

UNAMI Herald

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Working to set an example on the global stage: Iraq, UN and International Community discuss way forward on return of Iraqis from Syria's Al-Hol

Baghdad, 9 April 2022 — Concerted coordination between the Government of Iraq (GoI) and United Nations (UN) entities is crucial to bringing home Iraqi nationals who have become stranded in crowded camps or are detained in northeast Syria following the territorial collapse of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). On 9 April, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Centre for Counter Terrorism (ICCT) and the National Security Advisory of Iraq convened a high-level roundtable in Baghdad on Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (PRR) in the context of the GoI-led repatriation of Iraqi nationals from northeastern Syria's Al-Hol Camp. Today, almost 30,000 Iraqis — the vast majority of whom are women and children — remain stranded in northeast Syria with limited access to food, healthcare, education and other fundamental rights and services.

Organized under the patronage of H.E. Mr. Mustafa Al Kadhim, Prime Minister of Iraq, H.E. Mr. Qasim Al-Araji, National Security Advisor of Iraq and H.E. Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the event comes as part of efforts to interpret and implement the 'Global Framework on all-of-UN Support to Member States on Individuals Returned from Syria and Iraq' in the Iraqi context and featured a keynote address from H.E. Mr. Ambassador Matthew Tueller, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq.

The roundtable brought together representatives of the GoI, UN entities and the diplomatic corps to take stock of the ongoing GoI effort to repatriate its citizens from northeast Syria. With the GoI now seeking to accelerate this process, the roundtable also provided a



timely opportunity to discuss the challenge of ensuring a comprehensive, human rights-based approach that promotes security and accountability for any offenses allegedly committed by returning adults, while also responding holistically to the protection and reintegration needs of children and adults.

"In terms of proactively taking steps to fulfil its obligations to repatriate its nationals, Iraq has set an example on the global stage. Some 450 families, or nearly 1,800 individuals, have been repatriated since May 2021," noted H.E. Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. "The United Nations is particularly appreciative of Iraq's intention to not only continue but also to accelerate repatriations. And yes, we are ready to continue providing the required post-return humanitarian, protection and reintegration assistance."

IOM Iraq Chief of Mission, Mr. Giorgi Gigauri, stated, "To date, an incremental approach to the process of repatriation and onward return to areas of origin has allowed the GoI and UN to work together to identify ways to improve the process over

time. Nonetheless, with the profiles of returnees likely to grow more complex, there are significant challenges to come. It is in this context and through these roundtables that IOM and UN partners are opening dialogue with the GoI on expanded support to address needs and gaps under the Global Framework."

This event was the fourth and final roundtable in a series launched in February 2022. The first roundtable, which took place on 22 February, focused on screening, risk assessments and needs assessments; the second took place on 24 February and focused on age-appropriate approaches to rehabilitation; the third was held on 27-28 March, focusing on ways to promote community acceptance in areas of origin and facilitate the reintegration of adults and children; and the latest event, on 9 April, looked at the way forward in the application of good practices in Iraq. The four roundtables were made possible by the generous support of the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

NOTE: The text of the SRS's speech on this event starts on page 3.

In this edition ...

Security Roundtable on Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (PRR) practices

Baghdad, 9 April 2022 - The closing roundtable on Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (PRR) Practices, hosted by the Government of Iraq, was held today in Baghdad under the patronage of the Prime Minister and National Security Advisor of Iraq as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq. The roundtable focused on the Government-led repatriation process, the UN Global Framework, and future PRR considerations. *More on page 3.*

IHEC and UNAMI conclude lessons learned workshop

Sulaymaniyah, 31 March 2022 - The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) concluded a four-day general lessons learned workshop. Throughout the workshop, which was held in Sulaymaniyah from 27-30 March, IHEC Board of Commissioners (BoC) and senior leadership together with senior officials from the UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA) brainstormed on the challenges and lessons learned from the 2021 Council of Representatives (CoR) elections and agreed upon recommendations to turn weaknesses into strengths to further improve Iraq's electoral processes. *More on page 5.*

UNAMI Report: Overcoming obstacles, women shone in 2021 elections; greater political participation is imperative

Baghdad, 7 March 2022 - A gender analysis of Iraq's 2021 national elections, conducted by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), reveals that Iraqi women candidates were able to break out on their own and win seats, beyond their quota, despite obstacles such as gender stereotypes, security challenges, insufficient political support, and the limited campaign experience of some first-time candidates. *More on page 15.*

The United Nations and partners' Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2022, which aims to assist nearly one million vulnerable Iraqis with life-saving aid, released

Baghdad, 27 March 2022 - Today, the Minister of Planning H.E. Dr. Khalid Batal Najim Abdullah, joined the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, in releasing the United Nations and partners' Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2022, which aims to assist nearly one million vulnerable Iraqis with life-saving aid. *More on page 46.*

UNFPA and the Iraqi Alliance of Disability Organization partner up to support the rights and needs of persons with disability

Baghdad, 12 April 2022 - UNFPA signed on Tuesday a Joint Cooperation Framework with the Iraqi Alliance of Disability Organization (IADO) to promote disability inclusion in alignment with the UN Iraq Disability Inclusion Strategy and address the gaps. *More on page 33.*

On International Woman's Day, UNICEF and GDCVAW in KRI launch the radio station "Voice for Equality", with support from USAID, to empower women and adolescent girls'

Erbil, 08 March 2022 - Marking International Woman's Day, under the theme, "Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow!", Iraq celebrates the remarkable achievements of women and girls in our societies and UNICEF and partners redouble their commitment to extend those gains to every girl, everywhere. On this occasion, the General Directorate for Combatting Violence Against Women (GDCVAW) in the KRI and UNICEF, with support from USAID, launched today the new radio station "Voice for Equality", a powerful platform to advocate for women and adolescent girls' well-being and empowerment... *More on page 23.*

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

Roundtable on Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (PRR) practices

Baghdad, 9 April 2022 - The closing roundtable on Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (PRR) Practices, hosted by the Government of Iraq, was held today in Baghdad under the patronage of the Prime Minister and National Security Advisor of Iraq as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq. The roundtable focused on the Government-led repatriation process, the UN Global Framework, and future PRR considerations.

Here is the text of the introductory remarks by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert:

“Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today.

In the past two months, a series of roundtables between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations were organised to enable us to collectively address the many critical and sensitive questions surrounding the return, rehabilitation, reintegration and, where necessary, the prosecution, of individuals displaced in North-eastern Syria.

There is no denying it: this is a uniquely challenging context. And while certain developments deserve our full commendation and support, others are deeply preoccupying - reminding us that time is of the essence. Reminding us that decisive, collective action is urgently needed.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is difficult to overstate the complexity of the task at hand for Iraq: in al-Hol Camp, mere hours from the Iraqi border, nearly 30,000 Iraqis with varying degrees of association to ISIL —



including victims of ISIL, and others with no association at all— remain in limbo. Their humanitarian and security conditions, already precarious, have deteriorated over the past 18 months. Recent deadly clashes represent only the latest examples of a steady wave of violence in the camp since late 2020.

It is also difficult to overstate the youth of this population: 3 out of 5 residents of al-Hol are under 17; one in 5 is under 5 years of age. These innocent children have only ever known this harsh environment; many of them are being denied the most basic rights, including education.

Now, over the past 3 years, you’ve heard me repeat that the legacy of yesterday’s fight against ISIL could very easily turn into tomorrow’s war, that we should not wait for young children to become of age in a camp like al-Hol. These children find themselves at risk of forced

recruitment and exposure to violent extremism. 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. In other words: a continued status quo is - without a doubt - the riskiest option.

Iraq’s decision to resume voluntary returns in early 2021 is therefore particularly welcome. In fact, in terms of proactively taking steps to fulfil its obligations to repatriate its nationals, Iraq has set an example on the global stage. Some 450 families, or nearly 1,800 individuals, have been repatriated since May 2021. And as thousands of Iraqis are still out there, the Iraqi authorities do realize that they cannot stop there.

The United Nations is particularly appreciative of Iraq’s intention to not only continue but also to accelerate repatriations. And yes, we are ready to continue providing the required post-return humanitarian, protection and reintegration assistance. And we truly hope that Member States and donors are with us on this.

Definitely worth mentioning here is the fact that this initial success is the product of robust whole-of-government coordination and cooperation. Prime Minister al-Kadhimi and National Security Advisor al-Araji have been highly instrumental in ensuring that a wide array of ministries and institutions deliver concerted efforts towards a



Roundtable on Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (PRR) practices *(continued)*



shared goal.

And of course, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement also deserves recognition for its role in managing the Jeddah 1 Centre: the ministry manages the centre, with UN agencies and their national and international partners supporting with healthcare, including mental health and psychosocial support, child protection, legal assistance, education, food security, and livelihood services. In other words: it is not only a whole of government, but also a whole of UN effort, including IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, and UNFPA, and our many partners

Ladies and gentlemen,

Engaging directly with returnees, our agencies have observed first-hand their relief at having left behind the hellish conditions of al-Hol in returning to Iraq. However, these returnees continue to be greatly concerned about the safety of their relatives who remain at al-Hol: continued efforts to prevent family separations are critical and appreciated, despite the enormously

challenging operational conditions in northeast Syria.

Returnees in Jeddah 1 are also anxious about their own futures, eager to move on to their areas of origin or relocate elsewhere in Iraq. Nearly 130 families or 500 individuals have now departed Jeddah 1 to their areas of origin or a third location. Crucially, a Visitor's Centre has been established to enable residents of Jeddah 1 to meet with their relatives on a regular basis. While this is most welcome, going forward, it will be important to establish benchmarks and reduce the transit time as much as possible.

Admittedly, significant challenges remain even after families depart Jeddah 1: in some cases, community members in areas of origin have refused to accept returnees; in other cases, families have been forced to relocate due to damaged or destroyed housing, lack of services, or lack of access to livelihoods.

Hence, closer cooperation between the government and the UN will prove essential to ensure that reintegration

needs, including community acceptance, are assessed prior to departure from Jeddah 1.

The incremental approach - followed thus far - has allowed the Government of Iraq and the UN to identify challenges and solutions, improving the process over time. But as we move forward, and returnee profiles become more complex, new and thorny challenges will undoubtedly arise.

And this, ladies and gentlemen, is why it is so important to continue and expand our dialogue with the government on advancing a rights-based approach that of course provides accountability for individuals who have committed crimes but also ensures holistic reintegration support.

Building on these recent discussions and round tables, expanded UN support to the Government of Iraq will be guided by the Global Framework for the provision of "whole of UN" support to the return of third country nationals from Iraq / Syria.

For those not familiar with this Global Framework: it lays out a collaborative approach with governments and pooled funding mechanisms under which the UN can support Member States on the protection, repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration of returnees from Syria, who may have alleged or actual links or family ties to designated terrorist groups.

Using this Global Framework, the UN and the Government of Iraq, building on years of partnership in addressing the many post-ISIL challenges, can jointly identify gaps and needs, and prioritize areas of multilateral support, leveraging specific mandates within the UN family.

And importantly, having played an exemplary leadership role in many respects so far, the Government of Iraq can greatly contribute to the global understanding of contemporary prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration questions.

Ladies and gentlemen, in closing:

Transnational challenges call for transnational solutions, and the United Nations looks forward to our continued partnership with the Government of Iraq in shaping and implementing these solutions for the greater global good.

Let's face it: al-Hol is a ticking time bomb. If it goes off, it will impact not only the region but also far beyond. Defusing it should be our collective priority.

Thank you."



IHEC – UNAMI jointly held seven thematic lessons learned workshops

Sulaymaniyah, 24 March 2022 - Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) jointly held six thematic workshops from 20 March in Sulaymaniyah. The thematic workshops covered technical areas such as public outreach, operations, procurement and logistics IT, training and procedures and security. Over the five days, around 200 participants together reviewed experiences during the 2021 Council of Representatives elections and discussed lessons, challenges and

recommendations for further improving Iraq's electoral process. The outcome of these activities will be presented during the general lessons learned workshop that will be held on 27 – 30 March with the participation of senior IHEC and UNAMI officials.

Additionally, IHEC and UNAMI conducted legal thematic workshops from 1 to 23 March for some 80 participants. The outcomes and recommendations of these sessions were presented during the general lessons learned workshop in Sulaymaniyah.



IHEC and UNAMI conclude lessons learned workshop



Sulaymaniyah, 31 March 2022 - The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) concluded a four-day general lessons learned workshop. Throughout the workshop, which was held in Sulaymaniyah from 27-30 March, IHEC Board of Commissioners (BoC) and senior leadership together with senior officials from the UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA) brainstormed on the challenges and lessons learned from the 2021 Council of Representatives (CoR) elections and agreed upon recommendations to turn weaknesses into strengths to further improve Iraq's electoral processes.

Judge Jalil Adnan Khalaf, IHEC Chairman, noted that "After the successful implementation of 2021 Council of Representatives elections, IHEC has made itself ready to systematically assess its performance and identify areas for improvement throughout the institution. The outcomes of this workshop will set the

ground for developing a comprehensive capacity building plan with the support of UNAMI. I extend my gratitude to UNAMI for its continued support".

The workshop covered key thematic areas including legal, operational planning, public outreach and media, voter registration, training and procedures, procurement and logistics, field coordination, security coordination and election information and results managements. The exercise also provided an opportunity for a participatory, inclusive, and bottom-up institutional approach to post-election reflections and evaluations, contributing to the development of an institutional culture where dialogue and contributions are incentivized and promoted.

UNAMI OEA Senior Election Operations Adviser, Jawed Habibi, said that "The 2021 Council of Representatives election was an achievement for Iraq that was successfully conducted under leadership of IHEC with the technical

assistance of UNAMI mandated by the UN Security Council. Despite this success, this enormous and complex process requires continuous improvement. I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm UNAMI's full commitment in supporting IHEC in the execution of the recommendations of the lessons learned workshop starting with a comprehensive capacity building needs assessment to move forward in enhancing the institution's technical preparedness under the lines of UNAMI's mandate".

In closing remarks at the conclusion of the lessons learned workshop, UNAMI OEA Senior Legal Adviser, Hugo Kacic, said that "IHEC and OEA colleagues gathered to exchange, to listen, discuss and to learn from each other. We documented and highlighted those aspects that worked well. At the same time, we honestly looked at areas and activities where IHEC could have performed better. The challenge remains. And this challenge is to how to apply the lessons learned that we have identified here to improve in the future. I would like to use this opportunity to re-confirm that under the leadership of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, UNAMI will continue to support IHEC as it is stipulated in its mandate."



UNICEF's Young People Advisory Group (YPAG) gathered to review the group vision and objectives and jointly develop YPAG workplan

Baghdad, 03 March 2022 - Twenty members of UNICEF's Young People Advisory Group (YPAG) gathered from across the country to review the group vision and objectives and jointly develop YPAG workplan. The group discussed mechanisms for systematic engagement at the community level and decision-making process. The group was trained on leadership skills, teamwork, communication, and other skills that help enhance and promote their role as YPAG members representing voices of young people in UNICEF programme in Iraq.



Building a bright future: Iraq's young leaders unite

Baghdad, 7 March 2022 - Empowering youth and women to play an effective role in their communities is key to building harmony among different groups. UNDP Iraq's Social Cohesion Programme is focused on equipping community actors and leaders with tools to prevent and deal with communal tensions through capacity building related to enhancing social cohesion, conflict resolution, and mediation techniques. At the end of February, over 130 members of Youth and Women for Peace groups from Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al-Din supported by UNDP Iraq came together in a workshop focusing on social cohesion. The youth and women discussed contributions to peacebuilding in Iraq while receiving training on communication, volunteerism, and leadership. A total of ten Youth and Women for Peace Groups are supported in the five governorates with generous funding from the Government of Germany.

The workshop provided an important opportunity for youth and women to network and share their plans, lessons learnt and goals for the future. Starting in March, the groups will implement over fifty community peace initiatives,



tailored to the specific needs of their governorates. Together, these future leaders of tomorrow shared their thoughts on the qualities and values that make a great community leader.

"Not every person can be a leader, as these traits often come naturally. To be a team leader, you need to know how to communicate well, analyze issues, and find solutions. You must identify the gaps and highlight opportunities. In Mosul after the liberation, each member of society felt a responsibility to support their community. I didn't know I had leadership qualities at first, but I found myself leading discussions and meetings." - Dahlia, Ninewa Women for Peace Group

"A good leader has the ability to discuss

various topics with different people and the power to convince people to do something good. A leader should have strong listening skills to hear the opinions and ideas of different people on the team." - Tabarak, Diyala Women for Peace Group

"To be a leader you should have a good personality and solid experience in leading projects. You have to work through adversity and commit to work hard to make a project successful and sustainable." - Ahmed, Kirkuk Youth for Peace Group

UNDP Iraq has launched in 2020 a dedicated five-year Social Cohesion Programme to promote stronger, peaceful, and more cohesive communities in all areas of Iraq.

Youth capacity development for peace building strategies

Erbil, 12 March 2022 - Today, IOM Iraq organized a second workshop on debate skills, advocacy and peace building in Erbil Governorate. The five-day workshop was attended by 22 young men and women from Al-Qaim district in Anbar Governorate. Participants discussed debating skills, team building and the development of advocacy campaigns, and shared ideas for peace building strategies.



Young people are actively getting engaged in contributing to peace building

Karbala, 13 March 2022 - Young people are actively getting engaged in contributing to peace building and shaping lasting peace in Iraq.

The Youth, Peace and Security Coalition is currently in Karbala, Iraq organising a five-day workshop for young men and women focusing on promoting youth participation in peace-building process and youth-led peace initiatives to positively impact communities.

The Youth, Peace and Security Coalition, supported by the Ministry of

Youth and Sports, UNFPA and FBA, aims to empower youth in Iraq to play

a role in nurturing and maintaining peace locally and internationally.



Dialogue launched for establishment of Network of Religious Leaders to Prevent Violent Extremism in Iraq



Baghdad, 20 March 2022 – On 19 March, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq and the National Committee on the Implementation of the Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism at the National Security Advisory launched the first dialogue session on the establishment of the Network of Religious Leaders to Prevent Violent Extremism in Iraq.

A high-level dialogue session included members of the National Committee on the Implementation of the Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism and members of the Shiite and Sunni, Yazidi, Christian and Sabian endowments, in addition to the AlHussein Holy shrine. A key focus of the Network of Religious Leaders will be to promote moderate religious discourse and increase awareness and support to community initiatives on the Prevention of Violent Extremism in Iraq.

This dialogue session contributes to

UNDP's integrated approach to Preventing Violent Extremism and supporting social cohesion in Iraq, including support to the National Committee, through capacity development for sub-committees located in various governorates on implementing the strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism in Iraq, as well as the establishment of interfaith religious leader networks across Iraqi governorates on Preventing Violent Extremism.

UNDP Iraq Resident Representative Zena Ali-Ahmad states, "The establishment of a Network for Religious Leaders builds on UNDP Iraq's support to the Government of Iraq in preventing violent extremism, with an integrated and comprehensive approach related to engagement with a cross-section of Iraqi society including religious leaders, youth, and civil society. It will strengthen social cohesion in Iraq."

Mr. Ali Abdullah Albedeiri, Chairman

of the National Committee on the implementation of the National Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism, states, "The national committee gives priority to the influential role of religious leaders in society, which will be further enhanced through the network in spreading moderate discourse and will contribute to the implementation of the strategy."

"There is a consensus among different religious sects on the need for this network. This session will provide important recommendations to proceed in forming a network to work on Preventing Violent Extremism," states Ali Al-Qarawi, from the AlHussein Holy Shrine.

"The meeting today on establishing the network has been open and transparent to advocate for moderate speech and combatting hate speech. The goal of the network is to monitor, analyse, and respond to hate speech that leads to conflict," says Mohammed Salah Rashad, from the Sunni Endowment.

"Today's initiative was a first step in establishing the network to support the strategy on Preventing Violent Extremism in Iraq. We agreed on mobilizing our communities to prevent violent extremism," states Dr. Ihsan Jafar, from the Shia Endowment.

"Today we discussed several ideas and recommendations, and we are optimistic that we will implement good initiatives under this network to prevent violent extremism before it happens," says Raad Jabbar, from the Minorities Endowment.

Support to the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) in Iraq is part of UNDP's Social Cohesion Programme to promote stronger, peaceful, and more cohesive communities in all areas of Iraq.

UNDP Iraq strengthening national and subnational capacities on action planning and measurement of the National Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism

Baghdad, 27 March 2022 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq in partnership with the National Committee on the Implementation of the Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism at the National Security Advisory has completed a series of workshops to strengthen the capacity of the national committee members and sub-committees across Iraqi governorates on risk management, action planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism in Iraq.

A technical workshop with representation from the Ministry of Planning and the Central Statistical Organization of Iraq held on 20 March was dedicated to discussing synergies and linkages of the national strategy with the national development frameworks, and the Sustainable Development Goals focusing on Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Additionally, a series of four-day workshops between 13 and 24 March have focused on developing the capacity of the governorate sub-committees across Iraq on implementing the National Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism.

UNDP's comprehensive approach to supporting the Prevention of Violent Extremism across Iraq and promoting

social cohesion includes the provision of technical support to the National Security Advisory and the Iraqi Department of Non-Governmental Organizations, as well as engagement with youth, media and supporting moderate religious discourse and discouraging hate speech among interfaith religious leaders across Iraq. UNDP Iraq Resident Representative, Ms. Zena Ali-Ahmad states, "UNDP's contribution to Preventing Violent Extremism in Iraq is focused on making sustainable change by supporting the Iraqi government at the national and sub-national levels, and communities, through strengthening capacities needed to address and respond to the root causes of violent extremism, to enhance conflict

prevention and promote social cohesion in Iraq."

According to Mr. Ali Abdullah Albedeiri, Chairman of the National Committee on the implementation of the National Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism, "The presence of United Nations experts and the Ministry of Planning enhance our capacities and we will continue this engagement to boost planning, follow-up, and performance measurement, extending our reach to additional governorates and directorates."

Support to Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) in Iraq is part of UNDP Iraq's Social Cohesion Programme to promote stronger, peaceful, and more cohesive communities in all areas of Iraq.



Working together on the prevention of violent extremism

Erbil, 29 March 2022 - In a watershed development, IOM Iraq facilitated a workshop between members of the Baghdad-seated National Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) Committee and officials from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) – the first such PVE-related collaboration of its kind.

Following a discussion of drivers of violent extremism, participants considered various policy solutions, recommendations and cooperation mechanisms. They agreed to:

- 1) work towards establishing a committee dedicated to PVE in the KRI
- 2) nominate three KRG representatives to sit on the National Committee
- 3) establish coordination platforms to share knowledge of PVE initiatives and practices in Iraq
- 4) organize similar workshops regularly at the regional, national and international levels.



Koya Marathon: Live together and accept peace to the end

Koya, 31 March 2022 - People of the host community in Koya, Syrian refugees and non-Syrians and displaced people from different places from across Iraq run together in the Koya marathon for peaceful coexistence. Around 100 participants took part in a 4 km race.

The run was organized by SWEDO (Swedish Development Aid Organization), UNHCR, volunteers, Koya Youth Center and city's local authorities.



Boots on the ground: Community-Based Organizations inspire social cohesion in Iraq



Baghdad, 31 March 2022 - Strengthening Iraq's social fabric following decades of conflict and sectarian violence is no easy task. One thing is certain; working from the ground up ensures an approach that is both sustainable and targeted to community needs. UNDP Iraq's project to empower Community-Based Organizations has capacitated 317 organizations in five Iraqi governorates with a series of training sessions on topics such as peace initiatives, partnership building, and project and financial management.

Following the training, 50 CBOs evenly distributed among the governorates of Anbar, Ninewa, Diyala, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din have received grants to implement community initiatives that contribute to societal peace and improving social cohesion. The creative initiatives are based on community needs and challenges such as advocacy and awareness raising on topics related to gender-based violence, human rights and digital security, in addition to workshops and camps that promote unity and religious tolerance. This project is implemented in partnership with Kurdistan Organization for

Human Rights Watch and with generous funding from the Government of Germany.

At an interfaith religious camp from 17-19 March implemented by Jude Humanitarian Organization and Amal Larva team, youth from various locations and religious backgrounds shared their cultures and experiences in Ninewa.

"My participation in this activity allowed me to live in Mosul for three days for the first time in my life without fear. I toured its markets with the friends I met in this camp, where we laughed and sang with each other regardless of our religious and ethnic differences." - -Nagiya, 21, Yazidi, Sinjar.

"The differences between us are what makes us wonderful and special." - Okan, 26, Assyrian Christian, Dohuk.

"We have discussed how religious leaders and government representatives must involve youth and women in decision-making in order to contribute to change for the better and promote cohesion and unity." - Hanin, 25, Mosul.

Numerous initiatives tackle the issue of Gender-Based Violence in Iraq,

engaging women and girls from various backgrounds. From 19 to 22 March, Dream Organization implemented an awareness campaign on the issue of gender-based violence in Fallujah.

In Rawa District, Anbar, from 18-21 March, the Western Women's Gathering Organization held a session to discuss the role of women in Preventing Violent Extremism.

From 20 to 22 March, Organization for Humanity for implementing a campaign to beautify schools in Amiriya District, Anbar with messages of peace and tree planting.

Initiative implementation is ongoing through the months of March and April 2022.

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. Empowering Community Based Organizations is part of the programme's extensive work with local peace mechanisms in Iraq.



New contribution from Japan supports UNDP's work on Preventing Violent Extremism in Iraq



Baghdad, Iraq, 03 April 2022 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Iraq has welcomed a US\$2.5 million (JPY 289 730 000) contribution from the Government of Japan to support social stability in Iraq through Preventing Violent Extremism.

The contribution will be channeled through UNDP Iraq's Support to Social Stability in Iraq through Preventing Violent Extremism Project which will address causes of violent extremism throughout Iraq and assist the Government of Iraq to implement its National Strategy to Combat Violent

Extremism Conducive to Terrorism by building institutional capacity at the national and sub-national levels, enhancing community resilience, and promoting viable pathways to reduce violent extremism with focus on women and youth. The project will also focus on improving security and stability in communities through advancing sustainable reintegration and socio-economic support to vulnerable groups.

UNDP's unique integrated and comprehensive approach to support stability in Iraq includes infrastructure and housing rehabilitation, livelihoods support, municipal strengthening, security sector reform, and social cohesion, supporting the country's transition. This project compliments UNDP Iraq's work on stabilization and community readiness and reintegration for thousands of Internally Displaced Persons including families perceived as affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

UNDP Iraq Resident Representative Zena Ali-Ahmad states, "We are extremely grateful to the Government of Japan for this important contribution and our continued work together to support the people of Iraq. Our partnership with the Government of Iraq on Preventing Violent

Extremism is focused on sustaining the stabilization gains made and creating durable solutions for community return and reintegration. With this project, we will ensure continued support to resilience and promotion of peaceful coexistence amongst groups that are vulnerable to marginalization, addressing key drivers that can lead to violent extremism."

According to the Japanese Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq, His Excellency Mr. SUZUKI Kotaro, "Japan has consistently supported the people of Iraq through various humanitarian assistance since 2014, amounting to over 600 million US dollars to date. I praise UNDP's continuous and tireless endeavour to help preventing violent extremism, the root causes of terrorism. The Government of Japan and people of Japan wish this project mitigates sufferings of internally displaced and vulnerable people and paves a way for ensuring human security and stability at the community level."

The Support to Social Stability in Iraq through Preventing Violent Extremism Project is part of UNDP Iraq's five-year Social Cohesion Programme launched in January 2020 to promote stronger, peaceful, and more cohesive communities in all areas of Iraq.

Together towards peace: Town Hall meeting promotes reconciliation and community acceptance in Habbaniyah

Baghdad, 24 April 2022 - Following prolonged conflict in Iraq, encouraging the safe and dignified return of Iraqis to their home communities is a priority to achieve social cohesion. UNDP Iraq's Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration Project, funded by the Government of Japan, is currently underway to encourage reintegration of 4,000 families in four areas of Anbar, Ninewa and Salah al-Din governorates with a comprehensive package of livelihood support, housing rehabilitation, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for previously displaced returnees and community members.

As part of this project, a series of Town Hall meetings is being rolled out, the first of which was held on 31 March in Habbaniyah, Anbar. The purpose of these meetings is to raise awareness among the community and encourage reconciliation and acceptance among returning internally displaced families and the community of return.

Over 120 people attended the Habbaniyah Town Hall meeting, representing a wide spectrum of people including women, youth, local



Community-Based Organizations, religious leaders, and local authorities. Every participant was encouraged to speak up to discuss their thoughts on community readiness in Habbaniyah.

In his opening address, Mayor of Habbaniyah Ali Daoud Selman, stated: "We, as a local government in Habbaniyah, are constantly striving to encourage families to return to the area and to reintegrate into the community." Sheikh Saad, member of the Habbaniyah Local Peace Committee, began his speech with a verse from the Qur'an: "And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another."

He went on to ask, "Why is it the fault of a woman, mother, or child that a

member of their family was affiliated with ISIL and deviated from the right path?" - Sheikh Saad, Habbaniyah Local Peace Committee Member

Community member Moyaed Ibrahim says: "We all strive for a society free of extremism and full of peaceful coexistence and reintegration. Most of the displaced are women and children, and if children remain displaced and marginalized in camps, they may grow up with the ideas of extremism and terrorism."

UNDP Iraq has launched in 2020 a dedicated five-year Social Cohesion Programme to promote stronger, peaceful, and more cohesive communities in all areas of Iraq.



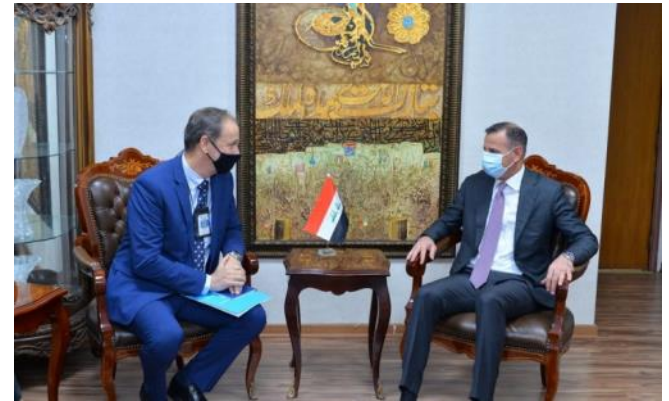
New York, 25 February 2022 - The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres, met with the Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Fuad Husein. They discussed the latest developments in Iraq and the region.



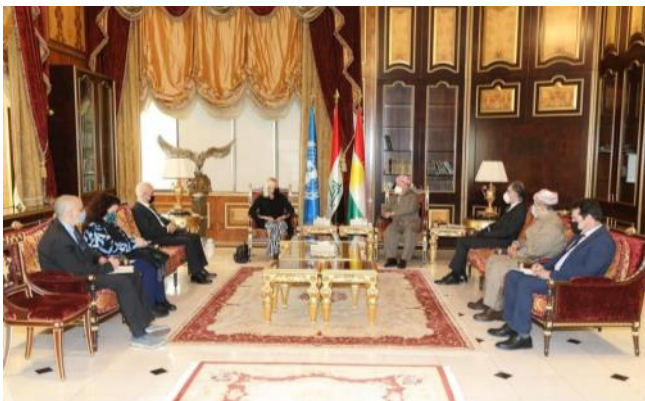
Baghdad, 28 February 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, visited the American University of Iraq-Baghdad (AUIB), where she was welcomed by AUIB President, Dr. Michael Mulnix.



