate of Civil Affairs, Passports and Residency. The first ran from 23-31 January 2022, covering the history and global use of MIDAS and training participants in how to collect, process, store and analyse traveller information in real time and across the entire border network, as well as how to train future

MIDAS-users. This was followed by another rigorous training from 6-10 February on how to install, configure and run the system.

These activities are part of a broader initiative to enhance the technical

capacity of the Government of Iraq to receive, screen and respond to migrants coming from Syria and leaving Iraq, made possible with support from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism.



UNDP and IOM facilitate a workshop with Iraqi government agencies and Anbar community leaders to encourage return and reintegration



Erbil, 18 January 2022 – UNDP Iraq and IOM, in partnership with the Office of the National Security Advisory, and with participation from the Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MOMD), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), and other relevant government agencies, have brought together over 35 community and tribal leaders from Anbar in a workshop aimed at fostering acceptance and understanding among local leaders to facilitate the return and reintegration of displaced Iraqis back into their communities.

UNDP and IOM are working with the Government of Iraq to support the return and reintegration of displaced Iraqi families with perceived affiliation to ISIL, including those returning from Syria, in line with the government's efforts to end protracted displacement through proactive measures to facilitate access to durable solutions.

The workshop participants discussed the details of the return process, the role of community leaders and local government in facilitating the reintegration of families, and the work which UNDP and IOM are undertaking to facilitate return and reintegration. The workshop generated recommendations to enhance community acceptance of returning families.

UNDP Iraq Resident Representative Ms. Zena Ali-Ahmad emphasizes, "Sustainable reintegration of displaced Iraqis back into their communities is a priority for UNDP, and community preparation is a key component of this important work. UNDP Iraq is committed to working with the government of Iraq, local community leaders, and UN partners to prepare communities for the return and reintegration of those who remain displaced and are facing challenges to

return."

According to Giorgi Gigauri, IOM's Chief of Mission in Iraq, "Identifying durable solutions for displaced Iraqis facing complex obstacles to return, integration, or relocation—including those with perceived affiliation to ISIL—is a top priority for IOM Iraq. IOM is committed to supporting communities in addressing social divisions and other barriers to return of internally displaced persons, as part of our peacebuilding and stabilization portfolio."

Dr. Saeed Al-Jiashi, Advisor, National Security Advisory, states, "Today's meeting focused on the displaced returnees from Al Hol Camp who are originally from Anbar Governorate. We agreed on a timeline to facilitate the return of over 200 families and the issues related to the return of the families themselves, as well as within the areas of the return, including feedback from local government and community leaders."

In 2020, UNDP Iraq launched a dedicated five-year Social Cohesion Programme to promote stronger, peaceful, and more cohesive communities in all areas of Iraq. The Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration Project supports the community readiness, return, and reintegration of families perceived to be affiliated with ISIL, who are often among the most marginalized and vulnerable, as well as supporting host families in areas of return.

UNHCR receives clothing donation from H&M for people forced to flee

Erbil, 21 January 2022 - In close collaboration with fashion retailer H&M, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is delivering clothes to more than 250,000 displaced people in Iraq. People who have been forced to leave everything behind are among the most vulnerable in the world, and the situation is only getting worse, with the added emergency of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. Many refugees have suffered tremendously due to the crisis, and UNHCR reports an urgent need to assist.

In response, H&M has donated clothing to displaced communities in Iraq, to help families keep warm during the cold winter months. The country currently hosts nearly 290,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as almost 1.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 4.9 million IDP returnees. "We are immensely proud to partner with UNHCR to address the needs of displaced communities. I am very pleased with what we have accomplished so far and that we are able to contribute to displaced people in Iraq and other countries by donating



these garments," says Pascal Brun, Head of Sustainability at H&M. For UNHCR's operation in Iraq, this is one of the major donations of its kind in 2021. The project was developed in close cooperation with UNHCR to ensure that the right garments were collected and shipped to the right place, with respect to the needs on the ground. Jean-Nicolas Beuze, Representative of

UNHCR in Iraq, said: "This donation carries more than just warmth to the displaced people in Iraq during the winter. It also shows the solidarity the world has for those displaced by conflict and persecutions. It reminds them that they are not alone. We, at UNHCR Iraq, are very proud of this partnership with H&M as we know it makes a difference in the lives of thousands of vulnerable people."

UNFPA team in Duhok distributed dignity kits to 500 recently displaced women and girls

Erbil, 24 January 2022 - This week, more than 1,000 newly displaced Syrians sought refuge in Bardarash camp, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. To ensure the basic sexual and reproductive health needs are met, the UNFPA team in Duhok is distributing dignity kits to 500 recently displaced women and girls and is providing them with psychological first aid and psychosocial support at the static Women Centre in Bardarash camp.



Heavy storms hit hard in Iraq, become harder for displaced and most vulnerable

Baghdad, 07 February 2022 - "We had to use four layers of clothes so that children would stay warm during the night", Mizgeen, a Syrian refugee living in Domiz camp, the largest refugee camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), recounts as he fills his jerrican with fuel to heat his shelter. "Fuel is expensive, and whatever cash I received from UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, it is barely enough to buy fuel. It will not last long enough for the entire winter", Mizgeen adds.

Unprecedented heavy rains and snow not witnessed in over 40 years fell in the KRI in the last few weeks, with extreme subzero temperatures reaching minus eight Celsius. The extreme weather caused schools to close, blocked roads and caused damage to exposed shelters where refugees and internally displaced people (IDP) live. For many refugees like Mizgeen or Iraqi citizens displaced by the 2014-17 violence by the Islamic State in Iraq, the extreme cold coupled with a

shortage of fuel for heating was devastating. Many still live under tents or in temporary shelters in camps or villages that are not adequate for such weather conditions. Hadiya was displaced in 2014, from Anbar governorate and now lives on the outskirts of Erbil after having lost her husband in the conflict seven years ago. A widow with four children, she never experienced such extreme cold: "What we need is heating throughout the day and night, but what we can afford is

Heavy storms hit hard in Iraq, become harder for displaced and most vulnerable *(continued)*

only six or seven hours of heating per day.”

Hadiya makes bread at home and sells it in her neighbourhood to make ends meet. “I am glad that I received cash assistance to help me buy fuel for heating; otherwise, my children would have been sick because of the cold weather”, she added.

Many Syrian and other refugees as well as displaced Iraqis lost their jobs due to lockdowns and the slowing down of the economy due to the pandemic. Work is scarce during the winter anyway, as most work as daily labourers on construction sites or in agricultural fields.

In Erbil, Hala, a widow in Baharka IDP camp, keeps praying to God that nothing will happen to her seven grandchildren who are left to her care



as their parents disappeared during the conflict: “Now I only have God and this sim card that brings me assistance”. UNHCR, through cash agents, distributes cash assistance directly to refugees and displaced Iraqis through their mobile telephone e-wallets. This allows them to go to nearest cash point and receive cash that they can then use as they see fit to meet their most pressing needs.

UNHCR and partners and since last November have started to distribute winter cash assistance to vulnerable displaced families. As the UNHCR Head of Office in Sulaymaniyah, Bola Han, confessed: “At least, because we

had distributed our cash assistance before the storm, these families were able to buy fuel for heating or warm clothes for their children before they got hit by the very bad weather.” This winter, over 546,000 individuals (refugees and IDPS) were targeted to receive cash assistance in Iraq. UNHCR wishes to thank the following donor countries: Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and USA, who provided us with unearmarked flexible funding that allows us to use the funds immediately when and where they are needed the most.

UNICEF receives US\$1.8 million from the Government of the Isle of Man to support the protection of Syrian refugee girls and boys

Baghdad, 10 February 2022 – UNICEF has received US\$1.8 million from the Government of the Isle of Man to increase access to quality and integrated Child Protection and Gender Based Violence (GBV) services for Syrian refugees in Iraq.

Overall, over 49,995 refugees will be reached through the programme, including 21,950 children (50 per cent boys and 50 per cent girls), 27,900 parents and community members (almost two thirds female) and 145 social workers and government and partner staff (also two thirds of them female).

The project will reach 12,500 girls and boys with psychosocial activities to help them process their experiences and strengthen their resilience for the future. This support will be provided through community-based centers by trained psychosocial service officers in targeted locations. Parents and

caregivers will also be supported to identify and manage their own stress and 1,200 men and women will receive parenting education to support protection and care of children. Finally, over 30,000 individuals will be reached through sustainable and community-based child protection and gender-based violence awareness-raising campaigns to mitigate protection risks for children.

Over 241,000 Syrian refugees continue to reside in Iraq. Women and children represent 68% of the overall registered refugee population in Iraq. Most of these populations have been displaced for many years, resulting in limited livelihood opportunities and increased risk of violence and abuse. Women and children have lacked sufficient access to basic protection and support services, and these funds will enable a critical response.

“80 percent of children in Iraq have

been exposed to some form of violence. This is alarming and calls for urgent action”, said UNICEF Representative in Iraq, Ms. Sheema SenGupta. “The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation for these children, with these funds we will be able to reach the most in need children with critical services thanks to the Government of the Isle of Man” she added.

UNICEF, in partnership with the Isle of Man Government, will implement the project through partners with an aim to ensure protection of Syrian refugee children and adolescents in Iraq. Driven by an equity approach, UNICEF will focus on reaching the most vulnerable children, including out of school children and children who have suffered trauma and abuse, to ensure that they are provided with child protection services and skills to bring about positive change in their lives.

Assistance is needed to support recovery in Ninewa Governorate's Sinjar district



Sinjar, 21 December 2021 - Assistance is needed to support recovery in Ninewa Governorate's Sinjar district, which was massively devastated during the ISIL conflict.

On 21 December, IOM hosted an event in Sinjar, bringing together local authorities; representatives from civil society groups; and leaders and members of the community to launch new activities designed to support economic growth in and safe returns to the Sinjar area.

To contribute to economic recovery and private sector development, IOM Iraq's Enterprise Development Fund (EDF) supports small and medium enterprises with financial capital, allowing local business owners to rehabilitate and expand their businesses and create

jobs. EDF Tameer has been designed to support businesses that were destroyed during the recent ISIL conflict. IOM has already supported 36 businesses in Sinjar with USD 515,794 in grants to local business owners, creating 194 jobs. In the first round of funding under EDF Tameer, IOM Iraq is providing USD 494,394 to owners of businesses that were destroyed during the 2014-17 crisis, with the potential to create 179 more jobs in the district.

In coordination with the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government and Dohuk Governorate authorities, IOM Iraq also announced plans to support willing individuals and families displaced in Dohuk Governorate to return to Sinjar or pursue other pathways to durable

solutions to their displacement.

The facilitated voluntary return and relocation program is designed to present people with options so that they can make informed decisions about their preferred solutions to displacement. IOM Iraq will provide individuals with information about the situation in their area of origin while they are still in displacement, and those who choose to return or relocate under the program will receive financial support to cover transportation and reintegration costs. People returning to selected areas of Sinjar will also receive support to rebuild their houses, as well as livelihoods assistance, while others will be linked to other organizations present in their destination areas through Durable Solutions Area-Based Coordination groups and other mechanisms.

The launch event in Sinjar on the 21st was designed to coordinate these activities with local stakeholders and to invite representatives from local civil society groups, leadership and community members to share their experiences with representatives of IOM.

This event was made possible with support from U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, USAID Iraq and the Government of Germany through the German Development Bank (KfW).

Strengthening IDP-owned businesses and upscaling a workforce through entrepreneurial training

Baghdad, 2 January 2022 - Thanks to the generous support of the Japanese Government, UNIDO has organized Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) trainings at the Shariya and Kabarto IDP Camps, aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and upscaling a workforce. The ten-day, 65-hour entrepreneurship training programme collaborates with 43 existing micro businesses located within the Camps and strives to make these businesses more sustainable and resilient, especially in light of the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The training, which includes sessions such as marketing, management and budgeting, is designed to help the IDPs leverage their past career experiences, improve upon existing management skills and acquire new knowledge in order to sustain and improve their



micro businesses. Participants and collaborating entrepreneurs receive asset support in the form of equipment, tools and supplies to strengthen their enterprises towards success.

Khalaf Murad Ilyas, originally from a village near Sinjar town, Nineveh Governorate, participated in the

programme as a means of expanding the barber business he has established in the Camp. Back home in his village, Khalaf was involved in his family's small barbershop and worked alongside his father and uncle.

Having only finished primary school, Khalaf says that, prior to the

Strengthening IDP-owned businesses and upscaling a workforce through entrepreneurial training *(continued)*

programme, he had not been exposed to skills like developing a business plan, and setting goals for business expansion.

“I learned how to manage my time and how to formulate a vision for the future,” Khalaf says of his experiences in the programme.

“I plan to develop my business to have a good income to improve the situation of my family.”

Nada Yusif Kalo, another programme participant, operates a small sewing shop in Kabarto IDP Camp. A divorcee with 4 children to support, Nada has been displaced since 2014.

Nada worked as a seamstress at a clothing factory in Mosul for five years, before deciding to go into business for herself. Nada opened a small workshop

at her home in Mosul after making an agreement with the factory who had employed her—taking in outsourced work from the factory, in addition to growing her own customer base.

Using credits and loans, Nada had made significant investments in her home-based business until Mosul fell into the hands of ISIS, forcing her with her family to flee and losing all her equipment to looting.

After being in the camp, she had to start work again to secure income for her children. She opened a small shop with simple equipment. The skill and experience she had could secure her some income.

“There are many skills that I lacked and did not have any idea on those I learned from the training such as,

managing your business, advertising and promoting of your products, and also how to calculate profit and loss. These are crucial to the development of one’s business,” Nada says.

Nada says that her business felt the impact of the Covid-19 crisis, as fewer social gatherings equated to less need for new clothing. Despite this, she is beginning to see her business return, thanks to vaccines and bettering mitigation efforts.

Thanks to the support of UNIDO, she intends to expand her business, and serve as a training vehicle for other women in need of skills training to gain independence and escape poverty.

“If you do not think of others you cannot think of yourself,” Nada says.

Poland reaffirms partnership with UNDP to support vulnerable Iraqis

Baghdad, 19 January 2022– The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq welcomes an additional PLN 1 million (approximately US\$ 244,000) contribution from the Government of Poland to its flagship Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS). This critical support will focus on stabilizing the five governorates liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to facilitate the safe and dignified return of displaced Iraqis, lay the groundwork for recovery and safeguard communities from the resurgence of violent extremism.

This contribution to UNDP’s FFS, bringing Poland’s total support to over US\$ 2.7 million, since the Facility was founded in 2015.

“This month marks four years since Iraq was officially liberated from ISIL. Yet over 1 million Iraqis remain displaced. Our support to Iraqi authorities and citizens is critical to meet the needs of internally displaced persons returning to their areas of origin,” says the UNDP Resident Representative for Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad.

“We are extremely grateful to Poland for this critical additional contribution, and its unwavering support to stability in Iraq,” adds Ms. Ali-Ahmad.

“The Republic of Poland is committed to the process of restitution of stability, peace and welfare in the Republic of Iraq. Our commitment includes donations to programmes executed by the EU institutions, direct donations to



aid organization from Poland as well as other EU countries running their programmes in Iraq and also projects rolled out by the Polish diplomatic missions directly on the ground. The donation within the partnership with UNDP in Iraq falls in the wider scope of activity of Poland in the Republic of Iraq and the Middle East,” Ambassador Marcin Kubiak, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland to the Republic of Iraq.

Based on stabilization priorities identified by national counterparts, FFS works to quickly restore essential public infrastructure, provides short-term employment opportunities, boost local livelihoods and economies, capacity support, and facilitates

peaceful reconciliation in communities liberated from ISIL.

With the support of 30 partners, including Poland, FFS has completed over 3,000 stabilization projects in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al-Din, benefitting nearly 6.6 million people.



Supporting recovery and stability in Iraq through local development



Baghdad, 23 January 2022 - As a part of UNDP's work to enhance the Iraqi youth's participation in the dialogue with the local authority, and

guide them towards a meaningful civic engagement, UNDP's "Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development" programme, funded by the European Union, hosted a workshop on "Youth Civic Councils" in Baghdad for young men and women. UNDP brought together different partners (UNFPA, UNICEF, international experts) to present initiatives that have worked both in Iraq and internationally, and to discuss how best to develop new forms of youth councils that would bring their voice to

local authorities and give them a platform to represent their issues (from vulnerable groups inclusion in policy making to gender equality, etc.) in a meaningful discourse.

These presentations were made in the presence of representatives of local authorities as well as Iraqi youth representatives and were followed by intense discussions on the different technical aspects of each example presented and on how to realistically implement these examples in the Iraqi context.

WFP and Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office partner on research to support vulnerable families

Erbil, 23 January 2022 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office (KRSO) signed a new agreement on research into food security, to support informed decision-making on efforts to support vulnerable families in the Kurdistan Region.

