

UNAMI Herald

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SRSR for Iraq Hennis -Plasschaert attends the second Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership

Amman, 20 December 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, attended the second Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership, hosted by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Here is the text of her speech (as prepared):

“Excellencies,

It is a true honour to be here, representing UN Secretary-General António Guterres. And while the Secretary-General regrets not being able to participate in person, he has asked me to convey his greetings to you all.

I would also like to extend our appreciation to His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein for hosting the second iteration of the Baghdad Conference. This initiative and today’s attendance clearly exemplify the depth of relations between Iraq and its neighbouring countries.

There is no denying it: the convening of today’s meeting is, in itself, a message of great importance. And yes, it is our hope that this demonstration of “regional partnership” will now result in a number of concrete steps. Steps that will solidify regional cooperation, coordination and collaboration. Steps that might even lead to a framework for regional integration as an



effective means of achieving prosperity, peace and security. And of course, for that to happen “frank talks” are, at all times, a prerequisite. Throughout the world, regional cooperation is increasingly seen as indispensable. While it is true that any geopolitical environment can be quite challenging, it is also true that regional cooperation acts as an important facilitator on the global stage.

Moreover, and as we all know, many of today’s challenges do not recognize borders: climate change, water scarcity, natural disasters, energy shortfalls, pandemics, financial shocks, corruption, poverty, food insecurity, terrorism - to name but a few.

And facing these challenges, requires

(as I said) close cooperation, coordination and collaboration. The simple fact is, we need each other to be at our best.

In my capacity as the Special Representative for Iraq, I wholeheartedly support Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani in his priority to position Iraq as an arena for dialogue and investment. In my briefings to the UN Security Council, I stated it often: the centrality of Iraq to regional stability cannot be overstated.

And for Iraq to further build its domestic stability, it is incumbent (on us all) to help foster an enabling environment. Hence, renewed and continued support for Iraq’s regional outreach and extended hand will remain vital.

Within this context, allow me to emphasize the importance of respecting the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and good neighbourliness. Established diplomatic instruments are at everybody’s disposal, also in times of heightened tensions or when faced with legitimate national security concerns.

Excellencies, in closing, the United Nations sincerely hopes that regional confidence-building will remain a priority for all. Meanwhile, the UN looks forward to the next steps, and stands, as always, ready to support and assist.”



In this edition ...

SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert: “If opportunities are indeed seized, Iraq stands an excellent chance of rapidly advancing towards sustainable development.”

Baghdad, 23 December 2022 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, sent the following Year-end message:

“As the end of the year approaches, we usually take stock of the past year’s events and what has been achieved. We also look ahead and reflect on what we hope to do better in the year to come.

There is no denying it, 2022 has been a trying year for Iraq. But as the year drew towards its close, government institutions were able to resume their functions providing Iraq with a great opportunity to embark on a path towards stability and progress. In this spirit and for the sake of future generations, let us all work together in 2023, and beyond, to tackle the multiple challenges Iraq faces, while ensuring a public space conducive for dialogue, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The country’s rich cultural, ethnic and religious heritage, as well as its geography and untapped resources, hold considerable potential. Buoyed by political stability and steady revenues, and if opportunities are indeed seized, Iraq stands an excellent chance of rapidly advancing towards sustainable development. In this case, a promising future awaits the Iraqi people who have triumphed over so many hardships.

On behalf of the entire UN family, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Peaceful and Healthy New Year.”



Climate change is the biggest threat Iraq has ever faced, but there is hope to turn things around

Op-Ed by Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq

Baghdad, 12 November 2022 - When I travelled to Baghdad a month ago to assume my duties in Iraq to help coordinate our support to the government and people in need, the land of the two rivers was totally different from what I had seen two decades ago when I first worked in Iraq. *More on page 103.*

UNAMI conference on youth engagement highlights the youth’s important role in Iraq’s future

Baghdad, 14 December 2022 - A project to showcase the ideas and creativity of Iraqi youth and how they can contribute to their country’s future concluded in Baghdad on 13 December in a national conference that brought together more than 35 young women and men from across Iraq, officials from government and parliament as well as the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). *More on page 8.*

Addressing the needs and rights of Yazidi women survivors to ease their suffering and instill in them hope

Duhok, 3 November 2022 - Several years after they were freed from ISIL/Da’esh captivity, more than 400 women survivors are still lingering in IDP camps, struggling to rebuild their lives. They dream of a better future for themselves and their families, and are seeking justice in a society that respects their rights and ensures there is space for them to excel. Those Yazidi women survivors are not forgotten, and addressing their needs and rights, and helping them achieve their dreams is one way to ease their suffering and instill in them hope. *More on page 14.*

UNITAD at a rapid pace in assisting justice opportunities in many countries-Special Adviser Ritscher tells UNSC

Baghdad, 08 December 2022 – Special Adviser Christian Ritscher briefed the UN Security Council earlier this week on the ninth report of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh/ISIL (UNITAD). *More on page 47.*

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

The Sixth Ministerial Meeting of the Forum of Ancient Civilizations held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 4 December 2022 - The Sixth Ministerial Meeting of the Forum of Ancient Civilizations commenced in Baghdad today with the participation of the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé, and his accompanying delegation. In his address, Mr. Moratinos noted "Cultural heritage sites and religious sites in Iraq and elsewhere reflect the people's identity and cement their sense of belonging".

This year, Iraq is honoured to preside over and host the Forum of Ancient Civilizations. The Forum will serve as a platform for participants, at the governmental level, to engage in dialogue and capitalize on the importance of cultural communication for economic and social development of the participating countries.

Here is the text of the remarks of USG Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé:

"Your Excellency,
Mr. Fouad Hussein, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq
And Chairman of the Forum
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
I am truly honored to be here today in your remarkable country.
I warmly thank the Government of the Republic of Iraq for the hospitality and the warm welcome.
I also wish to convey the support of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres who has delegated me to represent him in this meeting. Mr. Guterres firmly believes in intercultural and interreligious dialogue as a viable tool for peace.

This is my first visit to Iraq. A visit that is long overdue. But certainly,



worth the long wait.

I could not think of a more perfect setting for a forum on ancient civilizations than Iraq, a cradle of centuries-old civilization.

The wealth of diverse religions, cultures and ethnicities enriches the colorful mosaic of the Iraqi society.

Cultural heritage sites and religious sites in Iraq and elsewhere reflects the people's identity and cements their sense of belonging.

The people of Iraq have always stood out as the embodiment of resilience.

They are a living experience of hope amid the darkest moments in Iraq's history.

Hope, resilience and solidarity of the Iraqis were the driving force that helped them defeat Da'esh and liberate their country of their menace.

But to ultimately defeat terrorism, our global efforts should also be complemented by addressing the root causes of violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

This is where the role of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations come into play.

As the political initiative of the UN Secretary General for conflict prevention and conflict resolution through advancing intercultural and interreligious dialogue and promoting

diversity and mutual respect.

With its emphasis on dialogue and cultural cooperation, I am pleased that your forum complements the work that the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations began more than 17 years ago and succeeded in creating a global platform for intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

Just a week ago, we have successfully organized our 9th Global forum in the historical city of Fez, Morocco. More than 1100 participants came to the forum including 98 member states, civil society organizations, religious leaders and youth.

I seize this opportunity to thank H.E. the Minister of Culture of Iraq for his valuable participation.

Distinguished guests,

It is important to remember the importance of protecting cultural and religious heritage especially against the backdrop of today's global context where people whose identities are defined by religion, culture or ethnicity, continue to be besieged by hatred and fall victim to discrimination and marginalization.

Religious sites and places of worship are universal symbols of our humanity.

The destruction of these sites diminishes us all as a society.

That's why the Secretary General of the United Nations tasked my office to develop the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks in 2019.

The Plan is a global call to rally around our most basic tenets of humanity and solidarity and to reaffirm the sanctity of all religious sites and the safety of all worshippers who visit houses of worship in a spirit of compassion and respect. The Plan is elaborated in consonance with



The Sixth Ministerial Meeting of the Forum of Ancient Civilizations held in Baghdad *(continued)*

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, noting that this right includes the right of individuals and communities to manifest their religions and beliefs in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

I hope that reference to this plan would be included in your

declaration.

Distinguished guests,

In today's complex and multifaceted challenges, dialogue is a sine-qua-non for peace.

History has shown that dialogue is not a simple process, but that if we fail to teach and cultivate it, the situation can give way to a monologue or to mutism, which is conducive to conflict and violent

extremism. HH Pope Francis describes it as parallel monologues.

The revival of cultural and civilizational dialogue is a prerequisite for durable peace.

Once again, I am very pleased to be part of this initiative and I look forward to consolidating our collective efforts towards that end.

I thank you."

Press Statement on the meeting of the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq with His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani

Najaf, 7 December 2022 - High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Miguel Moratinos, accompanied by Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, was extremely honored to have been granted an audience with His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani on 7 December 2022 in Najaf.

High Representative Moratinos lauded His Eminence's wisdom and compassion. He expressed how deeply moved he was by His Eminence's moderate approach and consistent appeals for mutual respect and unity to prevail in support of diversity and peaceful co-existence.

Recalling the meeting between His Holiness Pope Francis and His Eminence on 6 March 2021, the High Representative and His Eminence exchanged views on the importance of inter- and intra-religious dialogue, which lie at the core of the UNAOC mandate.

High Representative Moratinos also presented the "United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites: In Unity and Solidarity for Safe



and Peaceful Worship", developed in 2019 in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks in New Zealand. In Iraq also, worshippers and holy sites have suffered tremendously.

The Plan of Action is a global call to rally around the most basic tenets of humanity, compassion and tolerance, to ensure that people are allowed to practice their faith and observe their rituals in peace. To this end, it is imperative that religious sites and places of worship and contemplation are true safe havens.

Launching the Plan in 2019, the High Representative presented the Plan of Action to His Holiness Pope Francis and to His Eminence Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb. With today's meeting, Moratinos said, three major religious leaders represented through the Vatican, Cairo, and Najaf, have been engaged. The High Representative extended his full collaboration and support to any effort that contributes to building a peaceful, just and cohesive society based on mutual respect and human dignity.

USG Moratinos meets Cardinal Sako

Baghdad, 4 December 2022 - The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, met with His Beatitude Cardinal Louis Sako, Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church. They exchanged views on means of advancing interreligious and intra-religious dialogue and countering all forms of discrimination on account of religion.



UNAMI on Twitter

Baghdad, 30 October 2022 - Our heartfelt condolences to the families of those killed by explosion of a tanker near a Baghdad sports field tonight and we wish the injured a speedy recovery. Thorough investigation into cause and circumstances of this horrific incident must lead to accountability and prevention.

Baghdad, 14 November 2022 - We condemn renewed Iranian missile and drone attacks on KR, which violate Iraqi sovereignty. Iraq should not be used as an arena to settle scores and its territorial integrity must be respected. Dialogue between Iraq and Iran over mutual security concerns is the only way forward.

Baghdad, 17 November 2022 - Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of the horrific gas tank explosion in Sulaymaniyah that resulted in many casualties. We pay condolences to the families of those who died, wish the injured a speedy recovery, and salute rescuers for their relentless efforts.

Baghdad, 21 November 2022 - Repeated attacks, violating Iraqi sovereignty, must cease. Such aggression not only recklessly heightens tensions but also causes tragedy. Whatever external score a neighbouring country is seeking to settle, the use of established diplomatic instruments is the only way forward.

Baghdad, 22 November 2022 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert: "Unfortunately, we can only repeat ourselves. Ongoing Iranian attacks are intolerable. Iraq must act as one in order not to give room to further hostilities. Strength abroad begins with unity at home". #Erbil #Baghdad

Security Council press statement on recent terrorist attacks in Iraq

New York, 20 December 2022 - The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the cowardly terrorist attacks near Kirkuk and Albu Bali, Iraq on Sunday, 18 December 2022. The attacks, which were claimed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), resulted in at least nine deaths of Iraqi policemen and eight civilians.

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

The members of the Security Council reiterated their support for the independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, democratic process

and prosperity of Iraq.

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

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

The members of the Security Council reiterated that any acts of terrorism

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

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

Social Cohesion

UNDP holds Community Reintegration Discussion Forum and launches studies on gender perspective of reintegration and preventing violent extremism

Erbil, 26 October 2022 – Today UNDP Iraq has concluded a two-day discussion forum on reintegration in Iraq, bringing together over fifty key government representatives, non-governmental organizations, partners, and stakeholders from across Iraq to discuss the importance of reintegration

in strengthening the social fabric of Iraq's communities, especially those witnessing returns of families perceived as affiliated with ISIL, with focus on the caseload repatriated from Al-hol camp in north-east Syria.

The discussion forum, Community Reintegration in Iraq: Progress,

Lessons Learned, and the Way Forward included an inclusive discussion on reintegration efforts and lessons learned in Iraq and globally. Today, a key focus of discussion included the gender aspect of reintegration, including key findings from new UNDP studies on reintegration and the

UNDP holds Community Reintegration Discussion Forum ... (continued)

Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) from a gender-sensitive lens.

Launched today and available online, *Between perpetration and prevention of violent extremism: Accounting for gender and Affiliated with ISIS: Challenges for the return and reintegration of women and children* provide an overview of reintegration and violent extremism challenges which often disproportionately affect women and children. The studies and discussion are intended to contribute to advancing peace and stability in Iraq.

According to UNDP Iraq Resident Representative Zena Ali-Ahmad, "It has been five years since ISIL has been defeated in Iraq, and attention must now be paid to target the remaining displaced Iraqis, including through the return and reintegration of the families with perceived affiliation to ISIL who are stigmatized, marginalized and hardest to return. UNDP, with our multitude of partners, is prioritizing

community reintegration and rehabilitation efforts in Iraq, including a concentrated focus on women."

Saaed Al Jayashi, Strategic Advisor, Office of the National Security Advisory, emphasizes, "Iraq will adopt the first complete national strategy for reintegration to be developed with support from UNDP, including an international exchange of experiences.

The government of Iraq will build on the results of this discussion forum, to be reflected in the reintegration policies and plans of action."

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.



UNDP, with local and national authorities and community leaders, celebrates successful community reintegration in Habbaniyah, Anbar



Baghdad, 30 October 2022 – The United Nations Development Programme Iraq (UNDP) celebrated with local and national authorities and community leaders in Habbaniyah, Anbar the successful reintegration of Internally Displaced Iraqi families in the district.

UNDP's approach to stability in Iraq includes support to stabilization in liberated areas through rehabilitation of infrastructure and services, livelihoods creation, strengthening local government capacities, and social cohesion. UNDP supports community readiness for the reintegration for thousands of Internally Displaced Iraqi families, including persons perceived as affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), who are often women and children, to ensure durable

solutions for displacement. Between the first local peace agreement reached, which enabled 500 families perceived as affiliated with ISIL to return, and the celebration on 29 October 2022, all internally displaced families have returned to Habbaniyah, Anbar.

UNDP Iraq Resident Representative Zena Ali-Ahmad states, "Our approach to the return and reintegration of IDPs is innovative and multi-faceted. Following stabilization activities, our programming related to community reintegration includes shelter rehabilitation and psychosocial and livelihood support, with emphasis on community ownership. Following success in Habbaniyah, UNDP Iraq is expanding this programme to additional areas throughout the liberated governorates."

During his speech, the Governor of Anbar, Mr. Ali Farhan, highlighted how achievements related to rehabilitation of infrastructure after liberation from ISIL in partnership with UNDP have created the enabling environment for the return of IDPs, in addition to the efforts of the local peace committees in Anbar to support social cohesion in communities and enhance reintegration, including for families perceived as affiliated with ISIL.

Saaed Al Jayashi, Strategic Advisor, Office of the National Security Advisory, emphasizes, "We are grateful for the efforts of UNDP in coordination with Anbar Governorate and the National Security Advisory, which has helped us to return displaced families from Habbaniyah to their place of origin. Today we celebrate a new stage for Iraq, turning the page on displacement, toward stability."

Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration is anchored on the UN Iraq Joint Approach for Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration of persons perceived to be affiliated with ISIL in Iraq. It 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.

Religious leaders are working on a local peace charter in Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 1 November 2022 - UNDP Iraq coordinated today a meeting in Kirkuk Governorate following a conference held for religious leaders across the governorate in August. Attendees included the Governor of Kirkuk and government representatives. The leaders are working to approve a local peace charter that will serve to honor cooperation and respect between all religious parties in Kirkuk.



UNDP supports NGO work on preventing violent extremism in Iraq

Baghdad, 10 November 2022 - UNDP's efforts in tackling violent extremism include empowering various segments of society, including youth, women, civil society organizations and government actors. As part of these efforts, UNDP Iraq, in collaboration with the NGO Department, completed the second phase of the capacity building program for 60 participants from local NGOs in designing and implementing programs and initiatives to prevent violent extremism (PVE) from different governorates in Iraq.

In the first phase of the capacity support program in 2021, the focus was on the first group of NGOs, and in the second phase held between 24 and 31 October, another group of representatives of the organizations participated in a series of workshops. Participants from Anbar, Basra, Diyala, Karbala, Kirkuk, Nineveh and Najaf attended sessions focused on planning, implementing and monitoring projects related to preventing violent extremism. The participation of civil society is essential, and its role is vital to reach peaceful coexistence and stability. This project is part of UNDP's support to the government in its efforts to prevent violent extremism.

Ms. Nadia Al-Awamleh, Team Leader of UNDP's Social Cohesion Programme

in Iraq, noted during the program, "This program ensures that NGOs from different governorates of Iraq receive the support they need to design and implement programs that contribute to preventing violent extremism through their development projects and their constant communication with the community. Through this partnership, we are paving the way for stronger, safer and more cohesive communities across Iraq."

According to the Director General of the NGO Department, at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, Mr. Ashraf Al-Dahan, "It is necessary to unite efforts to prevent violent extremism through a holistic

community-based approach, including engaging youth and women based on the experiences of our international partners in this field, such as the United Nations Development Programme in order to clarify strategies to address the root causes of violence and lay the foundation for comprehensive cooperation against extremism."

In 2020, in 2020, UNDP in Iraq launched a five-year dedicated social cohesion programme to promote stronger, more peaceful and cohesive communities in all regions of Iraq, with support from the governments of Denmark, Germany, Japan and the Netherlands.



“IOM Iraq partnered with the Catholic University in Erbil (CUE) to organize a youth cultural exchange event

Erbil, 16 November 2022 - Self-expression is a human right, and in Iraq, it has the power to help bridge divides and advance the country's post-conflict recovery.

On 15 and 16 November 2022, IOM Iraq partnered with the Catholic University in Erbil (CUE) to organize a youth cultural exchange event to celebrate Iraq's diverse and dynamic

cultural landscape through art, including poetry, short stories, photography, painting, theater, and games. The two-day event brought together youth from around Iraq to discuss and develop ideas that promote cohesion, peace and stability in their communities and across the country. Towards enhancing the meaningful participation of youth in society, a

“Corner Meeting Space” was arranged to facilitate the exchange of experiences between youth activists and Iraqi civil society organizations.

IOM recognizes the value of reinforcing skills and providing a platform to exchange experiences and identify common spaces that bridge ethno-religious, linguistic, cultural and geographical divides. Through capacity

IOM Iraq partnered with the Catholic University in Erbil (CUE) to organize a youth cultural exchange event *(continued)*

building, grant and in-kind support, IOM has worked with local civil society organizations, volunteer groups and youth activists since 2018 to advance social cohesion and improve inter-cultural dialogue across Iraq.

This event was made possible by support from USAID, the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Government of Germany.



UNAMI conference on youth engagement highlights the youth's important role in Iraq's future



Baghdad, 14 December 2022 - A project to showcase the ideas and creativity of Iraqi youth and how they can contribute to their country's future concluded in Baghdad on 13 December in a national conference that brought together more than 35 young women and men from across Iraq, officials from government and parliament as well as the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The conference, organized by UNAMI, is the final milestone of activities during the period June-December 2022 that involved more than 220 youths from various governorates, half of them women. Activities with the youth

included capacity-building workshops, technical and mentorship support on issues related to leadership, decision-making, communication and action on climate change. The youths had the opportunity to identify priorities and formulate concrete policy. They presented initiatives and recommendations to share with policymakers at provincial and national levels in order to inform government programmes and policies, including to help mitigate the impact of climate change in their communities and the country.

Present at the closing conference were Deputy Speaker of the Council of

Representatives Shakhwan Abdullah, Minister of Youth and Sports Ahmed al-Mubarqaa, the Prime Minister's Adviser for Youth, Qasim al-Zalimi, Members of Parliament, in addition to Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance.

The Deputy Speaker said that empowering the youth should be a priority for State institutions, adding that the youth of Iraq have the capacity and expertise that can benefit the progress and prosperity of the country.

The Minister of Youth and Sports commended the role of the youth and their initiatives, underlining his ministry's readiness to support young women and men in their endeavours with their communities or at the national level. He also stressed the need to move forward on climate change, commending youth initiatives in this regard.

DSRSG Cordone stressed in his address the importance for the Iraqi youth to express themselves and participate fully in the country's social, cultural and political life. With youth comprising 60 percent of the Iraqi population, Cordone added that the ideas and energy of the youth should not be underestimated. "We need you as partners and future leaders. We need you to play your role in full to build a peaceful and sustainable future for Iraq, which will meet the aspirations of all its people."

After the opening addresses, the officials engaged with the youth who presented their projects and explained their ideas. The youth also used alternative ways such as art and music to express their views and convey their messages to the political leaders.

Here is the text of the Opening Remarks by the DSRSG Cordone, at



UNAMI conference on youth engagement ... (continued)

this conference:

“Deputy Speaker Mr. Shakhwan Abdullah
Minister of Youth and Sports Mr. Ahmed al Mubarqa
Dear youth participants,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning,
I am delighted to be joining you here today to mark the conclusion of UNAMI’s 2022 youth engagement and showcase the results of the efforts of Iraqi youth over the past few months. They have once again proven not only capable but also committed to bringing change and building a better future for themselves and the generations to come. As we know, the youth of a nation are its leaders of tomorrow. We owe them, boys and girls, to provide them with the opportunities to express themselves and participate fully in the

country’s social, cultural and political life.

Dear friends,
Your presence here show the commitment of the Iraqi government to provide better opportunities for the Iraqi youth. Youth represent more than 60 percent of Iraq’s population, but their significance is not only in their number but also in what they can bring to the present and future of this nation. What we will see today are just few examples of what young women and men in Iraq are capable of in encouraging positive change within their communities. Unfortunately, youth in Iraq, as it is the case in other countries, encounter social obstacles and are often excluded from political discussions and decision-making forums. Yet, the energy and the ideas that young people can bring to resolve social or political issues should not be underestimated. Young people

are a source of innovation, and can make a key contribution to the development of just, inclusive and stable societies. I look forward to the government, the political parties and other state institutions to ensure the inclusive participation of youth and women in politics and decision-making processes.

Dear young participants present here, Over the past few months you have been working closely together empowering one another and exploring new ways on how to build a better future. You have formulated your recommendations to the government on how to promote your own social and political engagement, and presented initiatives to help mitigate the impact of climate change in your communities and in the country as a whole. We are here today to listen to your views, ideas, and aspirations.

I want to assure you that the United Nations remains committed to working with you to deliver on your ambitions, in line with our commitment set out in the UN Secretary-General’s “Youth 2030” strategy.

My young friends, we need you as partners and future leaders. We need you to play your role in full to build a peaceful and sustainable future for Iraq, which will meet the aspirations of all its people.

Today the floor is yours. I look forward to listening and wish you all the very best for your future.
Thank you.”



Political Consultations



Baghdad, 2 November 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, accompanied by the new Deputy Special Representative and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, met today in Baghdad with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, **Mr. Mohammed S. Al-Sudani**.

Iraq-UN cooperation in all fields was discussed, with a focus on efforts to combat corruption, the situation of the internally displaced (IDPs), as well as development projects. The UN delegation stressed their continued support for the government and people of Iraq on these and other topics.

Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Prime Minister.



Baghdad, 2 November 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Baghdad with the Governor of the Central Bank of Iraq, **Mr. Mustafa Ghaleb Mikhaif**. They discussed the current economic situation in the country.

Photo courtesy of CBI.



Baghdad, 15 November 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary - General for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**, met today with **tribal leaders** from the governorates of Iraq. Discussions focused on the current political situation in the country, issues related to water scarcity, reconstruction, return of IDPS and the role of the tribes in social cohesion and societal peace.



Baghdad, 21 November 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met in Baghdad with the leader of the National Coalition, **Mr. Ayad Allawi**. They discussed the general political and security situation in the country, including Baghdad-Erbil relations.
Photo courtesy of the National Coalition.

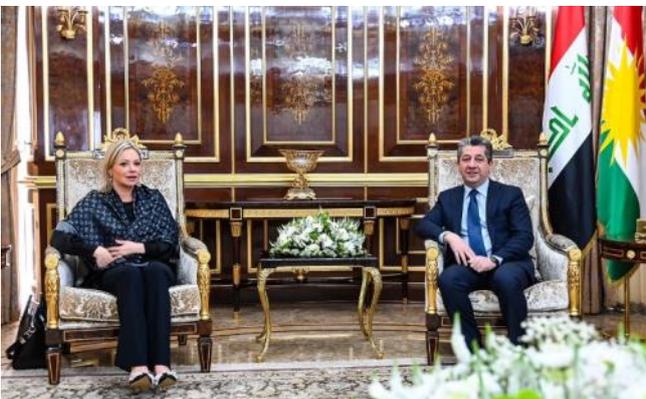


Baghdad, 22 November 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Baghdad with Iraq National Security Adviser, **Mr. Qassim Al Araji**. They discussed the security developments in the country, including the importance of dismantling the camps in Northeastern Syria.

Photo courtesy of the National Security Advisory.



Baghdad, 23 November 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, was received today in Baghdad by the President of the Republic of Iraq, **His Excellency Abdullatif Jamal Rashid**. They discussed the general situation in Iraq and the region and the role of the United Nations in providing support to the country and its citizens. The SRSG was accompanied by the UN Deputy Special Representative, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**.
Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Iraqi Presidency.



Erbil, 24 November 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Erbil with the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region, **Mr. Masrour Barzani**. They discussed the general political and security situation in the country and the region, including Baghdad-Erbil relations.
Photo courtesy of the KRG Media Office.



Baghdad, 5 December 2022 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Baghdad with the Prime Minister of Iraq, **Mr. Mohammed S. Al-Sudani**. They discussed the current political situation in the country and agreed to continue their cooperation in various fields.
Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Prime Minister.



Baghdad, 12 December 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 Al-Hikma National Trend, **Mr. Ammar al-Hakim**. They discussed recent political developments in the country.

Photo courtesy of the Al-Hikma.



Amman, 20 December 2022 - His Majesty King Abdallah II met the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, on the sidelines of the second Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership. They discussed the importance of regional confidence-building.

Photo courtesy of the Royal Hashemite Court.

SRSR Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert visits Karbala



Karbala, 11 December 2022 - The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, accompanied by the Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**, visited Karbala today. The delegation met with **Governor Nassif Al-Khattabi** to discuss the general situation and ways to further UN collaboration with the governorate.



Karbala, 11 December 2022 - The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, accompanied by the Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**, met today in Karbala with patients and staff at the **Warth International Foundation for Cancerous Tumors**, which is run by the Imam Hussain Holy Shrine.



Karbala, 11 December 2022 - The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, accompanied by the Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**, visited the Imam Hussain Holy Shrine in Karbala today. The UNAMI delegation also met with **Sheikh Abdul Mahdi Al-Karbala'i**, representative of the Supreme Religious Authority His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.



Report on International Cooperation for Capacity Building technical visit to Mexico National Electoral Institute, Electoral Tribunal and Supreme Court published

Baghdad, 28 December 2022 – With the technical assistance of United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI), Iraq successfully held its Council of Representatives (CoR) elections on 10 October 2021 in accordance with the Elections Law No. 9 of 2020. 329 members of the CoR were elected and the election results were certified by the Federal Supreme Court of Iraq on 27 December 2021.

Following the successful elections, Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) with the assistance of UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA) conducted series of lessons learned workshops to reflect on the shortcomings and achievements of the election administration, identify challenges and recommend solutions on wide range of issues including legal framework, election operations, technical administration and equipment, stakeholder relations, electoral dispute resolution (EDR), etc. Furthermore, UNAMI OEA under the mandate of the UN Security Council identified several areas of strengthening for the improvement of the electoral process, including the EDR system in Iraq.

EDR is one of the key areas were, UNAMI OEA has been providing support, advice, and technical assistance, over the past year. OEA legal advisors have been in continuous contact with IHEC Legal Committee, Complaints and Appeals Section and Legal Department, with Electoral Judicial Panel (EJP) judges, discussing the gaps and needs to enhance further the knowledge of and institutionalize the EDR. Several activities had already been organized between IHEC and EJP and with EJP alone towards strengthening the EDR knowledge that is in line with the international best practice and Iraqi legal framework.

Based on the South – South Cooperation development initiatives and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and 17, Partnerships for the Goals to continue strengthening the capacity of the Iraqi institutions, UNAMI OEA organized a technical visit to Mexico to share experiences, discuss, and further develop electoral knowledge on EDR in line with



international best practice.

Mexico was chosen as it is a country that has clearly institutionalized and strengthen electoral management body, judiciary in an independent way, as well as its well-developed South – South Cooperation. Accomplishments of the Technical Visit including but not limited to:

Exchanged knowledge and experiences on EDR, electoral Justice, and other important issues relevant to electoral process including campaign finance, electoral campaigning, voter registration etc. with the Mexican institutions, Enhanced the understanding of the electoral and political system, electoral reforms and EDR in Mexico, Reinforced the partnership and mutual understanding between Iraqi and Mexican institutions on EDR, training on electoral issues and determined further opportunities for partnership with Mexican institutions,

Identified dispute resolution concerns and solutions in Iraq and promoted research to deepen aspects of institutional interest or fosters knowledge about best practices on electoral management and EDR, Improved strategic long-term thinking to achieve gender equality in electoral management and in politics,

Deepened understanding for integrated approaches for training programmes on different electoral matters, Strengthened capacity needed for coherent and systematic process of the complaints and appeals so that the electoral dispute resolution mechanisms are effective and respond rapidly to emerging situations.

Full report is available at: <https://iraq.un.org/en/210140-report-international-cooperation-capacity-building-technical-visit-mexico-national-electoral>



UNDP and UN Women reaffirm their commitment toward increasing women's political participation in Iraq



Baghdad, 31 October 2022 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (UN Women) in Iraq partnered to support women's political participation and representation in Iraq. Today, the two UN agencies sign a US\$1 million partnership agreement in Baghdad.

The joint project focuses on addressing the constraints on women's political voice, strengthening women's decision-making and leadership in elected spaces and increasing leadership in civic spaces. Concretely, the partnership will aim to:

- Strengthen elected female leaders and potential candidates' ability to influence decisions, demand their rights and actively engage in decision-making at all levels.
- Increase the use of special

measures, such as quotas, to improve women's leadership and representation within political parties in Iraq.

- Mitigate obstacles to female participation in public life by addressing violence against women in politics.

“For long-term development to be inclusive and effective, we need women's representation that reflects all women and girls in all their diversity and abilities, and across all cultural, social, economic, and political situations. We need to expedite progress. We need bold, intensified, decisive action across Iraq to bring women into the heart of the decision-making spaces in large numbers and as full equal partners. There's no doubt this can and should be done. It should be done now,” said Resident Coordinator Ghulam Isaccai, adding “The UN is committed to empower

women leaders, support greater representation of women in politics, achieve gender equality and root out gender-based violence.”

“When there are more women leaders in political and public life, everyone benefits, especially in fragile contexts like Iraq. Therefore, we need more female leaders in Iraq, women that come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. For this reason, UNDP is excited to join efforts with UN Women to promote women's equal participation and representation in politics at all levels,” says UNDP Resident Representative Ms. Zena Ali-Ahmad.

“Empowering women is at the heart of what we do and one of our main priorities is to ensure that women have the ability to meaningfully participate and lead in decision-making processes and be represented on the political front. We hope that through this partnership with UNDP, we will drive forward women's and youth leadership in Iraq and strengthen institutions and systems to provide inclusive gender-responsive services,” added Dina Zorba, UN Women Representative Iraq & Yemen.

This partnership builds on UNDP and UN Women's long-standing ongoing efforts related to elections, legislative reform, and women's leadership. The project will be implemented and built on the continuing work of the two organizations on gender mainstreaming across Iraqi institutions, access to justice, and public sector reform.

Saja's determination to improve her life

Southern Iraq, 10 December 2022 - Saja [1], a 44-year-old woman, dropped out of school when she was 14 to marry Maher, 19 years older. She is now a mother of five, three boys and two girls. During the first years of marriage, Maher worked as a daily labourer. Yet, During her marriage, Saja's suffering continued as her husband continued to abuse her and the children. She had to depend on herself and her family's support to secure her children's needs to continue their studies.

But one day, Saja's life changed.

“In 2017, one day during lunchtime, I was cooking fish waiting for Maher to return home for lunch,” said Saja. “As soon as Maher entered the house, he started beating my oldest son, Yasser.” After the fight, Maher threw Yasser out of the house.

“I was shocked and very angry,” recalled Saja. “I pulled myself together and stood

in front of my husband and told him that I will never leave my children - if they go, I will go.”

Several attempts at reconciliation to reunite the family failed. Saja decided to leave the house with her children.

Gender-based violence center offers respite

To her good fortune, Saja learned about Multi-Service Referral Center (MSRC) in her city southern Iraq from her customers to whom she sold bread.

“I was very happy to meet the counselors at the center,” said Saja. Saja was also assigned to a gender-based violence social worker and received life skills training, psychosocial support, as well as legal counseling.

“I am now working as an administrator in a company,” said Saja with a smile.

The Multi-Service Referral Centre (MSRC) in southern Iraq, funded by The Government of the United States of

America, supports girls and women to prevent gender-based violence. Since 2021, the center helped 450 cases, half of them, women and girls.

Thanks to legal aid from the UNICEF-supported center, Saja was able to obtain the needed documentation for her five children.

“I hope that my children will continue to learn and secure good jobs,” said Saja. “I also wish that I can work at this center to inspire other women and girls to speak up and take action against gender-based violence.”

[1] All names of individuals were changed to protect their identity.

Written by Aseel Al Hadeethi, UNICEF Iraq



UNFPA developed and delivered standard operating procedures to provide quality life-saving services to GBV survivors

Erbil, 12 December 2022 - Ensuring the safety and security of survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the critical guiding principles for GBV prevention and response.

UNFPA in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government developed standard operating procedures to provide quality life-saving services to GBV survivors. Today, UNFPA handed over the guideline to the Ministry for implementation of the procedures in the shelters across the Kurdistan



Region.

The new procedures ensure the provision of minimum services to be

offered, related referral services, roles and responsibilities of different actors at different levels.

UNAMI addresses the needs and rights of Yazidi women survivors to ease their suffering and instill in them hope

Duhok, 3 November 2022 - Several years after they were freed from ISIL/Da'esh captivity, more than 400 women survivors are still lingering in IDP camps, struggling to rebuild their lives. They dream of a better future for themselves and their families, and are seeking justice in a society that respects their rights and ensures there is space for them to excel. Those Yazidi women survivors are not forgotten, and addressing their needs and rights, and helping them achieve their dreams is one way to ease their suffering and instill in them hope.

Some of those survivors had the opportunity to share their concerns and dreams at a workshop in Duhok on 31 October 2022, organized by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in partnership with the Consulate of the Republic of Korea, together with Kvinna till Kvinna, emmaorganization, Dak Organization and Joint Help for Kurdistan. The one-day workshop aimed to develop a long-term vision and roadmap to address the women's needs and rights.

Annette Lyth, UNAMI's Senior Women's Protection Advisor, shared with the survivors some inspiring initiatives driven by women survivors of sexual violence across the world, from Rwanda to the former Yugoslavia, Nepal and Ukraine. She also outlined the articles of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, engaging with the participants in a lively discussion.

Participants raised their most immediate needs, ranging from psychological and physical health support, better living conditions such as moving from camp tents to permanent housing, job opportunities,



daycare for their children, to literacy and educational courses. Some also emphasised their wish to return to school to obtain their high school diploma and pursue higher education. "Survivors should get their rights and justice without discrimination", said one.

Participants also mentioned how they can nurture their strengths and skills, build upon it to generate their own income and be financially independent. Two sisters explained that they were skilled in baking pastries and wished to open a business that sells home-made sweets. Another participant said that she would like to start a daycare centre because she has the ability to tend to children.

Other skills and capacities identified included raising awareness among peers and communities about women's rights and advocate for these rights as well as on the issue of missing persons. "My dream is to become a lawyer because I know the suffering of survivors and I want to protect their rights; I want to prevent the rights of

women and girls being stolen", said one. "My dream is to learn how to read and write so that I can write novels. I want to write so that the voice of [our] people will be heard all over the world and restore their rights."

Ms. Lyth encouraged the women to work with other survivors in the camps and develop their ideas together. "Their activism and determination is certain to make their dreams come true", she said, adding that UNAMI will continue to work with the Kvinna till Kvinna, Emma Organization, Dak and Joint Help for Kurdistan for the implementation of the ideas generated by the participants. UNAMI stands with survivors.



“Girls of Spring” published

Baghdad, 7 November 2022 - To celebrate the achievements of young girls and to mark the tenth anniversary of the World Day of the Girl, the United Nations Population Fund has published the book *Girls of Spring*.

The book shows the daily struggles Iraqi girls face, but they chose to keep going and fulfill their potential.

The book is available in both Kurdish and Arabic languages at these links:
AR <https://bit.ly/3ZapmOp>



Civil society organizations representing different geographical locations in Iraq have been approved and selected by the National Steering Committee (NSC) to implement projects under the Women Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)

Baghdad, 7 November 2022 - Civil society organizations representing different geographical locations in Iraq have been approved and selected by the National Steering Committee (NSC) to implement projects focusing on 3 thematic areas (Conflict Prevention, Humanitarian response, and Forced Displacement) under the Women Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF). The meeting was led by the Director-General of the Department of Women Empowerment at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, Dr. Yusra Mohsen, and co-chaired with the UN Deputy Special Representative, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ghulam Isaczai. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the government (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Planning, Department of Women Empowerment), Austrian and Canadian embassies, and UN Agencies (UN Women and UNFPA).



Swedish International Development Agency visits the UNFPA-supported 119 hotline and the Kurdistan Region's Statistic Office

Erbil, 8 November 2022 - UNFPA is grateful to the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for contributing to the empowerment of women and young people in Iraq with essential life-saving reproductive health and gender-based violence services and providing life skills education to young people.

Today, the Swedish International Development Agency visited the UNFPA-supported 119 hotline and the Kurdistan Region's Statistic Office.

The delegation closely learned about the ongoing project of the 119 #GBV hotline and the referral system. The

free hotline provides confidential support and guidance to survivors of violence. Future projects to strengthen the response to violence, especially technology-based violence, was discussed.

Later on, with the Kurdistan Region's Statistic Office, the team talked about the results of the recent “Iraqi Women Integrated Social and Health II” Survey. The survey is a collaboration between UNFPA, the Central Statistical Office, and KRSO, aiming at using the data to improve the life of Iraqi women through human-centric policies.



Training on GBV law and the application of judicial remedial measures to support women survivors of GBV in their access to justice held in Erbil



Erbil, 09 November 2022 - UN Women in Iraq in partnership with the Judiciary Council and Presidency of Public Prosecution in the Kurdistan

Region of Iraq conducted two days of training for 26 (16 female and 10 men) justice professionals from legal investigators and public prosecutors on Gender Based Violence (GBV) law and the application of judicial remedial measures to support women survivors of GBV in their access to justice as well as human explanation and discussion on Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings Law.

The training is within the project of "Enhance government capacity for quality and effective GBV response services in Kurdistan Region of Iraq" and funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and AICS and in partnership with UN Women.

The peacebuilders marathon held in Tikrit

Tikrit, 9 November 2022 - Zahrat Al Iraq Organization (ZIHR) advocated for social cohesion and peace through conducting the peacebuilders marathon with the participation of 120 participants from Tikrit University's sports faculty and with the coordination with the Women Empowerment Department and the governor representative of Salah Al-Din. The event was done in partnership with UN Women and funded through the WPHF.



Representatives of the Swedish International Development Agency meet with civil society organizations in Erbil to discuss their role in the monitoring and implementation of the National Action Plan

Erbil, 16 November 2022 - Representatives of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) met with civil society organizations in Erbil to discuss their role in the monitoring and implementation of the National Action Plan (NAPII). The meeting was facilitated by UNWomen and highlighted the progress, achievements, and challenges faced by CSO's with regards to UN Security Council resolution 1325 and the Iraq National Action Plan.

SIDA representatives also met with the High Council of Women and Development (HCWD) to discuss their achievements on the implementation of the NAPII at the Kurdistan level, the challenges they face, and what is

needed to overcome them. The meeting was led by Dr. Khanzad Ahmad, Secretary general of the HCWD, with

the presence of members from the USNCR1325 board consisting of civil society and UNWomen.



A panel discussion on "Combating Violence against Women in Politics" held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 14 November 2022 - A panel discussion was held entitled "Combating Violence against Women in Politics" to examine ways to combat the different types of violence in politics that women are exposed to in Iraq and provide a supportive environment for increasing and strengthening women's political participation.

This activity was done in partnership with the Department of Women Empowerment and UNDP. Participants included Dr. Yusra Mohsen—Head of the Department of Women Empowerment, Dr. Khanzad Ahmad—Secretary general of the High Council of Women and Development, a number



of female members of the Iraqi Parliament, civil society organizations,

and representatives of the judiciary and political parties.

Layla's story: empowering women in Iraq

Baghdad, 27 November 2022 - UN-Habitat is committed to diversity and inclusion and actively promotes gender equality and women's empowerment throughout its staff. This month, we invited our Community Mobilizer Layla to share with us her professional journey and her experience at UN-Habitat. By leading with the stories of women in UN-Habitat, we continue to foster a supportive environment where inclusivity is expected and prioritized.

Layla, 29 years old, is a Community Mobilizer currently working in the rural town of Sinjar, supporting Japan-funded projects with the aim to support her own community recover from ISIL's occupation. Here she gives an account of what it is like to be a woman in the humanitarian sector.

"Even after 8 years since the genocide perpetrated by ISIL, it is hard for me to speak about the horrific events of that times. Thousands of families were displaced, and hundreds of families

were trapped in the mountains. ISIL left ruins and destruction in our lives. After several months of displacement and harsh conditions, I started working with a local organization supporting survivors of the genocide, meantime I also worked as a volunteer at a refugee camp. In 2017, I started working with UN-Habitat as a Community Mobilizer supporting the people of my area by encouraging them to return to their homes and helping them to rebuild their lives. Over the years, UN-Habitat became as my second family. I am grateful to the organization that I can contribute and support my community, my people and loved ones. I see a great positive impact on the return of lives in the area. With my team's experience and work, I hope that we can create opportunities for more women to take on humanitarian jobs, giving them the ability to participate equally across sectors.

As per Layla's example, UN-Habitat

hopes to raise the profiles of extraordinary female professionals and encourage those who aspire to technical jobs. Together, we can transform the future of women.



Collaborating to advance women's empowerment

Baghdad, 5 December 2022 - United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Gender Unit representatives, Ms. Idah Muema, Senior Gender Adviser, and Ms. Sahar Mahmood, Associate Gender Affairs Officer, met today in Baghdad with Ms. Ala Talabani, adviser to Iraq Prime Minister Mohammed S. Al-Sudani on women affairs. During the meeting, they discussed areas of collaboration to advance women's empowerment including identifying avenues to strengthen women's political participation.



16 Days of Activism: UN calls for action now to end gender-based violence against women and girls in all its forms

Baghdad/Erbil, 25 November 2022 –

To mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the United Nations (UN) in Iraq launches the 16 days of Activism campaign for 2022, and renews its commitment to UNiTe with our national Iraqi partners in addressing violence against women and girls.

Violence has a disproportionate and lasting impact on the lives and wellbeing of women and girls. We are also reminded that over 30% of women and girls worldwide have been subjected to either physical and or sexual violence in their lifetime. Women and girls with disabilities can face even greater risk of violence, as they experience discrimination, exclusion and isolation that heighten barriers to their rights. The Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated gender inequality and widened gender gaps in employment, affecting women and girls' roles in society, leaving them more vulnerable to all forms of violence.

“Violence against women is a destructive pandemic that not only limits social and economic progress and undermines development, but also harms children, families, communities, and the whole nation. The chilling effect of violence is stopping women from taking an active role and participating in public and political life,” said Resident Coordinator Ghulam Isaczai.

He added, “Far too often, this violence or fear of it prevents women and girls from living their lives freely and to their full potential.” “Effective policy actions and legislation as well as their strong enforcements are needed to eliminate violence against women in all its forms and change the attitude regarding these crimes. All women and girls deserve to feel safe, secure, and empowered.”

Ongoing conflict in many countries around the world reveals how women and girls remain systematically targeted by sexual violence. In Iraq, it is estimated that 26% of married, separated, divorced or partnered women aged 15 - 49 face violence in their lifetimes.

The UN works with its national and local Iraqi partners to combat all forms of violence against women and girls through strategic preventative and responsive measures. They support implementation of the National Iraqi Strategy to Combat Violence against Women (2018-2030) and the Second

National Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR)1325, which advocates for women's political participation and their protection from Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

As women and girls make up half the urban population, do more than half the work, do the majority of care work, and are often subjected to sexual and GBV, cities ought to be designed and built with women's and girls' participation and interests in mind. There is room for great improvement of municipal governance, spatial organization, infrastructure, and services to better serve women and girls. Designing and managing cities with and for women will also improve cities for all.

Alongside the Iraqi Women leading the charge and the local organisations doing important work at the community level, the UN in Iraq continues to advocate for the ratification of relevant laws, such as the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, and the full and effective implementation of the Yazidi Survivors Law. They also support the provision of essential legal and healthcare services to survivors to help manage the adverse psychological and physical consequences of violence, which may affect them at all stages of their life.

Countering impunity, silence, stigma and shame surrounding GBV is an important step towards supporting women and girls to lead more prosperous societies and engage of men and boys. This must be accompanied by improved social and economic opportunities so that women and girls can fulfil their educational and professional goals, achieve economic independence through better access to decent work opportunities and social

protection coverage, as well as to decision-making spaces and meaningful participation therein.

GBV exacerbates hunger and malnutrition, and having food security can help break the cycle. The 16 Days campaign is an opportunity to show commitment to ending gender inequality, child marriage and GBV, and the belief that every human being has the right to adequate food and a life without violence.

Let's UNiTe in action toward a world in which women and girls are free from GBV once and for all!

Ghulam Isaczai, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq

Rita Columbia, UNFPA Representative, Iraq

Dina Zorba, UN Women Representative, Iraq and Yemen

Zena Ali-Ahmad, UNDP Iraq Resident Representative

Danielle Bell, OHCHR Representative, Iraq

Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative, Iraq

Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative, Iraq

Sheema Sen-Gupta, UNICEF Representative, Iraq

Wael Al Ashhab, Head of UN Habitat Iraq

Ally-Raza Qureshi, WFP Representative, Iraq

Muhammad Usman Akram, UNOPS Representative, Iraq

Jean-Nicolas Beuze, UNHCR Representative, Iraq

Giorgi Gigauri, IOM Chief of Mission, Iraq

Maha Kattaa, ILO Country Coordinator, Iraq

Paolo Fontani, UNESCO Representative to Iraq



“Chai and Chat” with the SRSG

Erbil, 25 November 2022 - On the eve of the #16DaysOfActivism Against Gender-based Violence, SEED hosted a “Chai & Chat” with Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

With generous support from Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq, members of the Women’s Support Network - including from the UN, NGOs, embassies and consulates, academia and civil society - joined a discussion on the need for effective coalition building among women leaders to increase Gender Equality and combat GBV in Iraq and the Kurdistan region.