Erbil, 28 February 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, was received in Erbil by Mr. Fawzi Hariri, Chief of Staff to the Kurdistan Region Presidency, and Mr. Falah Mustafa, Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to the Kurdistan Region President. Discussions focused on political developments in the country and the region in addition to preparations for the forthcoming Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections. The DSRSG earlier met with Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Head of Electoral Office, Mr. Khasraw Gorran, during which they discussed key issues related to the Kurdistan Region elections.



Baghdad, 1 March 2022 - Chief of Staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Mr. Mark Rutgers, met in Baghdad with the Acting Head of the Protocol Department of the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Ali Shamran Hajim. They discussed areas of mutual interest and explored means whereby joint collaboration can be further enhanced, with UNAMI thanking the Ministry for its consistent support and engagement.



Erbil, 2 March 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the prominent Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader, Masoud Barzani. They discussed the current political situation in the Region and in Iraq, including Baghdad-Erbil relations and formation of the new government.



Sulaymaniyah, 2 March 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún-Gísladóttir, held a meeting in Sulaymaniyah with Rizgar Hama, Head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Electoral Bureau. Discussions focused on key issues related to the forthcoming Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections.



Sulaymaniyah, 2 March 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún-Gísladóttir, met today with Mr. Shaswar Abdulwahid, Head of New Generation Movement. They discussed the current political situation and the upcoming elections in the Kurdistan Region.



Sulaymaniyah, 2 March 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún-Gísladóttir, met in Sulaymaniyah with a group of women's rights activists. Among other issues, they discussed efforts to address gender-based violence and women's political participation.

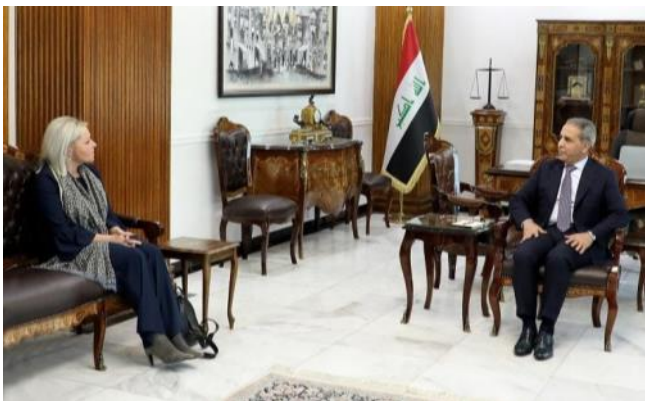


New York, 7 March 2022 - Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein met Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

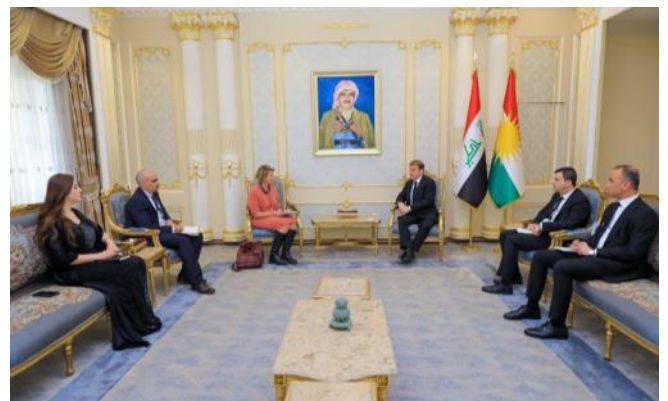
During the meeting, they discussed the political and security situation in Iraq and the region.



Baghdad, 8 March 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met in Baghdad with the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Iraq, Mr. Iraj Masjedi. Discussions focused on developments in Iraq and the region.



Baghdad, 13 March 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Head of the Supreme Judicial Council, Judge Faiq Zaidan. They discussed the legal and judicial support the United Nations provide to the Iraqi judiciary. Photo courtesy of the SJC.



Erbil, 16 March 2022 - Ms. Annette Lyth, UNAMI Senior Women's Advisor and Head of the Human Rights Office in Erbil, accompanied by Mr. Francisc Revuelto-Lanao, UNAMI Political Affairs Officer, met today with Kurdistan Parliament Deputy Speaker, Dr. Hemin Hawrami. They discussed the political situation in the Region, including preparations for the forthcoming regional elections. Photo: Courtesy of the Kurdistan Parliament, KR-I



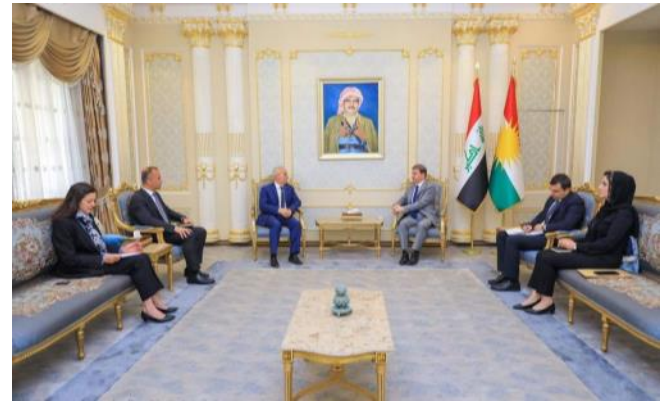
Baghdad, 17 March 2022 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Baghdad with the National Security Adviser, Mr. Qassem Al-Araji. They discussed the current political and security situation in the country and the region.



Baghdad, 8 April 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, and Ambassador of France to Iraq, Mr. Éric Chevalier, visited Baghdad's last functioning synagogue, met Jewish community representatives. Many cultural and religious sites dotting this ancient land are a testament to Iraq's diverse heritage: a treasure that must be preserved and cherished.



Baghdad, 14 April 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Baghdad with Miss Iraq 2021, Ms. Maria Farhad. The conversation between the Special Representative and Farhad, herself once an Internally Displaced Person (IDP), centred on how best to engage in humanitarian efforts to advocate for and assist vulnerable and marginalised communities, particularly children with Down's Syndrome, to stand up against all forms of violence against women, and to encourage the safe, dignified and voluntary return of IDPs to their places of origin.



Erbil, 18 April 2022 - The Head of UNAMI's Regional Office in Kurdistan Region, Mr. Ricardo Rodriguez, met today in Erbil with Dr. Hemn Hawrami, Deputy Speaker of the Kurdistan Parliament. Discussion focused on the preparations for the upcoming Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections, and UN support to the electoral process. Photo courtesy of the KR Parliament.



New York, 24 April 2022 - The Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Fuad Hussein, met the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres at the headquarters of the United Nations to discuss the updates on the situation in Iraq and the region.



Baghdad, 24 April 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Baghdad with the leader of the Wisdom (Al-Hikma) Movement, Mr. Ammar al-Hakim. They reviewed recent political developments in the country, with emphasis on the need for government formation to meet the needs of the Iraqi people.



Baghdad, 27 April 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, visited the Jurisprudence Association in Baghdad and met with Sheikh Abdul Sattar Abdul Jabbar and other members of the Association. They reviewed the recent political developments and discussed various issues affecting the population, with focus on human rights, displacement and humanitarian aspects and emphasis on social cohesion.
Photo courtesy of JA.



Baghdad, 28 April 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Baghdad with Iraqi Council of Representatives Speaker, Mr. Mohammed al-Halbousi. They discussed the political situation in the country and emphasized the importance of ending the political stalemate, in the interest of all Iraqis.
Photo courtesy of the CoR.

Neighborly Relations

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.

Security

UNAMI on Twitter

Baghdad, 13 March 2022 - UNAMI strongly condemns heinous missile attacks on Erbil. Iraqis are called upon to stand together in the face of any act that violates Iraq's sovereignty/territorial integrity, and/or aims to undermine stability/unity. Perpetrators of this cowardly attack must be held to account.

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned about the missile attack in Erbil

New York, 15 March 2022 - Remarks on Iraq by Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, at the noon briefing at UN Headquarters in New York on Monday 15 March 2022:

"I had been asked about the Sunday missile attack in Erbil, in Iraq.

I can say that the Secretary-General is deeply concerned about the missile attack in Erbil. The attack comes at a critical moment for Iraq's path to peace and stability. He renews his call on all concerned sides to exercise restraint and avoid escalation.

He urges Iraq's partners to support Iraqi efforts to advance regional peace and security, in accordance with the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and good neighbourly relations."

UNHCR conducted a PSEA training of trainers in Sulaymaniyah

Sulaymaniyah, 4 March 2022 – As another step to strengthen protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) UNHCR conducted a PSEA training of trainers in Sulaymaniyah last week.

UNHCR is grateful to its NGO partners for their active participation and inspiring efforts to protect the most vulnerable!



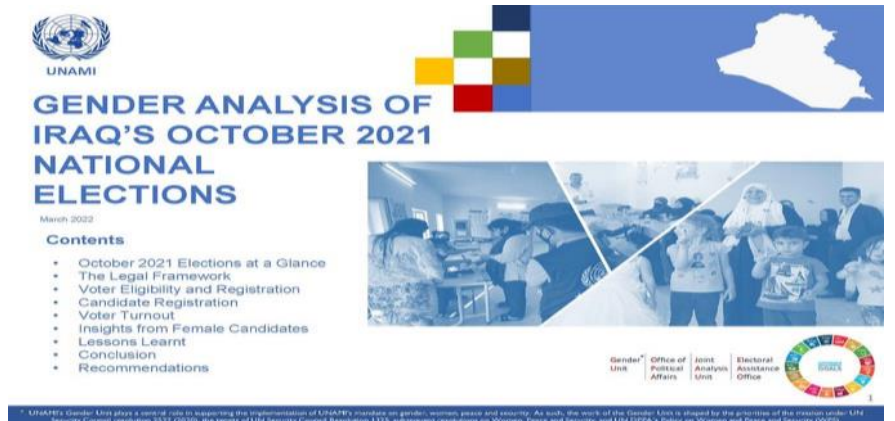
UNAMI Report: Overcoming obstacles, women shone in 2021 elections; greater political participation is imperative

Baghdad, 7 March 2022 - A gender analysis of Iraq's 2021 national elections, conducted by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), reveals that Iraqi women candidates were able to break out on their own and win seats, beyond their quota, despite obstacles such as gender stereotypes, security challenges, insufficient political support, and the limited campaign experience of some first-time candidates.

The performance of Iraqi women in the October elections marks a major improvement from the 2018 elections, with 29 percent representation up from 25 percent. The fact that 57 women from 16 governorates, out of the 95 women candidates, won outside the quota demonstrates Iraqi women's ability to win on their own merits. Notwithstanding this achievement, the quota remains a key instrument to guarantee women's representation in the Council of Representatives, the report added.

The analysis highlighted impediments to women's advancement in the elections, such as security challenges, cultural and traditional gender roles in rural areas, violence against female candidates, limited training, insufficient political party support and financial resources. The report revealed that the majority of women who won were politically affiliated, indicating that political parties remain a key avenue to enter parliament.

The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq for Political and Electoral Affairs, Ingibjörg Sólrún-Gísladóttir, said: "Iraqi women have proven that when they have the opportunity to enter politics, they excel. The 2021 election is a case in point – an unprecedented number of seats went to women



candidates, above their quota. I encourage this success to be reflected in the government formation and with senior appointments. Women should take their rightful place in politics and all decision making in the society. The exemplary performance of women in the October elections should be translated into advances in other areas."

The report recommended measures to bring Iraq into compliance with international standards such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to which it is a party, in order to end gender-based discrimination in politics and create a more enabling environment for women's political participation and electoral representation. Measures beyond quotas could be introduced, including financial support, lower thresholds for candidate nomination, tailored training programmes for women candidates, gender auditing of political parties, targeted recruitment, outreach programmes and extra security.

Recommendations to ensure that future elections are more gender-

responsive also include for the Independent High Electoral Commission to reward political parties for promoting women's full and active participation; a call on the Council of Representatives to assess the differential impact of proposed amendments on women and men when it reviews and amends electoral legislation; passing legislation to address violence against women in politics; as well as continued capacity building efforts for women who aspire to run for office.



Positive vibes can create equal gender opportunities



Kirkuk, 8 March 2022 – In 2015, The United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with Goal No. 5 focusing on gender equality to empower all women and girls. Fa'iza, who heads a school in Kirkuk, Awezan, a victim-turned-advocate, and Ali, a male champion of women's rights, are living testimony of the societal gains that can be achieved when living and working in an environment where women and men enjoy their rights and opportunities.

"I believe that women and men are on a weighing scale ... if no side rises above the other, then it is a scale of fairness," says Mrs. Fa'iza Hussein Ali al-Kakaiee, head of the Babagurgur Institution for private sector education in Kirkuk. She explains the difficulties she has experienced in a male-dominated sector but credits a good part of her success to the support she has received from the male family members and colleagues she has met in her career.

"My journey was long and difficult, but beautiful. Difficult because of some of the obstacles I faced to start such an important institution," Fa'iza said in a recent interview.

Fa'iza recalled how she had to sell some of her property to finance the Babagurgur project and work round the clock with contractors to finish the building so that she could launch it within the expected time. "It was a strenuous time in my life, but I succeeded in not only establishing the school but expanding it," she added with a confident smile.

Her husband, Ismail Mohammed Salih al-Kakaiee, also a founding member of Babagurgur, expressed faith in his wife's ability to excel in her leadership role. "I find Fa'iza to be a confident and

progressive woman, and I fully supported her to succeed in her mission. She has held the family name in high esteem and is an important woman in our community and in my life."

Like Fa'iza's husband, Dr. Jihad Abdullah Ridha, the Principal at Babagurgur, has also been a lifeline exuding positive vibes to support Fa'iza run the school and ensure that hundreds of girls and boys are empowered equally through education according to the Education 2030 Agenda approach.

Activism to Counter Violence Against Women

Awezan Nuri Hakim, a writer who is the Deputy Head of Pena Center NGO for combating violence against women in Kirkuk, is a survivor of gender-based violence (GBV) and abuse, subjected to early marriage. It thus come as no



surprise that Awezan is actively involved in the fight against GBV, aiming to provide a safe and equal space for Iraqi women to develop.

With 15 years of experience, Awezan likens gender-based violence to a cancer that limits women's progress. The lack of proper enforcement of the rule of law to deter potential perpetrators is the very reason why some Iraqi women can still not make their own life choices and are subjected to different forms of violence and unequal treatment in society.

"If we want to have a healthy society we need to start at the level of families, then the legislative and government institutions. All stakeholders should be involved in preventing violence," she said.

Male Champions of Women's Rights

Ali Hmoud Ali Atwan advocates for the prevention and redress of gender-based violence cases. He works closely with Surood Ahmed, who heads the Kirkuk sub-office of the Iraqi NGO Al-Amal Association. Ms. Ahmed, who has 17 years of experience in working on addressing gender-based violence in Iraq, said: "The mentality of the youth on gender issues is beginning to change in a positive direction and we now see for example, men advocating for girls to stay in school." But on issues of security for women in Kirkuk, Surood hopes for the Ministry of Interior to increase the number of female police officers so that women can safely lodge their complaints.

In 2021, the Iraqi Al-Amal Association started to focus on using male champions of women's rights and gender equality to enlighten men, especially youth about the importance of promoting and protecting women's rights. Ali is one of such male models who facilitates the positive awareness sessions.

Describing the impact of their awareness engagement, he said: "We are building a generation that accepts women's participation in different fields of work. We also focus on educating women on legal rights to enable them understand how to seek justice."

Indeed, as Fa'iza starkly puts it: "A woman can achieve anything she sets her mind to do if she believes in herself."

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Translations by Rashwan Salih, Mohamed Altaheri and Harith Alobaidi (UNAMI PIO)

Written by Celia E.B.T. Dadson, UNAMI Public Information Officer

Standard operating procedures for the services offered at One-Stop Assistance Centres (OSAC) in Kirkuk and Mosul discussed at a UNFPA workshop

Kirkuk/Mosul, 18 March 2022 - Ensuring women and girls, including the most vulnerable, have a life free of violence and with dignity is their fundamental right.

This past week, UNFPA with the Federal Ministry of Health held a one-day workshop for 15 participants from public health departments, women empowerment department, family protection unit of Kirkuk and Mosul.

Participants engaged in interactive conversations to define clear standard operating procedures for the services offered at One-Stop Assistance Centres

(OSAC) in Kirkuk and Mosul.

In a related activity, UNFPA with KOICA organized a five-day training to build skills and expertise of service providers on integrated protection and gender-based violence services in the One-Stop Assistance Centres in Kirkuk and Mosul.

One-Stop Centers provide comprehensive care, including case management, psychosocial/legal counselling, and referral.

The One-Stop Assistance Centers are supported by KOICA Iraq Office, Baghdad.



UNFPA hands over 11 women centres in Duhok to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

Duhok, 14 March 2022 – UNFPA and its partner Harikar Organisation handed over 11 Women Community Centres to the Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs in Duhok.

The Women Community Centres were first established by UNFPA in 2013 amid the humanitarian crisis, during the war against ISIL. The centres, which provided psychosocial support, case management, life skills activities and awareness sessions to women and girls, were located in 11 camps for refugees (4) and internally displaced persons (7).

The handover took place in presence of Dr Sherzad Hamed, Director General of the Labour and Social Affairs in Duhok, Mr Himyar Abdulmoghni, Deputy Representative of UNFPA in Iraq and Mr Salah Yaseen, Head of Harikar Organisation, in the presence of government and governorate representatives, staff from the Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs and social workers from the Women Community Centres.

Speaking during the ceremony, Dr Hamed, said: “We are happy to take on these centres to help the women and girls in our community. I thank UNFPA for their partnership and for



the ongoing building and strengthening of the capacity of the Directorate’s staff. Our collaboration will ensure we maintain good quality services to all women and girls requiring assistance at these Women Community Centres.”

For his part, Mr Abdulmoghni emphasised that this handover comes as part of UNFPA transition strategy that was developed in full consultation with all stakeholders to ensure the continuance of gender-based violence and women empowerment related services to women and girls in camps: “The importance of transitioning these centres from NGO’s management to the Government is to ensure sustainability of the confidential multi-sectoral

response and services, including medical, psychosocial and legal services for GBV survivors and confirm the government accountability to the most vulnerable women and girls.”

The Deputy also thanked Harikar Organisation for being a key partner in the provision of quality gender-based violence and reproductive health services to women and girls amid consecutive crises in Iraq since 2013 to date.

In 2022, UNFPA will hand over another 11 Women Community Centres to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, in addition to the centres already handed over.

UNFPA organized 50 sessions for over 1,300 youth and adolescents, across eight governorates offering knowledge and information on gender-based violence, reproductive health as well as peace-building

Baghdad, 27 March 2022 - Rights and choices for every young person to have the knowledge and power to make informed choices for their bodies and lives.

UNFPA organized 50 sessions for over 1,300 youth and adolescents, across eight governorates offering knowledge and information on gender-based violence,

reproductive health as well as peace-building and leadership to give them the strength and conviction to achieve sustainable development.

A message of hope - Maya's story

Baghdad, 23 March 2022 - "My name is Maya*. I'm a Syrian refugee from Al-Hasakah. I have been living in Domiz 1 refugee camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for about 8 years. I did not complete my education — only primary school — and I am currently jobless.

I am married and I live with my husband, his other wife, and our five children, three of whom are mine. He works as a day labourer and earns a living.

I had heard about the UNFPA-supported Safe Space and managed to get the location from my neighbour. I met the case manager, who recommended that I participate in the Women's Committee, sports training, and hairdressing to widen my social circle and feel empowered.

At first, I was too afraid to ask for help and tell my story to people I don't know. The staff at the Safe Space were nice to me, and they explained to me the services they provide. This encouraged me to make an appointment with the social worker. In my interview with her, after greeting an acquaintance, I began to explain to her that I needed help. She suggested that she refer me to the case manager whom I saw when I was first received.

I agreed and made an appointment. This time, I was more comfortable, because I had made several visits to the space, but there was still tension over how to narrate the subject. We entered a listening room where there was a table with two cups of water and a box of tissues, in addition to two chairs facing each other. She asked if I was comfortable, then asked what drew my attention in the room. As simple as it

was, this small interaction helped relieve my tension.

I told her about my relationship with my husband and his neglect of me. My story began with my marriage, in which I never truly felt like I had a life partner. Even though he was the provider, he never gave me enough money to cover my personal needs. I was constantly neglected. This worsened when I was pregnant with my youngest daughter, which is when he started hitting me and insulting me. I still deeply remember the details of each stage of this transition.

I was dying inside, at every moment of every day, but I had no choice but to stay for the sake of my children. I told the case manager that, of all his damaging behaviour, the insults were the most hurtful, and they came at every opportunity. I could not stand his looks, especially as he neglected the intimacy between us, which made it all worse. I found out later that he wanted to marry another woman. That was hard for me.

After several sessions with the case manager, I began to feel better, as if a weight was slowly falling off my shoulders. I learned breathing exercises and relaxation techniques and applied them myself. These helped me, especially since there was not much I could do at that point and I did not want to pursue any legal measures, despite the abuse. More importantly, he had stopped hitting me after he got married again.

My participation began with training with a women's committee. It was a wonderful programme that lasted several sessions, through which I

learned to make decisions, and to dare to claim my rights. I also chose gymnastics and hairdressing, which really worked for me, as I got to know other women and learn a variety of skills and techniques that boosted my self-confidence.

I felt empowered. I was able to ask my husband about my needs, in addition to becoming more social and having friends, and I had information about service providers in the camp if I needed them. Now I want to develop myself in the field of make-up artistry and, if I get the chance, I will open my own salon.

This is my plan for the future. This was an opportunity to tell my story, as I wanted to be a role model for women. Seek help if you are experiencing any kind of harm. Don't succumb to the circumstances that destroy you".

The women centres in camps for refugees supported by UNFPA are funded by Norway, Sweden, and the Central Emergency Response Fund(CERF).

*name changed for protection reasons



Canadian delegation visited the UNFPA-supported women centre in Hasan-Sham Camp

Baghdad, 1 April 2022 - Today, a Canadian delegation from Ottawa and Canada in Iraq visited the UNFPA-supported women centre in Hasan-Sham Camp. The delegation spoke with the women attending one of the sessions and learned about why they attend the activities, what are their ambitions when finishing a course and the way forward to reach their full potential.

"I attend this centre to learn, to socialise and to forget about my worries. I sew all my daughter's clothes, I have made many friends and being worry-free for a couple of hours, has made this centre my second home," said one of the course's participants.



Showing women in Iraq “You can do anything”



Baghdad, 28 March 2022 – Raghad Hav started with a small idea and brought it to life with the help of the 2019 UNITAR training programme Empowering Social Entrepreneurs and Youth Leaders for Iraq. Raghad founded She Codes Too, where she teaches Iraqi women to code.

Raghad started her career teaching computer sciences at the University of Information Technology and Communications in Baghdad. Her passion was to show her students how full of possibilities the IT field was. But while she enjoyed teaching, Raghad wanted to do something more practical, to start her own project. She just had no more than a slight idea of what or how.

“I just knew it was going to be teaching women about programming, but I had zero knowledge about how to create this initiative.”

When she heard about UNITAR programmes from an alumna, Raghad decided to apply. “Customized classes for you,” in her words, was what she liked the most about the programme. She needed a place where people could help her take a small idea and prove it, connect her with knowledgeable people, and encourage her to keep going. And that’s exactly what she found.

Joining the programme was “a big gate of resources,” says Raghad. It taught her how to plan and run a project and behave as a manager – being punctual, observing, running a team – and even how to shake hands: one day, Dr Clare Gately, the trainer for the entrepreneurship program, asked Raghad to shake hands with her. When they shook, she said, “yes, you have a problem with this.” She showed Raghad how a firm handshake can give the impression of a confident and competent leader. “I’ve never thought about shaking hands,” says Raghad.

“That was amazing of her, noticing tiny things and wanting to improve it. It’s an honest way to teaching you, to make you a better leader.”

After completing the UNITAR programme, Raghad started She Codes Too. Through the initiative, Raghad teaches Iraqi women coding and programming languages and mentors them on how to find jobs. Since 2020, She Codes Too grew from Raghad teaching nine women how to create a website to a team of volunteer trainers, free courses, and videos and tutorials on Instagram, YouTube and Facebook.

Forty women are taking part in the latest course on programming languages.

Raghad is happy to see that She Codes Too is having a positive effect on the women it reaches. “They like the space we’re creating,” she says. The learners continue to help each other as a community of women programmers.

In 2022, Raghad returned to UNITAR programmes as a resource person for the Waffle Camp × SDGs Workshop. The workshop taught high school girls in Hiroshima about basic coding and the Sustainable Development Goals. There, she shared the story of She Codes Too and discussed how to overcome the gender gap in IT. Raghad found some differences between Iraqi and Japanese students, such as their willingness to show their faces online, but she also saw the similarities – the young women’s passion for programming and their desire to change stereotypes of women in STEM.

When she started She Codes Too, Raghad was criticized for discriminating against men. But she simply wants to give women the same opportunities as men. Raghad does not consider herself a revolutionary. Through empowering the women in her community and leading by example, Raghad wants to convince Iraqi women that they can do anything.

“These tiny, small steps I’m doing, hoping to affect and give more good examples for other women – I know it’s not a big audience to give bigger effects. But that’s what I can do right now.”

UNFPA, KOICA open One-Stop Assistance Centre in Mosul

Mosul, 3 April 2022 - UNFPA and the Ministry of Health opened today, with support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), a one-stop assistance center (OSAC) for women and girls survivors of gender-based violence in Mosul, Nineveh Governorate.

Survivors of gender-based violence can receive medical treatment, including clinical management of rape, counselling, as well as legal services and referrals to additional support.

Social workers and medical staff at the centre will provide culturally sensitive care that upholds the dignity of survivors and promotes long-term recovery. They will also be receiving capacity-building on mental health and psychosocial support and gender-based violence response.

Dr Falah Hassan Altayy, the Director of Health of Nineveh stressed the



importance of the One-Stop Assistance Centre and taking action to respond to the needs of women and girls whether in response to gender-based violence or to their reproductive health needs. He also expressed his gratitude to UNFPA for supporting the health sector in the

governorate.

For this part, Mr Himyar Abdulmoghni, UNFPA Deputy Representative in Iraq, said: “As we transition from humanitarian assistance to the development phase, protecting women and girls is more

UNFPA, KOICA open One-Stop Assistance Centre in Mosul *(continued)*

essential than ever. This One-Stop Assistance Centre will ensure that the women and girls survivors of gender-based violence do not have to visit several facilities to provide them with quality and holistic services but can reach multiple services in one place.

Commenting on the event, Mr Cho Heyong Lae, KOICA Iraq Country Director, stated: "KOICA, as a strong supporter of UNFPA, celebrates the opening of the One-Stop Assistance

Centre in Mosul today. We are delighted to witness this meaningful occasion succeeding the One-Stop Centre in Kirkuk which opened last December. We hope that the Centre will make a significant contribution to providing necessary services for people who suffer difficulties from conflict-related sexual violence."

The project will be implemented in close collaboration with relevant ministries, including the Ministry of

Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Youth & Sports, the Ministry of Justice, the General Directorate of Combatting Violence against Women and the Women Empowerment Department.

The OSAC, the third of its kind in the country and the first in Mosul, is supported by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and will be run by the Directorate of Health in the Governorate.

KRG Department of Media and Information and UNFPA partner up to support women and young people

Erbil, 4 April 2022 - The Department of Media and Information (DMI) of the Kurdistan Regional Government signed on Sunday a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to promote ending gender-based violence and youth participation in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The newly established partnership will allow DMI & UNFPA to raise awareness on prevention and response of gender-based violence, on women's rights and promote healthy and informed choices for young people across the Kurdistan Region.

The event was also attended by the Head of KRG Department of Foreign Relations, Safeen Dizayee.

The newly established partnership will allow DMI & UNFPA to raise awareness on prevention and response of gender-based violence, on women's rights and promote healthy and



informed choices for young people across the Kurdistan Region.

DMI & UNFPA will jointly conduct advocacy campaigns and support dissemination of people-centred data

and interventions.

The MoU further outlines plan for collaboration between the two parties including joint interventions and activities.

UNFPA with Royal Norwegian Embassy in Amman organized sessions for young girls and mothers to strengthen their bond and learn about Gender Based Violence (GBV)

Baghdad, 5 April 2022 - For each young girl to be equipped to create their own future, they have to feel safe and protected.

Empowering young girls to make informed decisions and choices along with their mothers today will have critical impact tomorrow in ending gender-based violence, including child marriage and female genital mutilation.

UNFPA with Royal Norwegian Embassy in Amman organise sessions for young girls and mothers to strengthen their bond and learn about Gender Based Violence (GBV).



The Secretary General of the Council of Ministers receives UNFPA Representative to Iraq; discussed Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Iraq

Baghdad, 29 March 2022 - Addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Iraq was at the center of the meeting between the Secretary General of Council of Ministers, Hamid Naim Al-Ghazi, and UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Rita Columbia. The discussion

focused on the ways to enhance the multi-sectoral coordination to provide services to GBV survivors and the collaboration to strengthen the response and prevention of GBV and harmful practices across Iraq, especially child marriage.



Making waves in Basra: Defying gender norms in development projects

Basra, 13 April 2022 - As the world calls for more women and girls in technology, science, engineering and other typically male-dominated industries, 35-year-old Zainab Sadiq in Basra, Iraq's southernmost governorate is already challenging stereotypes.

In Basra, significant improvements to Khor Al-Zubair and Umm Qasr ports are taking place to scale up the capacity of two key facilities in the export, import, and handling of shipping operations. These two important freight transit port facilities are critical to the economic sector of Iraq, especially during post-war recovery efforts.

Zainab is an electrical engineer and member of the Project Management Team of the Port Sector Rehabilitation Project (II), implemented by the General Company for Ports of Iraq under the Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) Loan Programme, since 2017.

She has been assigned to work on three components under the port projects,

and alongside her other on-site duties, she's been involved in the evaluation of bids and technical documents of the project. "There are several challenges an engineer faces on daily basis, especially when joining a new workplace; it takes time to gain the trust of work colleagues and bring them around to your ideas. This can be overcome by listening and observing before suggesting any changes. You must build a reputation for yourself and set clear and achievable goals," says Zainab.

"One of my favorite memories of a project happens during the hand-over, as this is the time to remember all exerted efforts, all spent time, and realize that my thoughts have become reality," Zainab adds.

As a female electrical engineer in Iraq, Zainab not only succeeded in entering a career field primarily dominated by men, but also in a region where gender norms and roles may discourage such ambitions.

"My advice to girls and young women is



to believe in yourself and develop your skills. A job opportunity will not come unless you look for it. If you want to succeed, start from scratch and always be ready."