An important element of the partnership is training, and helping strengthen the skills and expertise of KRSO staff in food security monitoring. Building on WFP's successful skills workshops with KRSO in the past, the agreement includes comprehensive training on food security and data analysis, including Kurdistan Region government staff from other departments. WFP experts will also deliver training on key digital solutions.

"Our joint assessments with WFP will help improve understanding of food insecurity among households in the Kurdistan Region," said President of KRSO in Ministry of Planning of



Kurdistan Region Government Serwan Mohamed. "The results will help us plan and provide the most effective food assistance required for vulnerable families."

This is part of WFP's ongoing support to the government of Iraq to help reform and enhance the social protection system, to best serve families' needs. WFP and KRSO signed the Letter of Understanding (LoU) in a ceremony in Erbil. It formalises the collaboration between WFP and KRSO over the next three years.

"Iraq is at a critical time in its development journey, and helping build the social protection system in the Kurdistan Region is vital for families' wellbeing," said WFP Iraq Representative Ally-Raza Qureshi. "As a natural next step in our ongoing collaboration with KRSO, our new agreement supports quality research and analysis on food security, prioritising the needs of women, children and the elderly."

The agreement includes financial support for assessments, thanks to WFP's partners such as the European Union. Key digital tools, including hardware and software will be provided by WFP to help KRSO establish and improve its data infrastructure. In this way, the partners can maintain expert monitoring and analysis. The results will help support an early warning system, for quick response in the case of a crisis or shock.

Stabilizing Iraq top priority for Netherlands with new EUR 5 million contribution

Baghdad, 24 January 2022 - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq welcomes a EUR 5 million (US\$ 5.63 million) contribution from Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS), which finances fast-track initiatives to stabilize areas liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

This new commitment brings the Netherlands' total contribution to FFS to US\$ 107.45 million. The Netherlands is the third largest contributor among the Facility's 30 funding partners. To date, FFS has supported the return of 4.93 million Iraqis displaced by the ISIL

conflict.

"The impact of our stabilization efforts with generous support from key partners such as the Netherlands are clearly visible across Iraq. Schools are reopening, clean water is reaching homes, roads are connecting people, and homes are rehabilitated," says UNDP Resident Representative in Iraq, Ms. Zena Ali Ahmad.

"Through this contribution, the Netherlands has prioritised the wellbeing and prosperity of Iraqi communities and I applaud them for their commitment and leadership," adds Ms. Ali Ahmad.

"As one of the longstanding contributors to the FFS, the Netherlands values the

fact that UNDP links its reconstruction and recovery efforts with stabilization activities focusing on, for instance, re-establishing social cohesion." At the request of the Government of Iraq, UNDP established the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) in June 2015 to facilitate the return of displaced Iraqis, lay the groundwork for reconstruction and recovery, and safeguard against the resurgence of violence and extremism.

FFS has completed over 3,000 projects in 31 liberated cities and districts, helping local authorities to quickly rehabilitate essential infrastructure across Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah Al-Din.

Weaving for a new Iraq: durable solutions for women's livelihood in Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 24 January 2022 - UNAMI's Development Support Office visited today the Kirkuk Carpet Factory to explore livelihood opportunities for IDPs. The Director of the Carpet Factory briefed about the latest innovative partnership with UN-Women entitled: Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP II). This project is implemented by the Women Leadership Institute with generous funding provided by the Government of Japan.

The traditional art of carpet-weaving is recognized as an intangible cultural heritage. Hand-woven carpets are more expensive, but of higher quality than mass-produced ones. Director Muhanad demonstrated this by showing the visiting delegation a hand-woven rug and that looked fabulous, and then revealed...that it was over 100 years old! By comparison, a machine-woven rug already showed signs of wear and tear after just 2 years of use.

UN-Women is supporting the Kirkuk Carpet Factory through its innovative LEAP II project modality. This allows 20 young apprentices to learn the ancient art of carpet weaving from master-weavers. The project involves skills-transfer, heritage preservation, vocational training and livelihoods generation. The apprentices were selected from among the rich tapestry

of different ethnic communities, IDPs and people with disabilities in Kirkuk.

Ms. Hanim, one of the most talented apprentice-weavers is deaf. Yet this is not a handicap at all! Ms. Hanim weaves beautiful, complex 300-knot creations without losing her laser-sharp focus on the design. The Director noted that he received over 200 applications and competition for the 20 available slots was fierce. Interestingly, despite the high pay and good working conditions, no men applied for the apprenticeship programme.

The preservation of cultural heritage mixed with marketing and design could form the basis of an excellent livelihood project for the returnee community. Kirkuk would like to see more of these

kinds of innovative vocation-apprenticeship programmes for women in Kirkuk, particularly in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) field.

Director Muhanad explained that until the 1990s, Iraq produced the most beautiful, hand-woven carpets that were much prized by foreign dignitaries and businessmen. Even Turkish traders bought carpets in Iraq at the time. Unfortunately, decades of sanctions and civil war have decimated the Iraqi carpet trade. From the 7 officially licensed state companies, only the ones in Kirkuk, Baghdad and Babylon are still left. Currently, the State Company for Hand-Woven Carpets falls under the Ministry for Industry and Minerals, which is not



UNDP welcomes Romania as the Funding Facility for Stabilization's 30th funding partner

Baghdad, 27 December 2021 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq welcomes a EUR 50,000 (US\$ 56,609) contribution from the Government of Romania to UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS), which implements fast-track initiatives to stabilize areas liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Romania's first contribution makes it the 30th partner to fund UNDP's flagship stabilization programme. This important contribution will be utilized for critical projects in ISIL impacted areas that still require support to ensure returnees' access basic services. To date, the FFS has completed over 3,000 projects in the areas liberated from ISIL, benefitting more than 6 million Iraqis.

"We welcome the Government of Romania as UNDP's newest partner to the programme. Thanks to the generous and unwavering support of all

our partners, the FFS can continue its critical work to improve conditions in the liberated areas and assist those who remain displaced to come home with dignity," says UNDP Resident Representative for Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad.

"This contribution illustrates our partners' continued trust and confidence in UNDP's ability to support the people of Iraq to address the residual stabilization needs in the areas liberated from ISIL," adds Ms. Ali Ahmad.

FFS was established in 2015 at the request of the Government of Iraq with support from the member states of the Coalition to Defeat Da'esh (ISIL), to facilitate the safe and dignified return of displaced Iraqis. The programme focuses on rehabilitating critical services and infrastructure to ensure access to basic services, provide short and medium-term employment, provide capacity support for municipalities and



foster social cohesion across the liberated areas of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk Ninewa and Salah Al Din.

The FFS continues to work very closely with the Government of Iraq and local stakeholders to ensure it is addressing the needs of the individuals impacted by the ISIL conflict.

Roundtable on past and present social policy in Iraq held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 29 January 2022 - A one-day roundtable discussion organised by ILO office in Iraq and the Media Center for Civil Society Organizations in Iraq brought together policymakers, members of parliament, researchers, and practitioners from various fields and backgrounds to exchange ideas, knowledge and views on past and present social policy in Iraq.

Attended by H.E. Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Dr. Adel Al-Rikabi, the event is part of a series of workshops, which focus on social security, and which aim to provide a tool to stimulate dialogue leading to policy messages for policymakers - with the support of European Union in Iraq.



The Iraq Forum for Sustainable Development launched in Baghdad

Baghdad, 24 January 2022 – The Ministry of Planning launched the Iraq Forum for Sustainable Development in close partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat). The “Iraq Forum for Sustainable Development” project aims to support the effective implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) by the Government of Iraq under the leadership of the Ministry of Planning. The implementation of the SDGs provides an opportunity to empower a wide range of national actors, including civil society organizations, universities and trade unions, and to promote dialogue and strengthen partnerships with various actors.

Mr. Wael Al Ashhab, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq, stated that UN-Habitat is proud to partner with the Ministry of Planning to roll out this very important



project which will usher Iraq towards achieving the SDGs.

Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, said that “Iraq, despite the difficult circumstances it has gone through during the previous years, launched

this important initiative.”

The platform is designed to provide access to all Iraqis to information on the Sustainable Development Goals. The vision of empowered Iraqis in a safe country, a unified society with diversified economy, sustainable environment, justice, and good governance, is now within grasp.

Small businesses in Basra and Mosul to receive grants from IOM's Enterprise Development Fund (EDF)

Basra/Mosul, 30 January 2022 - There is a severe lack of work opportunities – especially among young people, internally displaced persons and returnees – in Basra and Mosul, two significant historic cities in Iraq.

IOM Iraq conducted investment committee visits in these historic urban areas, identifying 9 businesses in Basra and 17 businesses in Mosul to receive a grant from IOM's Enterprise Development Fund (EDF). These investments will help to bolster the creative industries and support local livelihoods.

This activity is being implemented in

collaboration with UNESCO Iraq as part of the project “Reviving Mosul and

Basra Old Cities”, supported by the European Union.



WFP Iraq and UN-Habitat Iraq work helps support vulnerable families who depend on the wetlands



Baghdad, 3 February 2022 – World Wetlands Day, reminds us of the need to protect and celebrate our marshes. In southern Iraq, the drying up of marshlands because of climate change

and low rainfall has affected people's lives, livelihoods, and caused the displacement of many people. The impact of climate change is harshest on poor communities.

WFP Iraq and UN-Habitat Iraq work helps support vulnerable families who depend on the wetlands. WFP is building the resilience of households, providing essential equipment and skills for long term sustainable incomes. Our work projects restore water sources and build incomes. Our training and grants help entrepreneurs grow.

Let's #ActForWetlands to support communities vulnerable to climatic shocks. Thanks to Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) for supporting WFP's work helping conserve wetlands and families who rely on them.

Disaster Risk Reduction Standard Operating Procedures crucial to address vulnerability in Iraq: IOM

Erbil, 6 February 2022 - Iraq is at risk of multiple natural and man-made hazards, like droughts, desertification, earthquakes and floods. Conflict-affected communities, including displaced populations, are particularly vulnerable to these disasters.

From January 29-30, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) hosted a workshop for senior government stakeholders from Baghdad and Erbil, to support their work developing standard operating procedures for crisis preparedness and response. The workshop focused on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and was organized with support from the European Union.

The workshop covered topics including risk mitigation, early warning systems and more. Senior participants from the Government of Iraq's Joint Center for Monitoring and Coordination (JCMC) and the Kurdistan Regional Government's Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) along with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MOMD) the National Operations Centre (NOC) and the Ministry of Defence along with Civil Defence and the Ministry of Oil were in attendance. All emphasized the importance of collaboration and coordination for more effective crisis responses.

"We have maintained a robust partnership with IOM during many previous issues and crises, but this particular topic is considered extremely important in the country's current circumstances," added Naseer Abdel Sattar, Director of JCMC in the Secretariat of the Federal Cabinet. "We

will work on standard procedures during the coming period, which of course will be based on some guiding evidence set by the JCMC."

"We discussed expected scenarios in the event of [disasters like flooding]. At the second stage, we will arrange for coordination between state institutions in the face of such cases," said MOMD spokesperson Ali Jahakir. "The third stage will include an assessment of the disasters and their repercussions on society and state institutions. The final point will be to document the role of voluntary teams in cooperating with state institutions in the event of any emergency."

"Clear and standardized operating procedures at the governorate level are the key to reducing the impact of hazardous events, which claim the lives of many and undermine national development and security," said Shanaz Taha, Head of the JCC's Strategy Division. "At the end of the workshop, both Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and central government representatives gave their

recommendations. We hope, with IOM's help, to implement these recommendations soon and create a suitable solution to reduce the tragedies happening in KRG,"

IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Giorgi Gigauri concluded: "With clear links between disasters, climate change, conflicts and population movements, it is imperative to include DRR work in humanitarian work. This workshop was an occasion for IOM to reaffirm its commitment to support the government at all levels to build resilience."

Working closely with governmental partners at national and sub-national levels, IOM's DRR activities support initiatives to prevent and prepare for disasters and related population movements, provide disaster assistance and protection where displacement cannot be avoided and contribute to post-disaster recovery by promoting durable solutions to displacement and strengthening resilience to future and existing risk. Globally, IOM's work on DRR contributes to States' efforts to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 which, along with the Paris Agreement, contains vital targets that contribute towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The EU, via ECHO, also supports IOM Iraq's work providing direct assistance to internally displaced persons — such as critical shelter arrangements, household items, camp management support services and essential information provision for thousands of vulnerable Iraqi families in Ninewa, Anbar and Baghdad governorates.



The EU and UNICEF, in collaboration with Eni, launch a project to improve the water quality for 850,000 people in Basra

Basra, 07 February 2022 – The European Union (EU) and UNICEF, in collaboration with Eni, launched a project today in partnership with the Basra Governorate, aiming to improve the water quality for 850,000 people in Basra City, including over 160,000 children as direct beneficiaries. The launch ceremony was attended by the Governor of Basra, H.E. Asaad Al Edani, Barbara Egger, Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation in Iraq, Paula Balancea, UNICEF Deputy Representative in Iraq, Alberto Piatti, Eni's Head of Sustainable Development, Walid ElMahdy, Eni Iraq BV Managing Director, and other authorities.

"UNICEF continues to work in Iraq to support a climate resilient environment, ensure access to safe water and empower young people to be actors of change through civic engagement. This project with the EU in collaboration with Eni will help to ensure the provision of equitable, sustainable and safe drinking water to vulnerable populations and support sustainable green job creation for young people in Basra city," said Paula Balancea, UNICEF Deputy Representative in Iraq.

"We are proud to continue with this important joint programme with UNICEF our strong EU engagement in Iraq and in particular in the South of Iraq, notably in Basra. It is our priority to contribute to improving the quality of life for Basrawis and strengthening the capacity of the water sector to provide for the equitable and sustainable provision of clean drinking water, in close collaboration with the Basra authorities. Applying an employment intensive approach, we will contribute to creating green decent jobs for Basra's Youth but also build

strong alliances to advance the climate change agenda together with ENI," confirmed Barbara Egger, Head of Cooperation of the EU in Iraq.

"This partnership is a clear example of how public-private alliances can create added value for local development, contributing to improve people's living conditions. Eni will provide its Al-Baradiya water treatment plants – each with a capacity of 400,000 litres per hour – under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Oil and Basra Oil Company, and thanks to this joint initiative with UNICEF and the EU we will be able to supply clean drinking water to the community of Basra. By joining our forces we will take one step closer to the achievement of the UN SDGs", said Alberto Piatti, Eni's Head of Sustainable Development.

Climate change has a dire impact on children's lives in Iraq, including increasing water scarcity and salinization, with serious implications on the country's future. Nearly 3 out of 5 children in Iraq have no access to safely managed water services and less than half of all schools in the country have access to basic water.

As a response, and thanks to the project, 350,000 people in two communities within Basra city, will have access to improved and climate resilient water services. In addition, 1,000 people in Basra city, especially young people, will have improved capacity to contribute to delivering equitable services and promote employment-intensive green growth.

To implement the project, costing at almost \$7 million over 3 years, UNICEF will work in close coordination with local authorities in Basra and Ministry of Construction, Housing and Public Municipalities in Baghdad and in partnership with Basra Water Directorate and private consultancy firms, and through strengthening capacities of local contractors, NGOs, and operators to improve water services management and social inclusion.

The project, launched by the EU and UNICEF in collaboration with Eni, is a new step in the right direction and aligns with joint engagement with the business sector to drive progress towards Agenda 2030 and the SDGs in Iraq and globally.



The project aims to provide access to improved and climate resilient water services to 850,000

IOM Iraq and National Bank of Iraq organized a workshop on how to apply for a commercial loan

Baghdad, 10 February 2022 - The Iraqi economy faces a long road to recovery from several recent crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted labour markets and private sector functioning throughout 2020, 2021 and continuing into 2022. A recent IOM Iraq study showed that, overall, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) receiving conditional cash grants through IOM's Enterprise Development Fund (EDF) displayed more resilience to negative economic

effects of COVID-19 than SMEs that did not receive EDF grants.

Today, IOM Iraq partnered with the National Bank of Iraq to organize a session attended by 18 EDF business owners from Baghdad Governorate on how to apply for a commercial loan. The session discussed the application process itself, including required documents and fees, and also explained the benefits of opening accounts and applying for loans.

Under the framework of its private

sector development programming, IOM continues to support Iraqi SMEs by promoting enhanced access to financial services through coordinated referrals. This activity was made possible with the support of the German Development Bank (KfW).



Mosul University's Theatre Hall officially reopens after ISIL destruction

Mosul, 8 February 2022 – The newly-rehabilitated Theatre Hall at Mosul University was officially opened yesterday by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), KfW Development Bank and Ninewa Governorate.

The Theatre Hall, which was the biggest hall in Ninewa, was severely damaged during ISIL occupation and Mosul's liberation. It is rehabilitated by UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) with financial support from the Federal Republic of Germany, provided through KfW Development Bank.

Rebuilt over 3,250 square meters of the University's campus, adjacent to the bustling Student Centre and Central Library, it is the largest theatre hall in Ninewa. The facility has the capacity to seat around 1000 people.