Guests also viewed a new photo exhibit, jointly curated by Metrography Agency and SEED and with funding from U.S. Department of State titled #ForEveryWoman, which was at the



Cultural Center at the Citadel and opened to the public between 25

November—10 December 2022. Photos by SEED.

Under the patronage of the Prime Minister, UN Women, UNFPA and WFP collaborated with the Department for Women’s Empowerment to launch the 16 days of activism campaign to combat violence against women and girls



Baghdad, 27 November 2022 - A conference was held to launch the campaign for the 16 days of activism to end violence against women, under the patronage of the Prime Minister Mr. Mohamed Shiaa Al-Sudani, and in collaboration with the Department for Women’s Empowerment at the Council of Ministers, and in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNWomen), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The conference highlighted the decisive role of Iraqi women in public life, through government positions, civil society, and human rights movements in preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls (VAWG). It advocated for the ratification of relevant laws, namely the Anti-Domestic Violence Law (ADVL). It was attended by members of Parliament, government, and civil society, including members of the parliamentary women’s committee, the High Judicial Council, ministries of Labour, Interior, Social

Affairs, and Health, as well as former members of Parliament, experts and academics. In addition, representatives of the international community attended including the Swedish and French Ambassadors, and the Finnish Deputy Ambassador.

The conference was initiated by Dr. Hamid Naeem Al-Ghazi, the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, who stated in his speech that combating violence against women (VAWG) is among the main priorities for the government. He affirmed that the development of the Second National Strategy for Iraqi Women (2023-2030) is an important step to providing legal and social protection to women, in line with the Iraqi constitution and governmental plans.

Mr. Mohamed Shiaa Al-Sudani, the Iraqi Prime Minister, expressed his government’s commitment to further promoting gender equality, and ending violence against women, referencing the importance of the National Iraqi Strategy to Combat Violence against Women (2018-2030). He cited the unprecedented appointment of a female minister to a key ministry in his government; Tayf Sami as Finance Minister, as an important step to empowering Iraqi women, but emphasized that more needs to be done.

Under the patronage of the Prime Minister, UN Women, UNFPA and WFP collaborated with the Department for Women's Empowerment to launch the 16 days of activism... *(continued)*

He said that economic reforms cannot be successful without the inclusion of women, and combating corruption can only be possible with women's support and contribution.

Mrs. Evan Faik, Minister of Displacement and Migration, elaborated on the efforts made by the Ministry to support and protect internally displaced women and girls, highlighting how they face greater risks of violence committed against them.

Dr. Yusra Karim Mohsen, Director General of the Department for Women's Empowerment, stated that protecting women from VAWG is essential to promoting gender equality in Iraqi society, which is enshrined in Iraq's constitution, and is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. She highlighted some of the achievements that the Department has made in this regard including the ongoing implementation of the Second National Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR1325). She also outlined one of the key pillars of the Second National Strategy for Iraqi

women, currently being developed, which focuses on the protection of women and girls. She added that this can only be achieved through empowering women and girls themselves, and through ratifying and modifying laws and legislations to protect women and girls, and by providing the necessary infrastructure to support survivors.

Mrs. Jessica Svärström, Swedish Ambassador, stressed that promoting gender equality and combating gender-based violence is one of Sweden's main objectives in Iraq, in line with Sweden's Development Cooperation Framework with Iraq. Similarly, Mr. Eric Chevalier, French Ambassador, expressed his solidarity and support to Iraqi partners in combatting VAWG, and encouraged Iraq to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, known as the Istanbul Convention. Mrs. Anna Malinen, Finnish Deputy Ambassador, highlighted Finland's priority to combat online violence, which is increasingly being used to harm women and girls, thus affecting

many aspects of their public and private lives.

Dr. Ammar Abdulqahar, Head of Programmes at UNWomen Iraq, highlighted the UN's support to its Iraqi partners to combat all forms of violence against women and girls. He said that the UN is supporting a number of strategic preventative and responsive measures, including the development and implementation of key national strategies. He elaborated on the partnerships UNWomen Iraq has in particular with WFP and UNFPA to strengthen Iraqi women's resilience and improve the access, protection and wellbeing of women and girl survivors of gender-based violence. He also expressed gratitude to the support provided by the Swedish, Finnish and French governments, which has enabled action to be taken on this very important issue.

The speeches were followed by discussions between government, academics and civil society, which focused on the importance of ratifying laws, namely ADVL in order to prevent VAWG, and guarantee the protection of women survivors.

Government of Iraq, Kurdistan Regional Government, UN, and Humanitarian Partners launch the 16 Days of activism against gender-based violence at Let's Talk conference

Erbil, 28 November 2022 – The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)'s annual "Let's Talk" conference this year brought together the UN, NGOs, policymakers, civil society, activists, academia, donors, and the private sector from across Iraq to unite and commit to ending Gender-based Violence (GBV).

The one-day conference was jointly hosted by UNFPA, UN Women, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), and SEED Foundation, in coordination with the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of the Iraqi Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government together with humanitarian and governmental partners. The conference took place with the generous support of international donors: the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Finland,



and KOICA.

Marking the occasion of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence (GBV), the co-hosts sent a strong message of collective action to end all forms of GBV and advocate for

women's empowerment and freedom to exercise their rights—ensuring that “No One is Left Behind.”

The event featured three high-level panels exploring the role of youth, activists, government, international

Government of Iraq, Kurdistan Regional Government, UN, and Humanitarian Partners launch the 16 Days of activism against gender-based violence at Let's Talk conference *(continued)*

partners, and, importantly, men in achieving gender equality and ending violence against women and girls in Iraq.

The event opened with video remarks from Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, Deputy Special Representative, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, who reminded us of the core intention of the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV initiative. "The eradication of GBV is a collective responsibility. We call on everyone to respond to the alarm raised by women and girls and take firm actions to end the violence. Prevention of violence is the responsibility of each one of us," said Mr. Isaczai.

The first panel, moderated by SEED Foundation President, Sherri Kraham Talabany, featured panelists Kwestan Mohammed Abdulla, the Kurdistan Regional Government Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Hanaa Edwar, a women's rights activist, co-founder of Iraqi Al-Amal Association, and Alina L. Romanowski, Ambassador of the United States of America to Iraq to discuss the role of critical actors in driving forward gender equality in Iraq. "Thank you to all the men in the room today; we couldn't end GBV without your support," highlighted Ambassador Romanowski. "We also urge leadership in Baghdad and Erbil to make progress on reforms to promote the role of women and combat GBV. Gender equality drives prosperity and leads to good outcomes for all," US Ambassador added.

On behalf of the Kurdistan Regional Government, his excellency Ano Abdoka stated: "The Kurdistan Regional Government has always worked to eliminate violence against women and any form of gender-based discrimination, and on this day, we emphasize the same unwavering position of the government."

The conference was followed by UNHCR's Deputy Representative in Iraq, Nicol Epting, presenting the Middle East North Africa Nansen Award for Refugees to Dr Nagham Hasan for her remarkable work on Yazidi women survivors. She was awarded the prize for physically and mentally helping Yazidi survivors and former ISIS captives for over six years. Dr Nagham Hasan, a gynecologist and founder of Hope Makers for Women Organization, retreated the importance of supporting gender-based violence victims and the displaced in Iraq,



including Yazidi displaced persons, in her acceptance speech.

The second and third panels, focusing on community mobilization – particularly engaging men and boys and youth activism - featured a vibrant selection of civil society and NGO community panelists.

At the conclusion of the event, the private sector community – Korek Telecom, talabat, Careem, Al-Marmouka, and Click Iraq - pledged their commitment to empowering women and girls from across Iraq and the Kurdistan Region and supporting efforts to end GBV.

- Korek Telecom pledged to build the capacity of 10 women from each of the 19 governorates of Iraq to develop their personal and career skills.

- Talabat is committed to giving young people livelihood opportunities across Iraq from displaced communities.

- Careem pledged to support safe travel for women needing critical protection services by providing discounts to survivors and those at risk of violence.

- Al-Marmouka – Iraq Al-Hadeeth Company, the distributor of Always menstruation pads across Iraq, pledged to raise awareness on menstruation hygiene and provide six months' worth of sanitary pads to 200 girls.

- Click Iraq pledged to train ten young women in social media marketing to develop their skills and will support the trainees through their Job Studio portal to find jobs.

Let us come together and talk about ending gender-based violence to ensure a brighter future for all women in Iraq.

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Here is the text of the DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai's opening remarks:

"Each year, UN agencies with partners commemorate the 16 Days of Activism,



Government of Iraq, Kurdistan Regional Government, UN, and Humanitarian Partners launch the 16 Days of activism against gender-based violence at Let's Talk conference (continued)



commencing on the International Day to End Violence Against Women on November 25 and ending on Human Rights Day on December 10.

The activities fall under the UN Secretary-General's UNiTE initiative to end gender-based violence by 2030.

Violence against women is seen as a fundamental obstacle hindering women's development and society at large.

In Iraq, early and child Marriage remains a widespread phenomenon with estimates as high as 25 percent.

The Conference organized by UNFPA in June 2022 constituted a key event to reinitiate the momentum around addressing this issue in Iraq, with a great commitment from Government actors and Civil Society Organizations at national and sub-national levels.

It is crucial that men and boys are involved and engaged in all activities related to Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls.

UNFPA Iraq has therefore initiated a country-wide exercise to design a strong Male Engagement Strategy

based on a comprehensive scoping assessment with the participation of Government entities, Academia, and Civil Society Organizations at large.

This will provide Gender actors the



necessary tools to effectively engage men and boys in preventing and responding to Gender Based Violence and in promoting Gender Equality.

Today, we reiterate our call to:
 Adopt a comprehensive strategy to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes and all harmful practices such as early marriage that includes awareness-raising and educational efforts;
 Take measures to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes and prejudice towards women and girls belonging to ethnic minority groups as well as from school curricula and textbooks;
 Take measures to accelerate the adoption of the draft Law on Protection against Domestic Violence;
 Ensure the availability of shelters for women victims of violence throughout its territory, strengthen medical and psychological support services for victims, counseling and rehabilitation services, and ensure that those services are appropriately funded and accessible.

Take appropriate measures to ensure the collection of disaggregated data on all forms of gender-based violence against women.

Eradication of Gender Based Violence is a collective responsibility, and we call on everyone to respond to the alarm raised by women and girls and take firm actions to end the violence.

Prevention of violence is the responsibility of each of us."



“Together to end child marriage ”

Dohuk, 30 November 2022 - "Together to end child marriage " is the slogan of a 16-day of activism campaign to eliminate gender-based violence, under which the Baghdad Women's Association implemented an activity to embodied and strengthened the power of women and girls in eliminating violence by celebrating and reminding them of the existence of international days of their own that work to renew the pledge to protect them at the level of national, regional and local all over the world.

In the presence of 53 women and girls from Kabarto 1-2 IDPs camps in Duhok, during the activity, the project staff explained the importance of the 16-day of activism campaign and the date of its establishment, in addition to providing an opportunity to express the continued mitigation of gender-based

violence through drawing, with the aim of delivering a message to women and girls about facing and the elimination of child marriage during the campaign days.

This activity was done under the project the Women Peace and Security in the Arab states - Phase II, in partnership with UN Women and support of the Government of Finland.



Poet Nazik al-Malaika is remembered as the voice of Iraqi women at the European-Iraqi Poetry festival

Baghdad, 1 December 2022 - Iraqi poet Nazik al-Malaika was a pioneer in her time when it came to writings on women's rights, and it is only befitting on her 100th birthday to recall some of her great work. The Iraqi Writers Union and the Inana Network commemorated the legacy of the late poet by launching on 1 December a three-day European-Iraqi Poetry

festival in Baghdad on the anniversary. Nazik al-Malaika's work was recited at the ceremony, which also included an address by the deputy minister of culture and representatives from the European Union, Sweden and UNAMI. The festival coincided with the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based violence.



UNHCR Iraq engaged in 16 Days of Activism

Baghdad, 3 December 2022 - With the support from UNHCR, the Legal Clinic Network held the launching ceremony of the 16Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Baghdad under the slogan: #LetsStopFemicide. This was the first of a series of awareness-raising events. The participants included

representatives from The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, and the community police.

During the event, the participants actively discussed the different types of violence against women and girls and solutions to prevent and stop GBV from humanitarian and legal perspectives.



UNAMI's Human Rights Office commemorates the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence in Basra

Basra, 4 December 2022 -UNAMI's Human Rights Office commemorated the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence today in Basra by screening a UNAMI HRO's advocacy short film "Breaking the Silence" on the need for a specific anti-domestic violence law in Federal Iraq; and

holding a roundtable discussion to strengthen a collective advocacy on the pending anti-domestic violence draft law for Federal Iraq and identify avenues of engagement with the new parliament.

Watch "Breaking the Silence": <https://bit.ly/3ulpOey>



UNITE! Renewed calls for accountability to counter criminal violence against women



Baghdad, 6 December 2022 - Academics, lawyers, women’s rights defenders, and civil society members, together with UNAMI’s Human Rights Office, renewed the call for the Government of Iraq to rigorously pursue accountability for gender-based crimes, including domestic violence. This latest call came during an expert panel discussing institutional and legal reform needed to strengthen the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence. Experts highlighted that the absence of a legislative framework criminalizing domestic violence is a key factor

accounting for its high prevalence throughout Iraq. They emphasized that impunity for domestic violence often results from the application of provisions included in the Iraqi legal framework, such as Article 409 of Iraq’s penal code which provides mitigating factors for so-called “honour killings”. Equally problematic is the common practice of referring domestic violence cases for reconciliation, as enabled by Article 41 of the Penal Code which provides the legal right to husbands to “discipline” their wives. On due diligence, speakers noted that obstacles such as insufficient numbers

of female police officers, conservative mindsets of authorities, slow investigation and lack of follow-up structures impede the effective investigation, prosecution and punishment of gender-based crimes. Concerning the issue of protection, experts recommended that increasing the number of Ministry of Interior Family Protection Units, shelters, and domestic violence courts as well as their adequate staffing with personnel (including women) well-trained on women’s rights would contribute to the better protection of survivors and those at risk. UNAMI recognizes the efforts by authorities to counter violence against women, encourages concerted steps towards prevention, protection and accountability and urges the Council of Representatives to repeal Articles 41 and Article 409 of the Penal Code. UNAMI further calls for the enactment of a law that explicitly criminalizes gender-based violence, in accordance with international human rights standards, together with improved services for survivors and those at risk. The UN family in Iraq will continue to support the Government of Iraq in these efforts.

UNAMI Human Rights Office hosts panel of experts to discuss institutional and legal reform to enhance the protection of women and girls

Baghdad, 6 December 2022 - Within the framework of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the UNAMI Human Rights Office organized a high-level panel of experts that brought together attorneys, judges, civil society activists and human rights defenders to discuss institutional and legal reform to enhance the protection of women and girls. The panel included the following experts who renewed calls for accountability to counter violence against women:

- Judge Sahar Haidar, a Domestic Violence Prosecutor in the Criminal Court of Karkh, who discussed the functioning and gaps in the work of the Domestic Violence Courts and Family Protection Units;
- Dr. Bushra Al-Obaidi, a recognized expert in international criminal law and Professor of Law at Al Rafidain University College, who presented recommendations on how to improve the institutional framework for

domestic violence cases; and -Amal Al-Sajr, a Women’s Rights Attorney, who spoke about her experience representing female victims in over 200 domestic violence cases. Danielle Bell, the Chief United Nations Human Rights Officer in Iraq, in her opening remarks encouraged the Government of Iraq to “rigorously

pursue accountability for gender-based crimes, including domestic violence”. She highlighted that “the absence of specific legal provisions criminalizing domestic violence is a key factor accounting for its high prevalence throughout Iraq”. She further noted that “Article 41 of the Penal Code gives the right of husbands to ‘discipline’



UNAMI Human Rights Office hosts panel of experts to discuss institutional and legal reform ... (continued)

their wives, thereby transforming acts of criminal violence into mere family disputes”.

During the panel discussion, participants discussed various institutional reforms, including facilitating access of women and girls to Family Protection Units. Experts discussed provisions in Iraqi law that have a negative impact on women, including Article 41 of the Penal Code, which shields men from prosecution for any act that constitutes a punishment of his wife, and Article 409 of the same law, which mitigates the sentence of

men convicted for so-called “honour killings.” Panelists highlighted how these gaps in protection discriminate against women.

Dr. Bushra Al-Obaidi noted that “the most violent weapon employed when committing violence against women is the law or legislation”. She highlighted numerous laws that “contribute to discrimination and justify violence against women, promoting a culture of impunity”.

Participants proposed a series of reforms needed to combat this culture of impunity, including repealing

Articles 41 and 409 of the Penal Code. Judge Sahar Haidar cited the need to increase the number of Family Protection Units. Participants called for the adoption of a dedicated Anti-Domestic Violence Law in line with international standards. They also called for facilitating access of survivors and those at risk to services, including shelters and Domestic Violence Courts, in order to further strengthen their protection and guarantee the full spectrum of their rights in Iraq.

Directorate of Combating Violence Against Women and Families launches #16DaysOfActivism in Duhok

Dohuk, 7 December 2022 - SEED was honored to join the Directorate of Combating Violence Against Women and Families (DCVAW)'s launch of #16DaysOfActivism in Duhok, organized by members of the GBV Working Group with support from UNICEF Iraq and UNFPA Iraq.

SEED proudly displayed and sold beautiful handicrafts made by its clients - survivors of violence and those at-risk - from its urban and camp-based centers.

SEED welcomed Mr. Majid Sied Salih the Deputy Governor for Technical Affairs, and the Director General of DCVAW, Ms. Fenik Shafeeq, alongside representatives from the UN, NGOs



and CSOs.

To #EndGBV, we must all be a part of a

conversation - raise your voice against GBV today!

UNAMI Human Rights Office facilitates a roundtable to discuss most effective ways to address domestic violence

Kirkuk, 7 December 2022 - As part of the global campaign of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq facilitated a roundtable discussion which brought together civil society activists, journalists, NGOs, representatives from the Iraqi High Commission of Human Rights as well as representatives from the police, to discuss most effective ways to address domestic violence. Participants highlighted the critical role of all stakeholders in the promotion and protection of human rights of women and girls and concluded that an inclusive process as well as joint advocacy efforts are critical to achieve needed legal and institutional reforms: This includes among other matters the



adoption of an anti-domestic violence law and the facilitating of access of survivors and those at risk to services,

including shelters, Domestic Violence Courts as well as Family Protection Units.

Institutional reforms needed to promote accountability for criminal violence against women, in particular, in domestic settings discussed at a High-Level Policy Dialogue



Erbil, 8 December 2022 - At a closed-door High-Level Policy Dialogue organized by the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the KR Judicial Council and the High Council for Women and Development, key

officials from the Kurdistan Regional Government participated in a discussion on institutional reforms needed to promote accountability for criminal violence against women, in particular, in domestic settings.

Present at the dialogue were 21

participants including the Minister of Interior, the head of the Kurdistan Regional Judicial Council, the Chief General Prosecutor, the Secretary General for the High Council for Women and Development, the Director General of the Directorate to Combat Violence against Women (DCVAW) and United Nations officials.

UNAMI's Chief of Human Rights and the Iraq Representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights proposed technical solutions that will help link government institutions working on violence against women in KRI, to better protect women.

Government officials on their side, committed to continue exploring the best possible ways to prevent and increase accountability for violence against women in the KRI.

Photo courtesy of the High Council for Women and Development KR-I.

DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai: "It is crucial that men and boys are involved and engaged in all activities related to Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls"

Baghdad, 10 December 2022 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, attended the DREAM Conference on 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. Here are his opening remarks:

"Thank you to the Dream Organization for Humanitarian Aid under the auspices of His Excellency Al-Halbousi for inviting me today to speak about this important topic.

Each year, UN agencies with partners commemorate the 16 Days of Activism, commencing on the International Day to End Violence Against Women on November 25 and ending on Human Rights Day on December 10.

The activities fall under the UN Secretary-General's UNiTE initiative to end gender-based violence by 2030 and I am pleased to see that Iraqi society is also reflecting on these important dates by having their own awareness raising events such as the one today.

Violence against women is seen as a fundamental obstacle hindering women's development and society at large.

In Iraq, early and child marriage remains a widespread phenomenon with estimates as high as 25 percent.

It is crucial that men and boys are involved and engaged in all activities related to Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls as we need a whole-of-society approach to Ending Violence Against Women.

Eradication of Gender Based Violence is a collective responsibility, and we call on everyone to respond to the alarm raised by women and girls and take firm actions to end the violence. Prevention of violence is the responsibility of each of us.

Thank you."



16 Days of activism celebrated in the camps

Baghdad, 13 December 2022 - On the 25th of November, the United Nations in Iraq launched the 16 Days of Activism campaign to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Over the past week, and in coordination with local civil society organizations, IOM Iraq teams engaged women and girls living in camps in Erbil, Dohuk and Ninewa Governorates, in health awareness-raising activities. They tackled topics

including the prevention of communicable diseases, women's health, sexual and reproductive health and the role of women in health promotion.

IOM Iraq renews its commitment to support communities and local organizations in addressing gender-based violence and to strengthen women's involvement in health promotion activities in their communities.



U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, visits UNHCR booth during the launch of #16DaysOfActivism2022 in Erbil

Erbil, 17 December 2022 - H.E. Alina L. Romanowski, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, visited the UNHCR booth during the launch of #16DaysOfActivism2022 in Erbil.

The Ambassador stopped at the booth and listened to a short brief about UNHCR and partners' work to combat

gender-based-violence in Iraq.

UNHCR in Iraq would like to take this opportunity to thank the US Government and the American people for the continuous and generous donations that help UNHCR allocate funds for people in need when and where it is needed the most.



UN Women continues women's capacity building in various fields

Baghdad, 20 December 2022 – UN Women in Iraq in cooperation with various civil society organizations, and with generous funding by Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), continues capacity building of Iraqi women and girls in various fields. Here are just few of many events held recently:

On 15 December Jinda Organization strengthened the capacities of 60 women on communications, public speaking, negotiation and problem solving in Dohuk and Hamdaniya to enhance their meaningful participation in conflict prevention processes.

On 15 December Information Center for Research & Development (ICRD) strengthened the capacities of 48 of decision makers and youth activists through a discussion session under the title of: "the impact of the increasing rates of drug usage and cases of violence" within the 16 Days of Activism in Thi Qar.

On 12 December Iraqi Women Journalists Forum (IWJF) developed

the capacities of 21 media activists through a workshop on media advocacy campaigning for women in Salah Al-Din.

On 12 December Zahrat Al Iraq Organization (ZIHR) strengthened the capacities of 23 of ZIHR staff and volunteers on conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Salah Al-Din.

On 8 December Civil Development Organization (CDO) in partnership with Pasewan Organization strengthened the capacities, knowledge, awareness and networking with 25 key persons in the community including religious men, mukhtars and government officials to increase awareness on the UNSCR 1325, Iraqi NAP, and the role of women in conflict resolution through conducting one seminar in Kirkuk.

On 30 November 2022 in Erbil, UN Women in Iraq in partnership with the Judiciary Council and Presidency of Public Prosecution in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq conducted two days training for 27 (14 female and 13 men)

justice professionals from legal investigators and public prosecutors on GBV law and the application of judicial remedial measures to support women survivors of GBV in their access to justice as well as human explanation and discussion on Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings Law.

This activity was done under the project Enhance government capacity for quality and effective GBV response services in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and AICS.

On 25 November 2022 in Basra, Information Center For Research & Development (ICRD) strengthened the capacities of 48 of decision makers and youth activists through a discussion session under the title of: "The Impact of the Increasing Rates of Drug Usage and Cases of Violence" within the 16 days of activism in Thi Qar. The session was conducted in partnership with UN Women and funded through the WPHF.