UNDP Iraq has been supporting the monitoring of the implementation of the Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) Loan Programme financed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), in partnership with the Government of Iraq since 2009. This Programme contributes to numerous socio-economic development projects, including the Port Rehabilitation Sector Project (II).

One Stop Centres offer a comprehensive and centralized Gender Based Violence response to medical, psychological, and legal aid

Erbil, 10 March 2022 - On International Women's Day 2022, Ms. Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq, visited Maternity Hospital in Erbil, one of the three One Stop Centres (OSCs) which offers a comprehensive and centralized Gender Based Violence (GBV) response to medical, psychological, and legal aid. UNICEF, with Cordaid, financed by the Government of Germany (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)), is providing assistance to an average of 200 GBV survivors per month and have trained 160 health care providers so far in strengthening GBV awareness raising mechanism and referral process.



A new step towards gender equality in Iraq; Italy, UN Women, UNFPA collaborate on women and girls protection in Kurdistan



Baghdad, 14 April 2021 – The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) has established a partnership with UN Women and UNFPA to improve the safety, protection and wellbeing of women and girls survivors of gender-based violence in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Building on existing structures and ongoing gender mainstreaming efforts, the new partnership will contribute to increasing access to quality gender-based violence protection services, such as mental health and psychosocial support, strengthening case management and referrals to other services upon survivors' requests. Survivors of gender-based violence will have easier access to justice through endorsed practical standard operating procedures for legal and police actors.

The project will strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Kurdistan High Council of Women Affairs and the General Directorate of Combating Violence against Women to enhance the implementation of existing policies and services addressing violence against women and girls.

Dina Zorba, UN Women Representative to Iraq & Yemen, expressed UN Women gratitude to the Government of Italy for their generous contribution to addressing gender-based violence, gender inequality and in improving access, safety, and wellbeing of women and girls survivors of gender-based violence in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. "Through this partnership, together with UNFPA, we intend to enhance coordination and support the KRI government in responding effectively to the protection needs of women and girls at risk and subject to gender-based violence."

"The Government of Italy fully

supports the urgent need to provide assistance to women and girls victims of gender violence, through the restoration of basic services. Every effort should also be taken to reintegrate those victims within their communities and provide them with tangible support to rebuild their lives" said the Ambassador of Italy to Iraq—Maurizio Greganti.

Since 2018, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) office in Amman has been responsible for implementing international cooperation initiatives in Iraq. Emilio Cabasino added "This project comes in line with the Italian Cooperation's aid priorities targeting the prevention and fight against gender-based violence in the Country, as it addresses immediate recovery and aims to improve accessibility to basic services".

Rita Columbia, UNFPA Representative to Iraq, commented on the contribution: "We are extremely grateful to the people and Government of Italy for their continuous commitment to eliminating gender-based violence especially in humanitarian settings and

strengthening the capacities of those working to protect women's rights and dignity. This support comes at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has increased cases of gender-based violence and immediate action at scale is required".

Khanzad Ahmad, Director of the High Council of Women and Development added that "It is necessary to thank the citizens of Kurdistan, the international community and UN agencies; without their generous support, it would have been difficult for the Kurdistan Regional Government to respond to the urgent requirements of the forcibly displaced people from the Iraqi provinces. On behalf of the Kurdistan Regional Government, I would like to also thank the people and government of Italy for providing continuous coordination and development to the Kurdistan Region and especially to women and girls who are victims of sexual based violence."

Yusra Mohsen, Director of the Department of Women Empowerment at the Council of Ministers, said "We value the initiative by the Italian Government and the Italian agency for development in launching this project which focuses on providing services to women and girls who have experienced violence in the Kurdistan Region. This project comes at a critical time as Kurdistan has recently hosted many Syrian refugees who have fled due to ISIS and are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection".

UN Women and UNFPA are committed to addressing gender-based violence through strengthening institutional capacities to scale up and improving multi-sectoral responses and support the Kurdistan Regional Government to advance its agenda on gender equality and empowerment of women.



UN Women and WFP join forces to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Iraq

Baghdad, 21 April 2022 — The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and reaffirm their commitment to strengthening collaboration and joint initiatives on gender equality and women empowerment in Iraq.

In collaboration with the Government of Iraq, UN Women and WFP's joint work will leverage gender-transformative programme opportunities and will focus on women's leadership, economic empowerment, social protection, resilience and livelihoods with regards to the impact of climate change, ending violence against women and girls, Women Peace and Security (WPS), gender and humanitarian development peace actions, food security and nutrition, and school-based programming.

"We thank WFP for this collaboration and hope that this agreement will cement the important work of UN Women and WFP in ensuring that the needs of women, men, girls and boys are met," said Dina Zorba, UN Women Representative to Iraq and Yemen. "By incorporating a gender-inclusive lens in

the implementation of projects, this will contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG5) on Gender Equality."

"We value this partnership and will exchange technical expertise plus develop research with UN Women, to expand our support for the Government of Iraq to incorporate a gender perspective to address the needs of women and girls," said Ally Raza Qureshi, WFP Iraq Representative. "We will respond to climate change and work to have an impact on gender mainstreaming at the national level through joint programmes, initiatives,

advocacy and coordination."

The agreement also sets out terms by which equality and empowerment will be championed in strategic projects, including school-based programming addressing the complexity of requirements around girls' education in Iraq and food security. Digital innovation for development will also be a parallel priority.

UN Women and WFP are committed to promoting and advancing the agenda on gender equality and women empowerment by strengthening collaboration and coordination on joint activities, projects and programming.



UNFPA with Embassy of France in Iraq protects and assists survivors of GBV

Baghdad, 25 April 2022 - Access to psychosocial support and legal services for women and girls ensures that they are provided with life-saving support. UNFPA with Embassy of France in Iraq protects and assists survivors of GBV to empower women and girls fulfill their potential for a sustainable future.



International Women's Day

On International Woman's Day, UNICEF and GDCVAW in KRI launch the radio station "Voice for Equality", with support from USAID, to empower women and adolescent girls'

Erbil, 08 March 2022 – Marking International Woman's Day, under the theme, "Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow!", Iraq celebrates the remarkable achievements of women and girls in our societies and UNICEF and partners

redouble their commitment to extend those gains to every girl, everywhere. On this occasion, the General Directorate for Combatting Violence Against Women (GDCVAW) in the KRI and UNICEF, with support from USAID, launched today the new radio

station "Voice for Equality", a powerful platform to advocate for women and adolescent girls' well-being and empowerment and to address the issue of prevention of GBV and violence against girls and boys; especially among IDPs, refugees and host

On International Woman's Day, UNICEF and GDCVAW in KRI launch the radio station "Voice for Equality" ... (continued)

communities in Kurdistan region of Iraq.

The ceremony was attended by Mr. Rebar Ahmed, Minister of Interior of KRI, Mr. Omed Khoshnaw, Governor of Erbil, US Consulate General, Mr. Robert Palladino, and Ms. Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq, in addition to other authorities.

Building on UNICEF-GDCVAW collaboration, "Voice for Equality" will echo the voices of women and girls of KRI but also voices of men and boys as advocates and champions of change in accelerating women's equality. It will promote participatory approaches that aim to stimulate critical reflection on power and strengthen voice and agency and also facilitate partnerships across organizations and sectors.

This radio station is one step further on women and adolescent girls' empowerment in the country. Iraq has made significant advances on women and girls' rights especially in girls' enrollment in education and the reduction of the rate of girl child mortality. Moreover, the second National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2020-2024), the National Strategy on Violence against Women and Girls (2018-2030) and the National Development Plan (2018-2022) are positive measures to make the Government accountable to protect women's and girls' rights.

However, despite efforts to reach gender equality and parity, significant barriers persist in Iraq. Recent data confirmed a 125% increase in reported



GBV incidents in 2021 compared to 2020, reaching over 22,000 cases. This increase in reporting of cases is linked to the resumption and scale-up of GBV-related services after COVID-19 related restrictions were eased. These cases are related to an increase of GBV cases in domestic violence, with a worrisome increase in depression and suicide among women and girls, especially among vulnerable groups such as IDPs and refugees.

UNICEF Executive Director, Ms. Catherine Russell, in her recent statement on International Women's Day, also asserted the need to protect women and adolescent girls due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in their lives, "We cannot let a generation of girls bear the cost of this pandemic for the rest of their lives. As we work toward a post-pandemic era, girls must be at the centre of global, national, and local pandemic response and recovery

plans."

Girls and women suffer disproportionately from violence and abuse. Based on reported cases at least 900,000 women and girls are at risk of GBV in Iraq, though the actual number is estimated to be significantly higher. Child marriage rate is 28%, and illiteracy rates among teenage girls are double that of boys.

UNICEF will continue to work with the Federal Government of Iraq and of the Kurdistan Region to create a safer environment for women in the country, while calling for stronger government investment to prevent GBV and support women and children with access to comprehensive response service as well as to promote girls and women well-being and empowerment especially on access for girls' secondary education and skills-building, child marriage prevention, and adolescent health care.

International Women's Day 2022: Marking one week of action towards equality

Baghdad, 15 March 2022 - Each year, International Women's Day is a time to reflect and recommit to challenging gender norms, empowering each other, breaking stereotypes, celebrating diversity and taking climate action. Over the past week, the UN in Iraq commenced an advocacy campaign to remind us all that women and girls play a critical role in leading climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response within our communities, and it's time to recognize their contribution. This year's theme, "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow," is designed to recognize the contribution of women and girls around the world and is aligned with the priority theme for the upcoming 66th Commission on

the Status of Women (CSW66): "Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programs."

Advancing gender equality in the context of the climate crisis and disaster risk reduction is critical, especially given that Iraq is among the top five countries most affected by climate change. Record low rainfall, water scarcity and rising temperatures are impacting heavily upon the most vulnerable communities, especially women and girls. They constitute the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent on the natural resources that climate change

threatens. All at once, women and girls are practical and influential leaders and change-makers for climate adaptation and mitigation; they are involved in sustainability initiatives around the world, and their participation leads to more effective climate action. Supporting women in sustainable entrepreneurship and trade can help mitigate climate change by enabling them to be more active in global value chains. On the other hand, the women's leadership role has both opportunities and constraints to increase empowerment, for women and girls to have a voice and be equal players in decision-making. Sustainability is essential for development and greater gender

International Women's Day 2022: Marking one week of action towards equality *(continued)*

equality; without equality, today, a sustainable future and a similar future remain beyond our reach.

"Everyone needs to stand with women and girls to accelerate the achievement of SDG5, through the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls," said Resident Coordinator Vojáčková-Sollorano, adding: "This is the time where we should all come together to work towards transformative climate action and to reverse gender inequalities to have a gender-inclusive and more equitable and sustainable world for us all".

We call upon the government, international community and civil society organizations to ensure that women's and girls' health, rights, and dignity are safeguarded and protected at all times. We must listen to women's voices and invest in their leadership and resilience. This also includes

increasing women's participation in the labour market through the promotion of decent work. Women bring communities together, lead efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and women can drive reconciliation and ensure long-lasting peace.

Building on the past week's efforts, we will continue to join together to empower women and girls in Iraq to step up and take leadership positions to tackle challenges such as climate change and support in creating a better and more sustainable future, for the generations to come.

Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq
Dina Zorba, UN Women Representative, Iraq, and Yemen
Ally Raza Qureshi, WFP Representative, Iraq
Maha Kattaa, ILO Country Coordinator, Iraq



Danielle Bell, Representative, OHCHR, Iraq
Salah El-Hajj Hassan, Representative, FAO, Iraq
Rita Columbia, Representative, UNFPA, Iraq
Eric Buchot, ITC Head of Country Programme Iraq
Zena Ali Ahmad, Resident Representative, UNDP Iraq

UNITAD's message on the occasion of International Women's Day

Baghdad, 8 March 2022 - Today the world celebrates International Women's Day, a commemoration of the achievements made on gender equality and an opportunity to highlight the challenges that remain. In the context of UNITAD, this includes investigating sexual and gender-based crimes committed by ISIL and promote accountability for these crimes. Beyond documenting crimes, we also strive to understand the reasons why ISIL committed sexual violence as a way to inform strategies to prevent future violence against women and girls in armed conflict.

When ISIL took large swathes of territory in 2014, it did so with a clear gender ideology that discriminated and inflicted violence against women and girls from all communities. UNITAD has placed the investigation of these

crimes at the core of its work. The findings of the Team's investigation on crimes against the Yazidi community presented to the Security Council in May 2021, included the sexual enslavement of women and girls as a genocidal act. Since then, the Team has also been undertaking investigations of crimes against other communities, all of which include a gender component. Much of the information we have gathered comes from survivors who trust us with their painful experiences and ask us for criminal accountability of those who harmed them. By coming forward, these women and girls do much more than describing crimes. Many feel empowered because they control their narrative and in the process contribute to fighting the stigma and shame associated with sexual violence.

The path to justice was advanced last March when the Iraqi Parliament passed the Yazidi Survivors Law, a bill providing the framework for ISIL survivors of sexual violence to obtain reparations. The law encompasses women and girls from all religious communities including Yazidis, Christians, Shi'a Turkmen, and Shabak. UNITAD welcomes this landmark development and the continued efforts to implement it.

It is with these women and girls in mind that today we remember the crimes they suffered and reflect on their long-lasting impact on the survivors and their communities. We also reaffirm our commitment to continue our investigations with the ultimate goal of bringing justice to all victims.

Flower festival held in Basra

Basra, 8 March 2022 - Happy International Women's Day! Today UNFPA unite for an equal and sustainable future! In Basra, youth volunteers took part in the flower festival to promote role of women in contributing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and raised awareness about gender-based violence. Without gender equality today, a sustainable and equal future remains

far from reach. As we commemorate IWD2022, empowering women and

girls today leads to a sustainable tomorrow.



UNAMI Human Rights Office organized events in Basra, Ninewa and Kirkuk to raise awareness about the leadership role of women in the protection of the environment across Iraq



Baghdad, 9 March 2022 – Marking International Women's Day and its theme of 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow', the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized events in Basra, Ninewa and Kirkuk to raise awareness about the leadership role of women in the protection of the environment across Iraq in line with this year's theme of

'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'.

On 8 and 9 March, the expert-level discussions brought together Iraqi women rights activities, representatives of local environmental directorates, local women empowerment offices, members of health directorates, university professors and scientists, the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights

and civil society representatives. The 31 women and 23 men, from Basra, Diyala, Kirkuk, Missan, Muthanna, Ninawa, Salah al-Din and Thi-Qar Governorates presented several community-led initiatives to strengthen gender equality and counter the effects of climate change.

Participants identified the need to enhance the participation of women in peacebuilding, social cohesion and sustainable development programs and to increase awareness about their key role in the protection of the environment. Participants also advocated for the creation of more green spaces to improve air quality and limit pollution.

To address some of these challenges, participants recommended the formation of a regular discussion group aiming to identify practical solutions and provide a structural exchange platform between government representatives and civil society.

Kirkuk's rich cultural diversity on full display as Kirkuki celebrate International Women's Day

Kirkuk, 8 March 2022 – Kirkuk's rich cultural diversity was on full display today as youth in colourful traditional costumes sang and danced, students displayed their art and poets recited their work to celebrate International Women's Day.

The event, organized by the House of Culture, in cooperation with the Directorate for Youth and Sport and the Directorate for Education (Women Empowerment Section), was also

attended by a delegation from the Iraqi Ministry of Culture as well as representatives of the UNAMI Kirkuk Office.

The event began with an exhibition of art works by students of the Kirkuk Arts Academy and other local artists. After a ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the exhibition by students from the Kirkuk Arts Academy, the Director of the House of Culture, Yousuf Taieb, congratulated all women of Iraq on

International Women's Day. A minute's silence to honour the martyrs of violence in Iraq, particularly the women among them, followed. Then the audience was treated to a colourful program of performances by Kirkuk artists, including female Kirkuki poets Munawar Molla Hassun and Thekrayat al-Obaidi, followed by song and dance performed by a Kirkuki youth group in traditional costumes.



UNODC is celebrating the contribution of women and girls, who are leading the charge on climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response, to build a more sustainable future for all



Vienna, 8 March 2022 - This International Women's Day (IWD), UNODC is celebrating the contribution of women and girls around the world, who are leading the charge on climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response, to build a more sustainable future for all. Through a series of interviews, inspirational women from Field Offices and HQ are providing insight in the intersection of UNODC mandate areas, environmental sustainability and gender. In this interview we are speaking to Zubaida Sulaiman Shakir, National Project Officer, GLO.ACT Iraq.

UNODC Gender Team: Could you please give a short overview of your area of work and its relevance to ensure environmental sustainability in the context of UNODC's mandated areas of work?

My work involves working on capacity strengthening for law enforcement officers and criminal justice practitioners. This work is designed to enhance a sense of agency and accountability within our target groups so that they will continue these efforts in their areas of responsibility. I also work on legislative development to ensure laws uphold

human rights, gender equality and protection of child rights. This aims to enhance living conditions for people in Iraq through the advancement of the law and enhancement of the rule of law centred around human rights. Just as environmental safety and sustainability are essential for the enjoyment of our human rights, improved access to rights is vital for communities to protect the environment. When we live in safe and stable societies, we are more focused on our surroundings. We have a healthier relationship with our environment.

My interest in environmental sustainability started when I was doing my bachelor's degree, focused on renewable energy. I had questions from everyone asking how I would implement these ideas in a war-torn country? I think my answer is now by enhancing the rule of law, centering our work on human rights, and ensuring inclusion and embracing diversity in our communities.

UNODC Gender Team: How are women and girls in comparison to men and boys, specifically impacted in this context?

It is a well-known fact that human trafficking and migrant smuggling affect women and girls differently than men and boys. However, what we see in our context is that this matters in terms numbers and vulnerability. Women and girls are more vulnerable to becoming trafficking victims and often endure more suffering as victims or smuggled migrants. These risks and vulnerabilities to trafficking increase even further for people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. When we work with the police, we ensure to include case studies that involve people

with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ persons and show family structures that don't fall within hetero-normative standard. We have an open discussion with the officers. We discuss differences in approaches and their accountability in upholding the law and leaving harmful biases out.

UNODC Gender Team: What role do women and girls play in combatting this issue and where do you see opportunities for a more sustainable tomorrow with women and girls at the forefront?

Women play an important role in opening doors and creating new pathways for others within the criminal justice system and cross-cutting areas. Women in leadership and decision-making positions have the power to impact new laws and policies that will enhance access to rights and equality. Our work also involves advocating for these changes. The role that girls play is really in seeing the representation, feeling that there are spaces open to them. We are moving towards a world where the struggle for inclusion should be something of the past, and having a seat at the table should simply be the norm.

What we see in Iraq now is a shining example of women and girls driving a multi-sectoral approach to change; the change they create is inclusive, sustainable, human rights-focused and focused on social justice. We have many more voices advocating for inclusion than ever before, and at the same time, more voices are saying this is not enough and that we should do more. We are raising the bar for everyone to aim higher. This is our role in creating a more sustainable tomorrow for everyone.

Strengthening local responses led by Women-Led Organizations

Baghdad, 8 March 2022 – UNHCR is immensely proud of “The Lotus Flower” one of the 7 winners of the 2022 UNHCR's NGO Innovation Award.

UNHCR has announced the winners on International Women's Day!

Background

The UNHCR NGO Innovation Award (“the Award”) celebrates efforts and achievements of NGOs who developed innovative approaches for protection and delivery of services to refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR.

UNHCR, via this Award, wishes to identify and recognize new and creative approaches that can result in better protection and delivery of service to refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR; and amplify the acts of solidarity and innovation in an age of uncertainty and disruption.

The Award 2022

The 2022 Award focused on women-led organizations and girl-led organizations (WLOs) working with or supporting refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees, stateless persons and host communities. The Award prioritized the organizations created or led by refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR, but was also open to other community-based women-led organizations working in a forced displacement context. This focus on women-led organizations sought to award organizations that hold strong organizational values, principles, and commitments to gender equality and accountability to women and girls, as well as those that promote women in positions of leadership.

Winners were selected based on four

criteria:

- They are women-led or girl-led
- They are working in a forced displacement context
- They work at the local, grassroots level
- They have developed innovative approaches in their work

Among the 7 winners in 2022 was “The Lotus Flower, Iraq”

Created in 2016, the Lotus Flower is a local, community-based and women-led organization, responding to the emerging needs of women internally displaced, refugees and host communities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The Lotus Flower's work focuses on Gender-Based Violence

Strengthening local responses led by Women-Led Organizations (continued)

(GBV) with inclusion of men and boys in their response, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), education, livelihoods, peacebuilding and women empowerment across all pillars. In spring 2019, The Lotus Flower, with the support of Care International, launched the Women's Business Incubator (WBI), a program that provides small business training, mentorship, and seed funding for women-owned business ventures. The

inclusion criteria for the pilot program placed an emphasis on female-headed households, single mothers, and survivors of ISIS violence. Other livelihood projects include farming, baking, sewing and becoming boxing instructors in self-defense, storytelling via photography, and the Lotus Flower Café, a social enterprise for women survivors. The Lotus Flower impacted over 40,000 women and girls in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.



EMPACT takes an innovative approach that teaches English language and digital skills

Baghdad, 8 March 2022 - In celebration of International Women's Day, WFP Iraq wishes to celebrate all women and calls for increased gender equality and women's empowerment in all walks of life.

One of the many initiatives that WFP carries out to advocate for improved opportunities for women in Iraq is the #EMPACT (Empowerment in Action) programme. EMPACT takes an innovative approach that teaches English language and digital skills to a level that would allow participants to seek and create work opportunities including online, providing a source of income for them and their families.

Ghufran Salim Jabbar, is one of our star EMPACT graduates. She is the sole provider for her two teenage daughters after their father passed away. Despite her college degree in mathematics, she was unable to find work in a competitive market.

"I was browsing Facebook for work one day and saw an advertisement for the EMPACT programme. It was intriguing so I applied and passed the entrance



test to join the classes," says Ghufran. "I was really excited to come across such a programme which meant that I could do this from my home thanks to the facilitations provided to me by WFP."

Four months later and Ghufran not only graduated with flying colours, she also managed to secure employment with one of Iraq's leading

telecommunications companies, an opportunity that very few people get.

Ghufran is one of many women that can stand on their feet and feel empowered in today's society and it is our aim in WFP to support her and others like her to pursue their dreams and achieve a better, sustainable future. Happy International Women's Day Ghufran!

In brief

Basra, 8 March 2022 - Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq/Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano: "Celebrating International Women's Day by meeting the future female leaders of Iraq in a UNDP-UNICEF supported school in Basra together with UNDP Iraq Resident Representative, Zena Ali-Ahmad, UNICEF Iraq Resident Representative, Sheema SenGupta, and WFP Iraq acting Deputy Resident Representative, Maysaa al-Ghribawy". Let's all unite for an equal, more sustainable and brighter future for all!



In brief *(continued)*

Baghdad, 14 March 2022 - On the occasion of International Women's Day, Baghdad Women's Association carried out a celebration inside the Kaberto 1 camp for the displaced at the presence of 49 women and girls from inside the camp.

This activity was done in partnership with UN Women and with support of the Embassy of Finland.



Human Rights

UNICEF organized an event to raise awareness on modern slavery

Baghdad, 16 March 2022 - What do adolescents know about child trafficking and what can they do to finish it?

Today, as part of #MyFreedomDay supported by The CNN Freedom Project, UNICEF organized an event to raise awareness on modern slavery in Al Iraq Al Jadeed School in Baghdad.

With the support from منظمة بنت الرافدين BROB I, adolescents took a stand and shared their pledges on how they want to end modern slavery and how this scourge affects children from all over the world.



'Voices for action against racism'

Basra, 21 March 2022 - To mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Missions for Iraq (UNAMI), in cooperation with the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR), organized a short-film screening and roundtable discussion in Basra to promote tolerance, inclusion and respect for diversity in line with this year's global theme of 'Voices for action against racism'.

The event brought together representatives from Iraq's Armenian, Chaldean, Sabeen-Mandean, Christian and Syriac communities as well as Iraqis of African descent, members of minority human rights networks, the IHCHR and civil society activists. The 7 women and 11 men from Basra Governorate discussed their experience of racism and shared ideas on how to adopt a unified approach as a means of combating discrimination.

At the start of the event, UNAMI screened four short-films that exemplify the vision and creative talent of Iraq's youth in exercising their right



to freedom of expression, and which tell important stories about human rights and rights of minorities. The Secret of Existence, (directed by Jassem Al Ansaeri), highlights harassment based on religious or ethnic difference. Give Me My Chance, (directed by Omar Yassein), depicts poverty-based discrimination in access to education. Colours (directed by Alaa Zaieyd) shows how racial discrimination isn't the natural order of things but is learned. Identity, (directed by Shahab Alarkwazi), reveals barriers that marginalized women can face obtaining identity documents and accessing basic services.

In discussions which followed the film screening, participants observed that children must be taught tolerance and respect for minorities, both at home and at school, from the youngest age. The discussion also highlighted the need to develop accessible and practical complaint procedures, and to strengthen the legal framework to counter racism and discrimination. Participants also highlighted the vulnerability of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities in Iraq and emphasized the important role of leaders and community elders in combatting racism and racial discrimination.

National training for Iraq on Human Rights at international borders in the context of counterterrorism

Baghdad, 17 February 2022 – The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) / Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) hosted a National Training for Iraq on Human Rights at International Borders in the Context of Counter-Terrorism. The three-day training was hosted by Iraq's Al-Nahrain Centre for Strategic Studies in Baghdad from 15 to 17 February 2022.

This training, organized in the framework of partnership cooperation between UNOCT, IOM and OHCHR, gathered 20 officials from national entities, including the Ministry of Interior, the Border Points Commission, the Customs and Civil Aviation Authorities, the Ministry of Transport, and the Ministry of Justice. The objective of the training was to enhance the capacities of national officials to better understand and implement applicable international law instruments, protocols and guidelines to ensure the protection of human rights while preventing cross-border movement of suspected or known terrorists and foreign terrorist fighters, as well as ensure safe orderly and regular migration.

IOM welcomed the added value of UN agencies with complementary mandates and expertise joining hands to deliver this effort of cross-cutting importance to all actors concerned with human rights and borders.

Recalling that all counter-terrorism measures must be compliant with international law, including international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law, UNOCT highlighted the importance of specialized and continued training on human rights-based and gender-responsive procedures at international borders.

“International borders carry unique set of risks for vulnerable persons, particularly migrants”, said OHCHR. “This training highlighted the crucial role of Iraqi border officials in protecting the rights of those most vulnerable and provided practical guidance on the operationalization of core human rights principles concerning non-discrimination, assistance and protection from harm.” Participants indicated the need for additional training on human rights at borders, and agreed on a set of recommendations for follow-up action and further engagement to bring about institutional change.

IOM in Iraq and more broadly in the MENA region enjoys comprehensive engagement with governments in the field of immigration and border management. The programming covers capacity-development in search and rescue, humanitarian border management, integrated border management, counter-migrant-smuggling, and many others: anchored in partnerships and complementarity with regional and international organizations. A growing number of governments in the region are exchanging expertise and experience with IOM toward enhanced rights-based migration management.

Through its Border Security and Management (BSM) Global Programme, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNOCT) of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) supports Member States in adopting and implementing comprehensive border management strategies and action plans which are inclusive of counter-terrorism elements and in full compliance with international law and human rights. The programmatic support includes specialized and tailored technical assistance and capacity-building activities on various aspects of border management and counter-terrorism.

The UNAMI Human Rights Office, which also represents the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Iraq, pursues an overall strategy to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights throughout the country. The work is guided by the principle that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”. In accordance with the mandate provided by UN Security Council Resolution 2576 (2021) UNAMI Human Rights Office (the Office) works to support the efforts of the Government of Iraq to promote accountability, protect human rights and strengthen the rule of law.



Implementation of safeguards in detention and during investigation to prevent torture and ensure accountability discussed in Basra

Basra, 17 March 2022 - UN Iraq Human Rights met with judges and investigative officers of the Ministry of Interior in Basra to discuss implementation of safeguards in detention and during investigation to prevent torture and ensure accountability.



UNAMI and Iraqi Network for Social Media hold roundtable discussion on digital rights and digital security in Baghdad



Baghdad, 22 March 2022 - UNAMI, in cooperation with the Iraqi Network for Social Media (INSM), organized today a roundtable on digital rights and digital security in Baghdad. This provided for the first time a platform for dialogue among Iraqi authorities, private companies and civil society

representatives, outlining issues encountered by all sides in relation to cybersecurity.

“An open and trusted internet cultivates innovation and creates opportunities for all. Its foundation lies in the trust of users, reliable networks and a free and secure internet which is

more important than ever”, said Hayder Hamzoz, Founder and CEO of INSM.

Participants proposed concrete next steps on how to tackle the issue of security in the online space, including the establishment of coordination mechanisms, internet policies and the adoption of relevant laws.

“Only a continuous multi-stakeholder dialogue, framed by human rights, will lead to a sustainable way forward, protecting the human rights of all in cyberspace”, said Danielle Bell, Chief of the Human Rights Office of UNAMI.

This roundtable concluded a cutting-edge project aimed to enhance the online protection of civil society organizations engaged on human rights matters. The project provided a series of trainings on digital rights and online security in the past few months that were attended by approximately 200 participants. This was accompanied by the provision of several protection tools, including a digital security guide, a digital help desk, and tailor-made digital security assessments for Iraqi NGOs.



Baghdad, 22 March 2022 – Ms. Danielle Bell, Chief of UNAMI's Human Rights Office and Iraq Representative of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), met with Ambassador Dr. Hisham Al-Alawi, Head of the Department of Human Rights at the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as part of ongoing cooperation on the protection and promotion of human rights in Iraq.



Anbar, 28 March 2022 - The Human Rights Office of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq met with representatives of the civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders and activists in Ramadi/Anbar Governorate to discuss among other topics freedom of expression, the protection from enforced disappearance and women's rights..

United Nations in Iraq trained over 500 staff members on PSEA

Baghdad, 30 March 2022 - Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) is a violation of universally recognized international legal norms and standards. SEA committed by aid workers betrays the core values and principles of humanitarian action and the fundamental to do no harm. SEA destroys the trust communities have in the humanitarian and development sector, and it is a catastrophic failure to

protect the people aid workers are obliged to serve.

It is important to acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage for SEA victims (survivors) to come forward and report sexual exploitation and abuse particularly in the face of an extreme power imbalance. Evidence shows that the number of reported cases represents a small percentage of those that occur. Even when a case is

reported, survivor(s), especially in humanitarian context, face significant barriers to receiving support and protection. Often the perpetrators of SEA are not held accountable for their action.

The United Nations Secretary-General, in his March 2017 Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) strategy, prioritizes the rights and dignity of victims; ending impunity

United Nations in Iraq trained over 500 staff members on PSEA *(continued)*

through strengthened reporting and investigations, including clarifying limitations on the United Nations to achieve criminal accountability; engaging with civil society and external partners; and improving strategic communication for education and transparency.