"From the start of FFS operations in Mosul in early 2017, we prioritized the rehabilitation of Mosul University, due to its symbolic importance as a center of learning. Today, I am very pleased to see how far we have come. I hope the University's Theatre Hall becomes a hub for not just learning but celebration of a peace, art, music and culture," says UNDP Resident Representative in Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad.

"We are here today because of the generous funding provided by the Federal Republic of Germany, through KfW Development Bank. As one of UNDP's longest standing partners, Germany has made generous contributions to the revival of Mosul, and to stabilization in Iraq," she added. Other key features of the Theatre Hall include state-of-the-art equipment for digital projections, surround sound system, perforated wall panels for acoustic enhancement and numbered



seating.

"The arts, music and scientific discourse are key elements to promote mutual understanding and peace within society," says Peter Felten, Chargé d'Affaires of the German Embassy in Baghdad. "Art, music and communication are just as important to a community's well-being as physical and economic security. Germany has funded the construction of this Theatre Hall because we hope that it will connect young Iraqis of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds through the means of artistic self-expression and joint cultural performance, and, thereby, contribute to reviving the famous 'spirit of Mosul' as a city that has always drawn its prosperity from the fruitful interaction between the diverse cultural, religious and ethnic components of its population."

"It is a great pleasure to witness the reviving of this facility which was possible with the generous contribution of the German Government through KfW Development Bank. We look forward to seeing the Grand Theatre Hall as a place of exchange and interaction enriching the cultural life

and cultural diversity of this important centre of learning," says Dr. Anna-Christine Janke, Country Director of the KfW Office Iraq.

Mosul University is the country's second-largest institution of higher learning, after the University of Baghdad, with 24 colleges, 40,000 male and female students and 11,000 faculty before the ISIL occupation. Many of the University's buildings were severely damaged or destroyed by ISIL, and library resources and technical equipment were burned, stolen or damaged. UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization has rehabilitated facilities under the Colleges of Agriculture, Computer Science, Education, Fine Arts, Mathematics, Medicine, Engineering and Science, allowing tens of thousands of students to resume their studies. The number of students at the University now surpasses enrollment rates before ISIL occupation by over 40 percent.

The opening ceremony included a musical performance followed by a short theatrical performance by the University's students on life after the ISIL conflict.

UNICEF, Mercy Hands and WFP introduced the "Shatt al-Arab Coding Club for Girls"

Basra, 14 February 2022 - Together with UNICEF and Mercy Hands, the World Food Programme (WFP) introduced the "Shatt al-Arab Coding Club for Girls," which enables girls in Basra to study in a safe environment, learn new tech skills, and innovate to create digital solutions. The students are proud to be part of the first club of its kind in Iraq. The initiative is part of the partners' Girls Education project, which helps girls complete their studies.



IOM provided Fatma's family assistance in the form of household items

Anbar, 08 February 2022 - Support is needed to improve living conditions for families still searching for durable solutions to their protracted displacement.

Fatma is widow in her fifties. She lived with her family of 4 in the Kubashat area of Anbar Governorate, before being displaced by the ISIL conflict in 2014.

As bombs rained down, they fled Kubashat with empty hands, leaving everything behind – worst of all, their land and property – just to survive. Fatma tells us: “I had a chicken coop that I depended on to cover my housing and living expenses. I lost everything that could help me now, but it was the worst night of bombing yet, so there was no other solution except to flee.”

They went to Baghdad Governorate's Al-Abadi area, where they stayed with relatives, who supported them during their time there. When the news began to predict that the area would

experience shelling and bombing, Fatma and her family journeyed to Al-Habania, an area west of Baghdad.

During her year in Al-Habania, one of Fatma's sons died in a workplace accident. “He was my oldest son. I raised him, I depended on him after his father died. He was such an affectionate boy,” said Fatma, tears welling in her eyes.

Feeling that she had lost everything and had no reason to stay, Fatma left Al-Habania for Al-Haswa area. She settled there, depending on the charity of her neighbors to get by.

“Everything you see [in my home] now came from the people in this area. When they heard my story, they tried to help me as much as possible. My [late] son was a daily worker, and we have a lot of debts, but we hope that the future will be better to me and my family,” Fatma continued.

In July 2021, IOM provided Fatma's family assistance in the form of

household items. “The items are very useful. I didn't have a water tank or water pump – you solved the water problem for my family. We didn't have a water heater for the winter season and don't have the financial means to buy any of these things. I hope IOM continuous to bring hope to other IDP's families. We are very thankful to your team. You went through so much effort for us.”

This project was made possible through the support of Republic of Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



U.S. Department of State delegation visited two IOM Enterprise Development Fund (EDF) businesses in Dohuk Governorate

Dohuk, 10 February 2022 - The ISIL conflict coupled with the economic slowdown caused by COVID-19 have severely impacted small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which employ roughly half of Iraq's workers.

Today, a delegation from the U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) visited two IOM Enterprise Development Fund (EDF) businesses in Dohuk Governorate.

With PRM support, IOM Iraq helped Zaid, the owner of Harikar Carwash Station, to renovate his business, which faced setbacks due to the economic and



COVID-19 crises. Zaid was able to get back on his feet after receiving the EDF grant from IOM Iraq.

The PRM delegation also visited the

Kahi Dairy Factory and met Sarhldar, who was able to expand his business, increase production and create job opportunities thanks to an #EDF grant.

The most suitable solution to assist vulnerable households to resettle in their properties

Baghdad, 18 February 2022 - With the destruction of their homes cited by many IDPs from Yathrib Sub-District as the main impediments to returning to their area of origin, UN-Habitat's in situ core housing intervention is being considered by Yathrib Mayor as “the most suitable solution to assist vulnerable households to resettle in their properties” and as such would like to see the project widely replicated because “it is making a tangible transformation in people's lives after many years of living in camps in

northern Iraq”. Funded by the European Union as integral part of its local area development programme, the

intervention was conceived in close consultation with the owners and the local authorities.





Basra, 10 February 2022 - A meeting between the ILO and the Deputy Governor of Basra Mr. Hasan Al Najjar highlighted ILO's Decent Work Country Programme being implemented in Iraq, and more specifically activities being implemented in Basra.



Basra, 16 February 2022 - The European Union Delegation and UN-Habitat Iraq team conducted a site visit to Jurf Al-Melah, one of the three selected underserved neighborhoods, as part of the EU funded project: "Increasing Access to Employment Opportunities for Vulnerable Urban Population in Basra City in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis".



Baghdad, 20 February 2022 - Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and Representative from the Embassy of Sweden in Iraq visited today one of the UNFPA-supported centres in Baghdad and saw first hand the livelihood skills the centre offers and heard from the centre manager about the services it provides women and girls to empower them and increase self-confidence.



Basra, 21 February 2022 - Today, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq/Resident Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, and her accompanying delegation, met with a couple who work side by side in Basra's beautiful countryside. Saeda grows market vegetables with support from the World Food Programme's Greenhouse project and her husband is reviving the Basra date palm industry.

Moslawis celebrate the reopening of Mosul University's Central Library and Ninewa Federal Court of Appeal

Mosul, 19 February 2022– The newly-rehabilitated Central Library at Iraq's second-largest university, Mosul University, was officially reopened today by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Federal Republic of Germany and the Ninewa Governorate.

Mosul University's Central Library, once a center of knowledge and culture, was left in ruins by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Founded in 1921, the Library became known as one of the richest libraries in Iraq, second only to the central Library in Baghdad. It was a hive of activity and housed close to one million resources. During ISIL, it was bombed by missiles and badly damaged, burning an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 books and manuscripts. The two-storey Library is next to the bustling Student Centre and recently reopened Theatre Hall. It can seat over

1,000 students at once and has the capacity to house over 100,000 books. The Library comes with dedicated spaces for studying, meetings, computers, and exhibitions.

Also reopened today was the Ninewa Federal Court of Appeal based in Mosul which holds the court of appeal,

personal status court, tort court, investigation court, domestic violence court and first instance court. The purpose-built facility will house 50 judges, 300 administrative staff and 50 security personnel. The six courts will have the capacity to handle around 7,500 cases every month.



Moslawis celebrate the reopening of Mosul University's Central Library and Ninewa Federal Court of Appeal *(continued)*

"The reopening of the Central Library and Ninewa Federal Court of Appeal is an important milestone in the journey to revitalizing this iconic city. Due to the city's historical importance and devastating destruction under ISIL, UNDP prioritized its stabilization and rebuilding efforts in Mosul. I am proud that today, the number of students at the University has surpassed enrollment rates before ISIL occupation by over 40 percent. This shows the strength and resilience of the city – one that's well on its way to recovery after years of conflict," said UNDP Resident Representative in Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad.

UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) rehabilitated the Central Library with financial support from the Federal Republic of Germany, provided through KfW Development Bank. The facility was furnished with support from the Netherlands. The rehabilitation of the Ninewa Federal Court of Appeal is also funded by the Federal Republic of Germany, and furniture for the facility is provided by Australia.

"We would not be here today if not for the support of one of our longest-standing partners, the Federal Republic of Germany. Together with Germany, we have made tremendous contributions to stabilization in Iraq. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Netherlands and Australia for furnishing the Central Library and Ninewa Federal Court of Appeal. This combined effort only goes to show that we will continue to work together to support the people of Iraq build forward better," added Ms. Ahmad.

"Speaking to people in Mosul I understand how much it means to them that two central places of community life have risen like a phoenix from the ashes. Germany is pleased to have contributed to the rehabilitation of Mosul University's Central Library because we want the youth in Iraq to be able to build up the knowledge and skills needed to shape Iraq as a stable, sovereign, united, democratic and inclusive country. Likewise, the rehabilitated Court sends a reassuring signal that, despite all the devastation endured by Moslawis, in the end, the



rule of law prevails," said Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Peter Felten, German Embassy Baghdad.

"We are very pleased that KfW Development Bank on behalf of the German Government was able to provide the financial support for rehabilitating the Central Library. It is a great pleasure to witness the reopening of this facility and we look forward to seeing this important centre of learning used for exchange and interaction enriching the cultural and academic life at the University," added Dr. Anna-Christine Janke, Country Director of the KfW Office Iraq.

New partnership supports private sector development in Iraq's Kurdistan Region

Erbil, 27 February 2022 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Planning (MoP) have today signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will boost the private sector by encouraging the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The MoU provides a general framework for cooperation between the two parties to conduct a survey of MSMEs, funded with the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in all governorates of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG): Dohuk, Erbil, Halabja and Sulimaniyah.

The findings of the survey, which follows a similar survey conducted in Federal Iraq across Baghdad, Basra and Ninewa, will build a comprehensive understanding of MSME structure, development trends, and operations, in order to help MSMEs develop into a sustainable economic base in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

"Micro, small, and medium enterprises

are the lifeblood of a healthy economy. They are also exceptionally vulnerable to risk. The U.S. Government, through USAID, is proud to contribute to this important research that sheds light on the opportunities and challenges of this critical sector and promote sustainable economic growth in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region," says USAID Mission Director to Iraq John Cardenas.

"The KRG is very grateful to USAID and UNDP for their assistance in conducting a Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Survey, which will be held for the first time throughout the Kurdistan Region. This will help identify deficiencies and provides recommendations for developing these institutions to provide job opportunities for young people in the private sector and reduce the unemployment rate, especially among young people," says Minister of Planning of KRG, Dr. Dara Rashid.

"This partnership is critical to enhancing livelihoods creation through strengthening the development of MSMEs in the Kurdistan region. We have already derived some extremely valuable insights through the Federal Iraq survey which has helped us



develop a roadmap on the way forward – ensuring business owners and those thinking of starting their own business have the necessary support and encouragement they need," says Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq Zena Ali Ahmad.

"This memorandum is another testament to the excellent cooperation between UNDP Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government - a key partner across many of UNDP's initiatives - as well as the partnership with our generous donor, USAID. We are extremely grateful for its ongoing commitment to fostering private sector growth in both Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq," she added.

FAO Project “Improving delivery of animal health services and disease surveillance in Iraq”

Baghdad, 2 January 2022 - A total of 30 veterinarians and animal health officers from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and KRG's Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MoAWR), were trained in a 5 days' workshop “Clinical Diagnosis and Disease Recognition” in Baghdad from December 19 to 23, 2021, in the context of the US Defence Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) funded project “Improving Delivery of Animal Health Services and Disease Surveillance in Iraq”, implemented by FAO in collaboration with the MoA with MoAWR.

The Dean of the Veterinary Medicine college, D. Hameed Ali accompanied by a 5 lecturers along with a number of veterinarians and animal health officers in the sector from Kurdistan region and Iraqi governorates, attended the training sessions, that became increasingly collaborative and interactive, continuously enriched with topics including, Brucellosis, Avian Influenza, Sheep pox and goat pox, Lumpy Skin Disease, Rabies, Peste Des Petitis Ruminants, Infectious Bovine



Rhinotracheitis, Bovine Viral Diarrhea, Foot and Mouth Disease, Bluetongue, Rift Valley Fever, Anthrax and Q Fever.

In the opening remarks, FAOR in Iraq, D. Salah El Hajj Hassan welcomed the attendees and indicated to the project interventions in the field of animal diseases “The training is to strengthen the capability of the veterinarians and animal health service workers in the areas of investigation, sample collection, examination, testing as well as laboratory diagnosis through sharing information and exchange of

expertise to contribute positively in the harmonization of the animal disease identification system across Iraq.

He added: “We work with partners to eradicate threats related to animal diseases and to limit the risk of animal disease outbreaks through improving capacity in assessing veterinary services and disease reporting systems”.

D. Hameed Ali, the Dean of the Veterinary Medicine College in Baghdad, praised the importance of the scientific cooperation between the Veterinary Medicine College and Food and Agriculture Organization through adapting effective model in training future trainers.

Also he expressed his admiration towards the training, describing it “The workshop was well organized and the approach was very informative, held with the help of qualified professors in the field of veterinary medicine and animal diseases, who have carried out many researches”.

Participants have given a certificate of completion at the conclusion of the training.

FAO strengthens capacity building of agricultural extension workers to support buffalo producers in the Marshes (Al-Ahwar)

Baghdad, 6 February 2022 - On 2-3 February 2022 at the Center for Rehabilitation of AL-Ahwar in AL-Chbayish, FAO has organized a workshop for agricultural extension workers within the project “Restoration and strengthening the resilience of agri-food systems in Southern Iraq” funded by the European Union and implemented by FAO in close cooperation with Ministry of Agriculture - Directorates of Agriculture in (Basra, Maysan and Dhi Qar), the project aims to empower poor small farmers and vulnerable rural families in the targeted governorates through improving crop and buffalo productivity.

The workshop was attended by 20 agricultural extension people from all the districts of the targeted Governorates with the aim of developing their capacity and technical skills to implement livestock and feeding activities with a focus on improving the productivity of buffaloes. The training sessions were supervised by Dr. Chedly Kayouli, FAO International Livestock Expert, with the assistance of Dr. Mohamed Abdulradh, the technical coordinator of the livestock activities in the project, and Dr. Khaled Al-Fartousi, FAO Coordinator in the South. The FAO expert focused on introducing good techniques to improve

the Buffalo feeding by using molasses to increase the nutritional value of low-quality local feed resources such as reeds, papyrus, various water plants, wheat and rice straw and corn cobs. He also lectured on introducing on large scale the technique of cultivating green fodders adapted to local conditions, and finally he explained the practical work plan to implement the project's activities in the next phase.

FAO Representative in Iraq, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, expressed FAO's interest in contributing of the improvement of the agricultural sector in Iraq and creating job opportunities for the rural poor families. He indicated that FAO responded urgently to support the buffalo breeders in the marshes, who were affected during this season by the drought that led to a decrease in the water of the marshes with an increase in salinity and a multifold increase in feed prices.

Dr. Salah announced that FAO had purchased 3000 tons of fodder (1000 tons of wheat bran, 1000 tons of straw and 1000 tons of maize silage) to be distributed in the coming days to alleviate the suffering of 5000 buffalo breeders. He stated also that the organization is in the process of purchasing 3000 tons of molasses to



begin distribution to 10,000 breeders in the project working areas in the south within a period of at least six months starting from the month of March 2022 at the latest.

The workshop was concluded in the presence of the Mayor of AL-Chabayish District, Mr. Kifah Shanawa, who thanked FAO for its support to upgrade agricultural extension staff in southern marshlands in a scientific and practical manner as well as in implementing concrete activities on the ground that effectively ease the suffering of buffalo breeders. He also expressed the readiness of the Local Government in the district of AL-Chabayish to provide all facilities to FAO to carry out its development projects in the district.

Director-General opens FAO Regional Conference in Iraq with call for joint regional action

Baghdad/Rome, 7 February 2022 -

The 36th FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (#NERC36) started today with a focus on improving nutrition, building resilient rural communities, optimizing water management, addressing the impacts of the climate crisis and fostering green recovery initiatives, as well as gender-sensitive development strategies.