UNAMI Human Rights and INSM for Digital Rights in Iraq launch user guide on digital security for Iraqi human rights defenders

Baghdad, 31 October 2022 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI HRO), in partnership with INSM for Digital Rights in Iraq, launched today the “Online Protection and Digital Security: User Guide for Human Rights Defenders”. This user-friendly guidance, available in Arabic, English and Kurdish, provides critical knowledge about concrete tools and strategies for human rights defenders and other activists as well as journalists to increase their safety and privacy online.

The launch coincides with Cybersecurity Awareness Month, themed “Protect your Digital Life”, and supports the Secretary-General’s 2020 Call to Action on the vision linking digital technologies to a new frontier for human rights.

In Iraq, human rights defenders increasingly rely on digital technology to monitor and advocate for human rights or to share their opinions, promote debate and mobilise. Nonetheless, malicious actors have also used these online platforms to threaten, intimidate and harass activists.

“This guidance provides individual users of digital technology in Iraq, in particular human rights defenders, with practical information on how to



mitigate online risks, protect their privacy and data, and preserve their rights and freedoms online”, stated Danielle Bell, the UNAMI Human Rights Chief and Representative of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Iraq. “With this effort, we aim to reach as many users as possible to provide them with the knowledge and tools necessary for them to be able to safely and freely conduct their work”.

Hayder Hamzoz, Founder of INSM for

Digital Rights in Iraq, reiterated that “the ability of Iraqis to safely navigate the digital space is a top priority for INSM and this guidance serves as a critical step to achieve this objective”. Since 2021, UNAMI HRO and INSM have provided hands-on digital security training to over 230 human rights defenders, journalists and activists. In addition, dozens of civil society organizations have received tailor-made assessments to improve their digital security profiles.

HRO’s projects enhance online civic space and freedom of expression in Iraq



Beirut, Lebanon, 17 November 2022 – From 15-17 November, the UNAMI Human Rights Office (HRO)

participated in the Bread&Net conference organized by SMEX in Beirut, Lebanon.

The UNAMI HRO delivered a session on how the HRO’s projects enhance online civic space and freedom of expression in Iraq, with a focus on its latest projects on digital security and digital rights.

The yearly conference aims to promote and defend digital rights across Arabic speaking countries. Hundreds of activists, technologists, journalists, researchers, lawyers, academics, entrepreneurs, and human rights defenders from around the world participated in the conference to discuss digital rights and digital freedoms.

To learn more about the HRO’s digital security and digital rights projects, and to download its new “Online Protection and Digital Security: User Guide for Human Rights Defenders” in Arabic, English, and Kurdish, click at: <https://bit.ly/3TI3A0r>

Interactive workshop for 10 young Iraqi artists on the promotion of human rights through visual arts held in Baghdad

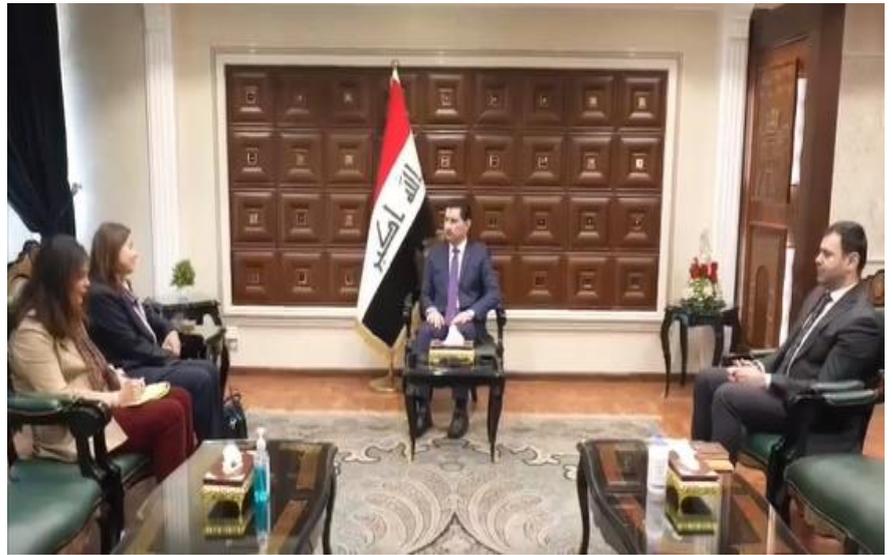
Baghdad, 10 November 2022 - The UNAMI Human Rights Office, in cooperation with the NGO Tarkib, organised an interactive workshop in Baghdad for 10 young Iraqi artists on the promotion of human rights through visual arts. Participants (including eight male and two female artists)

discussed the role of arts in promoting the right to freedom of expression, women and children's rights, and the rights of minorities as well as how art can be used as a medium to highlight and articulate the situation of vulnerable groups.



The selection process for the new Board of Commissioners of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights discussed

Baghdad, 15 November 2022 - The Head of the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Danielle Bell, met in Baghdad with the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Dr. Shakhwan Abdullah to discuss the selection process for the new Board of Commissioners of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights, including the work procedures of the Committee of Experts in nominating new members for the Board of Commissioners. UNAMI welcomes the steps taken by the House of Representatives to initiate this process and encourages that selection procedures be carried out in accordance with relevant procedures in domestic law and in line with the Paris Principles.



UNAMI HRO discusses human rights with components of the South

Basra, 15 November 2022 - Today, the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) held a panel discussion in Basra with 18 representatives of the components in southern Iraq, and discussed opportunities and challenges to promote the human rights of the components, social cohesion, peaceful

coexistence, and the safe return of the displaced to their original communities. Participants also identified strategies to address the human rights concerns of minorities and developed an action plan to assist them in creating a common roadmap to enhance the protection of minorities and their inclusion in society.



A briefing session with a particular focus on human rights aspects of the Mission's work held for the students of the Knowledge University in Erbil

Erbil, 16 November 2022 - The UNAMI Human Rights Office, in coordination with Knowledge University (KNU) in Erbil, organized a briefing session with a particular focus on human rights aspects of the Mission's work. 25 students and four professors from the Department of International Relations of Knowledge University participated in the session. The students were briefed on UNAMI's

human rights monitoring and reporting, focusing on priority areas of work in the Kurdistan region, including freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and the administration of justice among other topics. Participants discussed different avenues of advocacy on how to efficiently promote accountability, strengthen the rule of law, and protect human rights in the Kurdistan Region

and Iraq. Moreover, the UNAMI's Office of Electoral Assistance provided an overview of its work, highlighting support to elections on the national as well as regional level.



UNAMI's Human Rights Office holds a roundtable with the Iraqi Ministry of Interior in Kirkuk on due process rights of defendants under Iraqi and international law



Kirkuk, 23 November 2022 - UNAMI's Human Rights Office held a roundtable with the Iraqi Ministry of Interior in Kirkuk on the due process rights of defendants under Iraqi and international law. Thirteen Ministry

of Interior officers, including eleven males and two females, attended the roundtable, which focused on the Iraqi and international human rights law framework protecting the right to legal counsel, the right to remain silent and the right to prepare an adequate defence.

The roundtable also covered the legal framework governing legitimate arrests and investigations as well as the prohibition of torture. UNAMI Human Rights Officers discussed the Iraqi Criminal Procedure Code, the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and the International Convention for Protection from Enforced Disappearance. The roundtable also touched on strengthening the administration of justice by combating corruption.

“Baghdad Walk” – emerging Iraqi conceptual artists convey lived experiences and perceptions of human rights in Iraq



Baghdad, 26 November 2022 - “Baghdad Walk”, a mobile group exhibition and a narrative art walk by emerging young Iraqi artists, colored Baghdad’s historic al-Rasheed Street this weekend with their lived experiences and perceptions of human rights.

Walking through the street exhibition in solidarity and viewing the impressive displays on Friday 25 November, Chief of UNAMI’s Human Rights Office Danielle Bell explained the power of art in connecting and in expressing one’s views. “Each exhibition and installation powerfully

conveyed the lived experiences and perceptions of human rights of Iraqi youth expressionist artists. Art is intricately linked to the right to the freedom of expression, as it communicates ideas, social grievances and emotions that cannot be expressed in words.”

The exhibition showcases installations and conceptual artworks as well as performances and interventions in public space. It is a joint project of TARKIB and the Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq.

In advance of the exhibition, in September and November, UNAMI Human Rights Office organized two interactive workshops for Tarkib on the promotion of human rights through visual arts, and provided mentorship to the artists on how to bring human rights themes through in their work.

UNAMI HRO conducts a five-day-training aimed at developing and enhancing advocacy skills of youth activists from Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 27 November 2022 - As part of its support to youth human rights activists, the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) conducted a five-day-training aimed at developing and enhancing advocacy skills of youth activists from Kirkuk. Sixteen

participants from various communities in Kirkuk were trained on a wide range of storytelling methodologies including short digital film making, cartoon development and photography, which will support the promotion and protection of minority rights in their local community and serve as good

examples of voluntary activities and youth activism across Iraq.

The training also provided participants an opportunity to exchange ideas and find common solutions to shared concerns on peacebuilding and reconciliation.



UNAMI Human Rights Chief welcomes continued engagement with KR Chief Justice on countering domestic violence

Erbil, 28 November 2022 - UN delegation led by Danielle Bell, Chief of the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) was received today in Erbil by Justice Abdul Jabbar Aziz Hassan, President of the Kurdistan Regional Judicial Council. The UNAMI Human Rights Chief welcomes continued engagement with KR Chief Justice on countering domestic violence.



Yazidi female survivors came together for a second workshop hosted by UNAMI Human Rights Office

Dohuk, 29 November 2022 - Today, Yazidi female survivors came together for a second workshop hosted by the UNAMI Human Rights Office to generate ideas and inspiration for income generation. There is a wealth of talent and skill that these women will be drawing on going forward. UNAMI stands with survivors.



UNAMI Human Rights Office organizes a roundtable in Mosul on “Children Born of Conflict”

Mosul, 7 December 2022 - UNAMI Human Rights Office organized a roundtable today in Mosul, on Children Born of Conflict, with local authorities,

civil society and international partners. Participants discussed rights of the vulnerable children, protection gaps and best practices. They agreed on

recommendations and a coordination strategy to support the children.

Protecting and promoting minorities rights

Erbil, 7 December 2022 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) held a workshop on “Law No. 5 of (2015) for the Protection of Minorities in the Kurdistan Region: Challenges and Opportunities”. The workshop included 24 participants, including (11 women and 13 men) Baha’is, Chaldean Christians, Assyrians, Armenians, Yazidis, Jews, Kaka’is, Mandaeans, Turkmens, Zoroastrians, in addition to Arabs, as well as the Department of Religious and National Components Affairs in the Presidency of the Kurdistan Region. Iraq, representatives of the Independent Commission for Human Rights, representatives of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, the representative of the Directorate of Ethnic and Religious Minorities, and the Chancellery of the Kurdistan Regional Parliament. Discussions centered on the laws,

mechanisms, policies, and programs put in place by the Kurdistan Regional Government to promote and protect the rights of people belonging to ethnic and religious groups in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Participants also stressed that the KRG, civil society organizations, constituent communities and individuals share a common responsibility to preserve and respect Iraq’s diverse national, ethnic, linguistic and religious heritage. Participants also highlighted the need to support the government’s efforts to

enhance the protection of constituent groups, and the need to consult these groups on future legislative processes to ensure effective participation in public affairs.

This workshop is the fourth out of five workshops that started in October with the aim of increasing awareness and knowledge about the importance of strengthening the protection of minority rights in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq as well as stimulating stronger participation of all stakeholders.



UNAMI HRO raises capacities of lawyers towards broader protection of freedom of opinion and expression in Iraq



Baghdad, 10 December 2022 - On 25 November 2022 in Baghdad the UNAMI Human Rights Office, in collaboration with the Iraqi Bar Association, launched a three-day specialized training course for 21 lawyers (9 women and 12 men) from various governorates under the theme, "Raising the capacities of lawyers towards broader protection of freedom

of opinion and expression in Iraq". This course focuses on the national and international frameworks protecting the right to freedom of expression, limits to this right under applicable laws, and the role of UN Special Procedures in protecting human rights defenders and freedom of expression, among other topics. "The enjoyment of human rights and

freedoms is extended to legal advocacy," said Danielle Bell, Chief of the UNAMI Human Rights Office, in her opening remarks, adding that "a strong community of lawyers who are competent to challenge unlawful interference with freedom of expression is critical to achieve accountability for such violations".

Similar training was organized in Basra on 10 December 2022. 18 lawyers (eight women and 10 men) from various southern governorates in Iraq participated.

This course was organized at the request of the Iraqi Bar Association as a priority need to enhance the capacity of lawyers on this theme. This is the last in a series of three workshops, with the first held in Baghdad from 25 to 27 November and the second in Najaf from 1 to 3 December 2022.

These workshops were sponsored by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights under the initiative, "Global Drive for Media Freedom, Access to Information and the Safety of Journalists".

UNAMI HRO organizes a roundtable discussion in Dohuk focused on civic space

Dohuk, 12 December 2022 - The UNAMI Human Rights Office (HRO), in cooperation with the Kurdistan Region's Office of the Coordinator for International Advocacy, organized a roundtable discussion in Dohuk with representatives from various security services, including Asayish and members from different police departments.

HRO briefed on its work in relation to human rights monitoring and reporting, with a particular focus on civic space. Participants discussed concrete measures security forces could implement in order to strengthen the promotion and protection of critical human rights in the Kurdistan Region, including freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly.



UNAMI HRO holds workshop on "Mechanisms for the Protection of Minority Rights in the Ninewa Plains" in Mosul

Mosul, 13 December 2022 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) held today a workshop on "Mechanisms for the Protection of Minority Rights in the Ninewa Plains."

The workshop included 24 participants from the Turkmen, Christian, Shabak, Kaka'i and Yazidi societal components, and representatives of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR). The discussions centered on the situation of ethnic and religious societal components in the Ninewa Plains and the mechanisms, policies and programs to be put in place to promote and protect their rights.

Participants stressed that the governorate, civil society organizations, constituent communities and individuals share a common responsibility to preserve and respect Iraq's diverse national, ethnic, linguistic, and religious heritage. Participants also highlighted the need to support the government's efforts to enhance the protection of societal components, and the need to consult these groups on future legislative processes to ensure effective participation in public affairs.

This workshop is a part of an ongoing UNAMI/Human Rights Office project regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of component groups in Iraq.



Grassroots efforts have been instrumental in advancing transitional justice

Sinjar, 12 December 2022 - Grassroots efforts have been instrumental in advancing transitional justice for those impacted by ISIL's 2014 genocide against Iraq's Yazidi, Turkmen, Christian and Shabak communities.

In early December, a group of activists from Baghdad, Kirkuk, Bashiqa and Sheikhan visited Sinjar – site of the massacre that marked the beginning of ISIL's genocidal campaign – for a two-day exchange visit with activists and representatives from the local community.

The visit was organized by IOM Iraq and the House of Co-Existence, a cultural and social center in Sinuni dedicated to bringing together youth from various religious and ethnic backgrounds. The House of Co-Existence hosted the activists for a discussion of key challenges and community demands regarding transitional justice, governance and

security, as well as the engagement of civil society in these three areas. Guest activists shared their experiences and expressed solidarity with their Sinjar peers.

On the second day, the activists visited Kocho village, the site of another ISIL massacre against Yazidis in 2014. There, they paid respect to the killed and still-missing inhabitants of the

village, and discussed efforts to address the legacy of genocide in the area – including the rehabilitation of Kocho and the construction of a memorial site – with community leader, Sheikh Naif Jaso.

This exchange visit was made possible by support from the Government of Germany.



UNAMI HRO holds a briefing on its work in relation to human rights monitoring and reporting, with a particular focus on civic space

Erbil, 14 December 2022 - The UNAMI Human Rights Office (HRO), in cooperation with the Kurdistan Region's Office of the Coordinator for International Advocacy, organized a roundtable discussion in Erbil with representatives from various security services, including Asayish, the Counter-Terrorism Directorate, the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs and members from different police departments.

HRO briefed on its work in relation to human rights monitoring and

reporting, with a particular focus on civic space. Participants discussed concrete measures security forces could implement in order to strengthen the promotion of critical human rights in the Kurdistan Region, including freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly. Among other matters, participants identified an inclusive dialogue between security services and civil society as a crucial component for the effective protection of human rights.



UNAMI Human Rights Office implements workshops for civil society organizations on the United Nations Protection Mechanisms

Dohuk/Sulaymaniyah, 17 December 2022 – The UNAMI Human Rights Office implemented a two-day workshop for twenty representatives of civil society organizations in Dohuk on 10 December and in Sulaymaniyah on 17 December for twenty-seven representatives. The training aimed at enhancing the understanding of civil society organizations of United Nations Protection Mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review, the Special Procedures and the Treaty Monitoring Bodies of the United Nations. Participants discussed the role of civil

society actors on how to work most effectively with these mechanisms, in

order to successfully contribute to the implementation of human rights.



UNAMI HRO celebrates the 30th Anniversary of Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

Baghdad, 18 December 2022 – UNAMI Human Rights Office organized an event to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities by the United Nations General Assembly. The last of the series of five roundtable discussions about the importance of strengthening the protection of minority rights in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region which started in October also held alongside the celebration. The roundtable discussion centered on the 2022 “Review, Rethink and Reform” theme of the Declaration’s 30th anniversary, encouraging review of the existing mechanisms and legal frameworks, rethinking the role of human rights defenders in promoting the human rights of minorities, and

reform of the Declaration’s protection and implementation framework. A total of 50 participants (15 women and 25 men, and 10 children) from Iraq’s diverse ethno-religious components, along with their family members, participated in the event. The Adviser to the Prime Minister on Human Rights, Mr. Zidan Atouan and representatives of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) also attended the event. The event also featured cultural dance by children and music from diverse minority communities. “Today marks the thirty-year anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The Declaration is of relevance in Iraq, which is one of the world’s most diverse



countries with respect to its cultural, ethnic and religious heritage”, said Danielle Bell, Chief, Human Rights Office, United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and Representative, United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Iraq, in her opening remarks.

Recommendations made by the participants included coordination of collective efforts to counter hate speech, implementation of the provisions of the Iraqi National Human Rights Plan concerning component groups, curriculum reform and the enactment of relevant legislation concerning diversity protection and anti-discrimination. The outcome of the discussions will be shared with the Government.



How to maneuver safely through cyberspace

Sulaymaniyah, 18 December 2022 - The UNAMI Human Rights Office partnered with INSM Network to provide practical training in Najaf to a group of 35 (16 females and 19 males) human rights defenders, activists, journalists, bloggers, and lawyers on how to safely maneuver through cyberspace.

The training focused on improving digital security and increasing knowledge and awareness of digital rights in Iraq. Participants were introduced to practical tools to strengthen the safety of their digital environment, including communication, data storage, as well as protection from hacking, among other topics. UNAMI Human Rights Office delivered a session on how to identify and counter hate speech online, in order to promote online spaces where diversity is promoted and respected.

It was the fourth in a series of four workshops held on this topic, with the previous ones held in Baghdad (14 and 15 October 2022), Basra (21 and 22

October 2022), and Mosul (4 and 5 November 2022).

Same training was held in Sulaymaniyah (17 December 2022) for 15 (7 female and 8 male) human rights defenders, activists, journalists, bloggers, and lawyers on how to safely maneuver through cyberspace. This activity concludes Phase II of HRO’s

project on digital security and digital rights, which included in-person practical training on this thematic issue. Phase I of this project was conducted online during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021.

Both Phase I and Phase II of this project were delivered at the request of activists for training on digital security.



Language diversity preserves and protects the universality and indivisibility of human rights in Iraq

Baghdad, 10 December 2022 – In a nation as richly diverse as Iraq, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is particularly relevant and powerful. Its guarantee of human rights without distinction of nationality, gender, national or ethnic origin, religion, language, or any other status, serves to unite Iraqis in their shared aspiration to achieve equality, freedom and human dignity. So, it comes as no surprise that it will gain

more traction when it is translated into eight national minority languages.

To mark the launch of a year-long campaign leading up to next year's 75th anniversary of UDHR and leading up to International Human Rights Day, the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights Iraq, through UNAMI's Human Rights Office, coordinated the efforts of linguistic experts from across Iraq's component groups to translate the UDHR's 30 Articles. These

translations into Avesta, Bahdinan, Faili Kurd, Macho, Mandaic, Shabaki, Sumerian and Turkmen are now available online alongside Arabic, Kurdish and Kurmanji.

The translation process took over two years. It brought together community representatives, linguists, translators, academics, other language experts, civil society organizations and human rights defenders. Language required countless hours of discussion, collaboration, and linguistic and legal analysis to capture the meaning and spirit of each individual human right.

The UDHR, proclaimed in 1948, has provided a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations, setting out a broad range of human rights and fundamental freedoms to which everyone, everywhere around the world, are always entitled.

The detailed and careful translation process into the minority languages in Iraq served as a powerful and inclusive means of entrenching the meaning of the universal norms of UDHR into the local communities, and of reinforcing the link between them and the global human rights family.



Living with Disabilities

International Dwarfism Awareness Day celebrated in Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 25 October 2022 – Here are the remarks by Mr. Riccardo Ceva, Head of UNAMI Kirkuk Office a.i. at the event marking International Dwarfism Awareness Day:

“Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished guests,

25 October of every year is International Dwarfism Awareness Day. The Day is not just about the height of a person; it's more than that. It is a Day about how a unique community overcoming physical barriers and exclusion to seize opportunities and progress. It is a day to raise awareness about the challenges faced and to promote an inclusive society in all aspects of daily life from representation in the political sphere to economic prosperity.

The United Nations promotes respect for the human rights of all people ensuring the fundamental principles of equality, inclusivity and non-discrimination are applied for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, in the delivery of

services for those in need and inclusive participation of people of all backgrounds in decision-making processes.

The UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), adopted by the Secretary General in 2019, provides the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress and approach

on disability inclusion through all pillars of the work of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights, and development. Through this Strategy, the United Nations system reaffirms that the full and complete realization of the human rights of all persons with disabilities is an inalienable, integral and indivisible



International Dwarfism Awareness Day celebrated in Kirkuk *(continued)*

part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Strategy aims to strengthen accessibility for persons with disabilities and the mainstreaming of their rights, and includes a system-wide policy, an accountability framework and other implementation modalities.

The strategy will systematically embed the rights of persons with disabilities, including those affected by Dwarfism, into UN work, both externally, through programming, and internally through necessary technical support and advice, and will build trust and confidence among persons with disabilities to ensure that they are valued and their dignity and rights are respected and

that, in the workplace, they find an enabling environment in which to fully and effectively participate on an equal basis with others.

Article 27 of The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) states that persons with disabilities have the same right to work and get jobs as everyone else. Furthermore, the motto of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is "Leave no one behind"; and SDG Number 8 is specific to ensure employment and decent work for all people, including those with disabilities.

Since its establishment in 2003, UNAMI has worked to promote and

defend the human rights of all Iraqi citizens without distinction. In this context, the UNAMI Office in Kirkuk engaged in several meetings with people with disabilities and, more recently, launched an internship opportunity for people with disabilities to give them a chance to experience how the UN operates in the field. It is with such steps that we affirm our commitment to provide persons with disabilities with opportunities for participation on an equal footing with all other Iraqis to ensure they are able to enjoy the same standards of equality, rights and dignity as everyone else.

Thank you.”

IOM presents Report ‘Deaf People in Iraq, A Cultural-Linguistic Minority: Their Rights and Vision for Inclusion’ in Baghdad

Baghdad, 27 November 2022 -

Today, IOM held a high-level event to present recommendations from the report ‘Deaf People in Iraq, A Cultural-Linguistic Minority: Their Rights and Vision for Inclusion’ to representatives from the Iraqi Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education.

The report was developed by IOM Iraq, in partnership with The Iraqi Disabled - IADO and with support from the Government of Australia.