Against the above background, the United Nations in Iraq, through the PSEA Coordinator attached to the Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General for Iraq, who is also the Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator, rolled out a series of PSEA training and awareness raising sessions for UN and non-UN personnel, including the United Nations Guard Unit that is comprised of Fijian Armed Forces staff. In total about 533 personnel were trained on PSEA.

The topics covered in the training



included concepts that are related to PSEA, the UN zero tolerance policy on SEA, how to serve with pride, the UN Secretary-General's six core principles, how SEA manifests itself in Iraq, what is acceptable and unacceptable

behavior of aid workers, the consequence of SEA, victim support services, how to report misconduct, the whistle blower policies, the role(s) of staff and managers on SEA, investigation processes and sanctions.



New York, 31 March 2022 - Chief of UNAMI Human Rights Office and Representative of UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Danielle Bell, met in New York with representatives of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Iraq to the UN. They discussed human rights file in Iraq and mutual cooperation.



Baghdad, 3 April 2022 - IOM Iraq met with Luxembourg Foreign Minister, Mr. Jean Asselborn, to discuss important matters including ISIL's crimes against minorities and the Yazidi Female Survivors Law.



Kirkuk, 10 April 2022 - UNAMI Human Rights Office conducted a workshop at Kirkuk University today, in cooperation with the Dean and lecturers of the College of Law. The workshop focused on the connection between human rights, climate change and the environment.



Baghdad, 20 April 2022 - The Chief of the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and Representative of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Danielle Bell, and accompanying delegation met with Mr. Muhanaad Naeem, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister and Dr Hisham Al-Alawi, Head of Human Rights Directorate at the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Discussion focused on protection of human rights. UNAMI encourages continued efforts by the Government toward accountability for human rights violations.

UNAMI's HRO in cooperation with INSM, facilitated a global “brown bag” discussion on digital rights and digital security for UN human rights presences around the world

Baghdad, 5 April 2022 - UNAMI's Human Rights Office in cooperation with the Iraqi Network for Social Media (INSM), facilitated today a global “brown bag” discussion on digital rights and digital security for UN human rights presences around the world.

From December 2021 to March 2022, UNAMI's Human Rights Office in cooperation with INSM implemented a cutting-edge project to enhance the online protection of Iraqi human rights defenders, bloggers, journalists and activists through a series of trainings on digital rights and online security, attended by approximately 200 participants. This was accompanied by the provision of a digital security guide, a digital help desk, and tailor-made digital security assessments for Iraqi NGOs. Moreover, the project provided a platform for dialogue between Iraqi authorities, private companies, and civil society representatives, outlining

steps to strengthen rights in the online space.

The implementation of this project was met with enormous interest from civil society, given the increasing role cyberspace plays in the monitoring, reporting and advocacy of human rights, while recognizing the critical need to mitigate online risks, improve data protection and online communication, and adopt digital

security policies. UNAMI HRO and INSM presented lessons learnt and outlined steps on how to expand activities on digital rights in Iraq. 21 participants from various UN field missions and OHCHR country offices joined the meeting, reflecting on their own experiences and highlighting the criticality of the fast-evolving field of digital security for the protection and promotion of human rights.



Living with Disabilities

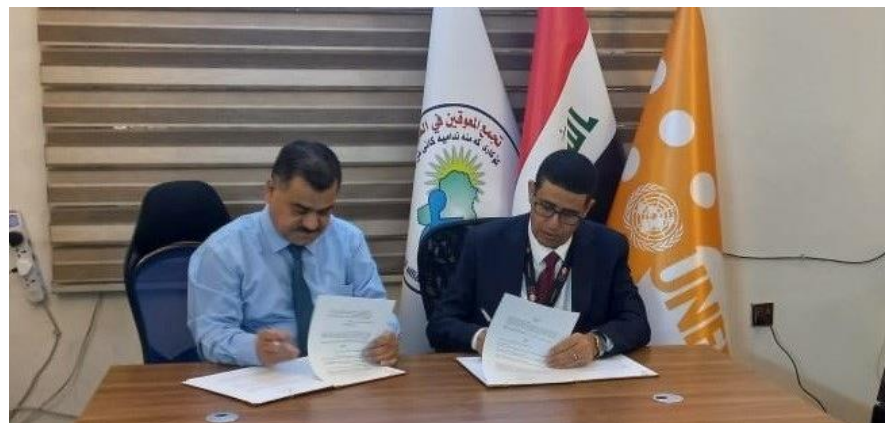
UNFPA and the Iraqi Alliance of Disability Organization partner up to support the rights and needs of persons with disability

Baghdad, 12 April 2022 - UNFPA signed on Tuesday a Joint Cooperation Framework with the Iraqi Alliance of Disability Organization (IADO) to promote disability inclusion in alignment with the UN Iraq Disability Inclusion Strategy and address the gaps.

This joint cooperation framework enables UNFPA and IADO to strategise and establish an advisory board that will ensure the rights of persons with disabilities, especially the rights of women and girls with disabilities to access reproductive healthcare.

The partnership will allow both parties to raise awareness on prevention and response to gender-based violence, advocacy for disability inclusion in legislation, policies and programmes at the central, regional and local levels, and promote youth empowerment across Iraq.

Mofaq Tofiq, the president of the Iraqi Alliance of Disability Organization highlighted the importance of this partnership for further collaboration to uphold the rights of persons with disability and ensure their



participation in the society.

For his part, the Deputy Representative of UNFPA, Mr Himyar Abdulmoghni said that: “IADO has been UNFPA's strategic partner for several years. Today's signature of a cooperative framework between IADO and UNFPA confirms our strong partnership and ensures that issues of people with disability are mainstreamed throughout UNFPA's programmes in Iraq. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with

IADO so that the people with disabilities in Iraq, particularly the women and girls can enjoy their reproductive health and rights.”

UNFPA and IADO will jointly support advocacy initiatives for inclusion of and awareness about persons with disabilities. The JCF further outlines plans for capacity building activities for IADO staff focused on project design and implementation, advocacy, and other areas identified through a needs assessment.



Mosul, 29 March 2022 - Young people with disability deserve:

- Full access to services and information on their sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Equal access to prevention and response to violence
- Life-skills education

UNFPA with funding from Finland organized several trainings to build capacity of youth center staffs in Ninewa, including life skills and communication skills. The trainings enable the staff to effectively communicate with young people with disability and their families and better respond to their needs.



Baghdad, 25 April 2022 – UNFPA with the support from the Japan Embassy in Iraq continues its outreach activities to ensure correct information and safe vaccination services are accessible to everyone, including persons with disability.

Freedom of Press

Citizen journalism: peacebuilding through media in Iraq

Baghdad, 3 February 2022 - Along with widespread use of social media comes the prominence of citizen journalism; and capacitating young journalists to use media tools ethically is key to spreading narratives of peace in Iraq. UNDP Iraq’s citizen journalism project launched in 2020 for 120 students of media colleges and bloggers active in advocating for peacebuilding and promoting social cohesion from the governorates of Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Basra, Dhi Qar, Diyala, Karbala, Kirkuk, Najaf, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and the governorates of the KRI.

Phase two of the citizen journalism project is currently taking off with local partner CDO (Civil Development Organization) and support from the Government of Germany, and it includes additional capacity building of the selected cohort, as well as training of 105 new members, and a short film competition. This phase focuses on combating Hate Speech and Preventing Violent Extremism on social media and using citizen journalism tools to promote social cohesion, including the creation and promotion of 500 new media products by the trained citizen journalists on the Tanoua platform. Additionally, round tables will be organized for media outlets, professors of media educational institutions, and activists to discuss the media realm’s status, gaps, and opportunities, and its impact on social cohesion and reconciliation in Iraq.

In January, two three-day workshops

were held for participants from Diyala, Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Mosul, Salah al-Din, and Sulaymaniyah, focusing on journalism ethics, and combating hate speech and violent extremism on social media. Additional trainings will follow in February for the remaining governorates.

“In Shangal (Ninewa) there are many different ethnicities and religions. I want to write about coexistence between Yazidis and Muslims also draw more attention to the region. By sharing and publishing news on peaceful coexistence, these stories will be reflected in other regions accordingly.” - Layla, 25, Ninewa, studied peace studies and human rights.

“I would like to know more about the principles of delivering news professionally and preventing hate

messages on social media. I want to write about vulnerable people, coexistence in IDP camps and ISIS - affected areas. Now media focuses on politics and economics and neglects social cohesion.” - Khalid, 30, Duhok, studied fine arts and theatre.

“I would like to write about the laws related to journalism protection and how they are applied.” - Aven, 32, Kirkuk, studied law.

“Media is a key method to make change in society. Media and especially social media is the most effective way to spread news. Sharing topics which help peacebuilding will affect society.” - Bakir, 29, Erbil, studied media.

UNDP Iraq has launched in 2020 a dedicated five-year Social Cohesion Programme to promote stronger, peaceful, and more cohesive communities in all areas of Iraq.



UNESCO hosted a consultation session on the "Breaking the Silence" project with Iraqi journalists

Baghdad, 20 March 2022 - UNESCO Iraq office held a consultation session with a number of Iraqi journalists as part of the "Breaking Silence: enhance accountability and prosecutions for the safety of journalists and fighting impunity (Phase 2), funded by the Netherlands.

This meeting is a part of a series of discussions held by UNESCO prior to the launch of the second phase of the project, which aims to enhance trust amongst the journalistic community, law enforcement, and judicial institutions in Iraq by strengthening government procedures for judicial follow-up in order to protect journalists and combat impunity.

Rochus Pronk, the charge d'affaires at the Netherlands Embassy in Iraq, said in his opening remarks: "This project aims to protect journalists from violence and intimidation, to train media organizations in providing protection to their staff, and to create an independent helpline for female journalists who require assistance". Mr. Pronk added, "Critical voices are often silenced. Crimes and violence against journalists and defenders go unpunished. That is unacceptable, therefore, I hope that I can meet many of you in person in the coming months, to hear your stories and also your ideas on how we can improve the safety of journalists in Iraq".

UNESCO Iraq is hoping that male and female journalists in Iraq will agree on a unified advocacy pattern that contributes in supporting safety and

security as well as forcing the authorities to end impunity for the killers of journalists. UNESCO CI Officer, Dhea Subhee, confirmed that discussions are on-going with government parties as the judiciary council, the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice to implement the project's activities in a way that improves safety indicators for journalists and reduces the chances of killers impunity.

The meeting concluded with a set of recommendations and suggestions presented by the participants, represented in; enabling female and male journalists to access judicial and criminal information on the previous killings of journalists, calling on the High Judiciary Council, to improve

judicial follow up and prosecution related to the detection of perpetrators and bringing them to justice. They also suggested improving the government's response to requests for protection, assistance provided to journalists and regulating the journalistic work environment.

UNESCO Iraq previously implemented the first phase of the Breaking the Silence project 2019-2021, which resulted in important measures at the level of criminal investigations at the Ministry of the Interior, with the generous support of the Government of the Netherlands. Today, the second phase of this project is being launched to complement the national mechanism for safety of journalists and combating impunity in Iraq.



UNITAD



Shikhan, 15 March 2022 - His Holiness Baba Sheikh Ali Elias received Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), Christian Ritscher. The Special Adviser reiterated UNITAD's commitment to hold ISIL perpetrators accountable for their international crimes, including the crime of genocide against the Yazidi community.



Lalish, 15 March 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher visited the town of Lalish and met with Baba Jawish. They discussed the current situation the Yazidi continue to cope with in the aftermath of the atrocities ISIL committed against them, including Yazidi women who are still missing.



Baghdad, 3 March 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher met today with H.E. Matti Lassila, Ambassador of Finland to Iraq. They discussed UNITAD's ongoing activities, and Finland's support for the Team in the pursuit of accountability for ISIL international crimes.



Baghdad, 16 March 2022 – Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Mr. Christian Ritscher visited today Free Yazidi Foundation Enterprise and Training Center and Sugar is Sweet Bakery and Cafe. He was informed on how the displaced Yezidis and Yezidi community live and try to rebuild. SA Ritscher was impressed by the Yezidi women's work at the Free Yezidis' Enterprise and Training Center. He also had the opportunity to see the new Sugar is Sweet Bakery & Cafe. Yezidi women's resilience and creativity place them at the forefront of building a brighter future in Iraq.



Baghdad, 22 March 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher visited the office of the Prime Minister of Iraq today and met with his Chief of Staff Judge Raed Juhi. The Special Adviser was highly encouraged by the support that the Iraqi Government extended to UNITAD.

Special Adviser Ritscher also expressed his continued commitment to working with Iraqi authorities in the highest spirit of cooperation towards the common goal of holding ISIL members accountable for international crimes.



The Hague, The Netherlands, 6 April 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher was pleased to meet with the International Criminal Court's Prosecutor Karim Khan. They discussed deepening partnerships with national authorities while also employing innovative approaches to enhance investigations into ISIL crimes in Iraq.



Baghdad, 10 April 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher concluded his first visit to Saudi Arabia where he met several Saudi officials in Riyadh including Dr. Abdulrahman AlRassi, Deputy Minister for International Multilateral Affairs. In Jeddah he visited the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and met with a delegation chaired by Ambassador Mohammad Salah Takaya, director of Political Affairs. Special Adviser Ritscher was extremely grateful for Saudi hospitality, and for the constructive discussions for furthering cooperation on issues of mutual interest.



Baghdad, 21 April 2022 - Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Mr. Christian Ritscher received today H.E. Filip Vanden Bulcke, Ambassador of Belgium to Iraq and Jordan. They discussed enhancing cooperation between UNITAD and Belgium in pursuing justice and accountability for ISIL international crimes in Iraq.

UNITAD, Iraq and Germany renew commitment to investigating the financial dimensions of ISIL international crimes in Iraq



Berlin, 13 April 2022 – The United Nations Investigative Team to promote accountability for crimes committed by Daesh/ISIL (UNITAD) joined by the Embassy of Iraq to Germany and the German Federal Foreign Office co-hosted a special event on Investigating Financial Dimensions of War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity, and Genocide today in Berlin, Germany.

“With thanks to the generous financial support from Germany, UNITAD established a dedicated Economic Crimes Unit (ECU) to support the work of the Team in relation to the financial aspects of crimes falling within UNITAD’s mandate”, explained Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Christian Ritscher. “This enabled UNITAD to investigate the complex financial structures that were central to ISIL/Da’esh as an organization which maintained a huge bureaucracy, and used massive resources to commit heinous international crimes.”

H.E. Mr. Lukman Faily, Ambassador of Iraq to Germany, stressed in his opening remarks that “the importance of the

continuity of UNTAD’s work inside Iraq and on the international arenas such as Germany, as it reflects the Iraqi and global will to hold ISIL/Da’esh accountable, reveal its sources of funding, its support, and its effects, and also to eliminate ISIL/Da’esh as a transnational terrorist entity.”

In his address, Minister of State of the German Federal Foreign Office, Dr. Tobias Lindner, emphasized the importance of UNITAD’s work to hold ISIL/Da’esh members accountable for their crimes: “accountability is the key to successful reconciliation in post-conflict-societies. Impunity - on the other hand - destroys the social fabric of a society. This is the reason why we encourage partners to adopt the concept of universal jurisdiction and to make ample use of it.” The Special Adviser further commended Iraq’s commitment to support the mission of UNITAD, and the facilitation of the Team’s investigations towards the common goal of ensuring accountability for ISIL/Da’esh international crimes. At his end, Judge Raed Hameed, Deputy

Head of the Ninewa Federal Appeals Court and one of the main Iraqi Investigative judges working on ISIL/Da’esh crimes provided an overview on his investigative work and the ongoing cooperation with UNITAD in this regard. UNITAD has been able to complete initial lines of inquiry across ISIL/Da’esh’s various revenue streams, with a focus on ISIL/Da’esh’s central treasury (Bayt Al Mal). This progress was built on engagement with Iraqi national authorities which included close collaboration with the Iraqi judiciary, as well as with regulatory bodies such as the Iraq Anti-Money Laundry and Counter-Terrorism Financing Office.

During the special event, UNITAD provided an update on investigations into ISIL/Da’esh’s oil trade and the trafficking in Antiquities, inextricably linked together through ISIL’s own design under the Diwan Al Rekaz (Ministry of Buried Resources), and exploring ISIL/Da’esh’s exploitive taxation schemes, focused on collecting wealth, property, and personal possessions from a range of targeted minority groups.

Discussions also were prompted by valuable insights presented by Ms. Nina Jørgensen, Professor of Public International Law-University of Southampton on the international legal framework presently available to holding financial actors accountable for their role in the commission of international crimes. Those present reaffirmed, in their discussions, the importance of further enhancing international cooperation to track and hold accountable the individuals who facilitated and financially benefited from ISIL/Da’esh crimes in Iraq.

UNITAD joins the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact

New York, 21 April 2021 – The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh (UNITAD) joined the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact in a virtual signing ceremony attended by principals of both entities. With this latest addition, the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, already the largest coordination framework within the UN-system, now comprises 44 UN and non-UN entities.

During the ceremony, Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism and Chair of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, said that “UNITAD’s work on accountability for the crimes committed by Da’esh in Iraq adds an important operational layer to the work of the Compact on the ground.” He also praised UNITAD’s efforts on pursuing justice for



victims of terrorism.

Highlighting the importance of holding Da’esh members accountable for international crimes as a common goal for both organizations, Mr. Christian Ritscher, Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, underscored that “as the ultimate goal of the Global Counter-Terrorism Compact is to strengthen a

common United-Nations approach to support Member-States in this area, UNITAD is honored to contribute to this overall architecture, in compliance with its mandate.”

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, launched by the Secretary-General in December 2018, is the primary institutional vehicle for coherent, coordinated and increased support to Member States in their implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

UNITAD will enrich the work of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact by providing analysis and insights from their pioneering work on new technologies, particularly in archiving and digitalization of evidence, and utilizing artificial intelligence and e-discovery tools.



Baghdad, 25 April 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher met today with H.E. Prashant Pise, Ambassador of India to Iraq. They discussed mutual cooperation including India's recent support to UNITAD's investigations into ISIL's crimes of destroying cultural heritage and their use of chemical weapons.



Baghdad, 27 April 2022 - Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Mr. Christian Ritscher, visited today the Central Investigative Court in Rasafa and met 1st Judge Jabbar Abd Dali, congratulating him on assuming this position. They discussed mutual cooperation aiming at prosecuting ISIL members in evidence-based judicial processes according to international standards. Special Adviser Ritscher praised the excellent cooperation with the Iraqi Judiciary, in particular the Central Court, towards achieving the common goal of holding ISIL members accountable for their international crimes in Iraq.

Humanitarian

At Sharya IDPs camp in Duhok German diplomats met with people receiving assistance from WFP Iraq

Duhok, 5 March 2022 - At Sharya camp for displaced families in Duhok, representatives from German Consulate General Erbil including the Acting Consul-General met with the women and men receiving assistance from WFP Iraq, all made possible with the support of the Federal Republic of Germany and partners.



USAID representatives and UNICEF visited Debaga camp to assess the progress of child protection program

USAID representatives and UNICEF visited Debaga camp to assess the progress of child protection program Erbil, 7 March 2022 - Senior Humanitarian Advisor, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and UNICEF visited Debaga camp in the Erbil Governorate to assess the progress of child protection program in support of vulnerable displaced women and children. The visit included observing various life-saving child protection activities implemented in the center, such as psychosocial support sessions and meeting with the case workers. BHA and UNICEF interacted with parents and care givers to understand the situation of the camp, services available and their challenges. The funding from BHA has also enabled capacity building of frontline workers on case management, positive

parenting and life skills education for adolescent girls. In a related news, humanitarian colleagues from the EU and UNICEF in Iraq visited Khanke camp, an informal settlement, and Domiz camp in Dohuk.

They also went to a women's support centre and a public health centre in Mosul and Jeda'h camp in Qayyarah. Together, they monitored progress on UNICEF's EU-funded humanitarian response.



Celebrating International School Meals Day



Baghdad, 10 March 2022 - Together, the World Food Programme (WFP) in Iraq and the Iraqi Ministry of Education are working to support 449,000 children with healthy, fresh meals at school. By helping address children's short-term food needs, WFP and the Government are supporting better nutrition and learning outcomes. Now schools are open, our relaunch of the National School Feeding Programme is helping protect and kickstart our children's futures. This year, for the first time 40% of children are directly supported by the government, as part of the long-term

handover plan from WFP to the Ministry of Education.

We are also working together on the National School Feeding Policy, our vision is for every child in need to be supported with school meals. Locally, our School Feeding Programme positively impacts upon the economies of communities, with an estimated 1,700 jobs created for every 100,000 meals.

WFP celebrates the Government's vision for funding this important School Meals programme, supporting children and their futures.

EU delegation visited Duhok refugee camps

Duhok, 27 March 2022 - H.E. Mr. Ville Varjola, the EU Ambassador in Iraq and EU delegation visited Duhok refugee camps.

They were met by Ms. Gwen Le Couster, Head of office UNHCR Duhok, and UNHCR staff.

The visiting delegations met with

UNHCR staff, partners and camp management Barzani Charity Foundation. The Ambassador was accompanied by Ms. Marie Paret, the Head of the EU Liaison Office in Erbil, and Mr. Christophe Reltien, Head of Office of the Echo Educational Humanitarian Organization Iraq.



The visiting Canadian team met in Dohuk with displaced families, to hear about their situation and needs

Duhok, 29 March 2022 - The visiting Canadian team met in Dohuk with displaced families, to hear about their situation and needs.

Canada's assistance to WFP means that each month, households can buy the food they need.

WFP is grateful to the Canadian Embassy in Iraq for their support to displaced and refugee families in camps.



Ambassadors of Germany and France visited UNICEF's programs at Sharya Camp in Dohuk

Dohuk, 31 March 2022 - The German ambassador in Iraq, Martin Jaeger, and the French Ambassador to Iraq, Eric Chevalier, visited UNICEF's programs at Sharya Camp in Dohuk, Iraq.

The delegation met the camp management, UNICEF, WFP and UNHCR staff and visited a school where UNICEF is supporting with provision of quality education services funded by Germany through KfW.



By supporting the internally displaced people in Iraq to obtain their legal documentation, UNHCR helps them access healthcare, education and social benefits

Baghdad, 31 March 2022 - Lack of civil and identity documentation is one of the primary protection issues faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) and IDP returnees. Missing civil documentation impedes one's access to essential public services, such as education and healthcare, and social security benefits, such as the Public Distribution System. It can also lead to restricted freedom of movement at checkpoints, increased risk of arrest and detention, exclusion from restitution and reconstruction programs, and the inability to participate in the country's public affairs. At the same time, numerous barriers make it difficult to obtain and renew civil documentation. In response, UNHCR, in cooperation with the government and civil society partners, has been implementing projects to enable IDPs and IDP returnees to access civil documentation, including Civil Status IDs, Iraqi Nationality Certificates, Unified National IDs, Birth Certificates and Public Distribution System Cards since 2019. Distribution of Individuals Lacking Documentation:

- Over 1 million Iraqis lack one core legal document
- Over 500,000 Iraqis lack at least two core documents
- Over 250,000 lack at least three or more core documents

UNHCR and partners provided legal assistance and/or counseling to 50,633 Iraqi individuals and supported the issuance of 46,458 documents in 2021.

As a key part of addressing the civil documentation needs of IDPs and IDP returnees, UNHCR coordinates and supports mobile missions by the ad-hoc committee under the Ministry of Interior (MoI) as well as local CAD missions, to facilitate access to documentation, focusing on locations where the highest number of individuals are missing two or more documents, namely Ninewa, Anbar and Erbil

Destruction of numerous CAD offices during the conflict and the limited logistical, human and financial resources available to the offices, exacerbated by the disruption of services due to the pandemic, has negatively affected access to civil documentation. UNHCR is implementing projects through its Area-Based Programming for Protection and Solutions (A2PS), including the rehabilitation of CAD

offices. In 2021, four CAD rehabilitation projects were completed in Salah al-Din (Shirqat District) and Ninewa (Ba'ajQahtaniyah, Al-Shimal, Sinjar District, and Tal Abta, Al-Hadar District). Civil Affairs Directorate Rehabilitation in focus Shirqat is one of the largest districts in Salah al-Din governorate. Since October 2016 some 162,000 IDPs have returned to the area and most were unable to secure missing documentation because the CAD office was not operational until August 2019. Even once open, damaged infrastructure severely limited the capacity. UNHCR rehabilitated the centre in 2021. "Previously, we were only able to process some 100 cases per day, but now, with the recent rehabilitation of the centre, we have increased our processing capacity to 500 cases per day", Colonel Al-Luhby, head of the CAD Shirqat.

"Because of no documents, I could not enrol my three boys in school. Finally, I managed to secure the national cards for my boys and will get them enrolled in school." Mohammed Al-Fattah, a returnee from Rumaila village.

UNHCR engages in regular advocacy at various levels to resolve obstacles faced by affected populations in accessing civil documentation and providing favourable outcomes. Most importantly, UNHCR continued to search for solutions for complex documentation cases –in particular for female headed households (FHH) with deceased, detained or missing husbands, who are unable to obtain civil documentation for themselves and their children. As a result of successful advocacy, female-headed IDP and IDP returnee

households were able to obtain curatorship documents, thus providing the women authorization by law to act on behalf of their detained/convicted/missing husbands, enabling them to obtain documentation for their children.

Moving forward, UNHCR will ramp up policy level advocacy to simplify the existing procedures and framework to ensure access to documentation for all, including by de-linking the security clearance procedures, allowing IDPs to seek and obtain their identity and civil documents in their area of displacement/current residence, digitalizing civil registry archives to allow IDPs in disputed territories to transfer their files from places of origin to areas of residence, and supporting the new system of digitalized data by facilitating access to UNIDs.

UNHCR Iraq Representative, Jean-Nicolas Beuze, said: "Having an ID is key in life! One needs one to enroll kids in school or get medical treatment. Or to open a bank account or rent a place. 28% of Iraqi displaced families in camps, 25% of IDPs in cities, 16% of IDP having returned home have no ID. This is UNHCR Iraq's priority."

Special thanks to major donors of un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as donors who have contributed directly to the Iraq operation in 2021: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Norway, Private Donors, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland, and United States of America.

Access UNHCR's recent report at <https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/2228>



Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities (PROSPECTS) in action

Dohuk, 1 April 2022 - This week, the Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities (PROSPECTS), funded by the Government of the Netherlands, and implemented by UNICEF, ILO Arab States, UNHCR Iraq and the World Bank conducted a joint field visit in Dohuk, Iraq.

The delegation engaged with the workers, youth and trade union representatives working on the EIIP programme.

Youth from refugee and internally displaced families and host communities, having completed life skills training with UNICEF Iraq, are now undertaking ILO's financial education and entrepreneurship training. They shared their aspirations with the delegation to scale up their small enterprises.

To support the acute needs of highly vulnerable population in Iraq, five

international organizations - IIFC, ILO, UNHCR, UNICEF, and the World Bank – joined their efforts to develop a new paradigm in responding to the most affected refugees in Dohuk governorate and the most affected Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and host communities in Ninewa governorate. So, Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities (PROSPECTS) was

established.

The Partnership focuses on three broad areas that are critical for refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, and Host Communities to overcome their specific vulnerabilities and host communities to pursue their own development agenda in a transformed environment:

- jobs and social protection
- education and learning, and
- protection and legal status.



UNHCR Representative in Iraq visited Kuwait

Kuwait, 3 April 2022 - Mr. Jean Nicolas Beuze, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency Representative to Iraq, visited the State of Kuwait and met with government officials and visited the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.

At a press conference at the UN House in Kuwait City, he said that he was impressed with compassion and generosity that government and people of Kuwait had towards displaced persons in Iraq, Syria and Yemen and elsewhere.



Stabilization and Development

UN Habitat improves infrastructure to fight seasonal floods

Mosul, 24 February 2022 - "I count on UN-Habitat's intervention to save my house from the violent floods that we suffer every year" said an apprehensive resident watching the ongoing excavation works along Street 20 in Matahin, western Mosul. Tall defensive barrier steps at the entrance of people's homes and dirt marks on the walls are a tell-tale evidence of the height that excess flood water can reach in this low-lying area during the seasonal rains. The works, which include the necessary demolition and reconstruction of a poorly designed bridge, are being implemented in partnership with the Ninewa Sewage Directorate who is supplying all the pipes. Community information leaflets were widely distributed to residents before starting the works to ensure their safety, particularly that of



unattended children. This project is funded by the European Union, through the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, and complements the on-going local area development project that the European Union is already implementing in the Matahin area, east of Yarmouk Park. In the city of Baiji, located in Salah al Din governorate, the European Union

is investing in the rehabilitation of damaged housing, public open spaces, WASH, job creation for the unemployed and activities for youth. In parallel to the rehabilitation of the malfunctioning Al Maliha Water Treatment Plant, UN-Habitat has just completed a 12.3 km extension of the potable water network serving Al Asri centre and Al Noor neighborhoods.



Mosul, 28 February 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq/Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, visited a thriving University of Mosul which has increased from 43,000 students to 70,000 students in a short time demonstrating that it is firmly back in the academic community. She also visited UNDP Iraq restored library, the lighthouse of knowledge in Mosul.



Mosul, 28 February 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq/Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, visited UNESCO Iraq al Nouri mosque and the restoration of surrounding heritage houses in old town Mosul. Very impressed by the progress of the EU-funded project “Reviving Mosul and Basra old city”. Not only is the cultural heritage of Mosul being restored but the project is providing much needed jobs for the youth.

With support from the European Union, UNICEF, WFP, and ILO partner with the Kurdistan Regional Government to reform social protection

Erbil, 1 March 2021 –The Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), and the International Labour Organization (ILO), today launched a new programme to reform the social protection system and the effectiveness of its response to ongoing socio-economic shocks. This important work is funded by the European Union (EU) which has prioritised support for Iraq to build a sustainable and more inclusive social protection system for families in need.

The Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government launched this new partnership with the three UN Agencies in line with their vision to develop an effective social protection response and to accelerate reform.

The joint programme will contribute to social protection reform by adapting, expanding, and innovating social protection responses to address the immediate needs of women, children, their families, workers in the informal sector and communities in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The reforms aim to improve the public policy environment for sustainable and inclusive expansion of social protection, and to reinforce capacities of regional authorities to deliver quality child, age, and disability sensitive, and gender responsive social protection programmes and services, fill in gaps in

employment related social insurance and assistance, and make social protection schemes food security sensitive and nutrition sensitive.

The programme aims to support the Ministries of Planning, and Labour and Social Affairs to update the Kurdistan Region’s Social Protection Strategic Framework, developing reform scenarios and a roadmap, introducing a cash transfer targeting children and pregnant women with linkages to health and education. The programme also aims to expand the scope and coverage of the contributory social security system and active labour market programmes to young people and informal workers, coordinate management of information systems and establish a single registry of people in need of assistance.

“Social protection reform means we can better fight poverty and ensure that vulnerable women, children and their families are included and supported. This programme is just the beginning of a process that will improve access to

basic needs such as food, access to health care, education and vital public services for vulnerable families, as well as employment opportunities and improved working conditions,” said UNICEF Iraq Representative Sheema Sen Gupta, WFP Iraq Representative Ally Raza Qureshi, ILO Country Coordinator in Iraq Maha Kattaa, and EU Head of Cooperation Barbara Egger, in a joint statement.