Agrifood sectors are among those struggling to recover from the shocks created by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years, and highlight the importance of sustainable and resilient societies, FAO Director-General QU Dongyu said in opening remarks conveyed virtually to the meeting hosted by the Government of



Iraq.

“In the Near East and North Africa region, the pre-pandemic food security situation was already critical” with

rising hunger and increasing inequalities jeopardizing the welfare of rural populations, women and youth, and worsening water scarcity, he said.

Near East and North Africa endorse FAO's strategic priorities on transforming agrifood systems

Baghdad/Rome, 8 February 2022 -

Agriculture ministers and delegates from the Near East and North Africa region signalled their commitment today to work towards the transformation of agrifood systems, foster inclusive rural development and support a shift to sustainable, climate-sensitive agriculture.

The commitments form the core of the ministerial declaration agreed at the closing of the 36th session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC36).

Government officials, academics and representatives of the private sector and civil society participated in the meeting, hosted by Iraq in hybrid modality, which included a number of presentations by senior FAO officials.

The ministers expressed their support for the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and formally endorsed the four Regional Priorities under FAO's programme of work for the region, which focus on creating inclusive value chains and employment opportunities for rural youth, promoting food security and healthy diets for all through trade, food safety and efforts to reduce food loss and waste, greening agricultural practices to ensure environmental sustainability, and building resilience to multiple shocks and stresses.

The Near East and North Africa (NENA) is home to 419 million people, 40 percent of whom live in rural areas and one in five of whom works in agriculture. While enormously varied,



the region shares the challenges of severe land and water scarcity. NENA is also home to rising levels of food insecurity and an increasing incidence of extreme poverty and alarming problems of overweight and obesity, especially among children and women. Conflicts, social unrest, huge dependency on imported food, financial and economic crises and multiple colliding and overlapping shocks reflect the region's vulnerability, the ministers said. The Regional Conference, an increasingly powerful governance mechanism for FAO that is held every two years offered opportunities for Members to review the Organization's work in the region and, in the words of Muhammad Karim Al-Khafaji, Iraq's Minister of Agriculture and Chairperson of NERC36, to take full ownership of outcomes that their joint actions deliver.

“Agrifood systems should and must lead the successful rejuvenation of your region,” FAO Director-General QU Dongyu said in closing remarks to the participants. He congratulated delegates for reaching consensus on the ministerial declaration and emphasized that Ministers of Agriculture and Rural Affairs must play a central role in terms of political commitments and action plans to allow other key partners to help them move forward. “We have to help the farmers, with enabling policies, investment, innovation and information technology,” he added.

High-level sessions

The regional conference included a series of ministerial roundtables on food security and healthy diets, on building resilient rural communities for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life for all leaving no one behind, and green

Near East and North Africa endorse FAO's strategic priorities on transforming agrifood systems *(continued)*

recovery and climate action.

FAO also organized a side event on water, energy and food to galvanize preparations for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's COP27 and 28 summits, both of which will be held in the region.

Participants also assessed the efficacy of FAO's recent and ongoing work in the region. That includes engaging three NENA countries – Sudan, Syria and Yemen – in the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, which aims to match investments and skills with poorer populations. Another Member, the United Arab Emirates, has taken action to mobilize support for participating countries outside the region. FAO's 1000 Digital Villages Initiatives, which seeks to tap e-commerce and other Internet

opportunities to benefit rural smallholders, has been rolled out in seven NENA countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

FAO's global initiative One Country One Priority Product, launched in September 2021, holds enormous potential for a region with some of the oldest agricultural traditions in the world, as FAO's Director-General emphasized in his opening remarks on Monday to NERC36.

Soon FAO will also release a regional edition of the State of Land and Water, a flagship product designed to offer decision-makers up-to-date information on the status and trends of natural resources management in the region as well as response options.

FAO is also helping Members in the NENA region combat a host of transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases such as Desert Locust, Fall Armyworm, *Xylella fastidiosa*, Red Palm Weevil, Peste des Petits Ruminants and Rift Valley Fever, among others, which have required resource-intensive actions around the region.

Members of the NERC: Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Yemen.

A High-Level Mission from the Delegation of the European Union to Iraq visited FAO's Activities in the Southern Marshlands (Al-Ahwar)

Basra, 9 February 2022 - A High-Level Mission from the Delegation of the European Union to Iraq visited FAO's Activities in the Southern Marshlands (Al-Ahwar).

Since the early hours of Wednesday morning, the delegation visited the areas Al-Deir and Al-Qurna in Basra Governorate and the Al-Chabyish marshes of Dhi-Qar Governorate in southern Iraq. The mission was headed by Agne Gleveckaite, Deputy Head of the EU Delegation - Head of Political Section and Barbara Egger, Head of Cooperation, while the FAO staff consisted of René Verduijn, Chedly Kayouli and Michelle Palacios as well as FAO National Staff from FAO Office in Basra and Local Extension Staff from Ministry of Agriculture.

The main objective of the visit was to meet with project partners and to observe what FAO has achieved on the ground, especially as regards the livestock sector, through the activities of the project "Restoration and strengthening the resilience of agri-food systems in Southern Iraq" funded by the European Union and implemented by FAO in close cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture - Directorates of Agriculture in (Basra, Maysan and Dhi-Qar).

Firstly, the mission visited a milk collection and processing center (Umm Hayder), 55 km from the center of Basra Governorate. Visitors observed the traditional method using old utensils for processing large amounts of milk into geymar, yoghurt and local cheese. Then they had the opportunity to see the new site in the same center, which was



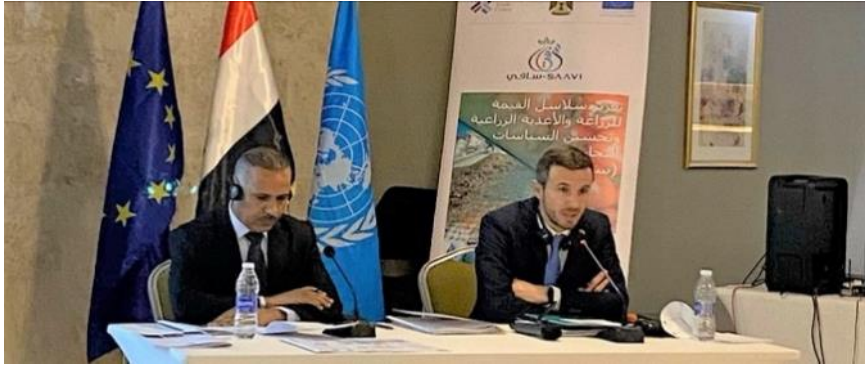
equipped with hygienic stainless steel dairy equipment through the support of the project. This also included practical training of women's groups on the use of this equipment for handling and processing improved traditional dairy products; along with the introduction of new varieties of dairy products such as Halloumi cheese, Labneh, Akkawi cheese and Ricotta, which are imported from neighboring countries. The project partners have now started processing these new products in southern Iraq alongside local products.

Afterwards, the delegation visited the Marshes of Al-Chabayish in the province of Dhi-Qar and learned about the challenges of Umm Karar who collects milk from buffalo breeders in the marshes which is transported from inside the marshes by boat and then transported to Qurna for the purpose of processing and marketing of dairy products to Basra. Also the delegation inaugurated a sugar molasses distribution unit for buffalo breeders

which improves livestock feeding, where producers are suffering from a shortage of feeds due to drought and high feed prices, which has led to the deterioration of the buffalo sector, which is one of the most important key assets of livelihood of livestock breeders in southern Iraq.

Finally, the visit, which was commended by the European Union delegation on observing the projects progress, ended with a field visit to a buffalo breeder inside the Al-Chabayish Marshes, where farmers explained the increasing mortality of their buffalo caused by poor nutrition due to the high prices of feeds and the water scarcity that critically affected the marshes as a result of the lack of upstream flowing water. Thus, the interventions by FAO, with the support of the European Union, and in cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture greatly support the livelihoods of buffalo breeders in the marshes and contribute to safeguarding of this vital sector.

Major strides made towards Iraq's poultry and tomato sector strategies



Baghdad, 8 February 2022 - Iraqi government officials, farmers and business leaders have approved two strategic plans that should help the country enhance its competitiveness, reinforce its productive capacity and ultimately create jobs.

Under the auspice of the Ministry of Agriculture, the International Trade Centre is facilitating the elaboration of the poultry and tomato sector strategies within the framework of the European Union-funded project, "Strengthening the agriculture and agri-food value

chain and improving trade policy in Iraq" (SAAVI) under the leadership of Ministry of Agriculture.

Key public and private sector representatives validated the strategic framework and plan of action for both sector strategies at the second core meeting for poultry and tomato sectors. Building on a highly inclusive and participatory process, and sound technical assessments including farmer and firms' competitiveness surveys and an unprecedented domestic market research this second core team meeting

is the final step towards endorsement and transitioning to implementation of the national strategies for the poultry and tomato sectors.

The strategy design process will produce two endorsed, coherent and comprehensive documents that will serve as a compass for the government, private sector and development partners to improve the competitiveness of farmers and small and medium enterprises in these two sectors, contributing to the national pathway towards sustainable food systems, inclusive growth and job creation for Iraq citizens.

Aligned with national planning frameworks, the strategies will specify clear priorities eventually producing a concrete five-year plan of action (2022-2026) that will not only define roles for implementing institutions but also provide an implementation management framework. Through the SAAVI project, ITC stands ready to contribute to implementation of key priorities under the strategies' plans of action.

Sporting helps kicking the challenges away

Basra, 9 February 2022 - "It was great to play a football game with rules changing every 5 minutes. With the team, we had to adapt to the change and find ways of succeeding in the new circumstances. Like in work or business, the world is always changing, and as entrepreneurs, we are able to adapt to survive and thrive as things change," said Maha Al Tamimi, young participant.

"It is possible to have fun while learning new skills," said Samer Saad who lead the football training and is also former Head coach of Iraq Futsal national team. "We had the chance to put adaptability into practice in a creative challenge and on the football pitch."

In an action-packed day six young women and 13 young men participated in learning activities through football at the Sports City in Basra, Iraq.

This was an opportunity to learn about innovative ways of overcoming challenges with the help of sports. Young entrepreneurs and agripreneurs went on the football pitch and took part in activities around adaptability.

"The participants shared their thoughts with each other on how best to adapt. Being opened to change and different ways of doing things, being willing to leave their comfort zones, accepting and listening to other people's ideas and perspectives, responding creatively to



new circumstances or composure and positivity to cope with changes and new challenges were some of the reflections shared by the group," said Mr. Saad.

Alongside a broad range of interventions implemented under the "Strengthening the agriculture and agri-food value chain and improving trade policy in Iraq" (SAAVI) project, ITC's Sport for Development initiative aims to use sporting activities to foster the socio-economic inclusion and development of youth, and to support young people in developing skills that are essential for gaining and sustaining employment, as well as nurturing entrepreneurial skills. In the coming months, this initiative will impart hundreds of youths with transferable life-skills to enhance their career paths, delivered in a hands-on

and accessible way on the football pitch in Baghdad and Basra governorates.

The event was organized by the International Trade Centre (ITC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, for the benefit of talented young Iraqi entrepreneurs, through the SAAVI project.

This 22.5 million EUR project, funded by the European Union, aims to contribute to inclusive growth and job creation for Iraqi citizens, particularly for youth. It seeks to enhance the competitiveness of Iraq's agribusiness value chain, while improving the country's trade policy. It is hoped that eventually, efforts to improve the competitiveness of the private sector will revitalize Iraq's bid to join the World Trade Organization.

By ITC News.

ILO farm-level interventions in Basra aimed at improving working conditions in the agricultural sector

Basra, 9 February 2022 - A delegation from European Union in Iraq visited International Labour Organization (ILO) farm-level interventions in Basra aimed at improving working conditions in the agricultural sector for women, men and people with disabilities.

Women working in date farms in Basra took part in ILO theoretical and practical training sessions aimed at

building their capacities and developing their skills to foster entrepreneurship

and employment in the field of agriculture.



Labor Issues

Efforts to improve access to employment services in Iraq are supported by different ILO programmes

Baghdad, 27 January 2022 - ILO office in Iraq held consultative and capacity building workshops for representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs working in employment centres across the country, as part of wider efforts by the ILO to support the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Federal Government and of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq to enhance career guidance and job-matching services for job seekers.

The workshops included a four-day training workshop in Erbil and an intensive one-day consultative meeting in Baghdad which brought together

Ministry staff members from across different governorates.

Efforts to improve access to employment services in Iraq are supported by different ILO programmes being implemented under the Decent Work Country Programme. These include activities supported by European Union in Iraq, as part of the “Social Protection Programme for Iraq: Leveraging Effective Response and Accelerating Reform” and by Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq under the “Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities.”



Security Sector Reform

UNODC provided training in Tunisia for law enforcement officers from the Ministry of Interior on Criminal Intelligence Analysis

Baghdad, 15 February 2022 - UNODC works with the Government of Iraq to take a proactive approach to policing through criminal intelligence analysis that would provide key information quickly and select, trace and prevent and/or stop crime.

UNODC recently provided a 10-day training in Tunisia for law enforcement officers from the Ministry of Interior on Criminal Intelligence Analysis. This training was part of the project “Strengthening the Capacities of Iraqi law enforcement and criminal investigation services”, funded by the US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).



Kani Shirin is one of the many areas UNMAS Iraq is providing clearance and explosive ordnance risk education support

Mosul, 6 January 2022 - The farmers of Kani Shirin, a small village in Tal Kaif, located north of Mosul, are suffering from severe contamination in their agricultural lands. UNMAS Iraq, with generous support from donors, is clearing the agricultural lands and providing awareness to the citizens of these villages. Kani Shirin is one of the many areas UNMAS Iraq is providing clearance and explosive ordnance risk education support.



UNMAS opened a safe park for youth, children, and families in West Mosul

Mosul, 07 January 2022 - In Iraq, nobody is immune to the dangers posed by the thousands of explosive ordnance, particularly improvised explosive devices that remain disguised awaiting their next victims.

In partnership with its implementing partner The HALO Trust and provincial authorities in the Ninewa governorate, UNMAS recently opened a safe park for youth, children, and families in West Mosul.

The park was constructed as part of UNMAS explosive ordnance risk education efforts to develop new tools that have a lasting, sustainable impact on the community.

The park will provide alternative gathering spaces for the nearby community, to minimize incidents resulting from explosive ordnance.

UNMAS would like to thank all its donors for their generous contribution to UNMAS activities in Iraq.



The Government of Sweden renews its support to explosive hazards management activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 20 January 2022 - The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) welcomes the contribution of SEK 50 million (approximately USD 5.7 million) from the Government of Sweden, which will support the Government of Iraq with humanitarian, socio-economic, and reconstruction efforts while protecting vulnerable civilians from the threat posed by explosive ordnance.

Due to successive conflicts in Iraq from 1980 until 2017, as well as the most recent conflict waged by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Iraq is one of the world's most explosive ordnance-contaminated countries, with approximately 2,850 square kilometers of recorded contaminated areas.

The financial contribution from the Government of Sweden will bolster the efforts of UNMAS to support capacity development for a nationally led and implemented explosive ordnance response. The Swedish contribution will support clearance of explosive ordnance in the liberated areas and southern Iraq and will further support explosive ordnance risk education efforts to protect civilians, with



messages and means tailored to reach women and children, as well as internally displaced person (IDPs) and vulnerable communities. The implementation of the project, which began in December 2021 and will run for 24 months, will assist UNMAS to support the national mine action authorities through technical advice and training for effective management,

regulation and coordination of mine action sector. Furthermore, it will build sustainable capacity of the national operators to independently deliver mine action activities.

His Excellency Mr. Jonas Loven, Ambassador of Sweden to Iraq, said: "Explosive ordnances continue to pose a serious threat to civilians all through Iraq. The widespread contamination is an obstacle for returns and access to basic social services that will require mine action for years to come. Sweden has had a long relationship with UNMAS Iraq and is proud to continue supporting their work including the increased focus on national capacity strengthening during this phase."

"With this generous contribution, Sweden has supported UNMAS activities in Iraq with more than USD 14 million since 2018" commented Pehr Lodhammar, Chief Mine Action Programme of UNMAS in Iraq. "The Swedish support will greatly contribute to durable solutions by facilitating the safe return of IDPs to their places of origin, and enabling access to communities in need of humanitarian assistance."

Belgium provides an additional EUR 1,500,000 for UNMAS activities in Iraq



Baghdad, 23 January 2022 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of EUR 1.5 million (approximately USD 1.69 million) from the Government of Belgium to support the Government of Iraq in protecting civilians impacted by explosive ordnance and enabling humanitarian action, socio-economic development, and peacebuilding.

The legacy of successive conflicts – the recent conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in particular – continue to substantially impact health, housing, public services, and livelihoods of Iraqis, including the displacement of millions since 2014, of which a million are still displaced

today.