UNITAD on Twitter

Baghdad, 3 December 2022 - On International Day of Persons with disabilities (#IDPD2022), UNITAD reminds of the traumatic experiences and the pain which survivors of ISIL crimes endure, associated in many cases with physical disfigurement and a profound impact on mental health.

UNITAD's Witness Protection and Support Unit, ensures inclusive assistance to witnesses, with accessible interviewing facilities, trauma informed practices and psychosocial support to survivors as they participate in justice processes for ISIL international crimes in Iraq.

IOM is proud to launch its 2022-2024 Disability Inclusion Strategy for Iraq

Baghdad, 3 December 2022 - Guided by the disability movement slogan ‘Nothing about us, without us’, IOM is proud to launch its 2022-2024 Disability Inclusion Strategy for Iraq, which has one of the largest populations of persons with disabilities in the world.

The Strategy outlines six goals, including the continued integration of the priorities and requirements of persons with disabilities across the full spectrum of IOM Iraq programming, with a special focus on accessibility in

all construction efforts – from housing to community centres and more.

IOM Iraq will work toward these goals taking into account the diverse and intersecting identities of persons with disabilities, reaffirming its commitment to meaningful engagement with and accountability to them and their representative organizations.

Find the 2022-2024 Disability Inclusion Strategy at:

<https://bit.ly/3Gji7LE>



On International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the UN calls for strengthened efforts to ensure an inclusive society in Iraq

Baghdad, 3 December 2022 – The United Nations (UN) joins the Government of Iraq and the international community in observing 3 December, recognized globally as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This day aims to promote an understanding of disability issues of people affected by natural disabilities and those induced by the war against terrorism, and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being for those in need, in accordance with Iraq's national and international commitments.

Iraq has one of the largest populations of persons with disabilities in the world, disproportionately impacted by decades of war and economic hardship. Their challenges could be exacerbated by stigma and discrimination.

In June 2019, the United Nations Secretary General launched the UN Disability Strategy. The Strategy provides the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the UN's work. Through the Strategy, the United Nations system reaffirms that the full and complete realization of the human rights of all persons with disabilities is an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The UN is committed to support the

Iraqi Government in upholding the dignity, rights and well-being of people with disabilities, including children living with disabilities.

In Iraq, the UN system also has a role to play in promoting a rights-based approach in the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance through its work, including, but not limited to:

- Supporting the Government of Iraq, and working jointly with the private sector and civil society, to promote an inclusive society for persons with disabilities, as concerns infrastructure, systems and policies;
- Championing persons with disabilities' rights and equitable access to all services;
- Advocating for more economic and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- Ensuring access of children and young people with disabilities to inclusive and quality education;
- Supporting organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs);
- Amplifying the stories of persons with disabilities;
- Improving accessibility of spaces, reading material and more, to accommodate participation in events and access to opportunity from people with a diverse range of disabilities;
- Promote their meaningful engagement in decision-making

processes;

- Develop and share information in accessible formats, including instructions, directions and notifications.

The approaches must be inclusive and follow the “Nothing About Us, Without Us” motto; persons with disabilities must be consulted about the needs and challenges they face to better inform humanitarian and development programming.

“On 3 December, as every day, we must remember that the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities must be promoted within all spheres of society,” said UN Resident Coordinator Ghulam Isaczai. “The UN in Iraq will continue to uphold this commitment and advocate for realizing the rights of persons with disabilities as part of an investment in a common future.”

We must all continue to be guided by persons with disabilities and OPDs as they express their needs across every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life, and also join them in celebrating their successes.

The United Nations in Iraq remains committed to support the Government of Iraq to strengthen efforts for the implementation of its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



Working together, we can protect our most vulnerable populations, particularly people with disabilities



Mosul, 4 December 2022 - To promote the rights and needs of Persons with Disability, UNFPA and the Embassy of Finland in Iraq celebrated the International Day of

Persons with Disability at the UNFPA-supported Al-Hadbaa Youth Center in Mosul.

Young people took part in organizing the event and communicated their

struggles through arts and sports to ensure inclusion and equal treatment.

During the day, two heroes told their stories of how they faced bullying and discrimination. Still, they overcame them by attending psychosocial support sessions and life-skills education courses. Through 2 social theater plays, young people raised awareness of the obstacles they face in their daily lives. And finally, the day ended with a friendly basketball match between the Al-Hadbaa Youth Centre and the Nineveh Paralympic team.

Finland and UNFPA promote the rights of persons with disabilities to live without discrimination, stigma and violence.

[Let's meet the heroes](#)

"I will continue studying and open my own private business project", Ahmed started telling us his story, "we are creative, inspiring, persistent youth

Working together, we can protect our most vulnerable populations, particularly people with disabilities *(continued)*

and we are capable of doing anything". "I felt that I am a new person after joining this center; YES, I am a vital member in my community ", Ahmed added.

"We are the heroes", said Ahmad Rajab with shining eyes and energetic face.

"They were and still are full of energy, but felt constrained by being in wheelchairs. Those young guys found it in sport which was a splendid way for them to feel that they could still be part of something bigger than themselves,"

Younis said excitedly after winning in the basketball match at the UNFPA and Finland-supported Al-Hadbaa Youth Center in Mosul.

Did you know, that the percentage of people with disabilities in Iraq surpasses those of neighboring countries?

Ninawa has the highest rate of children and adolescents with disability in Iraq (33.2%). Most of them don't attend school in Ninawa.

"This project with UNFPA will

hopefully make a difference in the lives of adolescents and youth with disabilities in Mosul," H.E Matti Lassila, the Finnish Ambassador to Iraq, stated from Ninawa on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. UNFPA commends Finland for its continuous support of reproductive health and rights of PWD and for promoting life skills education in Iraq.

Including and empowering persons with disabilities: Equal rights and a life free of violence



Mosul, 14 December 2022 - "Now I believe that there is nothing impossible; disability will not stop me from going ahead in my life ", Ahmed started telling us his story.

Ahmed lived in Mosul with his family when the war with ISIS started. He was 15 years old when ISIS destroyed a neighbour's house. Living through this nightmare, Ahmed developed a psychological trauma. Later it developed into Wilson's neurological disease that caused loss of movement and speaking.

His sudden loss of speech and movement caused him much suffering. "I felt marginalised by society because of my disability, and they treated me as if I could not do anything. I left school, my life changed, and my dreams were ruined." - he said.

Ahmed struggled a lot trying to live as he used to before. However, his inability to take care of himself, discrimination, and stigma from the community affected his mental health.

He fell into depression.

Ahmed is one out of 4,800 youths with disability of 22,995 registered people with disabilities who live in Ninawa Governorate. His story is not unique; many other adolescents and youth with disabilities go through the same experience and lose hope for the future. Luckily for Ahmed, he found a new path toward a better life when he saw a post on Facebook about disability-friendly youth centres in Mosul. The services provided by these centres were interesting to Ahmed and, most importantly, accessible to young people like him. He immediately joined one of the youth centres, and his new life started.

Ahmed participated in various courses in the youth centre, such as life-skills learning and sports activities. He also got access to physical therapy. Engaging with peers, learning new skills, and receiving physical therapy helped Ahmed build his confidence and strength to move and become more

positive about his life. "I was encouraged to get out of the house and engage in learning and voluntary work. My health, psychological and physical conditions tremendously improved. My body responded better by moving my fingers and walking around. I got to know wonderful people who became like my family," said Ahmed enthusiastically.

Today, Ahmed is a more powerful and self-confident young man. He communicates with people through writing. "I study and continue learning new skills. I dream that one day I will get a good job, become independent and help my family", concluded Ahmad with a happy smile.

These positive changes in Ahmed's life became possible thanks to a special initiative for adolescents and youth with disability launched by UNFPA with support from Finland and in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, and the governor of Ninevah. The project covers three youth centres in Mosul and helps young people with disabilities to study, receive the necessary support and become engaged with peers in a friendly environment. In eleven months, about 450 young people have benefited from the disability-friendly classes and services, and about a thousand adolescents with disabilities have received mental and psychosocial support.

UNFPA in Iraq works to promote the human rights of women and young persons with disabilities and places access to sexual and reproductive health services, information and education for persons with disabilities at the core of the programme.

UNAMI Human Rights Office and 13 journalists, activists and representatives from press freedom organizations gathered to discuss current media climate

Baghdad, 2 November 2022 - Today, 2 November, is the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, and marks the 10th anniversary of the UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists. The UN Plan of Action aims to create a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers, with a view to strengthening peace, democracy and development worldwide.

To mark the day, UNAMI Human Rights Office and 13 journalists, activists and representatives from press freedom organizations gathered to discuss the current media climate, as well as challenges journalists, bloggers and other press workers face to their safety and security. The group brainstormed advocacy strategies and discussed ongoing work to promote freedom of expression and increased

press freedom in 2023 and beyond. UNAMI HRO also shared its newly released guidance, "Online Protection and Digital Security: User Guide for Human Rights Defenders". This user-friendly guidance, available in Arabic,

English and Kurdish, provides critical knowledge about concrete tools and strategies for human rights defenders and other activists as well as journalists to increase their safety and privacy online.



UNESCO Iraq Office takes part in three events on International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists

Baghdad, 3 November 2022 - UNESCO Iraq Office is contributing directly and indirectly to three local activities taking place today in Iraq on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, in Baghdad, Basra and Erbil.

UNESCO welcomed the high-level Iraqi delegation to the international conference in Vienna, Austria. UNESCO Iraq Office's CI Officer, Dhea Subhe, is accompanying the Iraqi government delegation to the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists which is taking place from November 1 to 5.

At the same time, UNESCO Iraq Office

is sponsoring the dispatch of a group of Iraqi activists in the field of protecting journalists to the regional conference to protect journalists and combat impunity in Tunisia from 2-3 November, which is being held by UNESCO offices in the Arab region and North Africa.

UNESCO Iraq's CI Officer, is representing the Arab region and North Africa at the International Conference to End Impunity in Austria, where he will present the Arab regional plan to protect journalists and combat impunity for the next ten years #UNAP 2022-2032.



UNFPA workshop on effective communication held in Erbil

Erbil, 6 November 2022 - 20 Media staff from the Ministries and governmental institutions of the Iraqi Government attended the UNFPA workshop on effective communication in Erbil.

The workshop aims to strengthen the communication skills about particular topics such as gender-based violence, reproductive health and youth empowerment. Aiming to improve access to information about basic communication tools, methods and to develop communication strategies tailored to their interventions, while

ensuring the safety and dignity of women and girls during communicating stories to the public.

Thanks to Royal Norwegian Embassy

in Amman and @Sida - Styrelsen för Internationellt Utvecklingssamarbete to support capacity building of the government across Iraq.



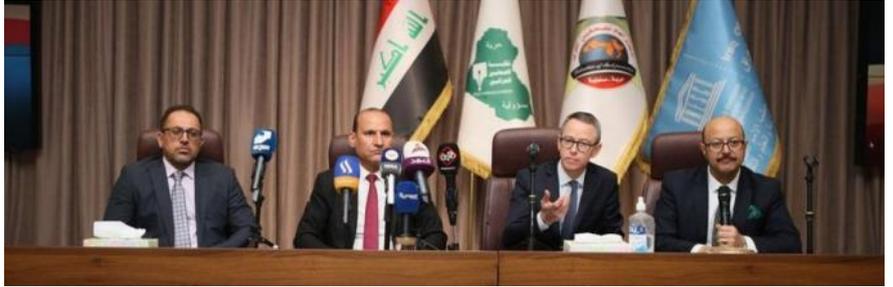
UNESCO Office in Iraq and French Embassy launch a joint project to train radio stations

Baghdad, 25 November 2022 - UNESCO Office in Iraq and the French Embassy launch a joint project to train radio stations. The French Chargé d'Affaires in Baghdad, Jean-Christophe, launched the project "Voices of Peace: to promote coexistence in areas liberated from ISIS through local radio", with the project leader for Freedom of Expression in the UNESCO Office in Iraq, Diaa Thabet, at the Iraqi Journalists Syndicate.

UNESCO implements intensive training for broadcasters from the

governorates of Mosul, Anbar and Salah al-Din on the concepts of peace building through local radios over a

period of five days with live experience on Baghdad Radio and Al Dakhiliyah Radio.



UNODC enhances the role of media in countering terrorism and supporting the rights of victims of terrorism

Baghdad, 28 November 2022 - Globalization and technological advancement have provided an opportunity to create and disseminate messages to large audiences at a wide speed. Terrorists have used this opportunity in their favor to spread their tailored narratives through social media, the internet, magazines or publications to achieve different aims such as entice fear in the hearts of populations, spread false realities to recruit fighters, or for mere propaganda. It has become evident that coordination is needed between the relevant actors in societies to offer alternative narratives to empower communities to face terrorist projections; countering such terrorist narratives post their issuance is not enough.

One of such key relevant actors in society is the media. The media speak to national and international audiences on the most urgent topics and have the power to fill information vacuums with credible and coherent knowledge; vacuums that otherwise could be used by terrorist groups. Media also showcase the stories of victims of terrorism and hence have an obligation to protect the rights of victims and avoid secondary victimization. Therefore, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is delivering a workshop on "The role of Iraqi media in combatting terrorism and supporting the rights of victims of terrorism in line with human rights" from 28 – 30 November 2022 in Baghdad, Iraq. The event is part of the project on "Strengthening the criminal justice response to terrorism in Iraq through supporting victims of terrorism to participate in criminal proceedings," funded by the Kingdom of the

Netherlands.

During the opening of the workshop, Ms. Cristina Albertin, Regional Representative of the UNODC Regional Office in the Middle East and North Africa, highlighted that "the role of media outlets and professionals in communicating cases of terrorism cannot be understated, especially in our highly connected world...To counter and prevent terrorist narratives effectively, media outlets have a responsibility to disseminate accurate and comprehensive information on terrorism-related threats, and to avoid sensationalist or baseless media reporting causing public fear and terror."

From his side, Dr. Essam Al-Saadi, Deputy National Security Advisor, affirmed that "dealing with large numbers of victims requires having legal systems that take victims' rights into account, in parallel with justice and fairness... victims' rights are not only financial but also psychological and emotional. Facilitating access to

justice is also very important. This all requires a solid international and national legal framework to protect victims' rights."

This workshop is bringing together actors from main media outlets, the Ministry of Culture, the National Security Advisory, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the Media and Communications Commission, the Iraqi Media Network, the Martyrs Foundation, and Civil Society Organizations.

For the coming days, the workshop will focus on enhancing the participants knowledge of (i) the importance of the rights of victims in receiving accurate information, (ii) the interest and coverage of mainstream media and social media networks following terrorist attacks, (iii) the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for media in regards to identities of victims and their families and possible secondary victimization, and (iv) promoting and implementing a more victim-sensitive approach by the media.



UNAMI HRO holds a workshop focused on the national and international frameworks protecting the right to freedom of expression



Najaf, 3 December 2022 - The UNAMI Human Rights Office, in collaboration with the Iraqi Bar Association, concluded a three-day specialized training course for 21 lawyers (5 women and 16 men) from

various governorates under the theme, “Raising the capacities of lawyers towards broader protection of freedom of opinion and expression in Iraq”. The course focused on the national and international frameworks protecting

the right to freedom of expression, limits to this right under applicable laws, and the role of UN Human Rights Mechanisms in protecting human rights defenders and freedom of expression, among other topics.

This course was organized at the request of the Iraqi Bar Association as a priority need to enhance the capacity of lawyers on this theme. This is the second in a series of three workshops, with the first held in Baghdad from 25 to 27 November 2022. The third workshop will be organised in Basra from 8 to 10 December 2022.

These workshops are sponsored by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights under the initiative, “Global Drive for Media Freedom”.

UNESCO Iraq discusses freedom of expression for female journalists and social media activists

Baghdad, 6 December 2022 - Today, UNESCO Iraq organized a round-table on improving freedom of expression and safety of journalists, especially female journalists and social media activists in Iraq.

Several female journalists, developers, and social media activists were joined by the representatives of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, the Bar Association and Civil Society Organizations to discuss the most significant risks and challenges they face regularly in their profession in the absence of enabling regulatory frameworks and legislation.

The discussion agenda was divided into two main axes: first, presenting the political class' actions and practices in defining the rights of women generally; and media journalists in particular and discussing draft laws that today's women expressed great trepidation over. One such law is the information crimes bill, which has resurfaced and is similar to the draft law on freedom of expression that was read aloud by the

House of Representatives yesterday.

The session's main discussion points included issues with employment and digital security, cyber-extortion and online harassment, unfair competitions in the private and public sectors due to gender inequality. The participants shared their most notable triumphs and illustrations of the strategies they used to deal with the difficulties in the workplace.

The Bar Association's attorneys expressed their willingness to take on legal tasks to defend other journalists

and activists via the internet. Some of the important recommendations made to UNESCO were; support to the program activities of the women journalists including establishment of monitoring, documentation, networking and coordination among the organizations.

Gender equality is UNESCO's priority and its support to the institutions (administrative, executive and judicial) in Iraq is focused on ensuring the journalism including digital reporting platforms are alive and accessible.



UNITAD

UNITAD commemorates the massacre at Al-Bakr roundabout

Baghdad, 28 October 2022 - In 2014, ISIL members seized control of Anbar, deliberately targeting Sunni tribes who refused to pledge allegiance, calling those Sunnis “apostates deserving to be executed.” During its tyranny, ISIL killed thousands of Sunnis, including

women and children.

Commemorating the massacre at Al-Bakr roundabout on 28 October 2014, UNITAD reiterates its dedication to investigate ISIL crimes against all affected communities. There is no hierarchy of victims.

The Team is supporting excavation of mass graves of ISIL victims in the area and remains determined to seek justice for ISIL international crimes in Anbar as in all of Iraq.

New French support for UNITAD to advance accountability for ISIL's core international crimes

Baghdad, 14 November 2022 – With a new funding of €530,000, France reiterates its support for the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), on core international crimes committed by members of ISIL in Iraq.

In particular, this support will promote UNITAD's lines of investigation into core international crimes committed against members of the Christian community in Iraq, ISIL's destruction of cultural heritage, and ISIL's development and use of chemical and biological weapons.

This support will also contribute to the ongoing capacity-building which UNITAD organizes for Iraqi judges to

improve their work in documenting and investigating those lines of inquiry regarding ISIL's international crimes.

Special Adviser Christian Ritscher commended France for its support to the Team mentioning that: "with this new funding, UNITAD will dedicate the necessary resources to investigating these three important pillars, uncovering the magnitude of ISIL core international crimes against Iraqi people and their cultural heritage."

His Excellency, Dr. Eric Chevallier, Ambassador of France to Iraq, remarked that "the horrendous crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq against the Iraqi people, often targeting the most vulnerable members of the society, and in particular minorities and women and

children, must never be left unpunished nor forgotten. In this light, UNITAD's work is crucial to ensure that ISIL perpetrators be irrefutably brought to justice wherever they may currently be – this latest French financial contribution will help UNITAD fulfill its mandate."

This new funding comes in line with France's long standing support of UNITAD and its mandate, and the pursuit of accountability for ISIL international crimes in Iraq. It opens further channels for more cooperation towards the ultimate goal of achieving justice for victims and survivors of ISIL's crimes against them, their communities, and Iraq as a whole.

First special event in the Arab Region for UNITAD discusses ISIL's leadership structure and the role of foreign fighters



Cairo, Egypt, 17 November 2022 - Co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the League of Arab States, and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, UNITAD organized a special event at the Headquarters of the League in Cairo; the first of its kind held in the Arab region.

The special event, titled "Towards Prosecuting Core International Crimes Committed by Members of Da'esh/ISIL in Iraq: Command Responsibility, Identifying Leaders and the Role of ISIL Foreign Fighters" aimed to show how leadership cases for senior ISIL leaders and middle leaders can be built. UNITAD experts provided concrete examples, explaining ISIL's leadership structure, and the responsibility of commanders, including responsibility for failing to prevent or punish the commission of international crimes. Moreover, a case study was presented on the so-called "foreign fighters" who joined ISIL from countries outside of Iraq.

In his opening remarks, Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Mr. Christian Ritscher stressed the importance of this special event as the first being held in the region, and at the headquarters of the League of Arab States nonetheless. "This special event marks a milestone in UNITAD's cooperation with states of the region in promoting accountability for ISIL's international crimes. This is of great significance to the countries of the region which suffered from the criminality of ISIL, both in terms of perpetrators and victims," said Special Adviser Ritscher. He further added that this special event comes in the context of the ongoing cooperation between UNITAD and the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to shed light on the ongoing work that the team is undertaking in partnership with the Iraqi judiciary in pursuit of accountability for ISIL's international crimes.

The event brought together a large

number of representatives of Arab states as well as embassies of several other countries in Cairo, who listened to a presentation by Judge Yassin Ahmed Fathi, Investigative Judge at the Nineveh Court, and Judge Nabil Karim Hassoun Judge of the Rusafa Central Investigative Court, giving an overview of their work on ISIL crimes in cooperation with UNITAD.

The event also included opening remarks by the two co-hosts represented by H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mohammed Lemine Guig, Under-Secretary General for Legal Affairs, as well as H.E. Ambassador Ahmed Al Dalaimy, Permanent Representative of Iraq to the League of Arab States; and a speech by Dr. Issam Al Saadi, Deputy National Security Advisor of Iraq.

The event comes in the context of UNITAD's efforts to increase cooperation with states of the region, and its commitment to promote accountability for ISIL's international crimes, including at the regional level. Most recently, in June of this year, Special Adviser Christian Ritscher addressed a meeting of the Arab Group at United Nations Headquarters in New York to brief them on the work of UNITAD in investigating ISIL crimes in Iraq. Earlier in March of this year, he visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where he held official meetings in Riyadh, and also at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Jeddah.

You may find the full opening remarks of Special Adviser Ritscher at <https://bit.ly/3X7Kggf>

Introducing International Expertise towards Prosecuting ISIL's International Crimes: intensive training program for Iraqi judges at the Nuremberg Academy



Photo: (c)International Nuremberg Principles Academy

Nuremberg, Germany, 29 November 2022 – The International Nuremberg Principles Academy (Nuremberg Academy), in partnership with the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), organised an advanced training course on international humanitarian law (IHL) and international criminal law (ICL) for 19 members of the Iraqi Judiciary in Nuremberg, Germany, from 21 to 25 November 2022.

The “Training Course on International Humanitarian Law and International Criminal Law” aimed to enhance the practical investigative and prosecutorial skills of the participants, and was tailored to meet the needs of the Iraqi judges who work on ISIL

international crimes in Iraq, with the aim of introducing the necessary in-depth knowledge towards prosecuting such crimes in Iraq in the future.

During the training, the judges were able to study and analyse relevant cases from international courts as well as national cases that adopt the universal jurisdiction in prosecuting international crimes. Such knowledge will help enable Iraqi judges to initiate and conduct proceedings before Iraqi courts, with the highest level of professionalism, and in conformity with international standards and due process. The training covered the substantive areas of IHL and ICL, as well as procedural elements, including modalities of international cooperation in criminal matters, which are sometimes necessary to undertake and

fulfil criminal investigation and indictment of international crimes cases. The trainers for this course were a wide range of renowned international academics, legal experts and practitioners bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge to the course.

In his remarks at the opening session, Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Mr Christian Ritscher said that he is “particularly pleased that this training is convening at one of the most renowned specialised institutions in this field; the International Nuremberg Principles Academy.” He further thanked the Judiciary in Iraq for their continued support and cooperation, mentioning: “the purpose of our joint work is to hold members of ISIL, those who committed such heinous international crimes, accountable through evidence-based trials before competent courts. UNITAD will continue to work in partnership with Iraq to ensure that we are headed towards achieving this aim.”

Representing the Nuremberg Academy, Mr Klaus Rackwitz and Ms Anabela Alves, also presented opening remarks, while Ambassador of Iraq to Germany, H.E. Luqman Abdul Rahim Al-Faili, greeted the participants in a live remote address.