As part of this project the UN agencies will support the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in gathering evidence, such as assessing and mapping social protection, reviewing public expenditure on social protection, and analysing multidimensional poverty, food insecurity, the labour force, and household access to social protection.

As a result, the Social Protection Programme will lay the groundwork for an evidence-based approach to social protection reform that is backed up by legislation, strengthened institutional capacities, and effective coordination.



Kingdom of Belgium renews commitment to stabilization with new €1.4 million contribution

Baghdad, 4 March 2022 – The Government of Belgium has contributed an additional €1.4 million (US\$ 1.6 million) to the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS). The critical funding will support stabilization efforts implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) across Iraq's five governorates in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah Al-Din.

This is the Kingdom of Belgium's seventh contribution to the FFS, bringing the country's total contribution to €13.52 million. With this generous additional funding, UNDP will be able to support the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure in the sectors of electricity, water and education.

"The impact of our collective stabilization efforts with continuous support from key international partners such as Belgium are clearly visible across Iraq. Schools are reopening, clean and potable water is reaching people, roads are linking people and homes are rehabilitated," says UNDP Resident Representative

Zena Ali Ahmad.

"However, critical stabilization needs remain as 1 million people are still internally displaced, including the hardest-to-return populations. This contribution comes at a critical period for Iraq, as we look to safeguard the hard-won stabilization gains and prevent ISIL's resurgence," she adds.

"After winning the war, we must win the peace and address the root causes and consequences of Daesh's presence in the region. In this regard, building resilience for returnees and local communities in the sectors of electricity, water and education is critical to the long-term stability of the region. That is why Belgium is happy to confirm with this new contribution its full and continuous engagement in the stabilization process in Iraq since 2016," Axel Kenes, Director General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalization, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.

At the request of the Government of Iraq, UNDP established the FFS in 2015 to facilitate the return of displaced Iraqis, lay the groundwork for reconstruction and recovery, provide



capacity support and safeguard against the resurgence of violence and extremism. The mandate was extended to 2023 due to the scale of urgent remaining stabilization needs and the request from the GOI and international partners to continue our interventions. In 2021, FFS placed greater emphasis on utilizing an integrated approach that included promoting sustainable livelihood and employment opportunities by rehabilitating supportive infrastructure for productive sectors, such as agriculture and small industries.

UNHCR ensures that refugees have access to clean and potable water

Sulaymaniyah, 4 March 2022 - In Sulaymaniyah, UNHCR has finished improving and upgrading the current water storage and distribution system in Arbat Refugee Camp. Ensuring that refugees have access to clean and potable water.



Consultation workshop on the Commercial Arbitration Bill and the New York Convention to implement its mechanisms paving economic growth in Iraq

Baghdad, 14 March 2022 - As Iraq acceded recently to the New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards, which entered into force on 9 February 2022, UNDP in partnership with the European Union (EU) held a consultation workshop between 3 to 5 March in Erbil to discuss this bill ensuring its compliance with Iraq's obligations under the international convention.

The workshop was attended by 26

representatives from the Legislative Committee in charge of drafting the bill, general managers, legal advisers from the Federal Government, the Government of Kurdistan Region of Iraq, chambers of commerce, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

Currently, Iraq has an acute need for economic development to escape the fragility trap and pave the way for stability and economic growth.

Establishing commercial Alternative

Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms, referring to any means of settling disputes outside of the courtroom, is key to creating a secure investment climate for local and international businesses in Iraq.

Building arbitration and mediation legal infrastructure is also crucial to provide a secure investment climate to attract more investments, increase cross-border trade transactions, and create jobs for thousands of Iraqis which lays at the heart of UNDP'S

Consultation workshop on the Commercial Arbitration Bill and the New York Convention ... (continued)

work related to Sustainable Development Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth).

This consultation focused notably on highlighting that access to informal justice, particularly to ADR, is equally given to Iraqi local businesses.

This three-day session provided a forum for representatives to discuss the international best practices and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Model Rules on arbitration and mediation, which provides a comprehensive set of procedural rules



upon which parties may agree for the conduct of arbitral proceedings arising

out of their commercial relationship and are widely used in ad hoc arbitrations as well as administered arbitrations. The representatives also reviewed the New York Convention, which is a Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards and the Singapore Convention on Mediation, is a uniform and efficient framework for international settlement agreements resulting from mediation to promote a common understanding so that the forum can come up with an advanced version of the arbitration bill in Iraq.

Arab States: Deputy Secretary-General calls on UN leaders to lift ambitions for the 2030 Agenda



Beirut, Lebanon, 16 March 2022 - The UN Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Amina Mohammed called upon the UN Resident Coordinators in the Arab States to safeguard the 2030 agenda, in spite of a complex environment, and help countries get the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) back on track.

Ms. Amina Mohammed met with UN Resident Coordinators leading UN teams in the Arab States during her visit to Lebanon where she opened the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2022.

As the representatives of the Secretary-General for development in countries, Ms. Mohammed stressed that the SDGs need Resident Coordinators' "convening power, ability to broker partnerships and the effective coordination needed to achieve results on the ground."

She raised concerns that across the

Arab region COVID-19 reversed the first signs of progress towards the SDGs, adding that this compounds other challenges in the region – from the climate crisis and biodiversity loss to conflicts that continue to destroy lives and livelihoods.

Ukraine crisis spillover

Ms. Mohammed noted with concern that the current crisis in Ukraine will create stress globally with rising fuel and food prices and fiscal insecurity, among other areas. She added that, more than ever, "the RCs need to keep hope alive and accelerate the sustainable development agenda."

She stressed that "our strengthened UN country teams and Resident Coordinators offer a clear conduit to ensure that the regional resources, assets and expertise land at country-level with impact at scale".

UN leaders also stressed the need to

strengthen engagement with key political actors and entities in the Arab region including the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council, while positioning the development agenda in conflict and protracted crises. They agreed that improving partnerships with high-income countries -- in the region and beyond -- was also a priority.

Our Common Agenda

Ms. Mohammed added that the Secretary-General's report on "Our Common Agenda" is "the wind beneath the wings of the 2030 Agenda" and Agenda 2063, an opportunity to boost the SDGs.

During her closing remarks, Ms. Mohammed welcomed the results achieved in 2021 and encouraged Resident Coordinators to "lift their ambition even further", particularly in view of the global challenges, while conveying appreciation for the Resident Coordinators' leadership across the Arab States.

At the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2022, Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, UN Resident Coordinator in Iraq, highlighted that coordination, partnerships and collaboration with all relevant ministries and local authorities remain key in working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "All UN agencies in Iraq make every effort to work with national, regional and local government, civil society, the private sector, academia, and youth as they all play a fundamental role in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of steps towards a sustainable future, where nobody shall be left behind," she said.

UN-Habitat is on the point of completing the reconstruction of 95 housing units in Sinjar

Sinjar, 17 March 2022 - UN-Habitat is on the point of completing the reconstruction of 95 housing units in Sinjar under the project titled “Support to Reconstruction and Peacebuilding of Liberated Cities in Iraq – Phase III” funded by the Government of Japan. The original houses were fully destroyed during the war against ISIL. Female and male graduates of vocational training under the same project have been engaged in some of the construction works, including painting and electricity wiring. By the

end of March, approximately 1,100 beneficiaries will be handed the keys to

their new homes so that they can settle back in their area of origin.



ILO facilitates a training that introduces, capacitates, and teaches the Know About Business programme and its modules to the trainers

Baghdad, 19 March 2022 - 24 participants - teachers and trainers - from Vocational and Technical Training Centres (VTCs) from across 12 governorates in Iraq are attending a comprehensive training on ILO’s Know About Business (KAB).

An ILO-GIZ project entitled “Improved Business Development Services targeting MSMEs and youth for decent work creation” aims to foster an entrepreneurship culture in governmental vocational and technical schools and centers. This is being accomplished by embedding the ILO’s entrepreneurship education



programme, Know About Business at selected technical and vocational

training centers.

The 24 participants are from various governorates, namely Anbar, Salah Al-Din, Nineveh, Babil, Al-Diwanya, Basra, Thiqr, Karbala, Wasit, Maysan, Deyala, and Kirkuk. They are participating in a two-week long training that introduces, capacitates, and teaches the Know About Business programme and its modules to the trainers.

This is the third KAB Training of Facilitators, which follows two other workshops that were organized between June – August 2021 and which were held for MoLSA (KR-I) staff.

Government of Germany/KfW and UNOPS support affected communities in Anbar and Sinjar, Iraq

Baghdad, 21 March 2022 - The KfW Development Bank and UNOPS signed an agreement to support the conflict-affected communities in Anbar governorate and Sinjar district in Ninewa governorate in Iraq.

With a total support of 35 million EUR from the Federal Republic of Germany, through the KfW Development Bank, UNOPS will undertake the rehabilitation of war-damaged shelters and basic community infrastructure such as water and sanitation stations and networks, roads and solar street lighting. UNOPS will adopt an integrated approach in order to enhance the living conditions of the conflict-affected communities and to improve their access to basic public services.

“Strengthening local resilience by rehabilitating the war-affected infrastructure which is necessary for

everyday life is one of the priorities of German cooperation with Iraq. The project in Anbar and Sinjar, financed through KfW on behalf of the German Federal Government and implemented by UNOPS, can contribute significantly to this end and will support host communities and IDPs alike,” said Germany’s Chargé d’Affaires Peter Felten.

Mr. Muhammad Usman Akram, UNOPS Director of Amman Multi-Country Office said, “Building on our robust partnership with KfW in the region, we are pleased at the opportunity to continue our cooperation

in Iraq in support of communities in Anbar and Sinjar. Working together with KfW, as our partner, we can support Iraq’s efforts to build a better future for all, as we see more and more people returning to their homes”.

The new agreement marks the second phase of an ongoing shelter project with KfW in Anbar governorate. The first phase of this project was initiated in December 2020 for the rehabilitation of 1,000 war-damaged shelters. Under the first phase, around 2,400 individuals have been receiving legal assistance to ensure their housing, land and property rights and obtain the legalisation of their ownership documents. With the additional funding of EUR 20 million, the total project budget will increase to EUR 35 million, which will enable UNOPS to assist 450,000 women, men, boys and girls who have returned to the affected areas.



The United Nations and partners' Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2022, which aims to assist nearly one million vulnerable Iraqis with life-saving aid, released

Baghdad, 27 March 2022 - Today, the Minister of Planning H.E. Dr. Khalid Batal Najim Abdullah, joined the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, in releasing the United Nations and partners' Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2022, which aims to assist nearly one million vulnerable Iraqis with life-saving aid.

"The Government of Iraq values its collaboration with the United Nations in all areas, including the humanitarian sphere," said H.E. Dr. Abdullah. "The continued commitment of humanitarian actors to serve the most vulnerable Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees is welcomed."

"Five years after the conclusion of large-scale military operations against ISIL, the humanitarian situation in Iraq has improved considerably," said Ms. Vojáčková-Sollorano. "However, a significant number of Iraqis still require humanitarian assistance. The 2022 HRP will help us meet their immediate needs, while we partner with the Government to implement durable solutions for those in protracted displacement and work towards a gradual handover of service delivery to the Government by 2023."

The 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) found that 2.5 million Iraqis are in need of humanitarian assistance, down from 4 million assessed as in need the previous year. This reduction is not a reflection of a considerably improved situation for affected populations, but rather a change in methodology in order to

ensure the most vulnerable are prioritized. On the ground, the situation for IDPs and returnees actually remains broadly the same as compared to 2021. Many Iraqis currently and formerly internally displaced by the conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continue to face a range of issues that prevent them from fully recovering, regaining self-sufficiency, and achieving long-term stability.

In 2022, humanitarian assistance will be prioritized for those with deep and compound needs that require life-saving aid. Special focus will be given to those who live in critical emergency shelter, who lost their civil documentation during the crisis, or for whom access to essential services or livelihoods opportunities remains compromised due to the large-scale destruction and displacement that took place between 2014-17. However, as the underlying causes of these

challenges – such as lack of social cohesion, high levels of poverty, and inadequate social services in areas of origin – are better assisted through longer-term engagement and investments by the government and development actors, the international humanitarian community will also undertake a program of transition in 2022, seeking to handover most direct service provision to the Government and development actors by 2023.

The Humanitarian Response Plan for 2022 comes on the heels of the successful delivery of humanitarian assistance to approximately 1.2 million Iraqis in 2021, thanks to the efforts of partners and the generosity of donors in providing \$600 million in humanitarian financial contributions, of which \$381 million went to the UN and partners' 2021 HRP.

Full text of the HRP is available at (English/Arabic/Kurdish) <https://bit.ly/3uT4Gwj>



UNDP and EU support Iraq's national efforts to improve transparency and accountability across state institutions

Baghdad, 14 April 2022 - Parliaments and parliamentarians are among the most important actors in promoting integrity and fighting against corruption worldwide. At the same time, SDG Goal 16 calls to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, improve access to justice and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions.

To improve parliamentary oversight of the Federal and Regional Anti-Corruption Strategies □□ UNDP Iraq, in partnership with European Union in Iraq and Iraqi Parliament held a

workshop for MPs focusing on discussing the related provisions in the UNCAC and the Doha Declaration for Parliamentarians.

The EU-funded "Support to justice initiatives curbing corruption and promoting commercial dispute resolution" Project continues its prominent work on supporting Iraq's national efforts to improve transparency and accountability across state institutions and supports Iraq to deliver its national and international commitments regarding the fight against corruption.



Germany and WFP support families in Iraq through resilience, climate change and social protection projects



Baghdad, 18 April 2022 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) together supported 104,500 people from vulnerable communities in Iraq to rebuild their livelihoods after conflict and adapt to climate change, alongside advancing the digitalization of the Public Distribution System for food rations (PDS).

“The thought that people in Iraq in these times still suffer from food insecurity is unbearable to me,” said German Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq Martin Jäger. “Germany is committed to helping Iraqi people build economic resilience given that this is the basis for growth and stability. We are promoting numerous multi- and bilateral programmes such as WFP’s Country Strategic Plan to advance food security and will continue to do so. Germany has an interest in seeing the most vulnerable supported, a functioning social security structure as

well as a prospering and stable Iraq.”

Germany is a long-standing partner of WFP in Iraq and contributed EUR 17.25 million in 2021 including for rural and urban livelihoods programmes, which also supported 288,100 people indirectly in the communities. Germany is a key donor for the EMPACT (Empowerment in Action) initiative, WFP’s award-winning digital skills, English and entrepreneurship training for youth. In addition, digitalizing the PDS, Iraq’s paper-based food ration card and largest social protection programme, continues to help the government assist the right people with the right food at the right time, across 18 governorates.

“Germany is a very important partner of WFP and their multiyear flexible support has helped the most vulnerable Iraqis to reestablish their livelihoods in areas of returns, and enabled us to work with the Iraqi government and partners to introduce smart innovative solutions to help smallholder farmers adapt to and mitigate the impact of

climate change in Iraq,” said WFP Iraq Representative Ally Raza Qureshi. “In parallel, Germany’s assistance for urban livelihoods and EMPACT training helped youth and women with vocational skills and small business grants, while funding for digitalization of the PDS is enhancing the government’s social protection for citizens. It is a holistic approach, and we thank the people and government of Germany for the generous contribution.”

With support from Germany, WFP’s rural development activities helped vulnerable communities with water access, to minimize water usage, manage salinity, and training and tools to be able to plant and grow food, and sell the surplus. It is essential support to confront climate change, and in conflict-affected areas, simultaneously contributes to the UN’s ‘durable solutions’ approach to assist families returning home after displacement. Digitalized PDS systems mean that families can more easily update their data to receive government assistance in their location.

Building on the German support from 2021, in 2022 climate change adaptation is another focus alongside urban livelihoods projects in southern Iraq and Ninewa, which continue with training prioritizing youth and women, including online marketing so they can reach their customers. The approach, as in the EMPACT programme, fosters entrepreneurship. As we approach COP27 in Egypt in 2022, Germany and WFP continue to support families to confront climate change. Germany’s partnership with WFP is helping the most vulnerable families to grow sustainable livelihoods again.

ILO’s capacity building on ways to effectively report on social policy and social security

Basra, 18 April 2022 - Sixteen journalists recently joined the ILO and the Media Centre for Civil Society Organizations in Basra to discuss ways to effectively report on social policy and social security. The ILO has been conducting workshops across the country to help equip journalists and other key stakeholders with knowledge that allows them to analyse, monitor and evaluate public policies and ways to effectively deliver messages on social security and related benefits. With the support of European Union in Iraq.



EU, UNDP and UN-HABITAT, visited Mosul to have a firsthand look at the current state of their joint EU-funded development projects

Mosul, 24 March 2022 - Today, a delegation from the European Union in Iraq, along with UNDP and UN-HABITAT, visited Mosul, Ninewa, to have a firsthand look at the current state of their joint EU-funded development projects in the city. These projects vary from flood-protection to cooperation with European experts. They later engaged in discussions with the civil society and the local authorities on vulnerabilities, reconstruction and sustainable solutions in Mosul.



IOM Iraq has established an electricity network

Baghdad, 28 April 2022 - Due to the damage sustained over the course of various wars, many areas across Iraq suffer from electricity shortages, particularly as temperatures soar — sometimes to record levels — during the summer. One of the places heavily impacted by electricity shortages is Al-

Shuhadaa, Baghdad Governorate. There, IOM Iraq has established an electricity network with support from U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration for the benefit of around 7,200 residents and returnees who live in these areas.



Agriculture

FAO implements pilot interventions for livestock producers in Najaf al Ashraf

Najaf al Ashraf, 1 March 2022 - As part of the efforts to support farmers in Iraq, FAO, in cooperation with the MOA/DOA Najaf al Ashraf Governorate, has started distributing molasses in Um Khashem / Al-Mishkhab District to livestock producers in order to improve livestock nutrition and mitigate high feed costs. During the inauguration ceremony, FAO representative in Iraq, Dr. Salah El-Hajj Hassan, accompanied by Mr. Munim Shahid Hussein, Director of Najaf al Ashraf Agriculture, pointed that FAO started today distributing molasses to more than 600 buffalo farmers owning more than 20,000 buffalo heads in the region of Um Khashem to improve the nutrition of their livestock after the increase in feed prices. This intervention is one of several interventions under “capacity building project to empower women and pioneer farmers in activities related to livestock in the governorates of Najaf al Ashraf - Karbala”, which was initiated by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture.



After the opening, the FAOR visited several farmers and observed the most important challenges facing rural women in processing the dairy products.

The implementation of these interventions was preceded by a field survey conducted by the project team, through which the most important obstacles and problems facing livestock breeders in the targeted areas were

identified, and the lessons learned and achieved from the livelihood support project funded by the European Union and implemented in Nineveh Governorate and transferred to the governorates of central and southern Iraq. It is noteworthy that the Um Khashem area is considered the first source of buffalo milk for the Najaf al Ashraf Governorate and the neighboring governorates.

ILO supports rural women in Basra to develop their skills in the date sector

Basra, 07 March 2022 - Abu Al-Khaseeb District, Basra, Iraq (ILO NEWS) Alaa Abass Jassim has many wonderful memories of spending time with her father on their farm in the southern Iraqi city of Basra.

The young university graduate has always loved nature and is starting a small business selling products made of molasses, vinegar, and dates.

"I grew up on a farm. When I was a child I used to see how my father would cultivate the land and sometimes I would help him," said the young Iraqi. "When I grew up, I went to university but I still love nature and palm trees."

Yet, like many other young women interested in establishing or expanding a small business, Alaa needs all the support she can get; from skills development in the use of modern agricultural machinery and Occupational Safety and Health, to gaining knowledge in entrepreneurship and ultimately setting up a small business.

She is one of more than 30 other women who recently took part in a capacity building training programme to foster skills, entrepreneurship and decent employment in the field of agriculture. Organised by the International Labour Organization (ILO), and supported by the European Union (EU), the training is part of efforts to promote workers' skills development, encourage the participation of women in agriculture work; and improve working conditions through the application of

International Labour Standards and national labour legislation. This two-year project worth EUR 3 million is funded by the European Union and is being implemented by the ILO.

The programme included both theatrical in-class learning sessions and practical training on farms in the Abu Al-Khaseeb District of Basra, known for its fertile land and date farms.

In the field, the focus of the sessions was on the use of modern machinery to improve the quality and quantity of agriculture products. It included sessions on irrigation, cultivation and fertilization, as well as storing and packaging products.

The training programme also focused on business leadership skills, sales and marketing-related topics. "Through the expertise and advice of the trainers, we were able to understand how to market our products in the future. I have experience in the field of date

production, but I don't have experience in marketing," said Alaa following the training. "It is important for women to establish small businesses and rely on themselves."

Entizar Hassan Abdulbari, who is her family's sole breadwinner, and who has a small start-up business making sweets and pastries made from date products, said that most of the women she met on the training had prior knowledge in the field of agriculture but they lacked the technical knowledge needed to make their businesses a success.

"We all have knowledge and experience through what we have learnt from our fathers and grandfathers but not in a scientific or technical way. But through this training we gained scientific knowledge which complements our own lived experience," said Entizar.

"I have learnt how to plan, market and advertise my products and how to rely on myself more," she added.



Improving delivery of animal health services and disease surveillance in Iraq



Baghdad, 14 March 2022 - 41 government legal advisors and veterinary representatives throughout Iraq participated in the workshop hosted by the Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO) under the title of veterinary legal legislation, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, and within the activities of the Project to Improve Animal Health

Service Delivery and Disease Control in Iraq funded by the Defence Threat Reduction Agency American (DTRA). The workshop aimed to introduce regulatory mechanisms for animal disease surveillance and control, import and export of animals and their products, as well as to bridge the gap between animal health services and disease control legislation and its practical application.

The representative of the FAO organization in Iraq, Dr. Salah Al-Hajj Hassan, addressed opening remarks by greeting and thanking the attendees. He affirmed the organization's commitment to adopting modern concepts and values in the "One Health" approach to address health threats to animals, humans, plants and

Improving delivery of animal health services and disease surveillance in Iraq *(continued)*

the environment. He added that this workshop provides an opportunity to exchange information and ideas on Iraqi animal health legislation and related regulations and how to move forward in amending them in accordance with OIE and international standards. He also explained that all recommendations will be reviewed for the purpose of their announcement after coordination with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Representative of his excellency the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Raed Haddad, the legal advisor to the minister conveyed the greetings of his excellency the Minister of Agriculture, in addition to praising the effective cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agriculture Organization and the

organization's role in implementing activities and programs funded by donors to support the agricultural sector in Iraq.

While the head of the Iraqi Veterinarians Syndicate, Dr. Samira Latif, explained the role of FAO in supporting the agricultural sector, both plant and animal, and the importance of holding these specialized training workshops, including this one (Veterinary Legislation).

The legal advisor to the Iraqi Lawyers Syndicate, Mr. Ahmed Majid Al-Hassan, stressed the importance of involving the Association in studies on veterinary legal legislation, thanking the role of the FAO by shedding light on this important issue.

The workshop was attended by the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water

Resources/Kurdistan Regional Government, representative of the Syndicate of Veterinarians in Kurdistan, The deans of both veterinary colleges in Baghdad and Duhok, with the participation of officials and representatives of veterinary services from Erbil and Baghdad, in addition to the targeted governorates (Duhok, Nineveh, Anbar, Wasit, Muthanna and Basrah).

The training included of presentations, group work, practical examples and case studies to enrich discussions on elements of veterinary legislation, including animal disease control and animal production, and was supplemented by the exchange of observational experiences and the exchange of information among the participants.

FAO through EU funded project supporting Nineveh vegetable producing farmers

Nineveh, 13 March 2022 - Through the EU funded project: Support to agricultural livelihoods of rural and peri-urban returnees and communities in Nineveh and under the crop value chain development activities, FAO proceeded with supporting farmers and started distribution of high-quality vegetable seeds to 4000 farmers in close cooperation with MOA, local authorities and farmers union.

The ceremony took place in the presence of the representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Iraq Dr. Salah El-Hajj Hassan, Director of Nineveh Agriculture Directorate, and president of farmer's union Mr. Abdul Hamid Al-Rashidi, and a large number of farmers.

Dr Hajj Hassan highlighted the importance of empowering farmers through the introduction of good agricultural and post-harvest practices in order to reach better yields, reduce post-harvest losses, and increase both crop productivity and quality with higher potentials for more added values and market competing opportunities.

The FAOR thanked and praised the important support and role of the EU in enabling further development for the agriculture sector in Iraq, supporting local communities especially returnees, he also acknowledged the partnership with the Minister of Agriculture, the Directorate of Agriculture in and



farmers union in Nineveh.

The director of Nineveh Agriculture directorate highlighted the important of Nineveh governorate as the food basket for all Iraq and addressed the appreciations for the efforts made by FAO in supporting the agriculture sector. The president of farmer's union, pointed out the effectiveness of the role played by FAO in supporting farmers and the agricultural sector in the governorate.

It is worth highlighting that the development of the vegetable value chain is an important pillar of the aforementioned project including the introduction of highly quality inputs developing technical expertise through the Farmers field school approach and should be enabling farmers to improve their management practices and post-

harvest handling experiences which will be improving their livelihood conditions and sustaining their rural resilience capacities.



Role of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in agriculture water and environment

Baghdad, 17 March 2022 - The Representation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq, in partnership with the Al-Aghsan Foundation for Agricultural and Environmental Development, held a workshop and a dialogue platform to strengthen partnership with civil society organizations (CSO) in Iraq. The workshop was chaired by Dr. Salah Al-Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, and Dr. Khaled Naji, head of the Al-Ighsan Foundation.

Dr. Salah stated that there is more than one association and organization working in the same field, but there is no coordination among them and with other stakeholders. This workshop should be an initiative to establish a platform to coordinate with CSO working to develop the agricultural, water and environmental sectors and propose solutions to the problems while

working on closer coordination with non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society organizations and governmental stakeholders, and others.

FAO has a long history of engagement with CSO in the fight against food insecurity, malnutrition and rural poverty, and in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. FAO has been working for many years with civil society organizations in technical work, emergency field operations, training and capacity building, and advocacy for best agricultural practices. The areas of cooperation in the organization's activities are in field programme, knowledge sharing and capacity development, policy dialogue, joint use of resources in emergency situations, normative activities, and communication and advocacy.

FAO has established mechanisms to

ensure the impartiality of the Organization, namely the capacity to provide a neutral forum for discussions and its evidence-based knowledge generating work. FAO is working on identifying potential local CSO partners, and playing a catalytic role in facilitating and supporting increased dialogue with CSOs by providing a neutral space for dialogue and expertise in technically-related discussions

The workshop objectives included the creation a dialogue platform for civil society organizations with FAO and other partners, raising awareness about areas of cooperation and partnership, discussing potential partnerships with civil society organizations, identifying gaps and opportunities, and preparing a future roadmap.

With the support of the European Union, the section of the FAO / Ministry of Agriculture attracted senior officials and many visitors at the Baghdad International agricultural Fair

Baghdad, 20 March 2022 - Under the patronage of His Excellency the Prime Minister, Mr. Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture, Eng. Muhammad Al-Khafaji, inaugurated the activities of the thirteenth agricultural week on the grounds of the Baghdad International Fair, under the slogan "Protecting and Supporting the Agricultural Product is a Guarantee to Achieve Sustainable Food Security for the period from 19 to 25 March 2022. Also present was His Excellency the Minister Youth and Sports, members of the Iraqi Parliament and the FAO Representative in Iraq Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, the president and members of the agricultural associations, as well as a large number of farmers, officials and those interested in agricultural affairs. Activities of the projects funded by the European Union in Iraq and implemented by FAO in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture witnessed a large number of visitors by presenting a wide range of distinguished Iraqi products processed by rural women through the milk value chain development program. Visitors were exposed to tasting many products, In addition explanations and extension leaflets were distributed.



Ministers of Agriculture, Youth and Sports acknowledged FAO efforts to improve Iraqi products at all levels while introducing innovations in selected value chains. On the other hand, FAO representative highlighted that such efforts are within the FAO and EU strategy to improve livelihoods, create more opportunities for youth, empower rural women and encourage investment and private sector role in rural areas.

Dr. Salah thanked the European Union for their continuous support and partners working in the Ministry of Agriculture for their cooperation in the

implementation of these strategic projects promoting the development of the agricultural sector.

The aim of this 2022 agricultural week is to exchange experiences and find plans and projects to support the country's economy, programmed activities are an important link between the public and private sector to introduce agricultural and animal products, mechanization, sprinklers, feed, fertilizers, poultry projects, veterinary medicines, horticultural projects, technologies for combating desertification, new varieties of seeds to support national food security.

FAO and EU support buffalo producers in Basra, Maysan and Dhi-Qar governorates to mitigate the negative impacts of water scarcity

Baghdad, 25 March 2022 - With the support of the European Union and in cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture and local governments, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) launched animal feed and fodder seeds distribution campaigns to 2,500 farmers and buffalo producers in the Governorates of Basra, Maysan and Dhi Qar in southern Iraq. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Mithaq Abdul-Hussein, the Head of Cooperation from the European Union Mission to the Republic of Iraq, Ms Barbara Egger, FAO Representative in Iraq, Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, as well as the representatives of respective local governments, the Directors of Local Agriculture Departments, the Heads of the Federations of Agricultural Associations and respective communities representatives attended the inaugural distribution ceremonies in Al-Qurna district (Basra Governorate), Al-Uzair district (Maysan Governorate) and Al-Jbayish district (Dhi Qar Governorate) on 21-22 March 2022.

This initiative comes amid difficulties experienced by farmers and buffalo producers from a sharp rise in feed prices, and water scarcity caused by the negative effects from climate change and reduced surface water inflows from upstream neighbours. This project focuses on strengthening of agricultural livelihoods in the south, in works closely with the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture to restore and enhance the resilience of agriculture food systems in southern Iraq by empowering poor smallholder farmers and vulnerable rural families in the targeted governorates.

At the distribution ceremonies, Dr. Salah indicated the need to support farmers to improve food security through the coordination of efforts and close partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and local governments. He added that the FAO's efforts fall under a larger EU-funded "Agri-food Business Development Programme" where several international partners (such as FAO, GIZ, ILO, IOM, ITC, and UNESCO) are collaborating to see broader impact across agricultural value chains, including that of livestock and dairy production, processing and sales. Dr Salah said he anticipated to see improved livelihoods, providing new and better jobs, empowering women in particular, and

enhancing the production of this vital sector of the economy. At the end he thanked the European Union for the continuous support of the agricultural sector in Iraq, the Ministry of Agriculture for outstanding role with project implementation.

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Mithaq Abdul-Hussein, stressed the positive role of FAO and the European Union in supporting the agricultural sector in Iraq, pointing out the importance of promoting the cultivation of animal fodder in buffalo breeding areas to ensure reliance on local feed. The representatives of local governments in the Governorates of Basra, Dhi-Qar and Maysan also expressed their appreciation to FAO for its efforts in supporting the agricultural sector and, in particular, providing necessary expertise to buffalo producers in preserving this important wealth, which is a mainstay for the development of the economy. The representatives of farmers and buffalo breeders through their Federations of Agricultural Associations stated that the intervention will have a positive impact on animal production and health.