The Government of Belgium, through its generous contribution to UNMAS Iraq, will support the Government of Iraq to develop its nationally-led response to explosive ordnance, as well as support UNMAS Iraq in providing the necessary technical support (both theoretical and practical) to the national authorities to further enhance their capacity to lead the mine action sector in the near future.

UNMAS Iraq continues to prioritise the development of institutional capacity in Iraq, including through partnerships with the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) and the Ministry of Interior (MoI), as well as the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), working

to enhance their capabilities to implement and coordinate a targeted explosive ordnance response that responds to community needs, including the different needs for women, men, boys and girls.

Commenting on the contribution, Mr. Filip Vanden Bulcke, Ambassador of Belgium, stated: “Belgium is very happy to continue its longstanding partnership with UNMAS in support of Iraq’s national efforts on mine action as a part of Belgium’s lasting contribution to the stabilization efforts to ensure protection, safe return of IDPs and resilience for Iraqi conflict-affected communities. Much work remains to be done. The development of national capacity and ownership of this important sector is crucial, and we commend UNMAS’ and the Government of Iraq’s outstanding work in this regard”.

Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, added: “Empowering Iraqi governmental institutions to lead the Iraqi mine action response will contribute to enhanced protection and human security and, in turn, boost the confidence of citizens in the government and enhance community trust.”

Remnants of war are as deadly for children as war itself

Baghdad, 2 February 2022 – Statement by Ms. Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq: “4 children have died (3 boys and 1 girl) and 2 have been maimed over the last week, as a result of incidents related to explosive ordnances in two locations in Iraq. UNICEF expresses its deep sorrow and condolences to the children’s families, friends, and their communities.

Tragically, as reported in a UNICEF statement last August, this is not an isolated loss of children’s lives - In 2021, 125 children were killed or maimed by explosive remnants of war (ERW) and unexploded ordnance, from which 52 children were killed and 73 were maimed. Stronger concerted efforts are needed to reduce the increasing impact of these explosives, especially in boys, as the number of children casualties grew a 67 per cent compared to 2020 (79 children for that year, including 61 boys).

These events, occurred in Babel province and Baghdad, and happened while children were doing daily chores, such as collecting wood. UNICEF



reminds all stakeholders that the need to uphold child safety must remain the primary consideration in all contexts. ERW continue to be a primary reason for the civilian casualties, with children being especially vulnerable – their smaller size makes them more likely to receive the full impact of the blast, making it even more lethal.

UNICEF continues to work on providing victim assistance, provide referral services to medical treatment and psychosocial support when needed. UNICEF urges all parties to accelerate

every effort to clear existing mines and unexploded ordnance and promote victim assistance, and to uphold children’s right to a safe and protective environment.

UNICEF also urges the Government of Iraq and the donor community to support the scale-up and provision of Explosive Ordnance Risk Education activities so that children and other community members receive explosive ordnance risk education in schools and communities in all areas previously affected by conflict in Iraq.”

UNMAS Iraq hosts an EU delegation at a clearance site in the Shatt al-Arab area in Basra

Basra, 10 February 2022 - UNMAS Iraq recently hosted Ms. Agne Gleveckaite, Deputy Head of Delegation - Head of Political Section to the European Union (EU) in Iraq, alongside representatives from the Iraqi Regional Mine Action Centre (RMAC) – South, to a clearance site in the Shatt al-Arab area in Basra.

As the primary donor of UNMAS clearance activities in Basra, the EU provided critical support to the effort to revitalize and reinvigorate agricultural and economic activities in the area. Reviving the Shatt al-Arab region is key for the local community in Basra, clearing agricultural areas and locations for new housing developments. Thus far, the area is too



dangerous to use as it is brimmed with legacy landmines accumulated from years of war and conflict, starting with the first Persian Gulf War with Iran (1980-1988), during which the area saw

severe battles where mines were extensively used.

UNMAS would like to thank the EU for their support in facilitating mine action activities in Iraq.

UNMAS Iraq hosts Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark to an explosive ordnance clearance site in the Basra governorate

Basra, 10 February 2022 - UNMAS recently organized a field visit for the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark to Iraq, Mr. Stig Paolo Piras, to an explosive ordnance clearance site in the Basra governorate, Iraq.

Decades after the end of the Iran-Iraq war, one of a series of Persian Gulf clashes (all which include Iraq), Iraqis continue to pay the price of legacy conflicts, particularly through the presence of landmines and other forms of explosive ordnance littering fields in the Iraqi South and in border areas. Legacy contamination continues to threaten the lives and livelihoods of affected Iraqis, hindering economic and agricultural development, further draining an already-squeezed economy. In response, UNMAS Iraq expanded its

geographical scope of operations in 2021 to southern Iraq to support the clearance of minefield contamination from legacy conflicts.

UNMAS would like to thank the Kingdom of Denmark for its continuous support to vulnerable and displaced communities in Iraq.



Director General of DMA meets the UNMAS Representative in Iraq; discussed the coordination of joint technical activities

Baghdad, 14 February 2022 – The Director General of DMA, Eng. Dhafir Mahmood Khallaf, met the UNMAS Representative in Iraq, Mr. Pehr Lodhammer, and discussed with him the coordination of joint technical activities.

A statement issued by DMA, stated that the two parties discussed the field visits to Kirkuk, Al-Muthana and Basra governorates in order to review the priorities of contamination and nature of clearance activities implemented in Basra governorate within the grant of European Union for

the aforementioned governorate, as well as the readiness of UNMAS to support some needs and requirements for DMA in terms of EORE, Information Management and the priorities of contamination in Wassit governorate/Al-Ta'an village after a previous joint visit to this village which contaminated with mines and ERW.

It is noteworthy that DMA constantly coordinates its activities with all its national and international partners, especially UNMAS as it is one of the most important international partners in mine action field.



UNMAS IED task evolution in Iraq



By Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, Chief Mine Action Programme, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Iraq

Baghdad, 11 February 2022 - With funding from over 20 United Nations (UN) Member States, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) has been conducting survey and clearance, explosive ordnance risk education and technical support for the national mine action authorities as well as other mine action stakeholders in Iraq for more than six years. Mine action activities are carried out in close cooperation and coordination with the Iraqi Directorate of Mine Action under the Ministry of Health and in collaboration with a multitude of international and national organisations, including non-governmental organisations and commercial outfits. Since the commencement of operations in 2015, following a request for support from the UN, the UNMAS programme has evolved as geographical priorities have shifted and with this also the operating environment, hence affecting the technical approach and team structures over time. It is these challenges that has resulted in UNMAS adopting a flexible approach to operational planning ensuring a tailored and effective approach to clearance could be delivered consistently.

When UNMAS first entered West Mosul in August 2017, there was limited understanding and knowledge of what the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had left behind in terms of explosive contamination. It was known that the modus operandi had been to use improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to deny access to key locations, as part of the ISIL strategic

defence and also to deny the return of displaced populations using tactics of the scorched-earth as Iraqi security forces and the global coalition gained more and more momentum throughout the Caliphate. What was unknown and beyond imagination, was the extent of usage, the evil genius employed in the design of the IEDs and that operators would be clearing unexploded ordnance in an urban environment often covered under debris at an estimated amount of 7.6 million tonnes of debris from the fighting in Mosul only. Hidden under this debris operators would soon discover hundreds of bodies from fallen ISIL fighters. Many of them were wearing explosive suicide belts or vests, which had to be carefully removed and rendered safe before the bodies could be transported for burial. All in all, a completely new environment for the mine action community and its operators, most of them used to a more “traditional demining setting” with no applicable International Mine Action Standards for this setting in existence at the time, which in part also drove the subsequent authorship of the new IMAS and IEDD best practices guides. As work progressed, operators would find and have to detect and render safe a multitude of different IEDs including ones fitted with pressure plate switches, anti-lift devices, tripwires, remote controlled devices, even passive infrared systems with a main charge in the form of an explosive formed penetrator and many other types of devices, including even toys fitted with explosive devices.

The first task for UNMAS Iraq in West Mosul, in support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Iraq’s stabilization efforts, was the Al Shifa Hospital

Complex. Once the second most modern hospital in Iraq and consisting of numerous different hospitals, including a teaching hospital, a blood bank, a burns unit and a maternity ward, it was initially used as a hospital by ISIL but later turned into their headquarters as the fighting progressed. Amongst other reasons, it was used as headquarters due to the observation opportunities the high-rise buildings in the area offered. At Al Shifa, UNMAS implementing partners cleared over 751 IEDs, improvised chemical ammunition, suicide belts, main charges and another 12,230 items of explosive remnants of war in a built-up area of a size less than 50,000 square metres and with extreme levels of war debris.

Almost four years later, the operating environment and scenario are different and clearance activities are mainly happening in the outskirts of Mosul, in the areas of Tal Afar and Sinjar where belts of IEDs are now being cleared in agricultural areas. The UNMAS programme has shifted its focus from supporting stabilization to primarily supporting durable solutions. Durable solutions are designed and implemented to ensure that displaced populations can return to and remain safely in their places of origin across the areas liberated from ISIL. Outside of Mosul, kilometre after kilometre of extensive IED belts laid in systems similar to traditional minefields are being cleared by women and men working side by side supported by mechanical means of clearance, mainly front-end loaders and excavators that have been fitted with armoured cabins to protect the operator. The area of Tel Kaif, north of Mosul, is a stark example of the level of IED contamination in the areas surrounding Mosul. Since early January 2021 until November 2021, UNMAS implementing partner Global Clearance Solutions (GCS) has cleared more than 2,274 IEDs, many of the improvised type VS 500, serial produced by ISIL, but also a multitude of various projectiles of different calibres. In Tel Kaif, IEDs constructed with main charges as large as 150 litres have also been rendered safe and removed. These deadly devices contain ammonium nitrate (fertilizer) mixed with aluminium powder and fitted with pressure plates and anti-lift switches, and in some cases containing purposely made and pre-cut steel fragmentation. Moving from the initial urban operating environment with individual

UNMAS IED task evolution in Iraq *(continued)*

IEDs to a more rural environment, UNMAS has adjusted the operating method and team structures to better and more effectively address the threats encountered. Clearance activities are now much more similar to traditional demining operations but with a few important differences including the fact that that new and, in Iraq, previously unseen devices are still encountered during clearance. Also, rather than strictly working with commercial organisations as when stabilization was supported, UNMAS is now working more with international and national non-governmental organisations who are operating in

tandem to ensure that national, localized and autonomous capacity is developed to ensure a move towards national ownership and, eventually, a smooth exit from operational support for UNMAS.

In support of durable solutions, UNMAS have also added residential area clearance teams specialized in clearance of houses to ensure that displaced populations can return to their homes and resume their livelihoods without the presence and risk from unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war. As the demands and requirements are changing, UNMAS will continue to

adjust operational activities to best serve the people of Iraq and to ensure the safe return of displaced populations. New challenges have required UNMAS Iraq to constantly respond with clearance assets and methodologies suited for and adapted to the threat and the operating environment.

AUTHOR

Pehr Lodhammar is the Chief of Mine Action Programme for UNMAS in Iraq. He has over twenty years of experience in humanitarian demining operations and with over six years of experience from the mine action sector in Iraq.

15 Iraqi mine action women graduated at explosive ordnance disposal course

Baghdad, 15 February 2022 - UNMAS Iraq recently celebrated the graduation of 15 Iraqi mine action women from its seven-week explosive ordnance disposal course, conducted in collaboration with the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), receiving recognition of certified EOD level two operators. UNMAS Iraq spearheaded this initiative in an effort to expand national capacities and ensure gender mainstreaming in the sector.

Women from UNMAS, the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA), the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), HALO Trust, Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD), Shareteah Humanitarian Organization (SHO) and Health and Social Care Organization in Iraq (IHSCO) participated in this course and will take their knowledge forward in their careers in mine action.



Mine Action international donors conference held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 17 February 2022 - The Director General of the Mine Action Department, Eng. Dhafer Mahmoud Khalaf, indicated that his department, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Mine Action in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (ACMA), and with the support of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), has held a conference for international donors today, which was attended by representatives of diplomatic missions and UN agencies, governors of governorates affected by the dangers of mines and other remnants of war, as well as many national and international organizations and companies working in this field.

The technical agent authorized with the powers of the Minister of Environment, Dr. Jassim Abdel Aziz Hammadi Al-Falahi, said today, during the International Donors Conference, that Iraq is one of the most polluted countries in the world with mines and other war projectiles.

This conference is the second of its kind organized by the Mine Action



Department in cooperation with the General Organization for Mine Action in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the United Nations Mine Action Service

(UNMAS) with the aim of attracting the largest possible number of international donors to assist in various mine action.

The Federal Republic of Germany provides additional contribution to UNMAS in support of the Mine Action sector in Iraq

Baghdad, 17 February 2022 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of USD 5.7 million from the Federal Republic of Germany for residential area clearance in support of stabilization initiatives and post-conflict returns in country.

The conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq has resulted in complex and extensive explosive ordnance contamination and displaced 5.8 million people since 2014. While the majority have returned, explosive ordnance continues to present a significant risk for individuals returning to their communities.

In Sinjar, the Yazidi population have suffered tremendously throughout the conflict with ISIL. The legacy of ISIL will continue to live on so long as explosive ordnance are scattered in houses, neighborhoods, and across communities, posing a threat to citizens set on rebuilding their lives post conflict.

In response, with the generous contribution from the Federal Republic of Germany, UNMAS is now clearing residential areas in Sinjar, paving the way for a gradual return of displaced Yazidis to their homes.

This contribution adds to a long-standing partnership between UNMAS and Germany to promote mine action in



Iraq, advancing peacebuilding, stabilization and development, particularly in areas formally occupied by ISIL.

On the occasion of Germany's contribution, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Peter Felten, German Embassy Baghdad, said: "Speaking to affected communities, I understood how much it means for them to be able to live their lives without the fear of explosive ordnance. It is obvious that only when the deadly remnants of war are removed can life return to normal. Explosive ordnance contamination is particularly heavy in Sinjar, which is why the people there consider UNMAS residential clearance in that area all the more important. Germany is

grateful for the courageous and dedicated work of the demining teams and pleased to support their efforts because we want to contribute to the safe return of communities, including Yazidis, to their homes."

Commenting on the contribution, Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, said: "The support from Germany will significantly enhance UNMAS efforts towards durable solutions. Residential area clearance will support safe returns for the many internally displaced persons that have not yet been able to return home, many who have cited booby-trapped residences as one of the primary reasons curtailing their return."

COVID-19 Pandemic



Baghdad, 20 December 2021 - Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, WHO representative in Iraq, launched a workshop organized by WHO Iraq and Iraqi Ministry of Health, which brought together Shia and Sunni clerics in Iraq to discuss COVID-19 including the preventive measures and the vaccination as gateways for controlling the Pandemic in Iraq.



Baghdad, 30 December 2021 - Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, WHO representative in Iraq, met the star of the Iraq football team, captain Noor Sabri, the goalkeeper of the lions of Mesopotamia.

He praised Mr. Sabri's engagement in health issues and sport issues alike and expressed his happiness to collaborate for the health and well-being of all Iraqis.

WHO Iraq invites citizens of Iraq to work together to unite against the Corona virus.

We are all concerned with strengthening the commitment to preventive measures and taking the vaccine to get rid of the epidemic.

WHO Iraq thanks all the artists, athletes, media professionals and doctors who participated in the World Health Organization and the Iraqi Ministry of Health in promoting community awareness of health issues.



New vaccine warehouses funded by Japan and built by UNICEF opened in Dohuk and Nineveh

Duhok, 8 January 2022 - This week, His Excellency Suzuki Kotaro, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, visited the governorates of Dohuk and Nineveh, where he attended the opening of vaccine warehouses funded by Japan and built by UNICEF in partnership with Peace Winds Japan in Dohuk and Mosul. Ambassador Suzuki observed UNICEF's work to ensure access of displaced and refugee populations to immunization and other essential health and nutrition services, with the support of the Japanese government.



WHO representative in Iraq, attended a session of the High Committee for Health and Safety led by the Prime Minister

Baghdad, 12 January 2022 - Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO representative in Iraq, attended a session of the High Committee for Health and Safety led by the Prime Minister HE. Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. Important measures were discussed to limit the progression of Omicron Corona virus variant recently confirmed in Iraq.



UN-Habitat has distributed 290 WASH/cleaning kits to targeted beneficiary families in selected vulnerable neighborhoods



Baghdad, 13 January 2022 - With funding from the European Union and as part of the Headway Programme implemented in partnership with UNDP, UN-Habitat has distributed 290 WASH/cleaning kits to targeted beneficiary families in selected vulnerable neighborhoods in Erbil and Mosul. This initiative will help raise awareness regarding the importance of

good cleaning and hygiene habits in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. The kits included a leaflet promoting water saving strategies and practicing hygiene with less water, to counter the ongoing water scarcity and drought in Iraq.

*Each cleaning kit consists of (soft broom, bucket, mop, jerry can, soap, sanitary pads, detergent, gloves, etc.)