The capacity-building programme of the Nuremberg Academy aims at equipping practitioners and institutions with the relevant knowledge and skills to investigate and prosecute core international crimes. UNITAD provides capacity building for Iraqi judges given the nature of Da'esh crimes in Iraq, and in light of the prospect that there will soon be an appropriate legal framework that allows for dealing with ISIL crimes as international crimes in Iraq.

UNITAD is very grateful to the International Nuremberg Principles Academy for the partnership and efforts in making this program possible. This training comes as a part of UNITAD's close cooperation with the Judiciary in Iraq in promoting accountability for ISIL's international crimes. In 2021, the team organised basic and advanced online training courses in international criminal law and international humanitarian law, which were uniquely conducted in Arabic language, by experts from the region.



Photo: (c)International Nuremberg Principles Academy

UNITAD Forensic Science Unit conducts a 6-day intensive training course for specialized Iraqi officers on digital forensics

Baghdad, 30 November 2022 - UNITAD Forensic Science Unit conducted a 6-day intensive training course for specialized Iraqi officers on digital forensics. This training, facilitated by the National Security

Advisory, contributes to building capacities of Iraqi security services in dealing with such evidence. The training focused on best practices in maximizing the use of battlefield evidence while ensuring the chain of

custody and associated examinations of evidence in line with international standards, which is key when collecting and preserving evidence of ISIL international crimes in Iraq.

Witness interview facility opens in Baghdad

Baghdad, 30 November 2022 - On behalf of Special Adviser Christian Ritscher, UNITAD Chief of Evidence Management, Anees Ahmed, welcomed H.E. Hans Sandee, Ambassador of the Netherlands in Iraq and H.E. Anna Malinen, Deputy Head of Mission of Embassy of Finland in Baghdad for the opening of the witness interview facility in Baghdad.

Establishing the facility was made possible through the generous support of the Netherlands, guaranteeing confidentiality for witnesses as well as emotionally safe and supportive environment to give their accounts on

ISIL international crimes. It builds on UNITAD's victim centered approach

supported by the Netherlands and Finland.



Washington, D.C. 01 December 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher was delighted to visit Washington D.C., U.S. Department of State, The United States Department of Justice, and the National Security Council where he met with a number of US officials, including H.E. Ms. Beth Van Schaack Ambassador At Large for Global Criminal Justice.

Special Adviser Ritscher briefed US counterparts on the work of UNITAD over the past year and expressed thanks for the continuous US support to promote accountability for ISIL International crimes committed in Iraq.



Baghdad, 30 October 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher welcomed today Ambassador of Denmark to Iraq, H.E. Mr. Christian Thorning, at UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad.

Special Adviser Ritscher expressed that UNITAD is grateful for Denmark's continued support to the Team's investigations, while both discussed venues of future cooperation.

New York, 2 December 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher met with H.E. ASG for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific at the UNDPPA, Mr. Mohamed Khari to provide an update on the work of UNITAD, and exchange views on recent developments relevant to the Team's work, in line with UNITAD's mandate to promote accountability for ISIL international crimes and seize justice opportunities globally.



New York, 2 December 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher was delighted to meet in New York with H.E. USG for United Nations Office of Counterterrorism, **Mr. Vladimir Voronkov**, to discuss issues of mutual interest, including the work of the Global Counterterrorism Coordination Compact. They also discussed future areas of collaboration on issues related to justice for victims and survivors of ISIL international crimes.



New York, 2 December 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher met with H.E. Ambassador Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations in New York, and expressed his thanks for Austria's continued support to UNITAD's investigations. They discussed ongoing cooperation, and future opportunities for further work in the pursuit of accountability for ISIL international crimes.



New York, 2 December 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher was delighted to meet with H.E. Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations in New York, **Ambassador Osama Abdelkhalek**. Special Adviser Ritscher briefed on UNITAD's work and the recent special event organized at the HQ of the League of Arab States in Cairo. H.E. Abdelkhalek and Special Adviser Ritscher further discussed venues of potential cooperation between UNITAD and Egypt, highlighting the importance of engagement with countries of the region to support the Team's work in promoting accountability for ISIL's international crimes.



New York, 2 December 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher met with H.E. Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations in New York, **Ambassador Mohammed Bahr Al-Uloom**. They discussed the progress in UNITAD's investigations ahead of Special Adviser Ritscher's upcoming briefing to United Nations Security Council. Special Adviser Ritscher looks forward to continued cooperation with Government of Iraq towards the common goal of pursuing accountability for ISIL's international crimes. He stressed the importance of Iraq's endeavors to adopt the necessary legal framework that enables the prosecution of ISIL core international crimes in Iraq.



New York, 4 December 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher was very pleased to visit Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs as the guest speaker of the event on "Investigating ISIL's International Crimes in Iraq," and to engage in a rich discussion with the Yale community, including a group of bright Jackson students, who are due to complete this semester a senior capstone project on the work of UNITAD. Special Adviser Ritscher expressed his thanks to the Yale Jackson School for hosting this engaging and thought-provoking discussion.



New York, 4 December 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher met with H.E. Ambassador R. Ravindra, Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations in New York. They discussed India's support to UNITAD's investigations into ISIL crimes related to development and use of chemical weapons and destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq. Special Adviser Ritscher expressed UNITAD's appreciation for India's support, congratulating H.E. Ambassador Ravindra on India's presidency of the UNSC this month.



New York, 4 December 2022 - At their meeting in New York, **Special Adviser Christian Ritscher** discussed with **Mr. Eliot Minchenberg**, Director of New York Office at UNESCO, UNITAD's investigations into the destruction of Iraqi cultural heritage by ISIL perpetrators and cooperation between UNITAD investigators and UNESCO in this arena.



New York, 4 December 2022 - **Special Adviser Christian Ritscher** met with **Ms. Riccarda Chanda**, Deputy Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations in New York, where Special Adviser Ritscher provided an overview of UNITAD's ongoing investigations. UNITAD looks forward to working more with Switzerland as its historic membership of the Security Council starts next month, counting on its unwavering commitment to international humanitarian law and accountability.



New York, 6 December 2022 - Meeting with H.E. **Ambassador Mohamed Abushahab**, Deputy Permanent Representative of UAE Mission to the United Nations, **Special Adviser Christian Ritscher** discussed opportunities for cooperation with UAE in support of accountability for ISIL international crimes, highlighting the importance of more engagement with countries of the region for the Team's work.



United Nations, 8 December 2022 - **Special Adviser Christian Ritscher** was delighted to participate in a panel "The Strength of Cross-Jurisdictional Cooperation – Lessons Learnt from ISIL", organized by France and Sweden, discussing UNITAD's contribution to Yazidi slave trade investigations and support to accountability for core international crimes.



Baghdad, 15 December 2022 - **Special Adviser Christian Ritscher** met with a group of MPs at the Iraqi Parliament, including **Mr. Mohamed Anoz**, interim Chairperson of the Legal Committee, to exchange views on the justice processes for holding ISIL perpetrators accountable for international crimes in Iraq. Discussions tackled the crucial role of the Iraqi Parliament in the adoption of an appropriate legal framework to pave the way for seeing trials on international crimes for ISIL members before Iraqi courts. The Special Adviser reiterated that UNITAD stands ready to extend support to this Iraq-led process, including providing expertise in the area of international criminal law, and potential capacity building for legislators.



Baghdad, 18 December 2022 - UNITAD's work to promote accountability in close cooperation with Iraq was on the discussion table in **Special Adviser Christian Ritscher's** meeting today with H.E. **Dr. Khalid Shwani**, Minister of Justice. Special Adviser Ritscher and Minister Shwani also discussed ideas to support the justice process to hold #ISIL members accountable for international crimes, including the need for an appropriate legal framework in Iraq.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Justice.

UNITAD at a rapid pace in assisting justice opportunities in many countries, Special Adviser Ritscher tells UNSC

Baghdad, 08 December 2022 – Special Adviser Christian Ritscher briefed the UN Security Council earlier this week on the ninth report of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD).

Special Adviser Ritscher highlighted the continuous engagement of the Team with Iraqi counterparts during the reporting period, emphasizing also that: “consideration and concerns of all communities impacted by ISIL crimes in Iraq remain at the forefront of the Teams’ investigative work.”

Continued partnership with Iraq as explained by Special Adviser Ritscher involved several areas, including advanced support to capacity building for Iraqi judges, as well as supporting the excavation of several ISIL-related mass graves in Iraq according to the annual road map agreed to with the Government of Iraq and international partners; and the preservation of evidence on ISIL-related crimes where the Team: “so far converted 5.5 million physical pages of documentary evidence into usable digital formats, and currently supports digitization activities at six different sites in Iraq with a throughput of approximately 100,000 pages per week,” as Special Adviser Ritscher specified.

The Special Adviser, further, described key progress in the Team’s investigations over the past 6 months encompassing UNITAD’s relentless efforts towards global accountability for Da’esh/ISIL crimes committed in Iraq, mainly concerning the completion of the case assessment focused on crimes committed against the Christian community in Iraq, which substantiated preliminary findings of acts constituting crimes against humanity and war crimes; and the development and use of chemical and biological weapons by Da’esh/ISIL focusing on the attack on Taza Khurmatu on 08 March 2016, which has generated significant volumes of battlefield evidence.

He also stated that UNITAD started to advance with its investigations into ISIL’s destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq. These investigations represent a breakthrough in the landscape of core international crimes investigations. So far, the evidence obtained shows that religious and cultural sites were



either intentionally destroyed by ISIL, or taken over and occupied, sometimes for military purposes, adding that “this work will provide the basis for a case assessment report, giving a detailed picture of this aspect of ISIL’s heinous crimes; crimes that targeted the history and culture of Iraq, and that of humanity at large.”

Highlighting a “pivotal stage” of UNITAD’s mandate, Special Adviser Ritscher indicated that the Team has: “now reached the next level on the path of holding ISIL perpetrators accountable for the core international crimes they committed,” explaining that: “while maintaining the same dedication to our investigative lines and capacity-enhancement activities, UNITAD will also shift towards a stronger and systematic support of individual accountability proceedings of alleged members of ISIL for international crimes before competent courts.”

He stressed the need for Iraq to adopt domestic legislation: “on core international crimes, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide,” encouraging the Iraqi Council of Representatives to consider this matter, and mentioning that UNITAD remains hopeful that after the formation of the new government in Iraq there will be progress in this regard.

He further explained that “sharing information with the Iraqi judiciary to support investigative work and ongoing judicial proceedings means a lot more than just handing over a huge box of evidentiary material that is comparable to thousands, even

millions of puzzle pieces. To promote accountability for international crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq means to deliver tailored assistance in accordance with the needs of the respective investigative judge or court. This could pertain to the sharing of information, but can also imply specific trainings and the sharing of experience and best practice in terms of handling the huge volume of evidence already in possession of the Iraqi judiciary.” Concluding, Special Adviser Ritscher reminded that UNITAD was established by the Security Council to ensure that the perpetrators of the most heinous crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq are held responsible in courts of law and that justice will be served, stressing that the Team: “is now moving at an even more rapid pace to assist justice opportunities for alleged ISIL members, if and when they present themselves, and regardless where the perpetrators may reside. UNITAD will not stop to ensure that justice is delivered for the thousands of victims and survivors who have been impatiently waiting to see their day in court.”



Statement by Special Adviser Christian Ritscher after meeting with His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani



Najaf, 19 December 2022 – It is a great honor and a true pleasure for myself and my team to be present here and to visit His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. Not only have we been warmly welcomed to the holy city of Najaf, but also were generously received by His Eminence; the man whose legacy is unmatched, and who has always exerted all effort to serve Iraq and the Iraqi people.

Since the establishment of this Team, until today here, we have constantly counted on His Eminence's wisdom and support to our cause in serving justice, and to our work in the pursuit of accountability for all victims of ISIL international crimes in Iraq. His messages of peace and his calls for justice as a way of healing from the wounds inflicted by ISIL on the Iraqi people, and as a way forward for

cohesion and unity in Iraq remain at the heart of our work.

We are humbled by His Eminence's heed to the grievances of all victim communities in Iraq, regardless of their religious or ethnic affiliation. My Team dedicates itself to this same principle in implementing our mandate; that all ISIL victims matter equally, with no hierarchy. We do hope that by doing our work, we can contribute to the same path of his Eminence, in seeking the truth, serving justice and healing for all affected communities who suffered from the international crimes committed by ISIL, which are war crimes, crimes against humanity, and in some cases genocide.

I had the honor to discuss with His Eminence my Team's investigative work and our pursuit for justice in Iraq and elsewhere in the world. We can

never forget the plight of all affected communities, those who endured so much pain and suffering during ISIL's dark ruling, a group that His Eminence stood, and still stands so strongly and honorably against.

I, and my team at UNITAD remain firmly committed to continue our investigative work to ensure that ISIL members are held accountable for the crimes that they committed against all affected communities in Iraq, including the Yazidi community, the Shia, the Sunni, the Christian, the Ka'kai, the Shabak and the Shia-Turkmen. ISIL international crimes aimed to destroy the diverse social fabric of Iraq, as well as its rich cultural heritage. Such crimes should be investigated, their legal characterization established, and their perpetrators held accountable before courts of law. That is the heart of our mission in UNITAD.

I am truly thankful for this opportunity to meet with His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, and was extremely encouraged after listening to his wise words and invaluable advice. And I reiterate my Team's unwavering dedication to the pursuit of truth, of justice and of accountability for ISIL's heinous international crimes in Iraq. I am reassured today, by the blessings of His Eminence, that our pursuits will continue to move forward steadily in partnership with Iraq, and to serve justice for victims and survivors of all communities in Iraq.



Baghdad, 21 December 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher met with Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Hasan Al-Taha, Chairman of the Iraqi Jurisprudence Council and visited the Holy Shrine and Mosque of Imam Abu Hanifa.

Special Adviser Ritscher briefed on UNITAD's investigations of ISIL international crimes against all Iraqi communities, including the Sunni community.

Special Adviser Ritscher thanked Sheikh Al-Taha for the warm welcome, and reiterated respect to the firm position of the Jurisprudence Council against ISIL, and the Council's continued support to UNITAD's investigations pursuing justice for all victims and survivors.



Baghdad, 22 December 2022 - Special Adviser Christian Ritscher visited Al Alamain Institute for Postgraduate Studies and met with Dr. Ibrahim Bahr Alolom, General Supervisor of the Institute and President of Bahr Al-Uloom Charity Foundation.

During his visit, Special Adviser Ritscher was pleased to discuss with the institute's law students and faculty, UNITAD's investigative strategies, as well as the justice and accountability process to hold ISIL members accountable for their international crimes in Iraq.

Discussions also involved potential collaboration between academic institutions like Al Alamain and its researchers with UNITAD, in particular to support of legislative efforts to adopt an appropriate legal framework to deal with ISIL crimes as international crimes in Iraq.

SA Christian Ritscher visits the Holy Shrine of Imam Ali

Najaf, 22 December 2022 - During his visit to Najaf, Special Adviser Christian Ritscher visited the Holy Shrine of Imam Ali, and was deeply touched by the spiritual sanctuary at the Shrine and its vicinity, sacred to millions of people in Iraq and around the world.



UNITAD on Twitter

Baghdad, 9 December 2022 - On the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime, UNITAD reaffirms its strong dedication to promoting accountability for ISIL intl. crimes including Genocide, to ensure such atrocities are never again repeated.



Baghdad, 22 December 2022 - UNITAD extends sincere condolences to the victims' families and the Government of #Iraq. The pursuit of accountability for international crimes committed by ISIL perpetrators contributes to Iraq's security and the safety of its people.

UNITAD discusses with partners “Blueprint for Psychosocial Support to Survivors of ISIL Crimes”



Baghdad, 29 December 2022 – With a conference titled “Blueprint for Psychosocial Support of ISIL Crimes Survivors-Trauma Informed and Capacity Building Practices” UNITAD brought together a number of national and international partners to set national strategies for best practices and trauma-informed approaches for all victims of ISIL crimes in Iraq.

The conference which took place in Erbil earlier this month, with the support of the Netherlands and Finland, aimed to increase awareness of the importance of psychosocial needs for survivors of such international crimes in justice processes, underline needs and related gaps for the provision of mental health and psychosocial support within Iraqi justice processes for survivors of ISIL crimes in line with UNITAD’s trauma-informed and victim centered approaches. It also aimed to build

collaborative partnerships, and widen the network of psychosocial service providers in Iraq.

Addressing attendees, Dr. Nenna Ndukwe, UNITAD’s Lead Psychologist, H.E. Mr. Matti Lassila, Ambassador of Finland to Iraq, and H.E. Jaco Beerends, Consul General of the Netherlands consulate in Erbil presented opening remarks, while UNITAD’s Witness Protection and Support Unit provided an overview of the evolution of international standards in witness protection programs and the trend in adopting trauma informed practice within investigations. Additionally, Dr. Daryn Reichert, Clinical Professor and Director of the Human Rights and Trauma Mental Health Program, Stanford University, Mr. Tomi Jansson, Senior Strategic Adviser on Organized Crime, the EU Advisory Mission in Iraq (EUAMI) and Ms. Delkhwaz Hacy, Legal Advocacy

Officer, Yazda Organization gave keynote remarks.

During the conference, participants from multiple governmental agencies and civil society organizations from Baghdad, Erbil, Dohuk, Nineveh, and Kirkuk engaged in discussions of case studies on the role of mental health providers in international investigations. The case studies discussed providing support to witnesses, and emphasized the value of documenting the psychological harm inflicted on survivors to be considered in justice process. Participants also conversed on the national needs and capacities in the area of providing psychosocial support and employing trauma-informed approaches in their programming with survivors and victims of ISIL, as well as in justice processes.

The conference came as a milestone in UNITAD’s promotion of the Team’s pioneering model of victim-centered and trauma-informed approaches among civil society and governmental entities, each working towards enhancing best practices in Iraq for supporting victims of ISIL from all affected communities.

To learn more about the activities of UNITAD’s Witness Protection and Support Unit Psychologists, you may read this article on the Team’s website: <https://www.unitad.un.org/news/unitad-wellbeing-victims-and-survivors-comes-first>

National Security Adviser receives the Regional Director of the International Organization for Migration in the Middle East and North Africa

Baghdad, 27 October 2022 - National Security Adviser, Mr. Qasim Al-Araji, received the Regional Director of the International Organization for Migration in the Middle East and North Africa, Mr. Othman Belbisi, at his office on Sunday.

During the meeting, a review of the work of the International Migration Organization in Iraq was held, and emphasized on the continuation of cooperation and partnership in the programs conducted by the organization in Iraq.

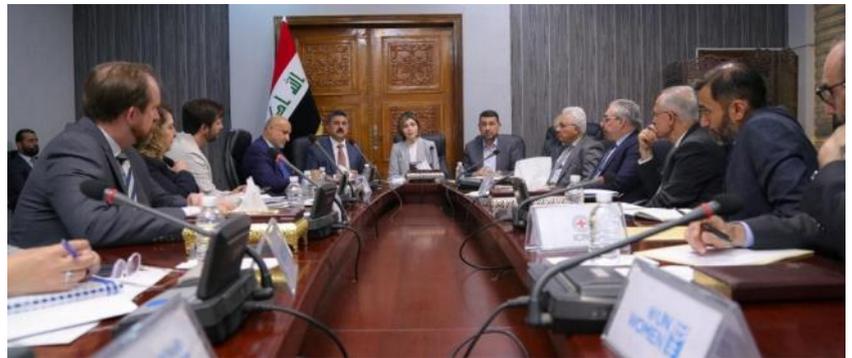
The regional director of the International Organization for Migration confirmed the organization's support for small businesses in Iraq and interest in the disabled segment, through qualifying programs conducted by the organization within Iraq.



The National Security Adviser researched ways to support the file for Iraq's accession to the International Organization for Migration Council.

DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Isaczai meets with the Minister of Migration and Displacement Gabro

Baghdad, 9 November 2022 - Deputy Special Representative, Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, accompanied by some UN agency representatives met with Iraq Minister of Migration and Displacement (MoMD), Ms. Evan Gabro, to congratulate her on her appointment and to discuss how we could further strengthen coordination and engagement on internally displaced persons (IDPs).



Strengthening development-oriented, government-owned and partnership-based reintegration processes is key to supporting displaced Iraqis abroad in returning home

Baghdad, 20 November 2022 - From November 14th–17th, IOM Iraq held a specialized consultation and workshop session in Baghdad with the Inter-Ministerial Technical Working Group on Migration, the Return Migration Taskforce and representatives from civil society to develop recommendable reintegration policies and practices. In line with IOM's evidence-based approach, participants deepened their knowledge of relevant research conducted by IOM, international standards and good practices in facilitating reintegration, with the aim

of applying that knowledge to improve reintegration services in Iraq. This session was made possible with

support from the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as part of the COMPASS project.



Women working in law enforcement discuss the barriers and solutions in countering human trafficking and migrant smuggling

Istanbul, Türkiye 23 November 2022 – Globally, women are vastly under-represented in law enforcement, judicial institutions and policy-making bodies. The average in 2016-17 was around 30 to 35 per cent in law enforcement and justice bodies.

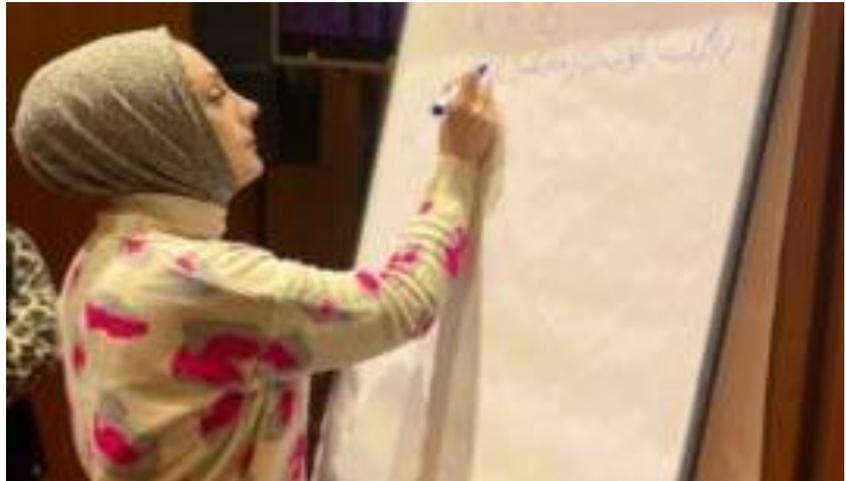
With human trafficking and migrant smuggling being gendered crimes, this lack of female representation in rule of law institutions is of grave concern.

The GLO.ACT Women's Network of Gender Champions against human trafficking and migrant smuggling was launched in June 2020 under the framework of GLO.ACT Asia and the Middle East, to help address the gendered nature of both crimes and the severe underrepresentation of women working in and/or leading institutions responding to both crimes.

One of the Network's objectives, anticipated in its Advisory Board-approved Roadmap to Action, is to establish closer connections between criminal justice practitioners in different countries, who often face the same challenges and can benefit from sharing information and mutual support.

On 10 November 2022, UNODC organized an exchange between female officers from Pakistan and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) in Istanbul, Türkiye. The day focused, in part, on finding solutions to the barriers and bottlenecks that prevent the meaningful inclusion of women in operational and leadership roles in Pakistan and the KRI.

The exchange also enabled the officers to share knowledge and experiences of the latest developments on human trafficking investigations in their respective countries, including techniques, challenges, successful investigations and understanding of the modi



operandi of criminal networks. Channels of communication between participants were also created, and opportunities for future potential bilateral/regional information exchanges were identified.

During the meeting, officers from the KRI emphasized the importance of assisting the Ministry of Interior in the KRI in drafting Standard Operating Procedures to encourage more women to join policing and increase the number of female investigators.

Both groups also advocated for the inclusion of gender policies that remove barriers to entry or progression, including access to childcare (within the police and federal authorities) or flexible working schedules, to encourage more women to work as investigators/in operational roles.