The FAO International Livestock Expert, Dr. Kayouli Chedly, presented major activities to be implemented within the livestock component of the project, briefed about the types of feed distributed and gave practical recommendations on their use. Dr Chedly stressed the importance of introducing modern techniques in livestock production to stimulate milk and meat production increase, as well as adapt to drought. This can be achieved also through the introduction of supplementary feeding of a high nutritional value, which is easy to implement, accessible to farmers, that



bears lower cost and proved to be sustainable.

Finally, in a EU Statement addressed to the audience, Ms Barbara Egger, Head of Cooperation from the European Union Mission to the Republic of Iraq, expressed the following: "The European Union is very proud to support the agricultural sector in Basra, Maysan, and Thi Qar Provinces. Through support to smallholders, this project is well placed to maximise the high potential offered by the agriculture sector in order to diversify the economy. The EU is fully aware of the difficulties experienced by the agricultural sector in the south of Iraq due to this year's drought, and today's distribution of molasses, corn silage, and fodder seeds is just one of the many activities that the EU finances in Iraq to alleviate the difficulties of farmers. The EU also would like to commend the good cooperation with MoA staff, local authorities, and FAO. I thank the team efforts for today's successful start of distributions."



New partnerships to enhance competitiveness of Iraqi farmers and businesses

Baghdad, 3 April 2022 - The International Trade Centre's, Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy (SAAVI) project signed a partnership agreement with Zuhoor al Watan in Baghdad.

SAAVI will collaborate with Zuhoor al Watan, one of the largest agricultural and poultry production companies in Iraq, to connect smallholder producers, strengthen their capacity, and create local alliances offering commercially viable volumes of quality products.

The five-year SAAVI project, funded by the European Union, seeks to enhance competitiveness of the agriculture sector and improve trade policy in Iraq with a budget of 22.5 million EUR. It is being implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC) in close collaboration with the Government of Iraq and other implementing partners, including the

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

This partnership will rely on the use of market-based solutions to support increased profitability of Iraqi small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which will eventually translate into job creation and inclusive growth. It will support broader strategic efforts from the government of Iraq to build a competitive agri-food sector, able to seize remunerative domestic market opportunities currently largely

captured by products imported from neighbouring countries.

"Iraqi agricultural products have undeniable market potential," said Eric Buchot, SAAVI Senior Programme Coordinator. "With the right support and associated reforms, they could not only provide jobs for thousands of Iraqis, but also a strategic and reliable alternative to foreign imports, which are more prone to price fluctuations and supply disruptions."



FAO and the European Union bring back joy and happiness to Nineveh women's groups amid the Holy Month of Ramadan and Easter festivities

Nineveh, Bashiqa, 18 April 2022 - On 18 April 2022, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture, Eng. Muhammad Karim Al-Khafaji, conducted a ceremonial distribution of agro-processing equipment to rural and peri-urban women of Bashiqa district in Ninewa governorate of Iraq. The equipment for milk collection and processing was made available to 4000 rural producers, thanks to a funding from the European Union and close collaboration of FAO with the Ministry of Agriculture within the project "Support to agriculture livelihoods of rural and peri-urban returnees and communities in Nineveh Governorate, Iraq". This project is an integral part of a holistic strategy aimed at developing dairy, feed and fodder value chain initiated earlier by FAO in the country, which has achieved tangible results to date.

During the distribution ceremony, FAO Representative in Iraq Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan stated that the organization has already supported Women Groups and farmers with different equipment for collecting and processing milk, in total targeting 4,000 households, as well as the rehabilitation of 35 milk collection centers to support rural women. He added that this work has resulted in increasing the productivity and quality of dairy products, enabling their marketability, which has become well known with consumers over a comparatively short period. To further



complement the production cycle, FAO is distributing additional equipment for the benefit of 750 women each representing a household and 150 Women Groups. The FAO Representative concluded by expressing his thanks and appreciation for the exceptional efforts and daily follow-up made by the project team, the extension staff of the Nineveh Agriculture Directorate, the Ministry of Agriculture and to the European Union for their continuous support.

In turn, the Head of Nineveh Agriculture Directorate Dr. Rabie Yousef Soran, praised the joint cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO and emphasized the pioneering efforts made by FAO in cooperation with the Nineveh Agriculture Directorate, and concluded that the remarkable achievements covered a large segment of farmers in Nineveh Governorate, especially displaced farmers and returnees.

The FAO Livestock Expert Dr. Chedy Kayouli said that the beneficiaries of today's ceremony have been trained beforehand, the practical training on milk collection and processing was essential while providing a platform for experience and knowledge sharing among farmers. In addition to building their individual capacities, participants also learned on working in teams within their Women Groups. The above coupled with exchange of skills and knowledge resulted in producing new types of domestic cheese for the first time in Nineveh and Iraq. These new varieties of cheese along with other dairy products benefited from improved technological process have been introduced to local markets stretching even beyond Nineveh governorate due to the quality that can compete with imported analogies. He added that during the blessed month of Ramadan and the Easter holidays, FAO today continues to spread joy and happiness to Women Groups in Nineveh by providing marketing equipment to facilitate their production, as well as improving opportunities for marketing their products and ultimately their livelihood conditions.

At the end of the ceremony, one of the project beneficiaries, Ms. Huda Khaled, spoke on behalf of all beneficiaries and pointed out the great role of FAO in improving livelihoods in Nineveh Governorate, and thus thanking both FAO and the European Union.

Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and UNDP partner to boost employment opportunities in Iraq

Baghdad, 11 April 2022 – A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) today. The partnership will focus on promoting sustainable economic growth and boosting employment opportunities in Iraq. The MoU brings MoLSA and UNDP together to work on several initiatives, including supporting small enterprises and creating an enabling start-up ecosystem in Iraq. The collaboration will cut across policy, institutional, and individual levels to support innovative small businesses and start-ups needed for employment generation in Iraq today. “At UNDP, we prioritize support to Iraq to diversify the economy, boost sustainable livelihoods and create jobs. We will together focus on bolstering our efforts to support small enterprises and creating more employment opportunities for Iraqis, especially vulnerable groups, as

we help rebuild Iraq after years of conflict,” says Ms Zena Ali Ahmad, Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq. “The partnership comes at the right moment as it builds on the ongoing technical and training support UNDP has provided to MoLSA since December 2021. We are working closely with MoLSA to improve monitoring of small enterprises that have received loans and incubation services from the Ministry,” Ms Zena adds. Through this agreement, MoLSA will also play an active role in implementing UNDP-implemented projects aiming at strengthening livelihoods. “Micro and small businesses are the backbone of any economy, especially in a country like Iraq where they have the potential to create sustainable job opportunities. Through this partnership with UNDP, we aim to create an enabling and nurturing environment for micro and small business in Iraq to succeed,” Judge Salar Abdul Sattar Mohammed, Minister

of Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. “The support UNDP is providing to MoLSA, especially with regards to micro and small projects and business incubators is in line with the global standard and draws from valuable international experience. Through the partnership, we also receive UNDP’s technical support with running programmes, creating job opportunities, and improving the start-up ecosystem in Iraq,” Mr Raid Jabbar Bahad, Director General of the Department of Labor and Vocational Training at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.



UNICEF receives USD \$1,4 million from the Government of Canada to support young people’s transition to entrepreneurship and employment in Iraq

Baghdad, 28 April 2022- The Government of Canada has contributed USD\$1.4 million to UNICEF to support close to 1,500 young people in Iraq to generate educational and economic opportunities for inclusive development and participation for a 2-year period. UNICEF will support girls’ equal participation in learning, skill development and employability, which will contribute to their empowerment and expansion of options as they transition to adulthood. The programme will support girls and boys with tailored interventions to transition from learning to earning in Baghdad, Anbar and Basra. “With nearly half of the Iraqi population under 19 years old, and almost a quarter of the population between the ages of 15 and 24, Iraqi youth are the backbone for social, economic, and political transformation. Through this funding, UNICEF reaffirms its commitment to leaving no one behind and promoting gender equality to support young people with opportunities to create a better future for them and their communities,” said Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF’s Representative in Iraq. “The prolonged conflict, economic and social crises in Iraq and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, have severely affected young people. Given that Iraq has a large youth population, we believe that investing in youth and strengthening their employability will facilitate their social and economic re-integration and



enable them to contribute to the country’s progress towards peace and prosperity. Canada is pleased to support this initiative from UNICEF to strengthen the economic participation and civic engagement of vulnerable and marginalized young boys and girls in Iraq, helping them to become agents of change for their own lives and their communities”, said Gregory Galligan, Ambassador of Canada to Iraq. Learning, engagement, and labour market participation constraints are multiplied when they are experienced by girls. Added constraints and vulnerabilities exist for them such as conservative social norms, early marriage and pregnancy, domestic responsibilities, threat of gender-based violence, fewer opportunities to attend school, limited access to services to be financially independent, as well as legal barriers to the labour market and other economic

freedoms. The end goal of the project is for girls to serve as equal and empowered community-innovators, proposing, co-designing and leading positive development and serving as role-models for other girls, and boys. The project will be implemented through a Life Skills Citizenship Education framework that builds youth’s skills around learning, employment, empowerment, and active citizenship, while also supporting youth-led innovative initiatives and amplifying their voices to empower them as agents of change within their communities. To strengthen the project and ensure sustainability, UNICEF will provide technical assistance to government stakeholders, including the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and their regional directorates to build their capacity on gender equality approaches as well as concepts related to youth development and participation to effectively deliver relevant services for most vulnerable young people, especially girls. UNICEF and Canada with these funds aim to unlock the potential of young people in Iraq by accelerating progress in improving their skills for learning and employability. The project will continue to encourage youth economically, personally and socially with a vision to increase learning and empowerment of young people as a means to ensure equity for all.

Knowledge exchange with France on countering drug trafficking

Paris, France, 17 February 2022 - UNODC in partnership with the Iraqi Ministry of Interior's (MoI) Anti-Narcotics Directorate and the French Ministry of Interior organized a second study visit to France including Paris and Le Havre for a high-level Iraqi delegation within the framework of the project "Strengthening the Capacities of Iraqi law enforcement and criminal investigation services", funded by the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (US/INL). This visit provided practical insight to strengthen Iraqi law enforcement agencies' capacities in countering drug-related organized crime and to reinforce relevant international cooperation.

In Paris, the delegation visited the Directorate of the OFAST "Office Anti-Stupéfiants" (the French Anti-Narcotics Agency) and was introduced to the OFAST structure, mandate, the standard operating procedures (SOPs), intelligence information-sharing mechanisms, the methodology to collect and analyze information related to drugs trafficking and to manage informants.

The delegation was able to attend the opening of the Expo. MiliPol Paris 2021, one of the largest global trade

fairs for safety that showcases the latest trends, techniques, technologies, and equipment in the military and defense industry. The exhibition was opened by the French Minister of the Interior Mr. Gerald Darmanin with whom the delegation discussed France's support to Iraq's capabilities and technologies to face drugs and terrorism; as well as the continuation of the ongoing collaboration between the two countries within the framework of UNODC's efforts.

Furthermore, the delegation visited Le Havre Port, the second biggest port in France, and viewed examples of techniques used to detect different forms of drugs and to hear real-life cases faced at the port with the

different ways such drugs were trafficked, either with passengers/travelers or cargo containers.

Brigadier-General Mr. Ismael Al-Maliki, Head of the Anti-Narcotics Unit in Basrah that supervises Um-Qasr Port, the only seaport in Iraq, expressed his interest to enhance Um-Qasr's port security and techniques based on what the delegation had seen and appreciated.

The visit allowed for an in-depth exchange between the French and Iraqi authorities and provided practical takeaways for the delegation to explore its benefit in the Iraqi context to prevent drug trafficking and drug-related crimes.

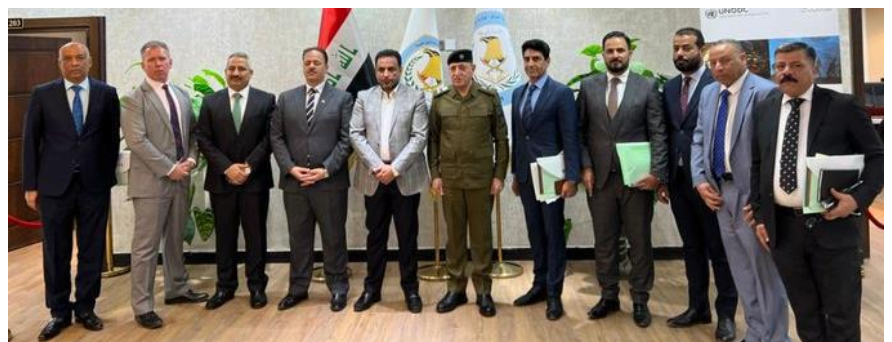


GLO.ACT facilitates workshop on legislation and possible solutions to counter migrant smuggling in Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Erbil/Baghdad, 27 March 2022 – Over the past nine months, the issue of migrant smuggling and how best to address this crime has gained momentum in Iraq. To support counterparts in Iraq UNODC, under the framework of the Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (GLO.ACT-Asia and the Middle East), organized on 10 March 2022 a workshop bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) to identify pathways likely to facilitate the drafting of national legislation on the Smuggling of Migrants (SOM).

This workshop in KRI follows on from a first workshop held on 9 December 2021 in Baghdad. It ensures an aligned approach is adopted when considering national legislation on migrant smuggling.

Opening the workshop, Martin Reeve, GLO.ACT Regional Advisor spoke about the current context in Iraq and beyond, outlining the need for a response to migrant smuggling. Mr Reeve explained why it is essential to understand the



difference between SOM and Trafficking in Persons (TIP). He talked participants through some of the critical considerations for national security and emphasized that international cooperation is essential to ensure successful SOM investigations.

Highlighting some critical cross-cutting human rights and gender mainstreaming issues, Zubaida Shakir, GLO.ACT National Project Officer, Iraq said, "Laws need to be inclusive of the needs of the diverse populations they are serving. Criminal justice practitioners and legislative entities

need to be mindful of the need of women and children and the risks they face on route." Ms Shakir also added that it is necessary to uphold international human rights standards and integrate them into new legislation.

To present on the international Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Aimée Comrie, GLO.ACT Project Coordinator joined the workshop via video link. By presenting various case scenarios, Ms Comrie engaged the group in a lively

GLO.ACT facilitates workshop on legislation... *(continued)*

discussion that highlighted that it is challenging to effectively dismantle organized crime groups that profit from this crime without national legislation on SOM.

The issue of migrant rights and protection in mixed movement situations was addressed by UNHCR, while IOM provided participants with a current situational analysis for Iraq. IOM also highlighted why timely and effective assistance to trafficked persons, smuggled migrants in need and people on the move in vulnerable situations is critical, especially regarding their recovery and sustainable reintegration. The final workshop session, delivered by Mr Reeve, focused on smuggling and investigation techniques.

Following the workshop, the GLO.ACT team will work closely with the Ministry of Interior, the Higher Judicial Council, and the Ministry of Justice in Kurdistan region to initiate the legal drafting process. Stakeholders in Kurdistan region are keen to see a draft of this law before the end of this year.

A total of 13 participants (10 males, 3 females) representing various government counterparts participated in

the workshop, including from the legal department, the Directorate of Combating Organized Crime, the joint Crisis Coordination Centre in the Ministry of Interior, the Human Rights unit, the anti-Terrorism unit, and the legal department within the Kurdish security forces (Assaiysh), the Shora Council and the Director of the Legal Directorate within the Ministry of Justice, as well as director of the Reformatories and Head of the Coordination unit within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

The Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants – Asia and the Middle East (GLO.ACT-Asia and the Middle East) is a four-year (2018-2022), €12 million joint initiative by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) being implemented in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in up to five countries: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Afghanistan), Islamic Republic of Iran (I.R. of Iran), Republic of Iraq (Iraq), Islamic Republic of Pakistan (Pakistan). GLO.ACT-Bangladesh is a parallel initiative also financed by the EU and implemented

with IOM.

The project builds on a global community of practice set in motion in GLO.ACT 2015-2019 and assists governmental authorities and civil society organizations in targeted, innovative, and demand-driven interventions: sustaining effective strategy and policy development, legislative review and harmonization, capability development, and regional and trans-regional cooperation. The project also provides direct assistance to victims of human trafficking and vulnerable migrants through the strengthening of identification, referral, and protection mechanisms. The project is fully committed to mainstreaming Human Rights and Gender Equality considerations across all of its activities. The project is funded by the European Union.

Today in Baghdad, GLOACT facilitated the 1st meeting of the SOM law drafting committee in Iraq.

Developing legislation on migrant smuggling is a critical step towards dismantling organized criminal groups that profit from this crime.

Mine Action

UNMAS continues to make Mosul safe again

Mosul, 28 February 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq/Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, visited a Mosul hospital, which the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) has successfully demined. Witnessing the total destruction of what was a brand-new hospital before Daesh occupied it, the ruins are a reminder of the brutality of war. UNMAS continues to make Mosul safe again.



UNMAS – Safe Park opening in Mosul

Mosul, 28 February 2022 - As part of its explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) initiatives and larger UNMAS global efforts to turn minefield into playing fields, UNMAS Iraq has strategized new tools that will leave an effective and sustainable impact on the local community. Amongst those tools is the opening of safe parks, providing the youth in the community, in addition to children and families, alternative gathering spots to circumvent potential explosive ordnance-related accidents. Established in 1997, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

leads, coordinates and implements activities to mitigate the threat posed

by mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices.



UNICEF: “February has been one of the most dangerous months for children in Iraq”



Baghdad, 14 March 2022 - February has been one of the most dangerous

months for children in Iraq in recent times - 6 children (all boys) have lost their lives, and 10 children (9 boys, 1 girl) have been maimed by explosive remnants of war (ERW).

ERWs and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) remain one of the leading causes of killing and maiming of children in Iraq, with boys particularly affected.

UNICEF is alarmed by the high number of children affected by ERW and urges all stakeholders to accelerate efforts to clear existing mines and

unexploded ordnance, expand risk education, and promote victim assistance. Combined, this upholds children’s right to a safe and protective environment.

UNICEF continues to work with partners including the Directorate of Mine Action within the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency to raise awareness and increase safety for children, their families and communities in highly contaminated areas.

Employing a locally diverse team of searchers in mine action is one of UNMAS and donors top priorities in Iraq

Baghdad, 04 March 2022 - Meet Fadia Rashou Yousif, a Yazidi woman who worked with one of the former UNMAS implementing partners in Sinjar, Iraq. She was a member of the first mixed-gender clearance team deployed by UNMAS in Iraq, working to clear improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and other forms of explosive ordnance from her community.

Her inspiration to work in mine action is derived from the death of her uncle’s wife from an explosive ordnance, which she recalls in a poem written by herself. For many years under Da’esh rule, Yazidis were singularly targeted as one of the militants’ enemies in the country, subjected to genocide in which thousands from the minority community were killed. Years after liberation, the Da’esh legacy still lives on, particularly through the thousands of explosive ordnance they left behind, a fact cited as one of the top reasons inhibiting the return of most in the



Fadia Rashou Yousif
Community Liaison Officer (CLO)

3 AUGUST 2014 - GENOCIDE

Before the disaster, streets in Sinjar were crowded with people. Some were driving their cars, some were just sitting on their houses’ threshold looking and smiling to everyone and some were setting fire over a hill in the village to celebrate light... Children were also celebrating and happy. Overnight, everything was gone and one thing has remained: destruction following the attack on 3 August 2014, when Sinjar (a Yazidi community) was exposed to the most heinous crimes committed by Da’esh. The genocide was against Yazidis in particular. We were killed, our women were taken and our children were recruited and brain-washed. Mass graves became commonplace. We were displaced and everything that could have saved us was in vain due to the bloodshed. We were exposed to the most violent crimes against human rights.

I wrote some words on my way to Sinjar:

A CHILD

He died of thirst
Embracing the sky with his hands
Begging God for some water
Should he come back, he would ask everyone:
Why did you let me die?

community to their homes. Employing a locally diverse team of searchers is one of UNMAS and donors top priorities. Australia has been one of UNMAS Iraq’s largest donors, contributing more than USD 15.8 million over the years, and is a steadfast supporter of gender

mainstreaming initiatives, including efforts to employ Iraqis from diverse backgrounds to clear their communities from explosive ordnance.

UNMAS would like to thank the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia for its support to UNMAS gender and diversity initiatives in Iraq.

UNMAS hosted Ambassador of Sweden at a clearance site in Basra

Basra, 21 March 2022 - UNMAS Iraq recently hosted Mr. Jonas Lovén, the Ambassador of Sweden to Iraq, to a clearance site in the Shatt al-Arab area in Basra.

Shatt al-Arab was a severe battlefield during the Iran-Iraq War, and a significant number of landmines were planted as defense mechanisms. The area not only acts as a pivotal water source to thousands living in the vicinity, but also harbors rich and fertile farmland that is largely inaccessible due to heavy explosive ordnance contamination.

Over the years, the Kingdom of Sweden has been a key contributor towards UNMAS activities in Iraq, supporting a localized mine action response that

accounts for the differing needs of Iraqi women, men, boys, and girls.

UNMAS would like to thank the

Government of Sweden for its generous support to the mine action sector in Iraq.



France renews its commitment to protecting civilians impacted by explosive ordnance in Iraq



Baghdad, 22 March 2022 - The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) welcomes an additional contribution of EUR 480,000 (approximately USD 550,000) from the Crisis and Support Center of the French ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs that will support life-saving mine action activities in Iraq. Activities will include survey and clearance of areas liberated from Da'esh contaminated with explosive ordnance and the provision of technical and advisory support to national authorities.

Four years after the Government of Iraq declared victory over Daesh, the presence of explosive ordnance, including improvised explosive devices,

continues to kill and maim civilians, hindering the durable and safe return of internally displaced persons and inhibiting reconstruction efforts.

The Government of Iraq and other national actors maintain mine action capacities within a number of government entities and established mine action authorities, though the demand for assistance far exceeds the resources available.

Through this grant, UNMAS will continue to assist the Government of Iraq to carry out clearance and risk education in liberated areas to create safe spaces for returns and protect Iraqis from explosive threats. Local capacity enhancement will also be prioritized through a partnership

model that brings together international mine action organizations with local NGOs, paving the way for localization and a sustainable mine action response in Iraq.

Commenting on the contribution, the French Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Eric Chevalier, said: "Demining is often the first step in restoring stability and bringing back a normal life in conflict zones. As such, it is a priority of our support to the Iraqi territories liberated from Da'esh. Since 2019, France has supported UNMAS with 1.6 million euros. Through the Crisis and Support Center, France has also been directly funding several mine action NGOs. In 2022, France stays committed to the fight against Da'esh and to reconstruction efforts for the benefit of the Iraqi people."

"France has been a core supporter of UNMAS activities in Iraq since day one. This additional contribution will go a long way in assisting UNMAS to further develop local mine action capacities in country, which will be the primary building blocks for a strong and independent nationally-led mine action sector in Iraq," said Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, Chief of Mine Action Programme of UNMAS in Iraq.

Since 2019, UNMAS Iraq and its implementing partners have trained and employed numerous mixed-sex Yazidi teams to clear their villages from explosive ordnance

Baghdad, 22 March 2022 - Nearly five years after liberation, the effect of the Da'esh invasion continues to haunt the retaken areas of Iraq: in areas still booby-trapped with explosive ordnance, in damaged infrastructure, and in the decline of basic services.

One of the key pillars of UNMAS work in the country is to provide training and technical support to the Government of Iraq. However, this support is not exclusive to federal, provincial, and local government stakeholders, but also Iraqi citizens, who are then better equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to undertake the jobs themselves.

So, in concrete terms, what does this mean?

Since 2019, UNMAS Iraq and its implementing partners have trained and employed numerous mixed-sex Yazidi teams to clear their villages from explosive ordnance. In order for this initiative to be successfully



implemented, additional members of the Yazidi community were hired to carry out administrative and security tasks. For the Yazidi community of Sinjar still living in internally displaced person (IDP) camps, this project means much-needed financial support that will assist families with their livelihoods. It means that family members are able to support their dependents in continuing their education. In other words, it means financial stability, something distant to

many of Iraq's IDPs.

The localization of Iraq's mine action sector is among UNMAS and donor top priorities. Belgium has been a core proponent of UNMAS activities in Iraq over the past six years, including efforts to employ Iraqis from diverse backgrounds to clear their communities from explosive ordnance.

UNMAS would like to thank the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium for its support to the mine action sector in Iraq.

UNMAS today premiered its documentary “Recovering from Da’esh: Women at the Front Lines”

Mosul, 24 March 2022 - UNMAS today premiered its documentary *Recovering from Da’esh: Women at the Front Lines* at the Women in Mine Action event and exhibit held at the University of Mosul in Mosul, Iraq.

In attendance were the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (DSRSG) for Iraq, Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, the Deputy Director-General of the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA), Mr. Bakr Sahib, the University of Mosul Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Muneer Salim Al-Badrany, the Chief of Mine Action Programme at UNMAS Iraq, Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, in addition to other Iraqi government officials, faculty, staff, and students, and members of the wider public.

The documentary was created to supplement the UNMAS Iraq baseline study of the socioeconomic



empowerment of women through mine action in the Ninewa governorate, sponsored by the government of the Netherlands. A panel was held thereafter to discuss the documentary as well as debate lingering issues facing women in mine action today.

UNMAS would like to thank all its donors for their contribution to UNMAS Iraq initiatives such as the Women in Mine Action event, with a special thanks to the Netherlands for sponsoring the making of the documentary.

On International Mine Awareness Day, UNICEF and UNMAS call for an Iraq free of explosive ordnance

Baghdad, 4 April 2022- No matter where they are used, explosive ordnance endanger a child's most fundamental rights. On International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, UNICEF and UNMAS call on governments to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA), and to speak out to protect children and civilians worldwide from the threat of explosive ordnance.

The creation of a stable and safe environment in Iraq continues to be undermined by the presence of explosive ordnance, particularly in residential and rural communities. Even though Iraq has not suffered from open conflicts in the last years, the effects of explosive weapons will reverberate for years to come. Landmines and unexploded or abandoned ordnance (so-called “remnants of war”) still cause death and injury across the country.

For the last 5 years, 519 children have been killed or maimed in Iraq due to explosive ordnance. More than 80 per cent of children affected are boys. Boys are disproportionately impacted due to incidents of child labour, such as grazing animals or collecting scrap metal to sell. Children are particularly vulnerable, attracted to remnants for their colourful appearance and unaware of how dangerous they are.



Some of these weapons are familiar household objects that have been turned into explosives.

UNICEF and UNMAS welcome the international efforts to put forward a political declaration to ensure the protection of civilians from harm arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

UNICEF and UNMAS continue to provide explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), and referrals to relevant services including medical treatment and psychosocial support when needed.

UNICEF and UNMAS urge 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 and UNMAS also urge the Government of Iraq and the donor community to support the scale-up and provision of EORE activities so that children and other community members receive life-saving messages in schools and communities in all areas previously affected by conflict in Iraq.

High level Dutch delegation visited UNMAS clearing site in Mosul

Mosul, 29 April 2022 - UNMAS Iraq recently hosted the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Ms. Liesje Schreinemacher, and the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Iraq, Mr. Michel Rentenaar, to the Al Shifa Hospital Complex in Mosul, Ninewa Governorate.

The complex once served as headquarters for Da'esh militants throughout the occupation. Upon their defeat, the grounds were brimmed with explosive ordnance, rendering the hospital inaccessible to thousands of civilians in need.

UNMAS Iraq worked with the Iraqi government to clear the area of all explosive ordnance, with clearance taking more than a year to complete. Clearance of Al Shifa enabled the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other organizations to begin rehabilitating



the area. Temporary caravans are set up to cater to patients in the meantime. As one of the key donors of UNMAS clearance activities in Iraq, the #Netherlands has been a critical enabler of Iraqi humanitarian and stabilization efforts, and has seen the country contribute significantly to

activities facilitating the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of internally displaced persons to their homes.

UNMAS would like to thank the government of the Kingdom of Netherlands for their support in facilitating mine action activities in Iraq.

COVID-19 Pandemic

UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, launched a campaign to support the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines and routine immunization services in all districts of Iraq

Baghdad, 9 March 2022 – UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Health have launched a campaign to expand the coverage of COVID-19 vaccines and routine immunization services, involving over 1,300 mobile outreach teams across Iraq.

With the rapid spread of COVID-19 in 2020, the Iraqi Ministry of Health took the initiative to join the COVAX Facility, which is providing COVID-19 vaccines in sufficient number for approximately a quarter of Iraq's population. In addition, the Ministry of Health signed memoranda of understanding with vaccine manufacturers to procure additional doses of vaccines, to ensure that an even higher proportion of the population can receive these vaccines and that there is no shortage of COVID-19 vaccines in Iraq. The COVID-19 pandemic, vaccination efforts and associated preventive measures have led to disruption of routine immunization activities, resulting in increased numbers of children vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases. These children will also be reached through this campaign.

The campaign includes more than 1,300 outreach teams operating from primary health care centers throughout the country. Each team includes qualified



staff conducting awareness raising, COVID-19 vaccination and routine immunization targeting millions of children and households in Iraq.

All Iraqis above the age of 12 are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination, but the priority is to protect those most vulnerable to the disease, including health workers, those aged above 60 years, all people with chronic illness or immunosuppression and certain occupational groups such as teachers and security personnel.

“This large-scale campaign is timely and will allow us to reach unvaccinated individuals and communities with COVID-19 vaccines and children with catch-up doses of routine immunization across the nation. This will reduce the risk that vulnerable unvaccinated

individuals will lose their lives due to vaccine-preventable diseases. UNICEF appreciates the support from USAID, ECHO and the Government of Germany and acknowledges the leadership of our partner the Government of Iraq in this effort.” said Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq.

Among other measures, community awareness about vaccines and the risks of COVID-19 disease will be raised, encouraging families to follow up their vaccination schedule.

UNICEF and the Ministry of Health through this campaign are committed to ensuring that all people receive vaccines and immunization as appropriate, especially children, those most vulnerable to COVID-19 including internally displaced and refugee populations.

Outreaching to religious and tribal leaders on communicating COVID-19 preventive measures

Kirkuk, 11 March 2022 - WHO Iraq and the Ministry of Health concluded a 3-day workshop to train religious and tribal leaders from Hawija district of Kirkuk on communicating COVID-19 preventive measures and vaccines uptake among communities.

The pandemic is not over. It will be if we all get vaccinated!



UNICEF continues to work to bring closer vaccines to all vulnerable communities

Erbil/Kirkuk, 15 March 2022 – UNICEF continues to work to bring closer vaccines to all vulnerable communities because #Vaccineswork!

UNICEF, in partnership with the Department of Health of the Ministry of Health of the KRI, launched a COVID-19 vaccination social mobilization and behavior change campaign in 8 camps for refugee and internally displaced communities in Dohuk, Iraq.

This includes identification, awareness, registration, referral and follow up with the vaccination units to increase demand for vaccination in the camps.