IOM Iraq is assisting institutions in Anbar to meet oxygen needs

Baghdad, 31 January 2022 - As COVID-19 cases increase across Iraq, so too does pressure on healthcare institutions and demand for medical oxygen to treat critical cases. IOM Iraq is assisting these institutions to meet oxygen needs in all districts and regions of Western Anbar Governorate, including Haditha, Anah, Rawah, Al-Obaidi, and Al-Qaim. Part and parcel of efforts to support the

governorate's returnees, many of whom are especially vulnerable to infection, IOM recently installed an oxygen generation laboratory in Anah Hospital. A project inauguration ceremony was held for residents of Western Anbar.

Around 400,000 residents will benefit from this project, made possible with support from the German Development Bank (KfW).



WHO supports KR-I with over 20 tons of medical supplies to enhance the national response to COVID-19 health challenges

Erbil, 23 January 2022 – The World Health Organization (WHO) handed over more than 20 tons of urgently needed medical technologies to the Ministry of Health in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

The 117-pallet consignment contains a variety of emergency medical devices, mechanical and intensive care unit beds, personal protection equipment (PPEs), and in-kind medical furniture that will contribute to boosting the quality of medical care services and enhancing the local health authority's preparedness to encounter a potential transmission of the Omicron variant in what is considered as the fourth wave of COVID-19 pandemic in Iraq.

"I am happy at the level of collaboration between the Ministry of Health in Kurdistan Region of Iraq and WHO and would like to thank all the hard efforts behind this continued support," said Dr. Saman Barzangy, Minister of Health in KR-I. "This shipment of emergency medical supplies will surely make a difference in the quality and quantity of health care services delivered in our health institutions. Hundreds of thousands of people will now ensure better access to essential and emergency health care services including COVID-19 treatment," H.E. Dr. Barzangy added.

After the significant decrease in COVID-19 infections in the last months of 2021, helped by the rise in numbers of vaccinated people across Iraq, the infection figures started to surge again recently alarming of a new wave of the



pandemic in the country, which could relate to the detection of the Omicron variant in the northern city of Duhok in KR-I and the capital Baghdad on 6 January this year.

"This consignment complements the previous emergency and lifesaving support presented to enforce the local health authorities' response to the new surge in Omicron variant cases," said Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq.

"We are concerned about the recent drive in case numbers which we see as a call for a collective action to promote the local prevention and vaccination efforts. WHO and the Ministry of Health on both the Central and Kurdistan Regional levels share the same goal of working to protect the Iraqis and save lives through accessible, sustainable, and affordable quality health care services across the

country," Dr. Zouiten added.

It is worth mentioning that in 2021, WHO Iraq supported the Ministry of Health in KR-I with medical equipment and pharmaceuticals worth of over US\$2.5 million. The support assisted in augmenting the provision of essential and emergency health care services in the KR-I governorates and productively contributed to addressing the dire health needs of the region's community which continues to host nearly a quarter of a million Syrian refugees and over 1 million internally displaced Iraqis.

The World Health Organization in Iraq would like to express its gratitude for the generous contribution from the People and Government of Germany, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the People and Government of Kuwait for assisting in funding this medical and lab support.

IOM cooperates with the Rusafa Health Department in Baghdad to support COVID-19 vaccination services

Baghdad, 29 January 2022 - In Iraq, 14.45% of the population has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Further support is needed to increase vaccination uptake across the country. IOM cooperates with the Rusafa Health Department in Baghdad to support COVID-19 vaccination services in Sumer neighborhood's health center, located in the Shaab area. Since November 2021, nearly 6,000 vaccine doses were administered via the clinic.

In Iraq, education is one of the many sectors negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including through misinformation about the vaccine. IOM Iraq has been providing COVID-19 vaccination services in Baghdad's Sumer Health Center, in cooperation with the Rusafa Health Department, and has been conducting awareness and sensitization sessions on COVID-19 with communities and healthcare workers since September 2021 to encourage vaccine uptake.



U.S. State Department's delegation visited Baadre Primary Health Care Center (PHCC) in Dohuk Governorate



Dohuk, 01 February 2022 - COVID-19 is having an unprecedented impact on mobility for those displaced by conflict in Iraq. Ongoing support is

needed to avoid harmful consequences, minimize hardship and reduce public health risk. Today, a delegation from the U.S. State

Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) visited Baadre Primary Health Care Center (PHCC) in Dohuk Governorate. With PRM support, IOM Iraq assisted the Dohuk Directorate of Health to renovate and expand this PHCC so that internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host community members could have improved access to health services. A second floor was built where community members from Baadre are currently receiving their COVID-19 vaccinations.

PRM also visited Duhok Governorate's Shariya IDP camp to observe a campaign providing information to community representatives and IDPs on IOM's durable solutions programme, including about the facilitation of voluntary returns; Information on the returns process itself and the type of assistance IDPs are entitled to during and after the return movement were provided.

With support of WHO's core contributors, health services and on-site vaccine opportunities were implemented in Iraq

Baghdad, 8 February 2022 - The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted an already fragile health system in Iraq. The health systems in the country had been crippled by decades of wars and instability that compromised the access to equitable and sufficient health care services across the country.

World Health Organization (WHO) and the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH) forged a close cooperation in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and succeeded in mapping a quick response to critical health issues like the low vaccination rates across the country's 18 governorates.

Capitalizing on donors' support and contributions, WHO and MOH jointly planned a vast on-site vaccine project to provide the population, including the vulnerable groups of the refugees and IDPs with equal opportunities to get the vaccine quickly and easily.

Um Salam, a 73-year-old widow- who lives in rural western Kut city in Kut governorate west Iraq, recently lost a relative due to complications caused by COVID-19 infection. The realization of the severity of the consequences of the virus led Um Salam to reached out to the city's local PHC to enquire about vaccinations for herself and her two



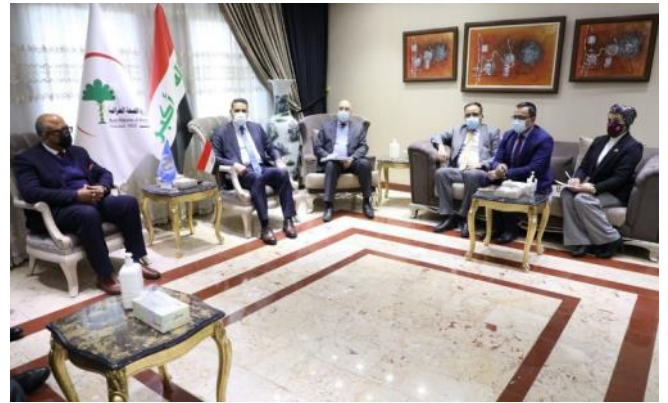
grandsons. She was pleased when the vaccination process was simple and effortless. Her queries were immediately answered, and she was able to take the vaccine herself along with her two grandsons at the site.

" We are grateful for the continued support of our core contributors. The latest support from the Qatar Fund for Development and other core contributors has indeed enabled WHO

and the Ministry of Health in implementing multiple projects including strengthening the national surveillance system, promoting the prevention and control of communicable diseases like COVID 19, and facilitating the preparedness for mass gathering events, especially in central and southern Iraq." Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq said.



Baghdad, 24 December 2021 - Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, WHO representative in Iraq, participated today at a training workshop for media professionals and journalists in Iraq organized by WHO in Iraq and Al Jazeera Media Institute. He stressed that the partnership between the World Health Organization and Al Jazeera Institute in the field of media training will make the difference in health education in Iraq.



Baghdad, 19 January 2022 - Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu, WHO Assistant Director General in charge of Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence and Surveillance visited Iraq. In his meeting with Iraqi officials he expressed WHO readiness to support Iraqi Ministry of Health to build the health systems and the surveillance systems of the future.

The newly rehabilitated Emergency Unit in Baiji General Hospital opened

Baghdad, 30 January 2022 - UNDP Resident Representative Zena Ali-Ahmad inaugurated the newly rehabilitated Emergency Unit in Baiji General Hospital on 30 January. During her visit, she also met with the Governor of Salah Al-Din, Ammar Jabr Khalil, to discuss UNDP Iraq's ongoing efforts to support the people of Salah Al-Din to build forward better. After which, she sat down with key religious leaders to discuss their role in strengthening social cohesion in Salah Al-Din. Through the Social Cohesion programme, UNDP has been working with religious leaders across Iraq to enhance their role in community

coexistence and cohesion. The delegation also visited key Funding Facility for Stabilization project sites to

monitor progress, such as the Tikrit Teaching Hospital and Almazra'a Police Centre in Baiji.



Health for all cannot be achieved without quality primary health care

Baghdad, 13 February 2022 - At the recent International Family Physician Conference, World Health Organization (WHO) Iraq Representative, Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, stated that Universal Health Coverage and Health for all cannot be achieved without Quality Primary Health Care, which in turn cannot be achieved without family doctors and practitioners. "Iraq needs to invest in renewing its health care forces emphasizing the family medicine in the heart of the health development strategy moving forward", said Dr. Zouiten.

to 12,000 family practitioners to reach the 3 per 10000 population thresholds as advised by WHO.

On the margins of the conference in Baghdad, Dr Zouiten received a decoration shield.

In Iraq 5% of the 2805 primary health care centres (PHCs) are run by a Family Physician. The total number of Family Physicians in the country is about 775, while the country needs up



Iraq ahead of demographic dividend, not population growth or explosion

Baghdad, 4 February 2022 - On 27 January, UNFPA Representative, Dr Rita Columbia, gave a statement to Al-Sabah newspaper about demographic dividend and the importance of putting robust, evidence-based, and people-centred policies.

During the interview, a mistake in translation from English to Arabic occurred. UNFPA Representative was misquoted on population growth. Dr Columbia was highlighting the increase in the number of young people will lead Iraq to the demographic dividend opportunity.

Complete Statement of UNFPA Representative to Al-Sabah as given in English.

[Beginning of statement] “The demographic situation in Iraq has been changing. We see a ratio of the younger population getting higher, with about 50 to 60% of people aged up to 30 years old, which provides the opportunity of demographic dividend.

If there are policies and actions from the country, government and communities to empower young people, especially girls, with education and health services, and family planning and employment, then within 20 years, Iraqi can make a big jump towards economic stability and development.

Based on the Iraq Women Integrated Social and Health Survey (I-WISH-2) conducted recently by the Central Statistical Office at the Ministry of Planning, with support of UNFPA, a third of the women population in Iraq

experience at least one form of gender-based violence, similar to the global figures. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic increased the risk for women to experience violence and abuse and be unemployed.

Family planning is extremely important for any family to ensure sustainable growth for their children, for family prosperity and their own economic prosperity. Today, we see that access to modern contraception is not universal in Iraq, which limits the choices of women and families and couples.

However, UNFPA currently supports the Ministry of Health at the Federal and Kurdistan Region levels to address this issue. We are proud to have a

National Birth Spacing & Family Planning Strategy. We hope that is strategy will be well implemented.

WI take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Health and the local authorities at the Governorates level, who pay attention to gender-based violence and family planning with support from donors like Japan, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. [end of statement]

UNFPA reaffirms its commitment to work with all strategic and implementing partners in Iraq to ensure rights and choices for all through ending unmet need for family planning, ending gender-based violence and harmful practices and ending preventable maternal death.



Mental Health

IOM continues its support to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services

Baghdad, 11 February 2022 - The experiences endured by conflict-affected populations in Iraq, including severe hardship and violence, have left a need for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services – particularly among internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees.

IOM recently held a capacity building forum in Baghdad attended by members of the National Technical MHPSS Working Group in Iraq. During the session, IOM provided participants the latest updates on IOM capacity building and training resources, including the updated version of “The Manual on Community-Based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies and Displacement”, available at: <https://www.iom.int/mhpsed>

IOM Iraq also shared information about a new online course designed to complement the manual in supporting MHPSS professionals to design, implement, monitor and evaluate community-based MHPSS humanitarian response programmes, projects and activities in contexts impacted by emergencies and displacement. The course is available at: <https://www.ecampus.iom.int/enrol/index.php?id=546>

In addition, participants were consulted on an upcoming guide to the integration of livelihoods and MHPSS, to be launched by IOM Iraq in February 2022.

This forum was made possible with support from the Governments of New Zealand and Japan.



Good mental health is key for a healthy life

Baghdad, 16 January 2022 - Good mental health is key for a healthy life. Mental Health and women empowerment were at the centre of the discussions today between the Ambassador of Spain and UNFPA Iraq Representative with Yazidi women at Khanki camp for internally displaced persons.



UNODC helps Iraqi victims of terrorism regain hope and their lives

Baghdad, 19 January 2022 - "As a result of the support I received, I enrolled in university to learn English and made new friends. After two years of introversion, a refusal to communicate with the outside world, and denying myself to live - today, I finally feel empowered, liberated and more optimistic," says 26-year-old Nour (not her real name*). She is one of the 17 Yazidi victims of terrorism who attended a workshop organized by UNODC to help them recover psychologically and build resilience.

However, Nour has not always been so hopeful about her future. She is one of 6,000 Yazidi women and children abducted by Daesh (ISIL) fighters in Northern Iraq that had to endure captivity, torture, domestic enslavement, and systematic sexual exploitation. "I had always remembered myself as a positive person. But after my release from years in captivity by Daesh, I felt that something within me had died and I felt lifeless," she recounts.

Earlier this year, UNODC has started a project in Iraq assisting the country to strengthen its criminal justice system to uphold and protect the rights of victims of terrorism in criminal proceedings. However, recognizing that prompt and efficient emotional assistance to victims such as Nour significantly increases their ability to cope with trauma, UNODC has also promoted psychological support as an integral part of the project. Together with the Association of Victims of Terrorism in Lebanon (AVT-L), it delivers the project's activities to rehabilitate and empower victims within their communities.

The most recent events were held in Jordan this past November. At one workshop, UNODC trained 18 experts, amongst them three women holding senior positions, from Iraqi criminal justice institutions involved in preventing and countering terrorism. One participant stated that "access to justice and



contributing to establishing the truth is crucial for victims because it represents their struggle for survival. These suffering victims want to prevent these crimes from being repeated in the future." UNODC has been a key partner to Iraq since 2014 in building the capacity of Iraqi authorities in fighting terrorism. In this connection, another participant of the workshop expressed: "We hope that UNODC continues to support us in drafting and amending counter-terrorism legislation and that soon we can work on legislation specifically related to victims of terrorism."

The other workshop, which Nour attended, welcomed psychotherapists, journalists, and victims of terrorism. The project's activities help equip victims with communication tools to redefine their own narratives and empower them to become agents of peace in their communities. "During the first workshop, Nour was extremely reclusive. I saw fear and lack of trust in her eyes," an AVT-L expert

recalls.

"It took her significant time to open up and share her story with the participants," the expert explains. Eventually, Nour requested one-on-one sessions with AVT-L psychologists to share her suffering during her captivity. When victims can finally recall their trauma, other, more complex traumas might emerge, as was the case with Nour. "She felt blocked in her thoughts, reactions, and decisions," the AVT-L expert says. But adequate support and small, asserted steps, the expert reports, made Nour "feel empowered to turn her life around and reintegrate herself back into her community, all by herself."

*Names in this story were changed or not mentioned to protect the identity of the speakers

The workshops were made possible by the project "Supporting victims of terrorism within the criminal justice framework, including psychological support" in Iraq, which is funded by the Netherlands.

The role of innovative local solutions in strengthening Iraq's Green Economy

Baghdad, 29 December 2021 - The concept of Green Economy is on the rise in Iraq. The UNDP-Accelerator Lab in Iraq is supporting this move through sensing, exploring, and mapping innovative local solutions to facilitate the shift of Iraq's economy toward sustainability. Specifically, the UNDP-AccLab is working on initiating positive behavioral change towards the consumption of environmentally friendly products.

The sensing and exploring journey by the UNDP-AccLab in Iraq through Mission 1.5 Game, the Future of Climate in Iraq Exhibition and Call for Innovation with Iraqi youth has found a shift to green economy and produced valuable insights regarding community priorities within this area. Community priorities were found to be related to pollution and solid waste. Following this, the UNDP-AccLab began a solutions-mapping activity, which highlighted that the number of businesses and projects with sustainable solutions is increasing in Iraq. For example, some Iraqi companies have changed their product packaging to an eco-friendly alternative, while other businesses started selling eco-friendly items, including Ecopotamia, EcoMENA, Green Gold, IPR Eco, and Bait Alhiraf company.

The UNDP-Acc Lab in Iraq analyzed the focus of the local solutions and identified one local solution that is working on the issue of plastic waste: Eco-Bags by Bait Alhiraf. The company's local solution is Eco-Bags,



which involves the production of reusable bags featuring authentic Iraqi designs, by vulnerable women, to spread Mesopotamian culture to the world. The solution is tackling the issue of solid waste materials, which is one of the main reasons for the clogging of drains and the pollution of Iraqi rivers. Adding to this, litter is a problem with a very negative social and environmental impact and in Iraq, people are yet to acknowledge the effects of plastic waste on the environment.