The importance of continued capacity building through the training of criminal justice professionals, such as police officers and judges, in terms of identifying human trafficking and migrant smuggling, was also stressed by the participants.

10 female officers (5 from Pakistan and 5 from the KRI) participated in the exchange. Looking ahead,

UNODC will support the participants in setting up informal communication mechanisms and identify future information and peer learning opportunities.

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.



IOM delegation and MOMD Minister discuss projects to support the displaced and Iraq's accession to IOM

Baghdad, 27 November 2022 - Today, the Minister of Migration and Displaced, Ms. Ivan Faiq Jabru, received a delegation from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), represented by the Regional Director of the Organization in the Middle East and North Africa, Mr. Othman Belbeisi, and the head of the organization's mission in Iraq, Mr. Giorgi Gigauri, at the ministry's headquarters in the center of the capital, Baghdad.

At the beginning of the meeting, Her Excellency welcomed the delegation and praised the efforts made by the organization in assisting Iraq with the support and relief of the displaced, stressing the need to increase the support provided by the organization for the programs of return projects.

The meeting also touched on the issue of the possibility of Iraq joining the

International Organization for Migration, and Ms. Jabru affirmed in this regard the ministry's readiness to urge the concerned government authorities for Iraq to join the organization and to maintain coordination and cooperation regarding

the conditions of the displaced and returnees.

For its part, the delegation thanked the Minister for her kind reception and cooperation with international organizations in order to provide support to the displaced.



National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for returnee reintegration launched in Baghdad and Erbil

Baghdad, 8 December 2022 - As they rebuild their lives, Iraqi returnees from abroad need support to access to services that will ease the reintegration process.

On 5 December, the Government of Iraq's Minister of Migration and Displaced, H.E. Evan Faeq Jabro, launched the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Returnee Reintegration in Baghdad, which was developed and operationalized with support from IOM Iraq.

Run by the Ministry of Migration and Displaced, in coordination with other relevant ministries and non-governmental service providers, the NRM will support sustainable reintegration by linking returnees from abroad to free and confidential services, including those that resolve legal identity issues; provide vocational training; offer mental health and psychosocial support; and help to enroll children in schools.

The launch was attended by Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai; IOM Iraq Chief of Mission, Mr. Giorgi Gigauri; Director-General of the Kurdistan Joint Crisis Coordination Center, Mr. Hussein Kalari; and other representatives from the Government of Iraq, the international community, UN agencies and civil society organizations.

On December 8, the Kurdish Regional Government represented by the Governor of Erbil, H. E. Omed Khoshnaw; Minister and Head of Department of Foreign Relations, H. E. Safeen Dizayee; Director General of the Joint Crisis Coordination Center (JCC), Mr. Hussein Kalari; and Director-General of the Ministry of Migration and Displaced, Mr. Ahmed Raheem; launched the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Returnee Reintegration at the Erbil JCC office.

Run by the Erbil JCC in coordination with other relevant ministries and non-

governmental service providers, the NRM – developed and operationalized with support from IOM Iraq – will support sustainable reintegration by linking returnees from abroad to free and confidential services, including those that resolve legal identity issues; provide vocational training; offer mental health and psychosocial support; and help to enrol children in schools.

This event was made possible with support from the European Union in Iraq.



A youth sport committee holds a soccer tournament for community members near the ruins of Hatra

Hatra, 14 December 2022 - In the town of Hatra, a volunteer youth sports committee made up of young people who have returned from displacement, organizes positive and healthy entertainment activities in an area where youth unemployment is high and common recreational spaces are limited.

With support from IOM Iraq, the committee held a soccer tournament for community members near the ruins of Hatra – the 2500-year-old Mesopotamian city. Ahead of the championship match, teams received training, as well as uniforms featuring the famous Hatra ruins. Al Hatra Youth Football Team (in yellow) won

the trophy 1-0.

The committee members hope to hold a traditional horse race in the future, as has been done for centuries in the area.

This tournament was made possible by support from the U.S. Department of State: Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration.



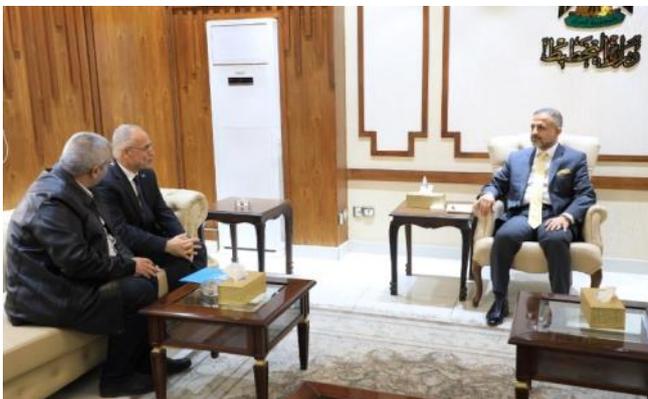
At a workshop, findings about reintegration challenges were presented

Baghdad, 15 December 2022 - To achieve Durable Solutions, IOM Iraq hosted a workshop on the reintegration barriers faced by people who were displaced during the ISIL crisis, including those who have returned to their place of origin or integrated elsewhere. The workshop was attended by participants from the Iraqi government, donor governments, UN agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

Based on IOM research, the workshop presented findings about reintegration challenges. This presentation was complemented by thematic panel discussions on safety, security, and social relations.

The workshop facilitated extensive discussions among various actors to analyze the situation of returnees and provide recommendations.

This was made possible by support from the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as part of the COMPASS project.



Baghdad, 29 November 2022 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, met with **Mr. Mohammed Ali Tamim**, Minister of Planning, to discuss how to further strengthen coordination and support Iraq's development priorities, including climate action and achieving durable solutions.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Planning.



Baghdad, 18 December 2022 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, met today with the Minister of Migration and Displaced, **Ms. Evan Faiq Jabru**. They discussed the ministry's future plans regarding the return of the internally displaced persons (IDPs), and the obstacles and challenges facing their return to their places of origin.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Migration and Displaced

Spotlighting climate migration on International Migrants Day

By Giorgi Gigauri, IOM Iraq Chief of Mission

Baghdad, 18 December 2022 - Today, on International Migrants Day, IOM reaffirms its commitment to upholding the human rights of migrants at every stage of their journey. IOM has assisted millions of migrants since it was established in 1951 and continues to lead the way in promoting the orderly and humane management of migration.

Every year, we see people around the world leaving their homes due to conflict, disease, disaster and – increasingly – climate change. Climate migration is already a reality in Iraq, where IOM has been tracking climate-induced displacement across the central and southern regions since June 2018. As of 15 September 2022, 10,464 families (62,784 individuals) have been displaced because of drought conditions across ten governorates. As environmental changes intensify, the rate of displacement is likely to increase exponentially.

Drought, land degradation and increased salinity in important rivers and tributaries continue to place a strain on the agricultural sector. With many families unable to guarantee sufficient and sustainable livelihoods in rural areas, we see their arrival in urban centres in search of livelihood opportunities. But these urban centres already struggle with economic security and governance and are not prepared to accommodate them.

A 2021 IOM study found that over half of migrant households in Basra reported that they could not afford enough food or basic items, and 53 per cent did not have access to a



financial safety net. Migrants also reported higher levels of exclusion from access to public services and other rights, which includes employment support, policing, formal dispute resolution and guarantees on property rights.

Iraq is still recovering from years of conflict that have devastated its population and caused massive displacement – and now with soaring temperatures, water scarcity and diminishing quality of the water that remains, the gains made through the collective efforts of the Government of Iraq, IOM and partners are at risk.

In line with IOM's Global Migration Environment and Climate Change (MECC) Strategy and the UN Network for Migration's prioritization of MECC-related programming, IOM Iraq will coordinate and collaborate with partners to enhance disaster risk reduction strategies and address challenges related to displacement or irregular migration flows stemming from environmental degradation and water scarcity in particular. This includes strategies to address tensions over dwindling resources

and support to Government entities to adjust or develop new policies to strengthen access to livelihoods and services in the agricultural field.

Through the Global Compact for Migration, under which Iraq is a leading member of the Champions Country Initiative, IOM will continue to support the Government of Iraq in responding to the growing challenges faced by migrants and their host communities more broadly – challenges including social exclusion; barriers to accessing essential health services; labour exploitation; trafficking; and more.

As Chief of Mission, I am proud to lead a team where respect for the rights, dignity and well-being of migrants is central to everything we do. At IOM, we firmly believe that everyone benefits when migrants are provided with access to the support services they need.

On behalf of the entire team at IOM Iraq, today we reiterate our commitment to promoting safe, orderly and humane migration management – in Iraq and across the world.

A great opportunity for Iraqi officers to gain expertise in identifying high risk passengers using passenger data

Baghdad, 27 December 2022 - AIRCOP and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) recently organised a good practice exchange visit between officers of Iraq airports and Romanian Passenger Information Unit. A great opportunity for Iraqi officers to gain expertise in identifying high risk passengers using passenger data. The activity was funded by the Government of Canada.

AIRCOP is a multi-agency project implemented by the United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in partnership with INTERPOL and

the World Customs Organization (WCO).

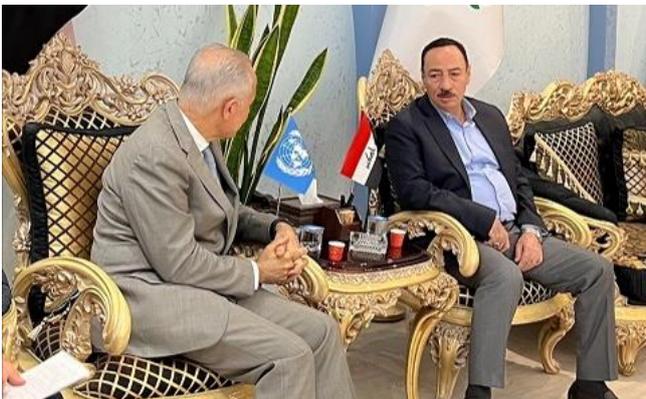




Dohuk, 15 November 2022 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, today met with Governor of Dohuk, **Dr. Ali Tatar**, to discuss humanitarian transition including development challenges in the region, and in particular, in Dohuk.



Ninewa, 17 November 2022 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, visited **Hassan Sham camp** today and heard about challenges for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the area including education challenges.



Ninewa, 16 November 2022 – The UN Deputy Special Representative, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, had an introductory meeting with the Governor of Ninewa, **Najm Al-Jubouri**, to discuss humanitarian transition, development interventions and challenges of internally displaced persons/returnees in the region and in particular in Ninewa.



Mosul, 16 November 2022 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, today attended the Area-Based Coordination meeting to discuss remaining needs and strengthen coordination efforts of humanitarian and development actors in Mosul.

SIDA delegation visits sites in Hatra, Mosul, and Duhok where UNHCR is undertaking activities in support of refugees, IDPs, and the surrounding host communities

Baghdad, 21 November 2022 - During a recent trip to Iraq, a delegation from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida - Styrelsen för Internationellt Utvecklingssamarbete visited sites in Hatra, Mosul, and Duhok where UNHCR is undertaking activities in support of refugees, IDPs, and the surrounding host communities. The visit included a school and UNHCR's Registration Centre in Domiz refugee camp, Duhok Governorate, and the Community Support Centre in Hatra, Nineveh

Governorate, where the SIDA delegation met with UNHCR and partner staff to learn about the services provided at the centre. The SIDA team also visited the Directorate of Civil Status, Passports and Residence in Mosul, where they were briefed on the process for the issuance of civil documentation. Through support from donors like SIDA, UNHCR is able to help displaced persons to access civil documentation, which alleviates obstacles to their freedom of movement and access to critical services like healthcare,

education and other assistance. Sweden is UNHCR's largest donor of unearmarked funding globally, allowing UNHCR flexibility to use funds where they are needed most.



IOM Iraq implements a cash-for-work activity in Hatra, Ninewa Governorate

Hatra, 22 November 2022 - Displacement-affected persons in Iraq continue to face difficulties securing income adequate to meet their needs. To support the country's socioeconomic recovery, IOM Iraq implemented a cash-for-work activity in Hatra, Ninewa Governorate, that included cleaning the market area, rehabilitating its electrical supply, painting walls and shops and

rehabilitating public bathrooms. With what he earned through the cash-for-work, Abdul Hamid – who supervised forty workers during the activity – told us, "I was able to pay off my debts and improve my living conditions following the loss of my previous job."

This activity was supported by the Government of Germany, through KfW.



DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Isaczai visits Anbar



Ramadi, 27 November 2022 - Reintegrating displaced Iraqi families is a key priority for the Government of Iraq, and the UN in Iraq. UNDP's Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration in Iraq Project has supported the return of displaced Iraqis to four locations in Anbar, Salah al-Din, and Ninewa. Today, UN DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai visited Anbar Governor Mr. Ali Farhan to discuss joint efforts to encourage reintegration in Anbar. He also met with the Habbaniyah Local Peace Committee, led by Mayor Mr. Ali Dawood, to discuss the committee's support, which has seen the return of 524 families to the area since the Local Peace Agreement of January 2021.

The DSRSG/RC/HC was impressed with the efforts of the local government and Local Peace Committee, including

strong UN support toward reintegration. A fruitful discussion included an exchange of successful experiences, touching on challenges related to livelihoods and long-term support of the returnees.

He visited the Vocational Training Centre in Ramadi, where families and community members participate in livelihoods training in six specialties. At the Al-Mathiq Health Clinic, he met with families perceived to be affiliated with ISIL who have returned to their areas of origin and discussed the hardships they have faced.

UNDP's fulsome approach to reintegration includes livelihoods training, MHPSS, and housing rehabilitation. The first phase of the Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration in Iraq Project has been supported by the Government of Japan.



UNHCR helps displaced persons with civil documentation

Erbil/Baghdad, 20 December 2022 - "Now I have my Iraqi nationality card, I can issue identification cards and passports for myself and my entire family, ID cards are needed for every government transaction and allow for services," says Yousef, a displaced Iraqi from Nineveh to Erbil.

Thanks to generous contributions from the State of Japan (日本国) and European Union Yousef and other displaced Iraqis are reclaiming their lives.

Accessing services and Civil documentation is vital to one's enjoyment of fundamental rights. Despite this, lack of civil documentation remains one of the main protection issues facing internally displaced persons and returnees who may face numerous barriers seeking to obtain and/ or renew civil documentation.

Missing civil documentation impedes one's ability to access basic services, education, healthcare, and social security benefits and can lead to restricted freedom of movement,

increased risk of arrest and detention, exclusion from restitution and/or reconstruction programmes and the inability to participate in the public affairs of the country.

In response, UNHCR, in cooperation with the government and civil society partners, continues to implement and support projects and initiatives to enable IDPs and returnees to access civil documentation.

According to the Multi-Cluster Needs

Assessment VIII (2020), more than 2.1m individuals are in households reporting that they miss one or more core documents, while more than 800,000 persons are in households reporting that they miss 3 or more core documents. Core documents as defined by the National Protection Cluster include ID card (Civil ID and Unified ID), Nationality Certificate, birth certificates and Public Distribution System Cards.



DSRSG/RC/HC meets KRG Interior Minister

Erbil, 22 December 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, met today with Mr. Rêber Ahmed, Minister of Interior, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), to discuss the current situation of the internally displaced persons (IDPs), the coordinated approach to achieve durable solutions and prioritizing the implementation of Sinjar agreement.

Photos courtesy of the Ministry of Interior, Kurdistan Regional Government.



Stabilization and Development

UN-Habitat Iraq and partners provide a training course on land rights to the students of Dohuk University

Dohuk, 6 November 2022 - UN-Habitat Iraq Programme joined the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS) to provide a training course on land rights to the students of Dohuk University. The training aimed to introduce the concept of good land governance and its key Housing, Land and Property (HLP)

components to students, lecturers and key partners of Dohuk University.

UN-Habitat Iraq's HLP team delivered a session on its current work and planned land initiatives, including Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration (FFPLA). It also provided practical examples on how using FFPLA through Social Tenure

Domain Model (STDM) will secure the tenure rights of vulnerable population in Iraq.

Such courses on land governance and management are highly needed also in other Iraqi institutions to complement future land-related initiatives.

UN-Habitat Iraq inaugurates Al Shuhada Garden in Telafar

Telafar, 30 October 2022 - Changing how cities and towns are planned, built and managed can offer huge gains against climate change, COVID and growing inequalities.

UN-Habitat Iraq is proud to have inaugurated Al Shuhada Garden in Telafar today, in the presence of UN-Habitat's Regional Director, Head of Iraq Programme and the local authorities.

What was up to four months ago essentially a wasteland, encroached upon by an abandoned truck, an informal shop, and a very polluting generator, is today a tranquil garden overlooking a central fountain. The

space was designed in consultation with the community and built at the heart of a neighbourhood badly affected by war.

The garden will be open exclusively to women and their children, as requested during the consultations, and offers them a chance to also do some small-scale kitchen gardening and open-air gym activities. The works, funded by the European Union, were conducted through UN-Habitat's implementing partner EADE, who has recruited several unemployed women of the area after a period of on-the-job vocational training on paving and painting.



Iraqi Government officials and UN-Habitat celebrate the opening of a totally renovated Al Yarmouk Park in Mosul funded by the EU



Mosul, 31 October 2022 – In occasion of World Cities Day falling on 31st October, Mr Abdul Sattar, Head of Mosul Municipality, along with Mr. Hassan Al Allaf, Ninewa Deputy Governor, Mr. Ali Omar Gabo, Ninewa Deputy Assistant for Organisations and IDPs, Dr. Raad Jasim Al Abasi, Ninewa Deputy assistant for Planning and Follow-Up Ninewa Governorate, Ms. Barbara Egger, Head of Cooperation at the European Union Delegation to Iraq, and Dr. Erfan Ali, UN-Habitat's Regional Representative for Arab States, and Mr. Wael Al Ashhab, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq County Programme, unveiled the ceremonial stone to inaugurate the newly rehabilitated Al Yarmouk Park in west Mosul – an iconic public space project made possible through the generous support from the European Union.

This project comes at a time when green areas and public spaces in Iraqi cities are increasingly valued by citizens, especially in cities with a low ratio of green space per capita such as Mosul. Creating leisure and meeting spaces in urban areas constitutes a significant improvement in the quality of the environment and people's living conditions. Not only they encourage different sectors of the population to mix and integrate, but they have proved to be catalysts for physical

improvements and economic activities in the nearby areas, both directly and indirectly.

An important element that supports the success of the seven parks that UN-Habitat has rehabilitated in conflict-affected cities through the programme "Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development" funded by European Union, has been the integration of sports and leisure facilities. Sports have always been popular with the Iraqi people and Al Yarmouk Park offers today a football pitch, two multipurpose courts, along with an open air gym, a running track, a cycling route and an active playground for children.

After the ribbon cutting ceremony, several dignitaries spoke, including Mr. Hassan Al Allaf who emphasized the importance of environmentally friendly solutions to preserve a healthy environment and adapt to climate change.

Mr Abdul Sattar stated his satisfaction for the results and the close cooperation that was established between UN-Habitat and his team since the inception of the project. He said "This park will contribute to create social and economic values and contribute to improving the quality of life in Mosul. It is also an opportunity to promote social integration, cohesion and peace-building as it includes

sports facilities and playground for people with special needs.

Just before handing over to Mr Sattar a symbolic key to the park, Ms. Egger lauded in her speech the extraordinary transformation of the park that now offers a range of activities that will bring the community together again, contributing to make this a truly transformative project. She emphasized the role of the government in replicating such initiatives in the future to promote a healthier environment in cities. The European Union has been a major contributor to UN-Habitat's post-conflict urban recovery programme in Iraq, ensuring that vulnerable households can rely on improved living conditions, better public services and livelihood opportunities in their home towns.

While speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Dr. Erfan Ali expressed his gratitude to the European Union for their generous support and emphasized the role of such projects in tackling the impact of climate change – a consideration that is particularly relevant to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) that will be taking place in Egypt in five days from now. He assured that UN-Habitat remains steadfast in its commitment to strengthen further the long-standing partnership with the Government of Iraq to achieve its goals for improving the lives of Iraqi citizens.

In a media interview, Mr. Wael Al-Ashhab, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq, remarked: "The recovery of this park was made possible through our staff's dedication, commitment, and hard work, but also of that of partners, such EADE, contractors, local communities and the thousands of workers – women and men – who have accompanied us in this journey." He also stated that "This project would not have been possible without the trust and collaboration of our partner UNDP who partnered with UN-Habitat to contribute to the recovery, peace-building and socio-economic stability of the country. Such partnerships have strengthened UN-Habitat's efforts and impact throughout its 25-year existence in Iraq, which we are proud to be celebrating this year."

Korea reaffirms its commitment to stabilization in Iraq with a new contribution to UNDP

Baghdad, 6 November 2022 - The Republic of Korea has made a new contribution of US\$450,000 to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Iraq's Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS), which supports stabilization, durable solutions, and the safe return of internally displaced Iraqis in the five governorates liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

This brings Korea's total support to the Facility to over US\$26.9 million. Korea's previous contributions have supported the implementation of 91 critical projects in the liberated areas, benefiting more than 1.14 million people.

"We are grateful to Korea for this timely contribution. With the Facility transitioning in 2023, the remaining stabilization needs are estimated at around US\$200 million across the five governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Ninewa, Kirkuk, and Salah al-Din. We believe that continued support is critical to secure Iraq's still-fragile stability," says UNDP Resident Representative for

Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad

"We are thankful for the continuous support Korea and the international community has shown in UNDP's ability to deliver at the highest quality and speed. The Facility has mobilized over US\$1.5 billion from 30 donors and the Government of Iraq to date. This collective effort demonstrates the international community's solidarity with its Iraqi counterparts," adds Ms. Ali Ahmad.

"Korea and Iraq share many similar historical trajectories such as civil war, dictatorship, and under-development. Therefore, the Korean government and the Korean people have always been making the best efforts to share their development experience with Iraq. UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization has been a vehicle of critical importance in the past post-ISIL rehabilitation phase, and the Korean government has been proud of being a part of such global solidarity. We will continue to engage with all relevant partners, most importantly the Government of Iraq, to further the

cause," says H.E. Sungsoo CHOI, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Republic of Iraq.

In mid-2015, UNDP established the Funding Facility for Stabilization to assist the government in rebuilding Iraq after the ISIL conflict. The Facility works with the Government of Iraq and local actors to ensure safe, dignified, and voluntary returns and to lay the foundation for successfully reintegrating displaced populations into the community in areas liberated from ISIL.

To date, the Facility has completed 3,278 projects across the five liberated governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din. This critical stabilization support has facilitated the return of 4.9 million displaced Iraqis to their areas of origin.



Italy renews its commitment to stabilization with a new EUR 2 million contribution to UNDP

Baghdad, 9 November 2022 - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), has renewed its commitment to stabilizing Iraq with an additional EUR 2 million (approximately US\$1.9 million) contribution. The generous contribution will be channeled through UNDP's flagship programme, the Funding Facility for Stabilization.

Italy has generously provided over US\$20 million since the Facility was set up in 2015. The funding will be used to focus on rehabilitating public infrastructure and providing essential services to vulnerable communities living in areas affected by the ISIL conflict.

"The impact of our stabilization efforts with continuous support from the international partners such as Italy are visible across Iraq. Hospitals are reopening, clean water is reaching people's homes, and universities are welcoming students back. With this additional funding, UNDP will be able to continue to support the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure

in sectors such as electricity, water, education and health," says UNDP Resident Representative Zena Ali Ahmad.

"We are immensely grateful for Italy's continuous support to stabilization in Iraq. This new contribution will position the Facility to better meet the expectations and needs of the people of Iraq and contribute to improving conditions in the Liberated Areas paving the way for displaced Iraqis to return to their communities of origin safely and with dignity," adds Ms Ali Ahmad.