With funding from the EU

International Partnerships and as part of the integrated immunization and COVID-19 vaccination services campaign, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health today launched the campaign at Al-Sayadaa informal settlement for displaced populations in Kirkuk, Iraq.

The campaign will support 40 fixed COVID19 vaccination teams across the governorate and 14 outreach vaccination teams conducting routine immunization.

In a related news, UNICEF in collaboration with partners shared results on two recently concluded surveys on COVID-19 and education and launched a UNICEF designed



national online rumor tracking dashboard to further support national COVID-19 vaccination efforts in Iraq. This project was funded by Germany (BMZ).

Training workshop on medical journalism and countering misinformation concluded in Iraq

Baghdad, 28 March 2022 – The World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health in Iraq and Al-Jazeera Media Institute, concluded on 24 March in Baghdad a training workshop on medical journalism and countering misinformation.

The 5-day workshop aimed at equipping more than 30 broadcasters, news anchors, programme presenters and producers across Iraq with skills and techniques needed to manage talk shows and verify information related to health issues, particularly COVID-19 and vaccine hesitancy, and comes as part of WHO's strategy to build a strong partnership between the media and the health sector in Iraq to ensure that Iraqi people have access to accurate information about their health.

"One of the main lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is that access to the right health information can make a significant difference in the communities health-seeking behaviour and can determine the health outcomes among individuals and communities," said Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq.

"The role played by the journalists and media specialists in disseminating accurate public information is very important in saving lives and can be as important as the role of doctors, nurses and health workers," added Dr Zouiten.

The workshop included practical and engaging training sessions focused on different health issues in Iraq, ranging from communicable diseases, noncommunicable diseases, mental health to pandemic and epidemic-prone diseases. The participants were equipped with references to various sources to further deepen their knowledge about

different health issues.

This is the second of a series of training workshops planned by WHO to build the capacity of media people, communication specialists and social media influencers to play their part in addressing misinformation and disinformation related to public health. In December 2021, WHO conducted training for more than 80 journalists and Ministry of Health communications focal points from Iraq on information-sharing and responsible reporting on public health issues.



WHO supports timely and accurate COVID-19 screenings

Baghdad, 10 April 2022 – Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO representative in Iraq, today handed over 630,000 antigenic rapid tests to Iraqi Ministry of Health that will be used for a timely and accurate COVID-19 screening.

These modern tests will help the ministry enhance surveillance and detection of SARS-COV-2 infection across Iraq.



UNICEF receives US\$26 Million from the Government of Germany to support the provision of basic services and the COVID-19 response



Baghdad, 24 April 2022 - The Government of Germany has contributed \$26 million to UNICEF to support UNICEF in its ongoing efforts to assist the Government of Iraq in strengthening its systems and improve access to quality basic services for children and their families in the context of COVID-19. This amount brings the German Government's total contributions to UNICEF in Iraq to over 200 million dollars since 2015.

The funding includes support for measures addressing the impact of COVID-19 by ensuring communities continue to receive essential water, sanitation, education and child protection preventive and response services. This will include the provision of personal protective equipment to 20,000 healthcare providers and hand sanitizer gel, soap bars and hand hygiene promotion to over 200,000

people.

“This funding is crucial as we support Iraq to increase access to basic services and bolster the national COVID-19 vaccination campaign. UNICEF thanks the Government of Germany for this timely support and partnership to accelerate our efforts to ensure every child in Iraq has access to safe water, education, social and child protection services when required,” said Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF’s Representative in Iraq.

“Children belong to the most vulnerable members of the Iraqi population, especially those living in IDP camps. I was very touched recently by my visit in a UNICEF-built school in Shariya Camp”, said GER Ambassador to Iraq, Martin Jäger. “Germany is funding UNICEF activities to make sure that Iraqi children grow up equipped with what they need most: health and education, because we can only overcome the Covid pandemic together, it is a global challenge where no one is safe until everyone is safe.”

An estimated 1 million children and adolescents will have continued access to learning through a combination of approaches such as blended learning, education TV & online portals and self-learning materials. At least 50,000 people will receive critical child protection services mainly from high-risk areas across Iraq and areas with

vulnerable populations, such as camps for the internally displaced and returnee community areas. In addition, UNICEF will support provision of access to safe, equitable, gender-inclusive water and sanitation services for over 700,000 vulnerable people and their families in targeted governorates, including community-focused hygiene promotion and improvement of WASH services in schools and healthcare facilities.

The project will primarily benefit children and young people, who make up more than half the population of Iraq. As the country marks two years since the pandemic was declared, the number of children and young people estimated to be under the poverty line has doubled. Children and young people are also the most at risk of experiencing poverty, service disruptions in critical basic services like primary health, water sanitation and hygiene, education and increase in rights violations.

UNICEF, in collaboration with the Government of Iraq and partners, will continue to work on long-term sustainability of national systems by strengthening national capacity to provide integrated access to basic services with the goal of enabling children to overcome poverty, enjoy their rights and fulfil their full potential.

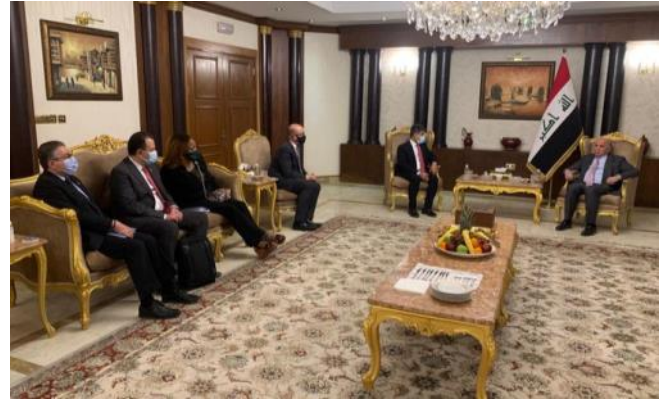
WHO Representative in Iraq visits College of Medicine in Baghdad

Baghdad, 1 March 2022 - Today, Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, met with Dr Ali Kamel al-Shalji, Dean of the College of Medicine at the University of Baghdad. They discussed ways of partnering between the College and WHO Iraq to improve the outputs of the College and reinforce the capacity of health personnel in Iraq.





Baghdad, 6 March 2022 - WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO), Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, and Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, met today with Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq. They discussed the importance of greater collaboration among UN agencies and Iraqi Government in view of strengthening health systems and making progress towards Universal Health Care (UHC).

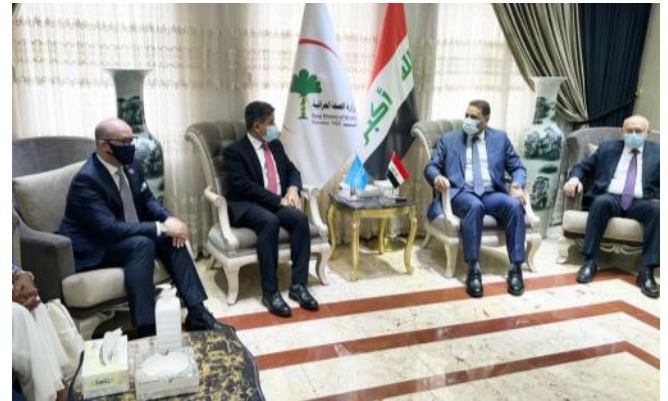


Baghdad, 7 March 2022 – WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO), Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, and Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, met with the Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Fuad Hussein, and thanked His Excellency for the strong support and major role of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry in facilitating WHO's operations, including COVID-19 response in Iraq. "I'm extremely grateful to His Excellency Fuad Hussein for his continued advocacy for #HealthForAll. In today's meeting, he showed full support for the Universal Health and Preparedness Review (UHDR) in Iraq and stressed the importance of investment in health diplomacy," said Dr. Zouiten.



Baghdad, 7 March 2022 – WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO), Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, and Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, visited today the College of Medicine at the University of Baghdad.

"The University's leadership showed authentic commitment to forging a successful partnership to enhance the capacity of medical personnel in Iraq. We were also delighted to meet and talk to some amazing students at the college, and see their thirst for knowledge and enthusiasm to bridge the gap in health needs and serve people in Iraq," said Dr Zouiten.



Baghdad, 6 March 2022 - Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq and WHO Eastern Mediterranean Office (WHO EMRO) Regional Director, Dr. Ahmed Al-Mandhari, had a very fruitful meeting with the Iraqi Minister of Health, H.E. Dr Hani Al-Aqabi. Two sides reaffirmed their strong commitment and collaboration to strengthen the health system and advance Universal Health Care in Iraq.



Baghdad, 2 March 2022 - Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, met today, Mr. Hamid bin Ahmed Aidarous, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to Iraq. They discussed ways of joint support and cooperation between the World Health Organization and the Sultanate's embassy in Iraq. Dr. Zouiten conveyed to His Excellency the organization's appreciation of the Sultanate of Oman's prominent role in supporting health efforts in Iraq and the region alike.



Baghdad, 3 March 2022 - Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, met today the Ambassador of Australia to Iraq, Ms. Paula Ganly, and briefed her on health needs in Iraq. Dr Zouiten appreciated her commitment to advancing the health system in the country and looks forward to effective joint collaboration towards achieving Universal Health Care in Iraq.

High-level delegation of WHO visits Iraq to boost health system

Baghdad, 16 March 2022 -- A High-level delegation from the World Health Organization (WHO) concluded a five-day visit to Baghdad and Erbil to finalize Iraq's Universal Health and Preparedness Review (UHPR) process. The UHPR is a governmental review mechanism led by the WHO Member States, in which countries voluntarily agree to a regular and transparent peer-to-peer review of their national preparedness capacities as well as the performance of their health system in response to the different hazards and risks affecting public health.

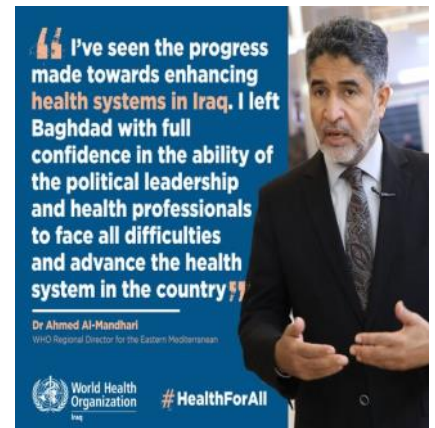
This initiative aims to bring together the relevant stakeholders in the country in a spirit of solidarity and mutual trust to promote more effective national coordination and international cooperation, to strengthen health security in the country.

"This is my first visit to Iraq after the COVID-19 Pandemic. I truly congratulate Iraq for all the efforts made to scale up the preparedness and response to COVID-19 and look forward to a further investment aimed at strengthening the national health system," said Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari,

WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

"I've seen the progress made towards enhancing health systems in Iraq. I left Baghdad with full confidence in the ability of the political leadership and health professionals to face all difficulties and advance the health system in the country," he added.

The High-Level delegation, led by Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, met with HE Prime Minister Mostafa Al-Kadhimi and other high-level officials, including Iraq's Minister of Health, H.E. Dr Hani Mousa Al Iqabi. The two sides discussed the performance of the Iraqi health system in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and reviewed the strengths of the response and the areas needing further improvements, both in terms of the health system's development and in the health security areas pertaining to preparedness and response to emergencies and outbreaks. "WHO is proud of its contribution so far. It is completely ready to further enhance collaboration with the government and the people of Iraq at all levels to ensure the best attainable health outcomes for everyone in Iraq

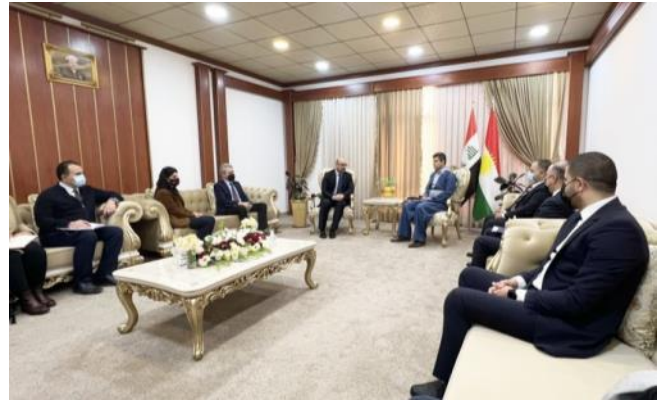


and beyond", said Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq.

"This mission is of critical importance as Iraq is one of five countries prioritized to undertake the UHPR globally. Iraq will be sharing the lessons learned with all WHO Member States and paving the way for improving the performance of its health system and strengthening the preparedness and response capacities to tackle different public health hazards," Dr Zouiten added.



Erbil, 9 March 2022 – Today, the World Health Organization in Iraq delivered 85 tons of life-saving medicines, medical supplies and various types of pharmaceuticals to support the health needs of people in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.



Duhok, 10 March 2022 - Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, met today the Governor of Duhok, Dr. Ali Tatar, whose strong leadership and support to the Directorate of Health during the pandemic made a difference. They agreed to continue and strengthen WHO support to further advance the governorate's health system.

Keep Iraq Polio Free!

Baghdad, 13 March 2022 - Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, attended a workshop with the Ministry of Health at which the update of the National Polio Outbreak Preparedness and Response Plan was discussed. WHO aims together with the Ministry of Health to achieve the highest vaccination coverage possible for children in Iraq and to keep Iraq Polio Free!



Workshop on implementing the newly developed gender-based violence (GBV) strategy held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 17 March 2022 - Today, WHO in Iraq and the Ministry of Health concluded a 3-day workshop on implementing the newly-developed gender-based violence (GBV) strategy, with the participation of 23 gender and human rights focal points representing different Iraqi governorates.



WHO builds capacity of rapid response team in Iraq with a focus on Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever

WHO builds capacity of rapid response team in Iraq with a focus on Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever

Baghdad, 22 March 2022 – The World Health Organization (WHO), in cooperation with the Ministry of Health in Iraq, concluded today a three-day workshop aimed at building the capacity of the country's rapid response team (RRT) in field investigation and response, with an emphasis on the recent outbreak of Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF).

The workshop, organized in collaboration with the Government of Japan, targeted 42 participants, including physicians, veterinarians, lab technicians, health workers and zoonotic diseases investigators from 13 Iraqi governorates.

"Rapid response teams constitute a pillar in human security and have contributed to containing outbreaks of epidemic- and pandemic-prone diseases in Iraq and beyond. This training, which used CCHF as a case study, will further equip the RRT with knowledge and capacities to control any future outbreaks of this anthro-po-zoonotic disease in Iraq and regionally," said Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq.

"We are very grateful for the collaboration with the Government of Japan, which enabled us to conduct this important training workshop and are looking forward to further collaboration to strengthen health security in Iraq. We're also pleased



with the effective cooperation between the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and WHO to tackle this disease," he added.

During the workshop, experts from the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and WHO country office in Iraq discussed the national zoonotic disease preparedness and response plan in the context of One Health. The team delivered various presentations focused on infectious hazard prevention and preparedness, including rapid risk assessment, case management, risk communication and community engagement, data management, and report writing. Working group exercises followed each of these sessions, with participants divided into multisectoral teams similar to the constitution of RRTs in the field.

The CCHF virus is transmitted to

people either by tick bites or through contact with infected animal blood or tissues during and immediately after slaughter. Most cases have occurred among people working in the livestock industry such as agricultural workers, slaughterhouse workers and veterinarians.

The disease has been endemic to Iraq since 1979, with few sporadic cases reported across the country. At times, small outbreaks have been reported, with the last outbreak happening in 2021 with 18 cases confirmed in Thi-qar and Ninawa Governorates.

"We are very grateful for the collaboration with the Government of Japan, which enabled us to conduct this important training workshop and are looking forward to further collaboration to strengthen health security in Iraq," Dr Zouiten said.

National Guideline for Infection Control launched

Baghdad, 27 March 2022 - Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, along with the Iraqi Minister of Health H.E Dr Hani Al-Aqabi, and Dr Maha Talat, from WHO EMRO, launched the National Guideline for Infection Control.

"A crucial moment in our quest to further improve health systems in Iraq," said Dr Zouiten.



WHO supports the provision of quality health services to nearly 7800 IDPs in Bzaybez

Anbar, 30 March 2022 - Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, visited the Primary HealthCare Center in Bzaybez near Amiriyat Alfalluja-Anbar where WHO supports the provision of quality health services to nearly 7800 Internally displaced Persons. WHO is proud to serve a community that would have limited access to healthcare without WHO's support.

Dr Zouiten said: "We will continue to support the provision of quality services in this center and others across Iraq. I'm very pleased to see a newly-

born Ghaydaa receiving essential healthcare services, including life-saving vaccines, in one of the WHO-

supported primary healthcare centers serving thousands of IDPs in Bzaybez, Al-Anbar governorate.



World Health Day celebrated in Iraq

Baghdad, 7 April 2022 - Today, WHO in Iraq celebrated #WorldHealthDay and also mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the WHO office in Iraq.

On this Day, we must unite efforts and join voices to support the Iraqi Ministry of Health and the national health system in the country.



WHO Iraq is building capacities of health workers on DHIS2

Erbil, 6 April 2022 - Improved collection, processing, analysis, dissemination, and use of health information is a key step in achieving better health outcomes in Iraq.

WHO Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health of the Kurdistan Region and technical support of WHO EMRO is building capacities of 45 health workers on District Health

Information System (DHIS2).

"I'm extremely proud of the collaboration with the MOH for the reform of Health Information System. This is the first step in Health System's reform, but we will not stop until we achieve UHC and Health For All", Dr Zouiten said.

Similar workshop was held recently in Baghdad.



25 years of WHO presence in the Kurdistan Region

Erbil, 14 April 2022 - Today, Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, marked the 25 year anniversary of constructive partnership and collaboration with the Ministry of Health in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Truly, this partnership is living its strongest moment, especially in these times of health emergencies.

On this occasion, WHO had the pleasure to honor Dr. Saman Barzanji, the Health Minister of Kurdistan Region and other dedicated health officials and workers for their valuable contributions in preparing for and

responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.



WHO and Ministry of Health generate priority actions and develop a roadmap to improve the emergency medical care system in Iraq

Baghdad, 21 April 2022 - WHO and Ministry of Health concluded a three-day workshop to generate priority actions and develop a roadmap to improve the emergency medical care system in Iraq.

The roadmap outlines implementation steps, resource requirements, timeline, barriers and evaluation indicators for each priority.

Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq said: "It's great to see such a strong consensus between WHO in Iraq and MOH to set action priorities and provide a strategic roadmap to leverage the improvements in the emergency care system in Iraq. Another crucial step towards strengthening health systems in Iraq."



Australia and UNDP Iraq inaugurated the newly rehabilitated Al Sijr Health Centre and External Consultancy Clinic in Karma

Karma, 21 April 2022 - The ambassador of Australia to Iraq, Ms. Paula Ganly, and UNDP Iraq's Resident Representative, Ms. Zena Ali-ahmad, inaugurated the newly rehabilitated Al Sijr Health Centre and External Consultancy Clinic in Karma today.

The two health facilities were left damaged during the ISIL conflict. It was rebuilt through the Funding Facility for Stabilization thanks to Australian Embassy in Iraq's generous support. While for Al-Sijr Health Centre, the furniture was provided by Denmark and equipment by USAID Iraq.

During the visit, they also met with H.E. Deputy Governor of Anbar, Mr. Jasim Mohammed, and visited ongoing

training on the prevention of gender-based violence at the Ramadi Vocational Training Centre.



WHO marks five years of strategic partnership with USAID in Iraq

Baghdad, 25 April 2022 - The World Health Organization (WHO) marks the five-year milestone of its strategic partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to support the provision of life-saving and essential healthcare services to vulnerable populations in Iraq.

Over the past five years, USAID has provided WHO Iraq with support totalling US\$122 million.

"USAID has been the biggest funding partner of WHO in Iraq over the past five years. We're proud of this genuine and growing partnership, which helped us expand access to much-needed healthcare services for millions of people in different governorates," said Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq.

"We greatly value and appreciate this impactful partnership, and we're exploring new opportunities to deepen this collaborative partnership further."

Impact of USAID's contribution

Thanks to the generous contribution from USAID, over 6 million primary health care consultations, including mental and physical rehabilitation

services, were provided to Iraqi citizens, while over 1,500 individuals benefited from various capacity building training.

USAID support also provided 56 new ambulances to the Iraqi health system, helping to ensure uninterrupted access to referral services. Funds also went to delivering essential medicines, medical supplies and diagnostic equipment to various conflict-affected governorates to provide comprehensive primary health care services to millions of people, including around 300,000 Syrian refugees and host communities in Erbil, Dahuk and Sulaymaniyah governorates.

In addition, USAID has contributed to WHO-Iraq's preparedness and response to COVID-19 by adding up to 800 new COVID-19 vaccination locations, including in challenging humanitarian areas, such as in camps housing refugees and internally displaced persons. It is also providing equipment and supplies, as well as technical assistance to Iraqi laboratories, clinics, and hospitals for testing, diagnosing, and treating COVID-19. USAID funding is also helping train frontline

workers on caring for COVID-19 patients and organizing awareness-raising campaigns.

"The United States is the leading humanitarian assistance provider in Iraq. We are pleased to celebrate five years of fruitful partnership with the WHO and stand committed to working with the Government of Iraq and other partners to provide critical services to Iraq's most vulnerable populations," said Heather Schildge, Acting USAID Mission Director to Iraq.



Working visit to the Family Planning Centre of Excellence in Basra

Basra, 9 March 2022 - The Directorate of Health of Basra, UNFPA and the Embassy of Sweden in Baghdad visited today the Family Planning Centre of Excellence in Basra, supported by British Embassy Iraq, to observe the services offered to families and women. The ambassador had a chance to speak with service providers

to learn about their daily encounters with visitors.

Services offered in the Centre are:

- access to high-quality family planning services
- integrated health services for women



The UK and UNFPA partner to enhance rights-based family planning in Iraq



Baghdad, 15 March 2022 –The United Kingdom is investing US\$ 19 million in the UNFPA multi-year programme on family planning in Iraq. This new partnership will improve national policies and regulations on access to right-based family planning with a focus on young people and vulnerable groups. It will also increase awareness of decision-makers, community leaders, and influencers about family planning, reproductive

rights and the dangers of child marriage.

The contribution will enable all women, young people, and people with disabilities, to access good quality family planning services, age-appropriate and reliable information, life skills, education on reproductive health and rights and better understand the negative consequences related to child marriage.

The British Ambassador to the Iraq,

HE Mark Bryson-Richardson, commented on the grant, saying: “The UK is excited to be working with UNFPA and the Government of Iraq in support of Iraq’s Family Planning Strategy. This will see local communities, particularly young people and women, enabled to make informed choices regarding their reproductive health and have access to quality health care. Investment in family planning has very high returns, both directly on health and household, as well as broader economic and political stability.”

Acknowledging the British support, UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Rita Columbia, said: “UNFPA is grateful to the UK Government for supporting reproductive rights of women and girls in Iraq. This funding will help to empower families and women to make informed choices about the timing of having children that will improve the health of mothers and children, and the overall wellbeing of families. The project will also support the prevention of early marriages and the empowerment of girls and women to contribute to their communities.”

Access to voluntary Family Planning (FP) and combating the stigma around it empower women and girls

Anbar, 26 March 2022 - Access to voluntary Family Planning (FP) and combating the stigma around it empower women and girls and help in eliminating gender-based violence, including child marriage.

In Anbar, UNFPA with Sida - Styrelsen för Internationellt Utvecklingssamarbete is organising sessions for community leaders to engage them and mobilize their potential in committing to change social norms against GBV and provide accurate information on FP to their community.

Access to sexual and reproductive health services and information is key to the reintegration of returnees back into their communities.

UNFPA, with support from EU Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid, provides mobile clinics for returnees in Hawas Al-Sadid village in Baaj area. Women and girls, in particular, can benefit from the help of a doctor and a nurse who provide medical consultations to the most vulnerable, especially in areas where services are scarce.



A workshop for doctors, nurses and healthcare providers highlighted the main findings of the family planning mapping in the Kurdistan Region



Erbil, 31 March 2022 - "Family Planning not only contributes to

economic development of a country, but also aids in increasing more people-centric policies. It affects the whole society, therefore; religious and community leaders, higher education and all stakeholders must be involved in the implementation of this strategic plan to reach everyone in the community," Dr Saman Barzinji, Minister of Health in Kurdistan Regional Government.

UNFPA with support from British Embassy Iraq organized a workshop for doctors, nurses and healthcare providers highlighting the main findings of the family planning mapping in the Kurdistan Region to provide quality public health and programmatic approaches for family planning.

Japan, through UNFPA, invests in integrated, life-saving reproductive health and youth services in Diwaniyah Governorate



Baghdad, 6 April 2022 - The People of Japan contributed US\$ 777,592 to the UNFPA programme in Diwaniyah Governorate.

The new grant will cover integrated life-saving reproductive health and youth-related services to internally displaced persons, returnees and host community. UNFPA will benefit 300,000 individuals in the Governorate

with improved access to reproductive health services and knowledge.

The fund will support the rehabilitation of hospitals in four major cities in the Governorate and the capacity-strengthening of health professionals serving that population. UNFPA will also provide psychosocial support and counselling services to adolescents and youth in centres, primary healthcare clinics and schools across Diwaniyah.

The Japanese Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq, HE Suzuki Kotaro said, "Japan has consistently supported the people of Iraq through various humanitarian assistance since 2014, amounting to over US\$ 600 million to date."

"I trust that UNFPA will achieve the improvement of health and social services in Diwaniyah backed by the coordination with its authorities and communities, through completing this

project and making use of its excellent expertise."

Commenting on the grant, UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Rita Columbia, said: "Al-Diwaniyah Governorate is one of the poorest governorates of Iraq. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation and increased the emotional, psychological and mental health problems, especially for adolescents and youth. I am thankful for the People of Japan for their commitment to improving the quality of life of people in Diwaniyah and investing in their health, whether reproductive or mental."

Thanks to Japan, adolescents and youth will also have access to life skills education in youth centres for returnees and internally displaced persons to cope with stress, frustration, emotions and daily life issues.

Mental Health

Mobile communities are offering a safe space for women and girls to chat and exchange information

Anbar, 03 March 2022 - Mental health is one of our best assets!

A healthy mental state means more empowered woman and girls who are more productive and contribute more to their communities.

UNFPA with Canada in Iraq, supports mobile women communities in Anbar, providing mental health and psychosocial support services. These mobile communities are offering a safe space for women and girls to chat and exchange information, participate in recreational activities and forget about their worries for some time.



UNICEF and Global Affairs Canada visited Qushtapa camp in Iraq

Baghdad, 29 March 2022 - UNICEF and Global Affairs Canada visited Qushtapa camp in Iraq. With funding from Canada, UNICEF established a primary health centre for delivery of maternal and new-born health and nutrition services, a climate resilient water supply and distribution system and child protection services including a parenting programme and mental health support services for children and adolescents.



UNDP, WHO and Government of Iraq unite on mental health and psychosocial support for reintegration of Iraqis returning from Al-Hol



Baghdad, 24 April 2022 - One in five people living in an area affected by conflict is expected to have a mental health condition. For Iraq, a country marred by decades of conflict, it's long been time to spotlight mental health. UNDP Iraq, in cooperation with the National Security Advisory, Ministry of Health, and the World Health Organization (WHO), recently completed the second phase of training on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in Baghdad for 25 representatives from various Iraqi ministries who form part of the integrated team that works closely with Iraqi families who were displaced and returned from Al-Hol Camp. The first training session took place in November last year. Since then,

participants were assigned to assess the psychological needs of the internally displaced families returning from Al-Hol Camp to Jada'a 1 rehabilitation center in Ninewa and prepare them for a smooth return and reintegration process to their areas of origin.

The second phase of the training included sessions on lessons learned from their experience with the families in Jada'a rehabilitation center, how to address challenging scenarios, and the way forward.

"For the national team, this is a new area of work and there are no similar experiences to compare with. We are focused on ensuring excellent efforts of the team in the field to assist with the reintegration of displaced families," says Dr. Saeed Al-Jiashi, advisor at the National Security Advisory.

According to Dr. Suhad Al Asady, a specialist at Al Tamaiuz Center, ONSA, "MHPSS is very important for reintegrating the families who return from Al-Hol camp and face psychological issues."

"Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) has the potential to offer a fundamental set of interventions to support the safe reintegration of returnees. From as early as possible,

reintegration programs should integrate MHPSS interventions at the community level. All interventions should meet the National and International human rights standards and conventions," says Andrea Bruni, Mental Health Technical Officer for WHO Iraq.

"Our joint efforts with this important MHPSS training supplements UNDP Iraq's work on ensuring mental health support toward reintegration in areas of return, which include Anbar, Ninewa and Salah al-Din governorates. Focusing on the mental health component of communities is vital to ensure unity and cohesion in Iraq following the social fragmentation caused by conflict," says Nadia Alawamleh, Team Lead, UNDP Iraq's Social Cohesion Programme.

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. UNDP Iraq's integrated response to support reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons includes Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services, livelihood opportunities and development, as well as housing rehabilitation in areas of return.

Environment

1 Million paper bags - sustainable solutions in Northern Iraq

Erbil, 6 March 2022 - Paper bags for bakeries is an initiative by Eco-Vital Organization in partnership with UNDP, funded by EU. Plastic is going nowhere. The consumption of plastic in Iraq - and the rest of the world - is a serious problem.

The device you are looking at now is made mostly out of plastic. The clothes people wear today are mostly made of plastic. To put it simply, plastic is in every part of our lives, and isn't going anywhere, literally and figuratively. The city of Erbil produces over 20,000

tonnes of solid waste every day, which get either dumped in landfills or burned in open air. Most of the waste comes from packaged goods, mainly water bottles and plastic bags. It is known by now that microplastics not only pollute the environment, but their

1 Million paper bags - sustainable solutions in Northern Iraq



particles also manage to make their way into the human body, especially when the plastic gets heated up, potentially causing health problems. With no real recycling solutions at hand, and no serious regulation on plastic production, humanitarian organizations in Kurdistan are rushing to address the problem at its source by introducing policy papers that aim at banning the manufacturing and importing of plastics, and presenting alternative solutions to the public.

Everyone loves bread. Bread loves paper.

The one thing you will definitely find on all Iraqi tables, is bread. Bread is an essential part of everyone's diet in Iraq. People form queues outside the bakeries every morning to get their delicious "Samoon". They watch it get fresh out of the furnace only to be put directly into a plastic bag before they take it, where its warmth leads the bag to start shedding plastic particles onto the bread.

Having the bread packaged in paper bags has a double beneficial role; it protects the bread itself from toxic chemicals released by heated plastic, and the biodegradable nature of paper

leaves our environment free from plastic waste to ensure our kids have a future, in a healthy planet.

Bread also tastes a lot better when wrapped in paper!

500 bakeries each received 2000 bags for free in 4 different sizes.

Let's break a habit.

Seeing the popularity of bread in the region, and the similarity of the way it is packaged throughout the country, UNDP, with the funding of the European Union, approved Eco-Vital's project to distribute paper bags to bakeries across Erbil, in an effort to introduce the bakers and the consumers to this alternative, hoping it'll start a wave of environmental awareness, with the right tools and messages.

What does the baker think?