The UNDP-AccLab in Iraq supported this local solution by providing technical, financial, and creative

support. The scale-up of the local solution resulted in designing creative Eco-bags with a mix of traditional and modern motifs that deliver a message to youth, and encourage the public to preserve the environment. The local solution, after launching, led to the promotion of green living among the public. It also led to spreading awareness related to eco-friendly items and changing market dynamics towards a greener economy in Iraq. The UNDP-AccLab in Iraq will continue to sense and explore other behavioral methods that will support the movement to a greener economy in Iraq.

UN Iraq staff in Mosul planted trees in Mosul

Mosul, 18 January 2022 - The need to protect Environmental Rights is greater than ever. UN Iraq Human Rights Office welcomes the Green Mosul initiative of planting trees throughout Mosul. Today, Green Mosul welcomed UN Iraq staff in Mosul to participate in their project to plant trees in Mosul.

Photos courtesy of Mosul Eye.



SRSJ Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert visits Mesopotamian Marshes, witnessing firsthand the challenges arising from climate change, water shortages and population growth

Baghdad, 1 February 2022 - As consistently reported by UN Iraq, drought and water scarcity are pressing concerns, and the marshlands of southern Iraq are among the worst affected areas. With annual evaporation varying from 2.5 to 3 meters, and starkly reduced riverine flows supplying the marshlands, the area covered by water has been substantially reduced. Moreover, increased salinity and mineral concentration directly impact human and animal health. Urgent action is required to address the lack of potable water and associated risks, including forced displacement. Importantly, the Ahwar of Southern Iraq are also a World Heritage Site, a Biodiversity Refuge and the Relict Landscape of the Mesopotamian Cities. These sites, closely associated with the country's ancient history and rich culture, are highly vulnerable and require conservation to prevent further irreversible erosion and collapse.

The main drivers of water scarcity include:

- Climate change effects and lower precipitation;
- Active reduction of water inflows by neighboring countries;
- Ineffective water resource management as well as inadequate water infrastructure and maintenance;
- Salinization of soils and water.

UN SRSJ Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert:

“The marshlands are not only magnificent landscapes, they are also essential for Iraq's biodiversity. While Iraqi authorities express their commitment to tackling climate change challenges, ownership across the political spectrum will prove essential. Water scarcity is a threat multiplier, adding to poverty, displacement, instability and conflict. These risks will only be exacerbated in the absence of concerted action and political resolve.”

Based on the early warning reports received and assessments conducted in the field, FAO proposes to undertake early action to address the immediate needs of poor rural households, starting with buffalo breeders in and around the marshes. The immediate needs are

animal feed (e.g. molasses, wheat bran and corn silage). In response to more structural needs, FAO has started to assist poor smallholder farmers and landless rural households in Basrah, Missan and Thi-Qar Governorates to improve agricultural productivity and income generation in a number of priority value chains, namely tomatoes, dairy (buffalos) and date palms. Many UN agencies are active in the southern region: FAO has joined hands with GIZ, ILO, IOM, ITC and UNESCO to implement a large EU-funded Agri-food Business Development Program; UNICEF focuses on improved access to potable drinking water; UNDP and WFP concentrate on economic development and livelihoods support.



UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator visits Basra and Thi-Qar to discuss support needed to combat water scarcity and climate change

Basra, 23 February 2022 -The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano visited Basra and Thi-Qar to reaffirm the UN's long-term commitment to supporting the Government of Iraq in tackling climate change.

Ms. Vojáčková-Sollorano was accompanied by H.E. Mr. Michel Rentenaar, Ambassador to the Netherlands, Mr. Edvard George from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Mr. Ally Raza Qureshi, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)



UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator visits Basra and Thi-Qar ... (continued)



well as representatives from the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and a representative from the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq.

During her three-day trip in southern Iraq, from 21 to 23 February 2022, the Resident Coordinator met with a wide range of partners, including government officials and representatives of civil society, and conducted joint site visits to several UN projects. Together with H.E. Michel Rentenaar, Netherlands Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Edvard Thorfinn George, Swedish International Development Agency, Mr. Qureshi, Ms. Sen Gupta, and Ms. Ali Ahmad, Ms. Vojáčková-Sollorano Governor of Thi-Qar H.E. Mr. Mohammed Hadi Al-Ghazi, with the Basra Director-General of Water, Mr. Zuhair Jawad Hashim, Basra Director-General of Education, Mr. Muslim Abdulkareem Naser, academics and representatives from various fields such as agriculture, food and energy to discuss the current climate challenges facing communities in Basra and Thi-Qar. The latest development projects that use innovative climate smart practices and eco-friendly technologies that improve water supply, sanitation and irrigation service delivery in Basra were also discussed.

“Water is at the core of sustainable development and is critical for socio-economic development and healthy ecosystems. Water is the common thread that connects all aspects of our life and one of the major issues in tackling climate change. Without urgent action, water shortages will not only cause large losses across multiple sectors of the economy, but affect more vulnerable people. More needs to be done to secure water resources and limit the impacts of water scarcity on

economy, society, and environment,” said Resident Coordinator Vojáčková-Sollorano.

The delegation visited the Anwar Al Zahraa school, which is the first school in Basra equipped with a desalination unit powered by solar energy. UNICEF will provide solar operated water units to 100 schools, with generous funds from the Netherlands, to ensure that more children have access to safe and quality drinking water.

They also visited several water complexes, where UNDP, jointly with UNICEF is implementing a water management project with generous support from the Netherlands. The project focuses on improving access to safe drinking water in Basra by rehabilitating four major non-functional water treatment complexes, focusing on those who are most vulnerable and ensuring that almost a million residents of Basra governorate have sustainable access to safe water. These resources will help the Directorate of Water in its conservation efforts by equipping it with smart devices to measure water consumption, track leakages, and put a stop to any waste.

“Access to clean and safe water is a basic human right, and this access can only be ensured when there is a good water management system in place. The Netherlands is very pleased to help by sharing our extensive expertise in this field and contributing to improving the lives of citizens in Basra,” explained Ambassador Rentenaar.

Ms. Vojáčková-Sollorano visited WFP’s Greenhouse and Solar Water Pump projects in Basra to meet some of the 4,500 farmers benefiting from these initiatives. The projects have significantly increased land use and productivity in the area. Solar-powered water pump technology not only

improves water security in drought prone areas, but also reduces air pollution and protects the environment. WFP’s climate change-focused resilience projects in southern Iraq aim to support vulnerable communities’ abilities to withstand climate change effects and positively impact upon their livelihoods and food security, while also working jointly with Government of Iraq partners at national and local levels to build capacities to provide support to vulnerable households.

In the Mesopotamian Marshes, where FAO in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture are supporting and improving production practices that are directly linked to the livelihoods of the communities living inside and around the Marshes, in addition to the implementation of activities that are promoting its restoration and at the same time reducing the degradation of its natural resources, Resident Coordinator Vojáčková-Sollorano stated “Look no further than the low elevations of the rivers, water shortage, desertification, salination, loss of biodiversity or the record-setting heat waves-- climate change is already here and Iraq is one of the countries considered most vulnerable to its effects. From providing clean and safe water sources using solar energy, to establishing quality health and community infrastructure, to creating sustainable livelihood opportunities—the UN has made a positive impact across Thi-Qar and Basra governorates. But more needs to be done and the UN stands ready to support the Government of Iraq in fighting climate change.”

The marshes are of fundamental importance because of their ecological and economic value and unique characteristics. The UN interventions to preserve and restore the marshes include improving the adoption of water efficient and climate smart agriculture practices and technologies, by enhancing water management practices and efficient irrigation technologies; drought-tolerant crop varieties and job creation.

Along with H.E. Mr. Michel Rentenaar, Ms. Vojáčková-Sollorano visited Shatt al-Arab region where UNMAS Iraq has cleared landmines and other forms of explosive ordnance over 536,800 m² of land since 2021 in Basra. There they met with female deminers who are clearing the land in order to increase agricultural opportunities.

Resident Coordinator Vojáčková-

UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator visits Basra and Thi-Qar ... (continued)

Sollorano led the local 'Area Based Coordination' (ABC) meeting in Basra with UN, government and local partners, which coordinates all actors, UN and NGOs, working on water and agriculture.

Before departing, Ms. Vojáčková-Sollorano, together with the H.E. Michel Rentenaar, Mr. George, Mr. Qureshi, Ms. Sen Gupta, and Mr. Sorosh-Wali visited the sites in the old city of Basra for the EU funded project, 'Reviving Basra and Mosul Old Cities,' implemented by UNESCO. The project promotes social cohesion and reconciliation through the restoration and reconstruction of historic urban landscapes. As well as rehabilitating cultural heritage assets, the project



also included much-needed creation of job opportunities and the development

of youth skills among displaced families and returnees.

Culture

Destruction turned into knowledge: Iraqi archeologists unveil the remains of the 12th century Al Nouri Prayer Hall

Mosul, 19 January 2022 - In Mosul, the excavations conducted under the Al-Nouri Prayer Hall have revealed the remains of the 12-century mosque. A total of four rooms built of stone and plaster were exhumed

Within the UAE-funded project "Reviving the Spirit of Mosul by rebuilding its monumental landmarks", and in cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Culture and the Sunni Waqf, the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH) discovered the foundations, floor, and basement of the building, dating back to the 12th century. The discovery includes four rooms where archeologists think the ablutions took place.

Archaeological excavations started on August 2021 by a team of 40 archaeologists and workers from the State Boards of Antiquities and Heritage of Iraq.

According to Khaireddine Nasser, director of the Department of Antiquities and Heritage in Nineveh the discovery allows for "better knowledge of the surface of Al-Nuri mosque and this ancient prayer room, but also the ablution basins" found there. "Each ablution room measures three meters (almost 10 feet) in height and 3.5 meters in width", Nasser said. "They are about six meters underground," he added. He said the discovery "amplifies the importance of

this historical and archaeological site". "The foundations of the old prayer hall are more extensive than those of the prayer hall built in the 1940s", he added.

The Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH), stated that it will work with UNESCO to protect, restore and integrate into the reconstruction process this very important discovery in order for visitors to learn about all the phases that the Al-Nouri Mosque went through for more than 800 years.

Archaeological excavations in this area

of the Al Nouri Complex were possible due to the unfortunate destruction of the Prayer Hall in 2017. The State Board of Antiquities and Heritage discovery is a strong example of how violent destruction can be turned into an opportunity for knowledge and development.

UNESCO is fostering reconciliation and social cohesion in Mosul through the restoration and reconstruction of emblematic historical sites as part of UNESCO's international initiative "Revive the Spirit of Mosul".



UNESCO has successfully finalized the cleaning of the alleyways of the Erbil Citadel

Erbil, 22 January 2022 - UNESCO has successfully finalized the cleaning of the alleyways of the Erbil Citadel (UNESCO World Heritage Site), in cooperation with the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalization (HCECR). The necessity of this activity resides in safeguarding the Citadel's built fabric and environment from the threat of fire in the summer season, in addition to cleaning all the citadel's areas and subsequently providing proper accessibility and ease of movement to carry out condition assessment and conservation works, while providing decent job

opportunities for Iraqis and Syrian refugees. This activity was implemented within the project

“Support to Livelihoods through Cultural Heritage Development”, thanks to the EU Madad fund.



UN SRSG visits Ur: It is high time that Iraq taps into its rich cultural history

Baghdad, 3 February 2022 - Mesopotamia is the home of ancient civilizations, as is evident in the archaeological ruins dotting Iraq today. Many sites of great cultural significance enrich the country's history and present. Ur in southern Iraq is one of those landmarks. “Walking on grounds that thousands of years ago were at the centre of the world brings awe and admiration. This is a place one must see”, UN SRSG Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert said on a recent mission to southern Iraq during which she visited Ur. Iraq's rich past is as significant as its oil wealth today. The right expertise and development efforts can attract many visitors, creating local jobs and generating income to help Iraq's economy break away from a complete reliance on hydrocarbon revenues. “Iraq has tremendous untapped



potential as a place of interest for visitors and travellers. Local and national authorities as well as the Iraqi

public are encouraged to take pride in discovering this wealth”, said Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert.

UNESCO supports the Digital Centre of Eastern Manuscripts

Baghdad, 18 February 2022 - UNESCO supports the Digital Centre of Eastern Manuscripts in Iraq by providing IT materials and hiring restorers for the restoration and digitization of ancient manuscripts salvaged from destruction in Mosul with support from the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.



The reconstruction works of Al-Hadba minaret and Al-Saa'a and Al-Tahera churches by UNESCO and UAE will be ready to start in March



Mosul, 8 February 2022 - Ernesto Ottone Ramírez, Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO and the UAE, announced during Mr. Ottone's visit to Iraq that, after three years of intense preparatory works, the reconstruction works of Al-Hadba minaret and Al-Saa'a and Al-Tahera Churches by UNESCO in partnership with the UAE will be ready to start in March. Audrey Azoulay, Director General of UNESCO, will travel specially to Mosul to launch these works.

80% of the old city of Mosul has been destroyed due to the occupation of the city by the Islamic State until 2017. After the city was liberated, Audrey Azoulay, Director General of UNESCO, launched in 2018 an ambitious international initiative to "revive the spirit of Mosul".

This reconstruction and reconciliation initiative aims to restore this rich and diverse city, with its pluralistic history at the crossroads of cultures and religions of the Middle East, back to its former glory, by empowering the population as agents of change involved in the process of rebuilding their city through three main axes: heritage, education, and cultural life.

The United Arab Emirates was the first partner to join this UNESCO's initiative for the restoration and reconstruction of the historic landmarks of Mosul – Al-Nouri Mosque and Al-Hadba minaret. The project was later expanded to include Al-Saa'a and Al-Tahera Churches. The European Union has also partnered with UNESCO to rebuild 122 historic houses.

This week, Ernesto Ottone Ramírez, Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO, visited the Old City of Mosul to witness firsthand the progress that took place.

"I am very happy to see large numbers of youth contributing to the

reconstruction of their city. Following the very good results of the previous phases of the work that I observed during my visit, we can announce excellent news: the reconstruction works of Al-Hadba minaret and Al-Saa'a and Al-Tahera Churches by UNESCO will be ready to start in March. And to kick-start these works, Audrey Azoulay, Director General of UNESCO, will travel specially to Mosul" said Ernesto Ottone R., Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO.

"We express our gratitude to the team who have worked tirelessly to deliver the project. The archeological discoveries under Al Nouri Mosque are a valuable contribution to our understanding of this historic monument. Consultations are underway to finalize the design of the Mosque, incorporating these precious discoveries. We eagerly await the start of the reconstruction work. The progress made on this project strengthens the resolve of the community and aids in bolstering the local economy by instilling confidence and engaging Iraqis in rebuilding their historical treasures" said Noura Al Kaabi, Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, United Arab Emirates.

UNESCO Director General will also inaugurate in March dozens of historic houses, the reconstruction of which is almost complete.

An ambitious work started in Autumn 2018

In coordination with the Government of Iraq, local partners and international experts, the rehabilitation of these iconic monuments started in Autumn 2018 by the preparation phase of reconstruction.

Following the demining operation of the four sites that were extensively damaged due to booby-traps, hazardous materials and unexploded ordnance,

started the clearing process: this was more than just the removal of old stones. In fact, amidst the rubble were valuable pieces that could be reused during reconstruction phase.

The selection of the valuable building fragments which had to be separated from the rubble had been done under the guidance of international experts and archeology students from the University of Mosul. These structural elements were stored in a safe warehouse and restored by trained students of the departments of archaeology, architecture and engineering of the University of Mosul. Structural investigations and documentations have also been conducted by experts on site to plan the reconstruction and restoration of the four monuments. In parallel the four sites have all been secured and stabilized and ready for the construction site. As for Al Nouri Mosque, UNESCO launched, in November 2020, an International Design Competition for the selection of the design of Al Nouri Mosque. The winners, an Egyptian team, are currently finalizing the detailed design expected to be completed by April this year.

Beyond the rehabilitation of architectural landmarks, the initiative includes on-the-job training for young professionals, strengthening the capacities of craftspeople, job-creation opportunities, and technical and vocational education which will be implemented in partnership with the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM).

An exceptional archaeological discovery

The Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO also visited the archaeological excavations conducted by the Ministry of Culture of Iraq and its State Board of Antiquities and heritage under Al Nouri Prayer Hall and made possible by the preparation phase of reconstruction of UNESCO.

The discovery includes four rooms, dating back to the Atabeg period, probably used for ablution. This assumption is based on the uncovering of a series of water basins and drainage channels abutting the lateral walls of the rooms. The dating of the rooms was possible due to the discovery of coins dating back to this era. Other artefacts from different ages such as jars, fragments of pottery and carved stone pieces were also found.

The reconstruction works of Al-Hadba minaret ... (continued)

“This discovery brings a message of hope to the people of Mosul, Iraq and the world. It highlights the deep history of the country; it opens new opportunities to learn and discover the rich heritage of Iraq” said Ernesto Ottone R., Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO.

H.E. Dr. Hassan Nadhem, Minister of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities of Iraq chaired the sixth Joint Steering Committee meeting of the “Reviving the Spirit of Mosul by Rebuilding its monumental landmarks” project funded by the United Arab Emirates at the Prime Minister’s Guest house in Baghdad and online.

The session included the participation of H.E. Noura Al Kaabi, Minister of Culture and Youth of the United Arab Emirates, Mr. Ernesto Ottone Ramirez, Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO, Dr. Saad Kambash, President of the Sunni Endowments of Iraq, Fr. Khouri Martin Hirmz Daoud, General Director of the Christian Endowments, Mr. Salim Salih Mahdi, Director General/Official coordinator for UNESCO Assistance at the Endowments, Dr. Sabah Abdullatif Mushatat, Special Advisor to the PM of Iraq for reconstruction and investment, Mr Mohammad Saleh Al- Tuniji, Chargé d'affaires, UAE Embassy and

Fr. Nicolas Tixier representing the Dominican Order.



Education

On International Day of Education, WFP and the Iraqi Ministry of Education launch expansion of school meals

Baghdad, 24 January 2022 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Iraqi Ministry of Education today kicked off the expansion of the national School Feeding Programme on the International Day of Education. This programme is fully funded by the Government of Iraq and reflects the strong commitment of the government to supporting the education of Iraqi children.

This marks a new phase of the programme where the Ministry of Education begins to directly take over the implementation of the programme and provision of the school meals. Physical classroom learning had resumed in Iraq for the current academic year following a prolonged period of distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year, for the first time the Ministry of Education will be implementing the programme directly, supporting nearly 113,000 school children in Al-Sadr City in Baghdad, in addition to nearly 21,000 children in Thi-Qar and about 50,000 children in Basra. In addition to nutrition, health and hygiene education, WFP will provide technical advisory support and also help with procurement and logistics, drawing on its years of experience in delivering school feeding programmes.

Through ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health, WFP strengthened capacities to implement the programme in 13 governorates and provide school meals



to 449,000 students this year. This comes after an agreement in 2021 to broaden school feeding activities to include 3.6 million Iraqi school children by the 2024/2025 academic year.

“WFP’s ongoing collaboration with the Government of Iraq on delivering school feeding is one of the most important pillars of our work,” says Ally Raza Qureshi, WFP Representative in Iraq. “The commitment of the Ministry of Education to deliver a successful school feeding programme, built on years of working together, is testament to the importance of continued education and achieving better prospects for the young children of Iraq in the future. It is also laying strong foundations for the government to deliver social protection programmes throughout the different phases of people’s lives.”

The School Feeding Programme aims to contribute to better learning outcomes through the provision of nutritional meals in school and to contribute

towards children’s attendance and school completion. The programme was suspended in the previous academic year due to COVID-19 and is now being resumed.

The importance of school feeding programmes goes beyond the immediate effects of providing young children with healthy and nutritious meals and supporting their ongoing education and staying at school. These programmes also support mobilizing and strengthening local economies as the school meal items will be sourced from local enterprises and shops. The provision of school meals also aims to promote gender equality as both boys and girls are encouraged to attend and complete school.

Through supporting the Iraqi government to independently deliver the School Feeding Programme, WFP is achieving more in terms of building stable and reliable mechanisms for supporting social protection and safety nets in the country.

Marking the International Day of Education, the Back-to-Learning Campaign from UNICEF, Germany and Canada, identifies 50,000 children and adolescents to return to school in Iraq

Baghdad, 24 January 2022 – As announced during International Day of Education, marked on January 24, 50,000 children and adolescents have been identified and more than 14,000 have been supported to get enrolled or re-enrolled in schools as result of the “Back-to-learning Campaign”, finalized by the end of 2021. The project, coordinated by UNICEF with the Ministries of Education of Federal Iraq and Kurdistan Region, and financed by Germany and Canada, identified these children and adolescents and facilitated their enrollment in formal and non-formal education through mobile teams.

“I dropped out from school due to health issues. Now, thanks to the campaign, I am back to school. This is great!”, said Dunya, a 13-year-old girl from Erbil, one of the girls who has been re-enrolled in school through this campaign.

Other identified children and adolescents who were not eligible to be enrolled in the formal schooling system have been supported to join the available informal education opportunities. In Iraq, thousands of children and adolescents are out of the education system, especially those most vulnerable. The pandemic has only exacerbated this trend, leaving thousands of children and adolescents more at the peril of capping their development. UNICEF is focusing efforts to increase access to basic education for dropped-out and out-of-school children in Iraq.

“This generation of children and youth cannot afford any more disruptions to their education. UNICEF will continue working with the Ministries of Education of Federal Iraq and of the Kurdistan Region to ensure that every child has education opportunities to develop and thrive and have access to a better future”, said Sheema SenGupta,

UNICEF Representative in Iraq.

“Education is the basis for a self-actualized life. Children must be offered every chance to further their education and to learn everything they need to be able to take the future into their own hands. Germany is proud to support UNICEF towards creating safe and sanitary learning spaces for children in Iraq,” said Martin Jäger, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Iraq.

“The compounding crises in Iraq, including the remaining impacts from the conflict as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, have disproportionately affected children and adolescents’ educational opportunities. Canada is pleased to support partners such as UNICEF in returning so many girls and boys back to learning. Safe, quality and inclusive education is a human right that all students are entitled to, regardless of where they live,” said James Christoff, Chargé d’Affaires a.i. in the Embassy of Canada to Iraq.

Through this intervention, UNICEF trained 330 teachers, social workers, and education staff in Duhok, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Northern Diyala and Sulaimaniyah to work in their communities and support the return of children to schools through different practices such as community mapping, group discussions, door-to-door

mobilization and one-to-one sessions.

“The Back to Learning Campaign was highly accepted by the population, especially among the low-income families and those who missed their opportunities due to conflicts and displacements in Ninewa; students were extremely happy to know that with the support from UNICEF, they would still have the opportunity. They even received the mobile teams with tea and sweets and let them in to their houses”, said Dr. Abeer Mufakker, the coordinator at Hadba Directorate of Education in Ninewa.

The teams were also able to identify cases that need special attention. Diman Wali, Social Worker in Erbil Directorate of Education, indicated: “During my visits, I met a mother who said her son has special needs and it is difficult to get him enrolled. Through this project, we were able to enroll him in school. They were very happy!”

UNICEF is supporting the Directorates of Education on implementing this method of mobilization networking, which enhances the linkage between the education system and communities, crucial to achieve better results. It also promotes a practice of community problem solving, in which the identified problems are addressed through the local institutions and community members themselves.



International Education Day celebrated in Basra

Basra, 27 January 2022 - On the International Education Day, UNICEF and the Directorate of Education in Basra held a celebration event in Basra to discuss how to enable children to return to schools and to prevent further dropouts to address the learning crisis in Iraq. The event was supported by Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ).



UNICEF, UNESCO and Ministry of Education organized an introductory session on the Educational Management Information System (EMIS)

Baghdad, 29 January 2022 - UNICEF and UNESCO supported the Ministry of Education in organizing an introductory session to the Educational Management Information System (EMIS) this week. Financed by the European Union, the system supports the rehabilitation of educational institutions and capacity building.



UNESCO and partners trained over 4,968 beneficiaries (3,287 females) since May 2021 on Preventing Violent Extremism through Education (PVE-E)

Baghdad, 6 February 2022 - Despite the COVID-19 disruptions, UNESCO and partners trained over 4,968 beneficiaries (3,287 females) since May 2021 on Preventing Violent Extremism through Education (PVE-E). The beneficiaries included 2,283 primary school teachers (1,327 females), 136 principals and school supervisors (64 females), and 2,549 parents (1,896 females) from 130 primary schools in Ninewa and Al Anbar Governorates within the framework of the “Gendered Approach to Preventing Violent Extremism through Education in Iraq” project.



IOM welcomes decisions by Directorates of Education in Salah Al-Din and Ninewa to protect children’s right to education

Baghdad, 27 February 2022 - Every child is entitled to an education, but in Iraq, almost 3.2 million school-aged children – including about half of all displaced children – are unable to enjoy this right. This prevents them from developing to their fullest potential and leaves them more vulnerable to social isolation, exploitation and abuse.

This February, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq welcomed the decision of Ninewa Governorate’s Directorate of Education (DoE) to allow undocumented children and children with incomplete civil documentation to continue with their schooling and obtain official diplomas at the end of the scholastic year upon submission of their civil documents. The key decision was obtained by invoking as legal precedent a similar achievement attained in Salah Al-Din Governorate in January 2022. These come after extensive advocacy efforts, consultations with local authorities and direct engagement with DoE officials by

IOM Iraq’s legal programming unit. Over 3,000 undocumented children are expected to benefit from these changes. Until recently and despite an earlier MoE directive, governorate-level authorities required children to have valid civil documentation to attend school. This posed a major problem for children whose documents were lost or destroyed during displacement, and children born during the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) occupation who were not issued documents or whose documentation is not recognized by Iraqi Authorities.

“This helps to resolve a critical issue faced by returnee families and vulnerable households in Ninewa and Salah Al-Din with respect to children’s access to schools and formal education,” said IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Giorgi Gigauri. “This achievement will serve as a precedent allowing IOM to scale up efforts to support access to education for mobile populations in line with Iraq’s commitments under the Global

Compact for Migration.”

Access to civil documentation is a fundamental human right. It is necessary for the exercise of other rights, including education, health, adequate housing, freedom of movement and due legal process. In the context of displacement and durable solutions, access to civil documentation is essential to voluntary and sustainable returns to areas of origin, as it helps to facilitate access to government services and increases community cohesion by reducing social divisions.

The IOM Iraq legal programming unit also supports communities with direct legal services covering documentation; Housing, Land and Property rights; and family law, and provides capacity-building activities for authorities and community-based groups to increase individual and collective resilience to conflict and drivers of violence.

The efforts of the IOM Iraq legal programming unit to obtain the DoE

In West Mosul IOM Iraq supported eight young women and men to become youth community mobilisers

Mosul, 09 February 2022 - In Zanjili neighbourhood of West Mosul, Ninewa Governorate, IOM Iraq supported eight young women and men to become youth community mobilisers. After receiving training on community engagement, participants developed their own initiatives to make their community more embracing of diversity.



UNICEF and Zain Iraq launch partnership to improve the lives of more than 5 million children in Iraq

Baghdad, 15 February 2022 – UNICEF and Zain signed today a partnership based on their shared values to support the rights of children in Iraq by adopting joint work plans on several child related areas, including education, health and nutrition, social protection, water and sanitation and youth engagement for the coming 3 years.

Under the partnership, UNICEF will join forces with Zain to leverage the leading telecom operator's strong network and world-class digital services to reach out to young people and children in Iraq with critical information and hear their views through surveys which will enrich UNICEF programs.

"We welcome this partnership with Zain Iraq, which will enhance our work in Iraq and allow us to reach more communities, especially in hard-to-reach areas. This is one step forward in strengthening our strategic relationship with Zain to improve the lives of children and young people in Iraq", said Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq.

Ali Al-Zahid, CEO, Zain Iraq, said: "We are pleased to announce this partnership with UNICEF, as it represents an extension of our mutual initiatives and efforts that aim to develop the living standards of Iraqi children and the local community. We place corporate social responsibility on top of our priorities and remain keen to employ our advanced technologies and services for the wellbeing of Iraqis, hand in hand with strategic partners as UNICEF".

The partnership will allow over 5 million children under 5 years, and 2 million women to be reached by 2022 through promoting maternal, newborn and child health digital initiatives.

Activities also include reaching 20



million people with messages on COVID-19 preventive measures and vaccination.

The new partnership will also provide at least 1,000 young person in Iraq with opportunities to reach their full potential through learning and engagement opportunities.

Overall, Zain Iraq and UNICEF Iraq will work collaboratively to support the rights of children in Iraq by jointly supporting projects on education, risk communication and community engagement, health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene,

adolescent development and participation, child protection and social inclusion and policy.

The partnership will raise awareness and influence policy agendas for multiple audiences, including civil society, governments, business networks and the general public. It will also be executed through Zain's leadership and impact in marketing and communication channels, innovation in communications products and services, and build on UNICEF's expertise in programming for children and young people.



Launch of Ana Turath online application

Mosul, 20 January 2022 - The Station institution, in collaboration with UNAMI, UNESCO, and Mosul Eye, launched the Ana Turath (أنا تراث) application. Ana Turath is a user-friendly application designed to function as an online platform for digital heritage archives available to the public. In this regard, the head of the Station-Mosul, Mr. Hamza, underscored the fruitful partnership between the Station and the United Nations (UNAMI and UNESCO), resulting in making Ana Turath a reality. Several young photographers and journalists attended the event to promote local heritage across the Ninewa governorate. A photo exhibition brought the event to a close.



United Nations thanks Fiji for its contribution to peace operations



Baghdad/New York, 17 Feb 2022 - In February 2022, the United Nations thanked Fiji for their service and sacrifice.

Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix thanked Fiji for its strong support to United Nations Peacekeeping and for the service and sacrifice of its military and police personnel deployed around the world under the UN flag.

Fiji first contributed peacekeepers to the United Nations when it deployed troops to Lebanon in 1978 and it has been a consistent contributor since.

Today, Fiji provides more than 340 uniformed personnel, including 39 women, to seven UN peace operations making it the 40th largest contributor.

Fiji's largest contribution of uniformed personnel to UN peace operations is to the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), where 168 of its women and men now serve.

Fiji also contributes to the UN Disengagement Force (UNDOF), the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS);

UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL); and the UN Interim Force in Abyei (UNISFA), and the UN Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMAH).

"Fiji has set a standard of generosity that it should be proud of and that

others should seek to emulate.

The UN appreciates the service and sacrifice of the Fijian men and women who serve in dangerous and difficult environments.

We are deeply grateful for their continued service", said Mr. Lacroix.

Over its more than four decades' long participation in UN peace operations, Fiji has contributed more personnel per capita to UN Peacekeeping missions than any other Member State.

During Fiji's contribution to UN peace missions, 66 Fijians lost their lives while serving under the UN flag.

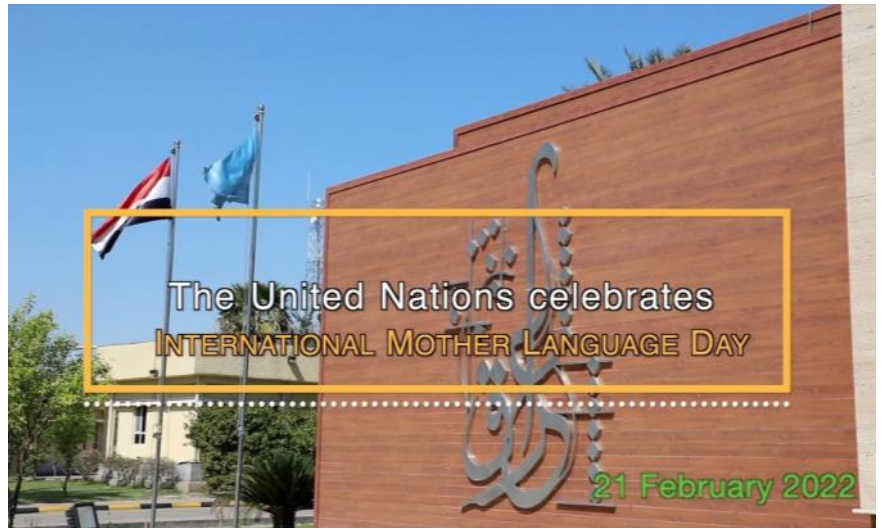
Fiji also endorsed the Secretary-General's 'Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)' initiative, which aims to refocus peacekeeping with more targeted mandates, make operations stronger and safer, and mobilize support for political solutions and better equipped and trained forces.

By UN News.



UNAMI celebrates International Mother Language Day | 21 February 2022

Baghdad, 21 February 2022 - The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) interacts primarily in English, Arabic and Kurdish, but its staff members speak a variety of their own mother languages. This contributes to the successful implementation of the Mission's mandate. UNAMI enjoys a rich linguistic and cultural diversity of its staff and partners from the international and Iraqi communities and components. UNAMI recognizes the role that the mother language plays to advance peace and to adopt the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by Iraqi communities. Watch the video at: <https://bit.ly/3H8b4Ur>



UNAMI activities presented to students and professors of Salahaddin University in Erbil



Erbil, 23 February 2022 – The Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Regional Office in Kurdistan Region, Mr. Ricardo Rodriguez, met with the students and

professors of the Center for Political and Strategic Studies of Salahaddin University in Erbil. It was attended by lecturers, researchers, and students of all levels from the College of Political

Sciences and the College of Law. The presentation focused on UNAMI's mandate and its activities in Kurdistan Region. At the end of the event, there was a questions and answers session.