Eco-Vital and their paper bag production company partners reached out to almost all bakeries around Erbil, learning more about the reasoning behind the choice of plastic, when traditionally, people in Kurdistan used to get their bread in cloth or paper bags. It was clear that the biggest -if not the only- reason was the affordability of plastic, which is the

main reason for plastic's popularity in recent decades anyway. However, most bakers seemed clueless to the real environmental and health risks that plastic imposes, but expressed excitement to get their share of the bags soon.

Distribution

The following weeks, volunteers took it to the streets to start distributing the paper bags. Each bakery got 2000 bags in 4 different sizes, for free. Within 2 weeks, 500 bakeries received their bags and the distribution of a million paper bags was completed!

Volunteers and representatives of the civil society organization Eco-Vital took advantage of the distribution process to chat with bakers and brief them on the benefits of moving away from plastic bags, and the negative effect of plastic on health, so the bakers in return can do the same when asked by their costumers about the sudden change, and the word spreads.

Awareness

Along the distribution of the paper bags, different radio messages were being broadcasted in Erbil, highlighting negative aspects of plastic packaging of bread, and letting people know that now, they can ask their baker for a paper bag instead.

The initiative made some noise. It was covered on TV. People heard about it.

The challenge of affordability is still there, but paper production companies in Erbil are woking hard to reduce the price to a competing level with plastic paper bags.

However, the biggest factor remains with people's awareness. If enough people want paper instead of plastic, the providers will have no other choice but to oblige, and that's where our focus will be.

IOM Iraq supported the International Water Conference in Baghdad

Baghdad, 8 March 2022 - Iraq is facing a complex water crisis. Rising temperatures, record low levels of rainfall and drought are disrupting agricultural and power production and limiting access to clean drinking water. Environmental degradation has already contributed directly to the migration of agricultural populations in search of better opportunities to sustain their lives.

The Baghdad International Water Conference, organized by the Government of Iraq's Ministry of Water Resources, took place from 5-7 March, at al-Rasheed hotel. Interventions from government stakeholders, UN

organizations, NGOs and Civil Society Organizations addressed the challenges posed by water scarcity and the need for dedicated action.

IOM, in collaboration with UN, the Network on Migration and international partners, stands ready to support Iraqi authorities in tackling these challenges; adapting agricultural practices; identifying trends through research and the Displacement Tracking Matrix; and responding to climate-induced migration and displacement.

IOM Iraq's support for the International Water Conference was made possible through the UN Network



on Migration, with assistance from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

WFP launches solar energy solution for youth project with University of Sulaymaniyah

Erbil, 13 March 2022 – The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has helped provide a new solar power system for the Career Development Centre at the University of Sulaymaniyah. The solar energy provided now effectively meets the electricity gap during power cuts or shortages, enabling seamless support to youth in need.

The centre is a key structure for the EMPACT (Empowerment in Action) project, WFP's pioneering digital skills, English and entrepreneurship training programme, which runs across Iraq. Starting in 2017 in Sulaymaniyah governorate as a pilot, EMPACT expanded to Anbar, Baghdad, Duhok, Erbil and Mosul. The initiative has won multiple awards for its innovative approach supporting vulnerable youth – internally displaced people (IDPs), Syrian refugees and their host communities – with the training and skills they need to take up work opportunities, including online, or to start small businesses.

“Through this new solar power system, WFP and the University of Sulaymaniyah created a sustainable, green energy solution, to continue

improving livelihoods for youth through EMPACT,” said WFP Iraq Representative Ally Raza Qureshi. “Given the impact of climate change in Iraq, which has the worst effects on the most vulnerable people such as youth and women, the adoption of green energy solutions with the University of Sulaymaniyah is even more timely. Iraq has huge potential for renewable energy adoption, which is a priority among its commitments made to climate action, including at last week's Baghdad International Water Conference, on which WFP and our UN partners collaborated. We thank the people and government of Germany, without whose support this initiative would not be possible.”

WFP is working closely with the Government of Iraq and partners on addressing the root causes of climate change and adaptation, and national policy to support the most vulnerable families. WFP is committed to using renewable energy solutions in its projects, part of its climate action. As well as climate-smart programmes, the solar power system is one example of how WFP weaves climate change sensitivity into all its work, such as

recycling and avoiding plastic use through reusable water bottles.

Since 2020, WFP and University of Sulaymaniyah have successfully partnered on running EMPACT courses, supporting 520 students to graduate. These young graduates are a small portion of the thousands of students who graduated since 2017, and thousands more of their family members. WFP also runs EMPACT in Colombia, Kenya, Lebanon, Turkey and Zimbabwe. Students learn a wide range of skills including office software, image editing and visual production, and coding such as HTML or Python.



UNEP Representative and Regional Director for West Asia visit to Iraq for the declaration of the first Protected Area “Teeb” and the opening of the Environment Information System Center

Baghdad, 22 March 2022 – Today, UNEP Representative and Regional Director for West Asia Mr. Sami Dimassi and the Minister of Environment H.E Dr. Jassim Abdulazeez Humadi declared “Teeb” as the first Protected Area in Iraq.

A ceremony was also organized for the opening of the Environment Information System Center funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which will make environmental data available to the Ministry of Environment.

On the sideline of this declaration, the two parties discussed the ongoing cooperation between UNEP and the Ministry and means to collaborate to ensure the success of current projects and for the good of the Iraqi people.

The visit started with the opening of the Environment Information System Center and then the audience were invited to the auditorium where the declaration of the first nature reserve in Iraq “Teeb” took place. This area is home to 230 plant species of which a large number is endangered. The

protection of this reserve will help mitigating extreme weather events, enhancing carbon storage, and providing space for plants and animals to reproduce and adapt to the climate change.

Later, Mr. Sami Dimassi and H.E Dr. Jassim Abdulaziz Hamadi announced the approval of the \$4.5 million (GEF7) project that will be implemented in collaboration between UNEP ROWA and the Ministry of Environment in

Iraq.

Mr. Dimassi ensured that “today is a day to be proud, since the first protected Area in Iraq was announced particularly since one of Iraq's objectives in its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) was dedicated to the protection of ecosystems and adoption of nature-based solutions. He also reminded the audience of the necessity to continue the efforts to declare “Dalma” as a natural reserve.”





Baghdad, 23 March 2022 - Mr. Sami Dimassi, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Director and Regional Representative, West Asia Region, met with non-governmental community organizations active in the environment sector in Iraq to discuss many issues related to environmental work and ways of cooperation.



Baghdad, 22 March 2022 - "A pleasure to be visiting Iraq for the first time and meeting with Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq/Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, today in Baghdad, discussing our cooperation and the pivotal role of the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) in supporting the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Iraq" - Mr. Sami Dimassi, UNEP Director and Regional Representative, West Asia Region.

Message from UN Iraq Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert on World Water Day 2022

Baghdad, 22 March 2022 - Everywhere on our planet, water is life. In Iraq, the availability and proper management of water resources are particularly significant. Last month, I visited the Mesopotamian Marshes in the south, witnessing firsthand the many challenges Iraq is facing. Lower precipitation, water shortages, salinization of soils and water, ineffective management of resources, and population growth have all taken their toll, throughout the country. In addition to climate change, the active reduction of water inflows from neighbouring countries is another serious threat.

The harsh reality is that water scarcity is not only a present danger but also a risk multiplier: its potential impact on poverty, displacement and conflict has grave implications for Iraq's stability and long term prosperity.

The theme of this year's World Water Day is "groundwater, making the invisible visible", highlighting a precious, and too often overlooked, resource. As the main source of fresh water, groundwater must be protected and preserved.

Earlier this month, the 2nd Baghdad International Water Conference convened in Iraq, making significant and wide-ranging recommendations.

This is certainly a good start that must now be followed by actions.

All stakeholders across the political spectrum must prioritize this as a shared responsibility, a crucial file to be urgently and seriously addressed, overcoming the political divide. Also, and importantly, Iraq's neighbours should be engaged in meaningful discussions on water sharing and resource management.

The United Nations family in Iraq is working in partnership with Iraq on water resource management, and all of us can do our part by seeking to limit our impact on the environment.

The future starts with all of us, today.

Rainwater harvesting now to preserve groundwater for tomorrow

Erbil, 22 March 2022 - World Water Day is marked this year under the theme 'Groundwater; making the invisible visible'. It highlights the importance of groundwater and the need to protect and preserve this precious resource.

With about 14 percent of Iraq's water coming from groundwater – the rest from the surface waters of the Rivers Tigris and Euphrates – some Iraqis are taking action now to preserve groundwater for tomorrow.

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, activists from several environmental organisations are focusing on conserving water, reforestation and decluttering polluted areas. Working with thousands of volunteers in Erbil, Duhok and Sulaymaniyah, Hawkar Ali,

Gashbin Idrees Ali and Shahen Omer Sa'eed of Hasar Organization explain how they use water in their climate projects to sustain the environment.

"Erbil's groundwater level is deep, and it takes a longer time to be recharged by annual rainwater infiltration. We must preserve it by promoting artificial recharging projects. If we have surface flow during the wet season, we can use surface water for storing underground," says Hawkar Ali, founder of Hasar. "Instead of groundwater, we must harvest rainwater by building several dams upstream of Erbil city."

A Ph.D. student in Earth Science Engineering, Hawkar Ali recalls how in 2021 their tree nursery suffered from water shortages due to a drop in groundwater levels at the nearby well.

Learning from their experience, they now use other water methods to sustain the trees they plant like in their recent project in Pirmam.

Echoing Hawkar's sentiments and equally as passionate about water conservation, protecting and greening our environment, Gashbin Idrees Ali says the main objective of the project, implemented in partnership with UNICEF and financed by Germany, is to reduce desertification by planting trees around artificial ponds that they build. "These ponds collect rainwater and reuse it to irrigate the planted trees," he explained as he joined volunteers in early March this year to plant 2,000 trees around Dwin's pond at Pirmam in the Erbil province.

Hawkar Ali believes that reforestation

Rainwater harvesting now to preserve groundwater for tomorrow (continued)

needs sustainable water resources to be successful and rainwater ponds can be a solution.

Explaining how the organization mitigates the effect of water scarcity to sustain their plants and reforest Erbil, Shahen Omer Sa'eed said, "We plant the trees that go with the Region's ecosystem and climate. We have started with oak trees that require less water. Our aim is not merely to green the areas but also to address the issue of water scarcity."

Hasar Organization has been involved in a three-year study of water resource protection focused on the development of harvesting rainwater integrated with reforestation campaign. Hawkar emphasizes that there must be a water strategy at the governmental level



which focuses on water as a critical and vulnerable issue in the Region.

"Any water protection initiative must be supported. Urban design should consider the groundwater distribution; there should not be urban distribution over the recharging side of the city that is supposed to infiltrate water into the

underground."
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Translations by Ihsan Barzanji, Nafea Azeez and Rashwan Salih (UNAMI PIO)

Written by Celia E.B.T. Dadson (UNAMI PIO)

Neighborhood unites over water

Basra, 22 March 2022 - Al-Huta is a village in southern Iraq near the Port of Basra. It is home to Ali Sattar, a 28-year-old man working in finance and administration at one of Iraq's largest oil fields west of Basra.

Ali lives here with his wife and their three children, along with his parents and three brothers. The palm tree-lined streets that lead to their home are on the banks of the Shatt al-Arab river.

With easy access to freshwater from the river, residents of Ali's village relied on farming as their main source of income for generations. The broader Basra region also relies heavily on the Shatt al-Arab river and its freshwater canals for water.

Paradoxically, while water is the source of many livelihoods here, for decades, drinking it was life-threatening. Poor management of water distribution, increasing pollution levels, sewage dumping, and outdated water infrastructure all contributed to the steady deterioration of waterways.

The 2018 water crisis was the culmination of decades of overuse, pollution, and reduced rainfall from climate change. Basra's water source became severely contaminated, and 118,000 residents went to the hospital due to water poisoning.

The situation was aggravated by unsustainable water use for irrigation and by industries. This lowered water levels, allowing seawater to seep into freshwater sources, making it unsuitable for people to drink or grow crops.

Walking along the paved road leading



to his neighborhood, Ali admires the palm trees and points to vast farmlands, including fields of date palms belonging to his friends and neighbors, Nazim Yousif, 65 and Mustafa Mohammad, 25.

"We suffered from the contaminated water," Nazim says. "We were unable to grow our crops, and the soil quality was affected."

Adding to what Nazim shares, Mustafa adds, "The water station in our locality was out of service. We used to only get water during select hours in the evening." He currently runs a carpentry shop out of his residence.

Facing not only a water crisis but an impending food emergency, Ali, Nazim and Mustafa sprang into action with other neighbors. They pooled funds to purchase weekly deliveries of tankers of clean water to ration equally among households.

A single tanker serving around 10 homes costs up to US\$ 400 a week, the equivalent of one farmer's monthly

salary. Though it was expensive, it was the only way they knew to keep their families and their community safe and healthy.

"We are a close-knit community that has stuck by each other through thick and thin," Ali said.

While Ali, Nazim and Mustafa were ready to do anything for their community, they also knew that they needed to find a sustainable solution.

In response to Basra's water crisis, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq with funding from USAID rehabilitated nine of Basra's major water treatment plants located in the districts of Shatt Al-Arab, Ezaldeen Saleem, Al Medina, Deer Al Saleem, and Abi Al-Khaseeb.

Today, the UNDP-rehabilitated treatment plants have been rebuilt to meet local and international standards. The system filters and adds chlorine to water drawn from the Shatt Al-Arab River before dispatching it to communities through a central piping

Neighborhood unites over water *(continued)*

system.

The renovated treatment plants are bringing safe, clean water to more than 625,000 residents of Basra.

For Ali, a monthly supply of potable water now costs around US\$ 30, which is about 25 percent less than the cost his family paid to receive clean water delivered via tanker.

"Now, life is different for us," Ali says. "We can get as much water as we want, whenever we want, without worrying if our family members will fall sick. However, we need to be careful with how we consume water."

Renewed access to clean water has also revived Nazim's farm and Mustafa's business.

"I am slowly building back my

business," Nazim says. "I cannot believe that my life has turned back around in such a short period."

For residents of Basra like Ali, Nazim and Mustafa, the water treatment rehabilitation project has reinvigorated a community that was spiraling into despair. Water has become a symbol of resilience, hope, and solidarity for their community.

"My special message to residents of Basra is to be mindful of water consumption. Every person on earth needs water to survive. Without it, we will not survive. Conserving water is key to keeping water pure and clean while protecting the environment. We need to preserve these resources for the future generations to come," says

Mustafa before he takes a sip of water. About:

The rehabilitation is implemented through UNDP's Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP), with generous support from USAID.

The provision of basic services, such as safe potable water, is imperative to reduce vulnerability and address the needs of Basra's citizens, helping to rebuild ties between the population and the Government of Iraq. These rehabilitated water treatment plants are improving access to potable water for more than 625,000 Iraqi men, women, and children.

A version of the story was originally published on USAID's Exposure platform.

UNDP: International and UN support for Iraq's transition to clean energy

Abu Dhabi, 24 March 2022 - The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) emphasized Sunday, the support from UN and international sides for Iraq's transition to clean energy.

After UNDP supported the Iraqi efforts to develop and submit its nationally determined contributions towards Paris Climate Agreement, including commitments related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which is an important turning point in advancing its efforts towards meeting climate change commitments, UNDP in Iraq, in partnership with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and with the support of the United Kingdom through the British Foreign Affairs and Development Office, organized a high-level workshop under the title "Iraq's Transition to Clean Energy".

The importance of this workshop, which was held in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, (the headquarters of the International Renewable Energy Agency), comes to help develop a long-term framework for energy policy and address the main obstacles in understanding the infrastructure and financial needs to promote renewable energy, as Iraq lacks a framework for action a clear energy transition policy that defines the path from the fossil fuel-based energy sector to the carbon-neutral energy sector.

The Iraqi Ministry of Environment, represented by the Minister of Environment and Iraq's Special



Representative for Climate Change, Jasim Al-Falahi, chaired the workshop and in the high-level presence of the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the United Arab Emirates, the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the International Renewable Energy Agency, Muzaffar Al-Jubouri and representatives of the General Secretariat For the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Electricity, the Ministry of Industry and Minerals, the Ministry of Oil, the Ministry of Planning, the National Investment Authority, the Ministry of Electricity of Kurdistan Region, and the Commission for the Protection and Improvement of Environment in the Kurdistan Region. Al-Falahi, during his speech at the opening of the workshop, expressed his thanks and gratitude to the government and people of the United Kingdom for supporting this project, which will increase Iraq's ambition

towards combating climate change. "We are grateful to the United Nations Development Program and the International Renewable Energy Agency for organizing this important event."

"This work would not have been possible without the continuous and valuable cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Environment, the partnership with the International Renewable Energy Agency, and the generous support of the UK government through the British Foreign Affairs and Development Office," Al-Falahi said.



UNICEF and Hassar organization planted 2000 oak trees at the Dwin pond project

Baghdad, 20 March 2022 - UNICEF and partner Hassar organization planted 2000 oak trees at the Dwin pond project as part of climate action and increasing green areas. The project is engaging young people and volunteers along with the universities and relevant government partners. This project was funded by Germany (BMZ).



Discussions started today to help set up a long-term energy policy framework and address key barriers in understanding the financial and key infrastructure needs to boost renewable energy

Baghdad, 25 March 2022 - Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are important policies intended to shape economic change in the world by including the concept of green economy, focusing on renewable energy and clean mechanisms. Discussions started today during a consultation workshop organized by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and UNDP Iraq, supported by the Government of the United Kingdom, to help set up a long-term energy policy

framework and address key barriers in understanding the financial and key infrastructure needs to boost renewable energy. UNDP supported Iraq in developing and submitting its NDC-a critical milestone in advancing its efforts toward meeting #ClimateChange commitments. However, Iraq lacks a clear energy transition policy framework that sets the path from a fossil-based to carbon-neutral energy sector.



Sulaymaniyah University is now home to a new solar energy system

Sulaymaniyah, 5 April 2022 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq/Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, visited Sulaymaniyah University and was delighted to see Sustainable Development Goal No. 7 in action with WFP: Affordable and Clean Energy. The university is now home to a new solar energy system powering the youth career development centre.

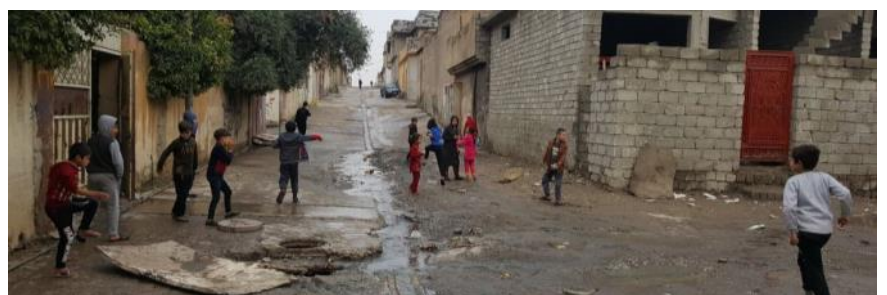


Solar panels used to operate the drop irrigation system

Mosul, 13 April 2022 - UN-Habitat's Mosul team in Yarmouk Park had the pleasure to host a scientific visit of 8 professors and 70 students from the Ninewa College of Environmental Science and Technologies. The visit focused in particular on the environmentally friendly and pioneering aspects of the project, including the use of solar panels to operate the drop irrigation system and serve the energetic needs of the community Hall. Students showed also great interest in how women from the surrounding area were trained and

employed as gardeners. The rehabilitation of Yarmouk Park is funded by the European Union as part of the local area development

programme that UN-Habitat is implementing in partnership with UNDP.



UN-Habitat recently partnered with Janat Al Frdaws Foundation to rehabilitate the dilapidated Al-Asri Park

Baiji, 16 April 2022 - As Iraqi cities become more densely populated and concerns about the impact of climate change and pollution are increasing, local authorities and citizens have become strong advocates for the rehabilitation and greening of their parks and gardens. Public open spaces are now recognized as powerful tools for the socio-economic recovery and physical well-being of urban communities that have been affected by conflict. Hence, UN-Habitat is proud to have recently partnered with Janat Al

Frdaws Foundation to rehabilitate the dilapidated Al-Asri Park in the city of Baiji, Salah al Din governorate, as part

of its local area development programme funded by the European Union.



UNEP's current missions in Iraq discussed

Beirut, 14 April 2022 - Today, UNEP Representative and Regional director for West Asia, Mr. Sami Dimassi, met with the Ambassador of Iraq in Lebanon, H.E Haydar Al-Barrak. They discussed UNEP's current missions in Iraq and possible future cooperation.

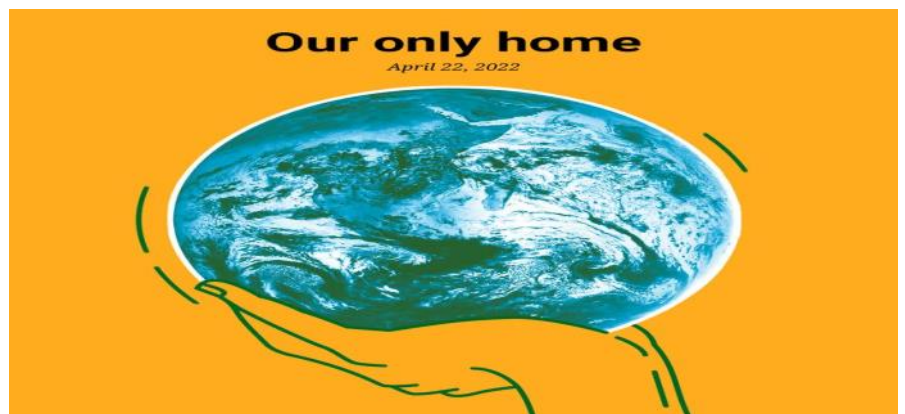


On “Earth Day”, UN in Iraq renews commitment to joint climate action

Baghdad, 22 April 2022 – In recognition of the 52nd Earth Day today, the United Nations in Iraq renews its commitment to protect the environment, and jointly confront climate change. This is the first Earth Day celebrated within the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

Anchored under the 2022 theme “Invest in our Planet,” this day is a reminder to redirect all our attention to creating a 21st Century that prioritizes the health of our planet and all species including our own. Our choices today can either accelerate the speed of destruction of the environment or help preserve it and protect our health, our families, and our livelihoods. Climate change and extreme weather events, man-made changes to nature, and protracted conflicts that disrupt biodiversity are destroying the planet we are leaving to future generations.

Restoring our damaged ecosystems will help end poverty, combat climate change and ultimately achieve the sustainable development goals. Everyone should play a part in this, if



we are to succeed.

In Iraq, the environmental situation has been subject to a number of converging pressures, ranging from poor water quality, deforestation and soil salinity to air pollution, conflict and land-use change, all of which have led to the deterioration of key ecosystems, climate change impacts and water shortages.

Nevertheless, protecting the earth through policies for environmental

action has become a top priority in Iraq. On 22 March 2022, the first protected area in Iraq was declared by the Ministry of Environment and UNEP, home to 230 plant species of which a large number are endangered. The protection of this reserve will help mitigate extreme weather events, enhance carbon storage, and provide space for plants and animals to reproduce and adapt to the changing climate.

On “Earth Day”, UN in Iraq renews commitment to joint climate action *(continued)*

The UN is supporting Iraq to mitigate and adapt to climate change through the design of sustainable projects that focus on supporting small and medium businesses, livelihoods and development; investments in efficient water and wastewater infrastructure; irrigation and the management of water consumption; as well as the use of renewable energy such as solar power. The UN is also working with the government on training, skills development and capacity strengthening to tackle climate change. Advocacy efforts are raising public awareness on the issues around water

consumption and sustainable water management.

Ecosystems support all life on Earth. The healthier our ecosystems, the healthier the planet and its people. For Earth Day 2022, we need to act boldly to restore our damaged ecosystems. It's going to take private sector, entrepreneurs, governments, and citizens — it is everyone's business!

Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq
Sami Dimassi, UNEP Representative and Regional Director for West Asia

Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq
Ally Raza Qureshi, WFP Iraq Representative
Zena Ali Ahmad, UNDP Resident Representative
Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Iraq Representative
Giorgi Gigauri, IOM Iraq Chief of Mission
Eric Buchot, ITC Head of Country Programme
Jean-Nicolas Beuze, UNHCR Iraq Representative
Himyar Abdulmoghni - UNFPA Iraq Deputy Representative

Culture

UNESCO participated in the reopening of the Iraq National Museum

Baghdad, 6 March 2022 - Today, UNESCO participated in the reopening of the Iraq National Museum. UNESCO Representative to Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani, briefly met with Iraqi Prime Minister, Mustapha Al-Kadhimi, and exchanged on the strong cooperation between UNESCO and the Government of Iraq.



UNESCO, in close collaboration with HCECR, has successfully completed the restoration of the northern ramp and retaining walls around Erbil Citadel

Erbil, 16 March 2022 - UNESCO, in close collaboration with the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalization (HCECR), has successfully completed the restoration of the northern ramp and retaining walls around Erbil Citadel. These activities were carried out within the framework of the EU-funded project "Support to Livelihoods through Cultural Heritage Development". UNESCO, HCECR and ILO will continue their cooperation to achieve the project goals.



Before Renovation



After Renovation

6,000 years of history brought back to life

Erbil, 13 April 2022 - The historic Erbil Citadel in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq dates back at least 6,000 years. The International Labor Organization (ILO) joined forces with the EU,

UNESCO and local partners to preserve national heritage, while promoting decent work for residents and Syrian refugees through labor-intensive approaches. ILO's Deputy

Regional Director for Arab States recently visited the site to inspect ongoing renovation works.



National Clothing Day celebrated at UNAMI Regional Office in Erbil

Erbil, 10 March 2022 - National Clothing Day is celebrated on 10 March every year in the Kurdistan Region. In Erbil and elsewhere in the Region, Kurdish women and men wear their traditional attire for the occasion, with vibrant colors and different tailoring styles.

Happy Kurdish clothing day!



34th anniversary of the chemical weapons attack on Halabja commemorated at UNAMI Regional Office

Erbil, 16 March 2022 - UN staff at the Regional Office in Erbil, Kurdistan Region, today commemorated the 34th anniversary of the chemical weapons attack on Halabja. At a solemn ceremony, staff observed a moment of silence to remember the more than 5,000 people who lost their lives in the attack.



UN Iraq Representative Hennis-Plasschaert on Nowruz: optimism is essential

Baghdad, 20 March 2022 - The International Day of Nowruz was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2010. An ancient festivity celebrating rebirth on the first day of Spring, Nowruz plays a significant role in strengthening the ties among peoples, as it proclaims the renewal of life and harmony, honoring values of peace, solidarity, forgiveness and reconciliation.

These values are more necessary than ever today. We face the existential threat of climate change that is adversely affecting our lives and our planet, not to forget the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to take its toll. Conflicts close and far, and political disputes at home, also harm our physical and mental wellbeing.

In the face of these compounding challenges, optimism is essential. Let

us reflect on how we can be part of rebirth, of new beginnings inspired by the justice and respect, that our world so desperately needs. Our hope is that differences in Iraq can be swiftly resolved for the country to move forward on the path towards sustainable development and prosperity. The human yearning for peace knows no borders.

Secretary-General António Guterres's message for International Nowruz Day 2022

New York, 21 March 2022 - Nowruz is a celebration of new beginnings.

The beginning of a new year. The arrival of spring. The renewal of nature.

Nowruz is also a celebration of our diversity.

It unites over 300 million people, between generations and beyond

borders.

It is a time to learn about each other, our cultures and our world.

And Nowruz is a reminder of everything we have in common.

It promotes reconciliation and good neighborliness.

It echoes the values of the United Nations of peace, human rights and

dignity.

As humanity faces unprecedented challenges, let us be guided by the Nowruz spirit of solidarity and renew our pledge to live in harmony, protect our planet and leave no one behind.

I wish everyone a happy, healthy and peaceful Nowruz.

UN in Iraq joined Earth Hour 2022

Baghdad, 27 March 2022 - Tonight, the United Nations in Iraq joined the world for #EarthHour 2022 by turning off its lights for 1 hour to stand united #ForPeopleForPlanet.



UN Iraq wishes Iraqis a safe and healthy Ramadan

Baghdad, 2 April 2022 - The holy month of Ramadan is a period of peace, reflection and prayer for Muslims. This year, the blessed month arrives at a time of heightened apprehension and concern about the future everywhere. Let us remain optimistic that better days lie ahead, focusing on family, friends and what brings us together. Let us also stand in solidarity with the vulnerable, those who remain displaced and those who are in need. The UN family in Iraq wishes Iraqis a safe and healthy Ramadan. Ramadan Kareem.



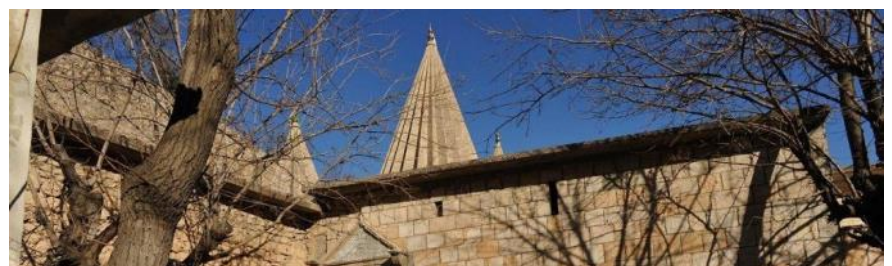
SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert, accepted the #HealthierTomorrow challenge and planted a palm tree

Baghdad, 10 April 2022 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, accepted the #HealthierTomorrow challenge from WHO Representative in Iraq, Dr Ahmed Zouiten, and planted a palm tree today at the UN Integrated Compound in Baghdad, as a gesture for our planet. She challenged UN Special Envoy to Yemen, Hans Grundberg, to do the same. The Challenge is part of #WorldHealthDay 2022, under the slogan “Our planet, our health”.



Warm wishes to Yazidis on their new year!

Baghdad, 20 April 2022 - Warm wishes to Yazidis on their new year, an occasion of hope and joy that is incomplete while people remain displaced or missing. As we remember victims of terrorism, we renew calls for efforts to end their plight so they may live in safety and dignity.



Chinese Language Day commemorated in Iraq

Baghdad, 20 April 2022 - Language Days at the United Nations seek to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity as well as to promote equal use of all six official languages throughout the Organization. The date for the Chinese day [20 April] was selected from Guyu ("Rain of Millet"), which is the 6th of 24 solar terms in the traditional East Asian calendars, to pay tribute to Cangjie. Cangjie is a very important figure in ancient China, claimed to be an official historian of the Yellow Emperor and the inventor of

Chinese characters. Legend has it that he had four eyes and four pupils, and that when he invented the characters, the deities and ghosts cried and the sky rained millet. From then on, Chinese people celebrate the day Guyu in honour of Cangjie. In the Gregorian calendar, it usually begins around April 20.

Check the video produced by the UNAMI Public Information Office & UNITAD on this occasion at <https://www.facebook.com/UnitedNationsIraq/videos/496790865472388>