"Iraq is a priority country for Italy, both as a pivot of stability in the region and as a partner in development cooperation. Reconstruction and rehabilitation of facilities and infrastructure is critical to our common goal of ensuring a safe and stable environment for returnees to start rebuilding their lives. Italy has never left Iraq, through thick and thin. We, together with UNDP, stand by Iraqis and are eager to build a peaceful, prosperous and safe future for Iraq," states H.E. Maurizio Greganti, Ambassador of Italy to Iraq.

The Director of the Amman office of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), Dr. Emilio Cabasino, also highlights, "Through constant commitment in development cooperation, big achievements are possible. With this spirit, AICS collaboration in supporting the Funding Facility for Stabilization over the years has allowed reconstruction and returns. With this renewed contribution, it also supports the transition towards handover and new programming for development."

In mid-2015, UNDP established the Funding Facility for Stabilization to assist the Government in rebuilding Iraq after the ISIL conflict. The Facility works with the Government of Iraq and local actors to ensure safe, dignified and voluntary returns and to lay the foundation for reintegrating displaced populations into the community.

With the generous support of international partners, the Facility has mobilized over US\$ 1.55 billion from 29 donors and the Government of Iraq. This collective effort demonstrates the international community's solidarity with Iraq.

UN-Habitat and ILO work together to improve access to employment opportunities for vulnerable women and men living in Basra's underserved settlements

Baghdad, 9 November 2022 – UN-Habitat and the ILO in Iraq are collaborating to increase access to employment opportunities for young women and men living in underserved settlements in Basra, where the unemployment rate is high and living condition is poor.

The collaboration is part of UN-Habitat's broader project, "Increasing Access to Employment Opportunities for Vulnerable Urban Population in Basra City in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis," funded by the European Union. The project targets around 21,000 people living in three underserved neighbourhoods of Al-Ahrar, Al-Kubiyah, and Jurf Al-Melah, by providing basic services such as water, waste management and access roads in urban and informal settlements, creating job opportunities, and enhancing the skills and capacities of vulnerable urban populations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Basra City.

Under the new collaboration, UN-Habitat and ILO will work closely with local partners, namely the Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs, to enhance employment services for job-seekers by establishing an employment service centre linked to a digital employment platform. In addition, the Directorate staff will receive capacity-strengthening training to deliver these services, which include skills development, career and job search guidance, and job placement.

Another key aspect of the programme will be to equip young men and women with the necessary knowledge and skills in the construction sector and business development. This programme will include introducing ILO's "Start and Improve Your Business" (SIYB) training programme, designed to support small-scale entrepreneurs to start or grow their businesses. After the completion of the skill-improvement training, entrepreneurs will be referred to the employment service centre, which will help them connect with organizations offering a wide range of support to grow and sustain their small businesses.

"This collaboration will help mainstream decent work into project interventions, and ensure that young people are equipped with market-relevant skills that will help improve their access to employment opportunities," said Dr Maha Kattaa,

ILO Country Coordinator in Iraq.

Mr. Wael Al Ashhab, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq said: "I am glad to see the formalization of the cooperation between UN-Habitat and ILO in Iraq, which will magnify the impact of our interventions on the economic and social conditions of the targeted people in Basra, particularly unemployed young men and women."

This collaboration will utilize Employment Intensive Investment Programmes (EIIP) to improve access to services and create decent job opportunities. EIIP methods link infrastructure development with decent job creation and promote local resources such as labour and equipment. The programme will build the capacities of local contractors and young engineers on these methodologies and ensure the application of Decent Work principles through the developing different tools.



UN Habitat and Ministry of Planning Iraq meet to discuss fruitful collaborations for improving Iraqi lives

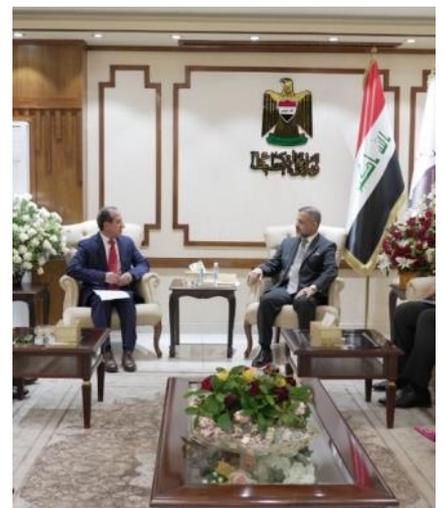
Baghdad, 10 November 2022 - Today, His Excellency the Minister of Planning of Iraq, Dr Muhammed Ali Tamim received the Head of UN-Habitat Iraq Country Programme, Mr Wael Al-Ashhab and his team. Mr Al-Ashhab congratulated Dr Tamim on the new assignment and had a great pleasure to inform the Minister on the current programme of UN-Habitat in Iraq and discuss the continuation of the collaboration between the Ministry of Planning and UN-Habitat Iraq Programme.

They also discussed the joint efforts to improve living conditions of all Iraqis, particularly the vulnerable population and the underserved communities who

are suffering from lack of provision of basic services.

Further, the Minister was briefed on the Urban Observatories to be established at the governorates to collect data and reporting on the SDGs forum managed by Ministry of Planning and supported by UN-Habitat.

In addition, the close coordination and the way forward concerning the informal settlements issue and how to accelerate the process to include them in planning and the budgeting of the government. Lastly, both agreed to continue collaboration and explore opportunities through bilateral meetings in the near future.



SDGs at the 46th Baghdad International Fair

Baghdad, 8 November 2022 - Something new has caught the eye of visitors to 46th Baghdad International Fair this year - a colourful pyramid of 17 cubes showcasing the Sustainable Development Goals (#SDGs).

Also known as the #GlobalGoals, the 17 SDGs were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, and are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other

deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

The Baghdad International Fair promotes business opportunities in Iraq and showcases the work of Iraqi and international companies in the country. It was also an opportunity for some businesses to display their products.



A roof over our heads

Tal Banat, 12 November 2022 - “At last, we have a roof over our heads. We can now sleep peacefully, knowing that we will be safe in this house. UN-Habitat restored our hope for a normal life”

This is just one of many expressions of gratitude that UN-Habitat Iraq’s team received from the community after the completion of 102 war damaged houses in Tal Banat, a rural town located in the northern Sinjar District – a project generously funded by the Government of Japan.

Entering their new houses represents a new beginning for vulnerable men, women, children, and people with

disabilities eager to return home and looking forward to rebuilding their lives and livelihoods after years of displacement.

UN-Habitat recognizes the urgent needs of returnees and is committed to improve the living conditions of returnees who struggle to make their way back to their homes due to lack of adequate shelter, basic services, and employment opportunities in their areas of origin and who have been forced to remain in displacement camps or find temporary solutions in crowded accommodations or unfinished buildings.



UNDP is supports Iraq in localizing the Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 agenda

Baghdad, 13 November 2022 - A workshop held from 7- 10 November 2022 by UNDP in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning supported the National Technical Committee headed by the Minister of Planning in developing reports that contribute to identifying challenges and priorities to

inform the next national development plan (2023-2027).

The workshop, attended by UN SDG focal points, academics, and media members, discussed the role of the committee in following up and monitoring the indicators and goals of sustainable development until 2030.



New study on mainstreaming Anthropocene considerations in Iraq

Baghdad, 14 November 2022 – Iraq remains one of the most fragile countries globally. Strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerabilities remains important to ensure the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and strengthening state-society trust. The United Nations Development Programme in Iraq (UNDP) today launches a study on mainstreaming Anthropocene considerations in fragile countries, and specifically the case of Iraq.

Building on the recently launched 2021-2022 UNDP Human Development

Report, this study provides a summary of the evolution of the human security approach, presenting a set of policy recommendations for mainstreaming important Anthropocene considerations into local and national development and social cohesion policies, especially in fragile contexts, with special consideration for the case of Iraq. Mainstreaming Anthropocene Considerations in Local and National Policy Recommendations – The Case of Iraq recognizes that development is a political challenge that must be addressed through sustainable

processes that include building coalitions for change to build Agency and promote Solidarity.

UNDP Iraq Resident Representative Zena Ali-Ahmad states, “We are excited to launch this study today that adopts an innovative approach to mainstreaming Anthropocene considerations in local and national policies and provides recommendations for consideration in Fragile Countries such as Iraq. We hope that the findings in this report will shed light on new thinking related to fragility in Iraq and other fragile countries.”

New study on mainstreaming Anthropocene ... (continued)

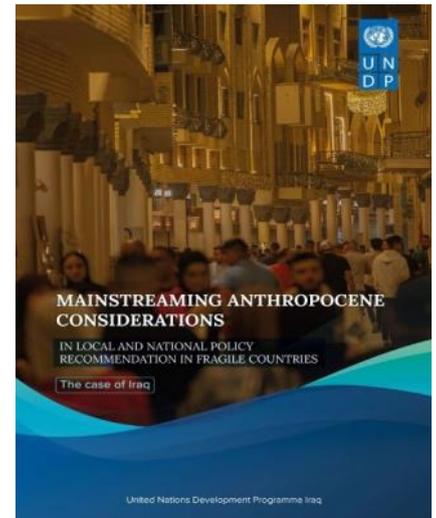
“With the release of this study, we hope to ignite conversation and thought work surrounding the effects of human activity on the planet, and how development in fragile countries, such as Iraq, must be approached,” adds Ms. Ali-Ahmad.

“The reality of the Anthropocene is not an abstraction but, as this report shows, a very concrete reality that is shaping opportunities to expand human development across Iraq. The report shows how even in settings where fragility and recovery from violent conflict have heightened importance, the relevance of the new context of the Anthropocene is not diminished,” says Mr. Pedro Conceicao, Director of the UNDP Human

Development Report Office.

“The Anthropocene is ushering in new and complex development challenges, and we are currently witnessing immediate effects across the Arab states. This study is a timely follow-up on the implications for human development, specifically in Iraq, including how we can work together towards innovative joint solutions in fragile crisis and post-conflict settings,” emphasizes Dr. Khalida Bouzar, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Arab States.

UNDP’s Human Development Report 2021-2022 was released in September 2022.



UNDP: JICA renews commitment to boost infrastructure projects for socio-economic development in Iraq

Baghdad, 15 November 2022 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Iraq Office have signed a renewed partnership agreement to monitor and accelerate the implementation of socio-economic infrastructure projects in Iraq. Implemented by the Government of Iraq (GoI) with loan assistance from JICA, aiming to improve economic recovery and living conditions of Iraqi communities, Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan projects are advancing infrastructure development in Iraq.

Five key components of ODA loan projects were completed in 2022 across Iraq, promoting service delivery and connecting communities to vital service sectors. Over two million residents of the city of Basra who experienced deteriorated water supply and quality for decades will soon receive access to a

reliable clean source of water, as major components of the Basra Water Supply Improvement Project, locally known as the Basra Grand Water Project, are now completed. In the north, the Deralok Hydropower Plant in Duhok Governorate will soon begin to supply power, feeding 37 MW to the grid and addressing thereby Iraq’s efforts to reduce carbon emissions resulting from fuel-operated powerplants.

“For over 14 consecutive years, JICA and UNDP have partnered to support the government to improve socio-economic conditions for Iraqi communities through reliable public service delivery. We will continue to support the Government of Iraq in laying down the foundation for sustainable growth in key public sectors, with a focus on electricity infrastructure, water and sanitation, health, oil, and transportation,” says UNDP Iraq Resident Representative Zena Ali-Ahmad.

“We have been working with the Government of Iraq to deliver basic infrastructure and Japanese knowledge to Iraqi people over a decade. Although we have faced many difficulties, including unstable security conditions and the COVID-19 pandemic, some large projects were successfully completed in 2022, which shows a notable progress of JICA projects. Our partnership with UNDP has greatly contributed to this achievement during the implementation stage” says JICA Iraq Chief Representative YONEDA Gen.

Through signing this agreement, JICA and UNDP reaffirm their commitment to improve the state of national infrastructure, public services, and private sector development, advancing Iraq closer to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



Belgium increases its support to stabilization in Iraq with new EUR 1.5 million contribution to UNDP

Baghdad, 16 November 2022 – The Government of Belgium has contributed an additional EUR 1.5 million (approximately US\$ 1.49 million) to the Funding Facility for Stabilization. The critical funding will support stabilization efforts implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) across Iraq’s five governorates: Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al-

Din.

This is the Kingdom of Belgium’s eighth contribution to the Facility, bringing the country’s total contribution to over US\$15 million. With this additional funding, UNDP will be able to support the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure in the most vulnerable communities in the Liberated Areas.

“We are grateful to Belgium for this

timely contribution to the Facility. With the Facility transitioning in 2023, UNDP’s focus is now on completing the last mile – namely and where possible, the dignified return of Iraq’s remaining 1 million internally displaced people, including the hardest-to-return population groups and most vulnerable returnees,” says UNDP Resident Representative Zena Ali Ahmad.

“This generous contribution comes at a

Belgium increases its support to stabilization in Iraq... *(continued)*

critical juncture for Iraq, as we look to safeguard the hard-won stabilization gains and prevent secondary displacement. We believe that continued support is critical to secure Iraq's still-fragile stability," she adds.

"Belgium is proud to support the Funding Facility for Stabilization, which is entering its last phase after having ensured the safe, durable and dignified return of millions of Iraqis affected by the ISIL conflict. The stability of Iraq remains a priority for Belgium. I am hopeful that in the coming transition phase, the Government of Iraq will be able to take further responsibility to ensure the

sustainability of and build on the impressive results achieved so far by the Facility for the safety and well-being of the Iraqi people in the liberated areas. While the transition's primary efforts shall go to the remaining million internally displaced Iraqis, Belgium encourages a continued attention to the most vulnerable amongst them, especially the \minorities, women, children and disabled people," says Hadja Lahbib Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Foreign Trade.

At the request of the Government of Iraq, UNDP in partnership with the International Community established

the Facility 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 Facility has supported the safe, dignified and voluntary return of almost 5 million internally displaced people by restoring essential services, supporting civilian livelihoods, building municipal capacity and fostering social cohesion. To date, the Government of Iraq has taken full ownership of over 3,400 projects completed under the Facility.

Tikrit's Vocational Training Centre reopens, after destruction by ISIL



Baghdad/Tikrit, 16 November 2022 – Vocational training centre in Tikrit was officially opened by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Salah al-Din Governorate, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Federal Republic of Germany today.

Initially built in 2009, the facility in Tikrit was an important centre for vocational skilling in Iraq as it reached over 2,500 people every year. The facility consists of the main building containing eight workshops for training courses and an administrative office. During the liberation from ISIL, most of the workshops were left severely damaged.

Through the Funding Facility for Stabilization, UNDP rehabilitated the entire building, including civil, sanitary, mechanical, and electrical works. Today, the facility can run over eight training programmes at any time. UNDP will further supply furniture and workshop equipment for the centre in the coming months.

The facility will serve people seeking

employment who are officially registered with the Salah al-Din Directorate of Labor and Social. It includes courses in repairing household appliances, hairdressing, plumbing and sanitary works, sewing, mobile phone maintenance, carpentry, repair and maintenance of air conditioning, working with aluminum, electronics and electrical works, and car mechanics.

"As new forms of instability arise due to the lack of livelihood opportunities in Iraq, this centre will be instrumental in providing technical and vocational courses to those most vulnerable or unable to access higher education. We hope that the centre will equip people with the practical and required skills to enter the job market or start their businesses," says UNDP's Resident Representative in Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad.

"We are extremely grateful to our longest-standing partner, the Federal Republic of Germany, for generously funding this project. We are proud to support critical areas, such as security sector and

livelihoods in Iraq. We look forward to continuing our work together to build a stable and prosperous Iraq," she adds.

The Almazra'a police station in Baiji, Salah al-Din, was also inaugurated today. The spacious and purpose-built facility has the capacity to serve around 35,000 citizens. Both the facilities were rehabilitated through the Funding Facility for Stabilization with support from the Federal Republic of Germany. While the furniture and equipment for the vocational training centre is funded by generous contributions from Norway.

Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Philip Holzapfel, German Embassy Baghdad says, "We are pleased to see that two central places of community life in Salah al-Din Governorate have been rebuilt thanks to German contributions. Speaking to people here we understand how much it means to them that the rehabilitated vocational training center in Tikrit will encourage people to acquire knowledge and skills. This will contribute to the development of a much-needed private sector and thus to empower Iraqis to build the future of their communities here in Salah al-Din."

"We also admire the reconstruction of the Almazra'a police station in Baiji – a place that represents the rule of law and makes it tangible for citizens, where trust in good governance can be being built day by day. We encourage the Salah al-Din Governorate to make the most of these facilities so that they can be of long-lasting benefit to the people of Salah al-Din," he adds.

Since 2015, through the Funding Facility for Stabilization, UNDP has completed around 3,400 stabilization projects across the liberated areas of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah Al-Din. The programme has supported the safe and dignified return of more than 4.9 million displaced people to their place of origin.

EU delegation visits a number of EU-supported IOM projects and businesses across Ninewa Governorate



Ninewa, 16 November 2022 - An EU delegation recently visited a number of EU-supported IOM projects and businesses across Ninewa Governorate. During the visit, the delegation met Ayob Thanoon, a business owner supported by IOM Iraq. Ayob is the founder of the Mosul Heritage House, the first museum specialized in the research and preservation of Mosul

heritage and identity.

“This dream had been circulating in my mind for five years,” Ayob told them. “Only today, it has become real – to preserve the heritage of Mosul.”

The delegation also met Adeeb Mahmood, a business owner who launched a small workshop from inside his home. Calling his studio Ain al-Fan, he used the space to draw and paint

locations of cultural significance in Mosul. When ISIL seized the city in 2014, he was forced to halt his projects, which greatly reduced his income. Today, IOM support is helping him to recover.

The EU tour also included a visit to Adeeb Maher, another business owner who was forced to shut his leather shop in 2014, but who never gave up his dream. When the dust settled after the Battle of Mosul that drove ISIL from the city, people began to pick up the pieces and rebuild what had been lost. Adeeb decided to do the same. He and his father opened a small leather shop on Mosul’s busy Dawasa street. For two years now, they have worked diligently — and people all over the city love their products.

IOM Iraq is pleased to work with the European Union in Iraq in support of post-conflict and economic recovery and the achievement of durable solutions to displacement in Iraq.

Strengthening judicial integrity in Iraq: New Judicial Code of Conduct launched today



Baghdad, 21 November 2022 – The Higher Judicial Council (HJC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the European Union Delegation in Iraq has today launched a Code of Conduct for judges and prosecutors across Iraq.

Recently adopted by the Higher Judicial Council, the Code of Conduct strengthens judicial integrity, impartiality, and independence, preventing undue influence and ensuring that decisions are made impartially. It calls for conflicts of

interest to be duly declared and managed appropriately, supports the mandatory declaration of assets while also guaranteeing freedom of expression of opinion and association for judges and prosecutors.

The Code further enhances adherence to Human Rights standards and the Rule of Law by complying with the principles and rights stipulated by the International Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Moreover, one of the Code's chapters assures the commitment of all judges and members

of the public prosecution to these principles.

Judge Dr. Faiq Zaidan, President of the Supreme Judicial Council, thanked the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme for their contribution to developing the capabilities of Iraqi judges. He also expressed his appreciation towards the international community's support in preserving the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law, as it is two main pillars of the state.

The Ambassador of the European Union to Iraq, H.E. Ville Varjola, affirms: “The Code of Conduct is an important tool in setting the desired standards of conduct expected from judges and members of the Public Prosecution Office. It enables the translation of the core values of judicial integrity, independence, and impartiality in terms of behaviour. It clarifies the ethical behaviour expected from judges and prosecutors.”

“The Code of Conduct is a bold step forward in promoting a culture of integrity and transparency within the Iraqi judiciary, while preserving its prestige and dignity,” says UNDP Resident Representative in Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad.

“This is one of many initiatives supported by UNDP to fight corruption.

Strengthening judicial integrity in Iraq... (continued)

A large component of our work is focused on strengthening the judiciary as the essential driver of change in the campaign against corruption in Iraq. With the support of the EU, we will continue to help the judiciary to promote the Code and enforce its strict adherence," she adds.

EU and UNDP will continue supporting the judiciary in developing and delivering training on the Code of

Conduct for judges and prosecutors. Moreover, EU and UNDP will further support the development of Codes of Conduct for other categories of justice professionals and public officials with a key role in fighting corruption.

Background:

The Anti-Corruption and Arbitration in Iraq project is EU-funded and builds on Iraq's national efforts to improve transparency and accountability across

state institutions and supports Iraq in delivering to its national and international commitments regarding the fight against corruption, to support the Iraqi institutions in the revision of anti-corruption laws, promote their alignment with international standards, and provide specialised on-demand training and mentorship opportunities for corruption investigators and integrity judges.

2022 EDF Women's Entrepreneurship Event held in Erbil

Erbil, 21 November 2022 -IOM Iraq organized the 2022 EDF Women's Entrepreneurship Event - Investing in Iraqi Women on the Rise, at Divan Hotel in Erbil.

During the event, 15 Women entrepreneurs pitched their businesses to a panel, and the winners were awarded grants between 5,000USD and 35,000USD.

The event featured a photographic exhibition from Iraqi women who have received financial assistance from IOM and three women entrepreneurs shared their successful experiences.

The event also included an outstanding performance by Melody of Life Band from Ninawa.

The Enterprise Development Fund - Women (EDF-W) works to encourage women's participation in the labour force and increase the representation of women business owners in Iraq — including by supporting start-ups and early-stage women entrepreneurs in

partnership with local incubators and training centres.

So far, IOM Iraq has invested more than USD 4 million into 293 SMEs, allowing them to create more than 1,280 new jobs in the private sector.

This activity was made possible with the generous support of the governments of Finland, Germany, the Republic of Korea and the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.



In the face of wide-spread economic decline in Iraq, support is urgently needed to advance economic recovery and private sector revitalization



Anbar 23 November 2022 - On 19 November, a KfW delegation visited

several small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Fallujah district,

Anbar Governorate. With funding from the Government of Germany, via KfW, these businesses are supported through IOM Iraq's Enterprise Development Fund (EDF), which provides tailored assistance to SMEs to enable them to recover and expand, as well as to facilitate rapid creation of decent jobs.

In the face of wide-spread economic decline in Iraq, support is urgently needed to advance economic recovery and private sector revitalization.

The delegation met with the owners of a tailor shop, a pastry shop and a marble factory, with whom they discussed business expansion, challenges and future plans.

UNICEF, funded by Germany, ensures access to safe drinking water to more than 250,000 people in Al Najaf Governorate



Baghdad, 27 November 2022 – UNICEF and the German Embassy handed over a water project funded by Germany, to the Governorate of Al Najaf today. This project will secure safe and clean drinking water benefitting more than 250,000 people in south Al Najaf and Al Kufa.

The project, financed through KfW Development Bank, was initiated to ensure access to safe water for a community suffering from highly contaminated water. Implemented in two phases, where piles were installed inside the Euphrates river basin enabling water intake to be extended by 15 meters, followed by pipe extensions and submersible pumps and electrical fixations the project was completed by the end of July this year. As a result, 6,000 m3 of clean water is pumped per hour securing safe and clean drinking water for these communities.

Ensuring access to safe water is key in

the fight against climate change. With rising temperatures, children and young people are at higher risk of more frequent, more severe climate hazards than ever before. They are most vulnerable physically and psychologically, putting them at increased risks of morbidity and mortality. Almost every child is already exposed to water scarcity, heat waves, and vector-borne diseases.

“Supporting the water sector in all aspects, including access to clean and safe drinking water, will be key in mitigating the effects of climate change,” said Philip Holzapfel, German Chargé d’affaires a.i. in Iraq. “This is why Germany supports the efforts of the Iraqi Government and the Governorate of Al-Najaf to provide basic water services to the local population. In particular, I am delighted that this project will be setting a strong priority on strengthening the access to WASH

services for children and young people. It is their future that is at stake.”

In Iraq, only 59.7 percent of the total population has access to safely managed drinking water, dropping to 47.6 percent in rural areas². Extreme weather conditions, drought, and changes in water recharge patterns are making it more difficult to access safe drinking water, especially for the most vulnerable children.

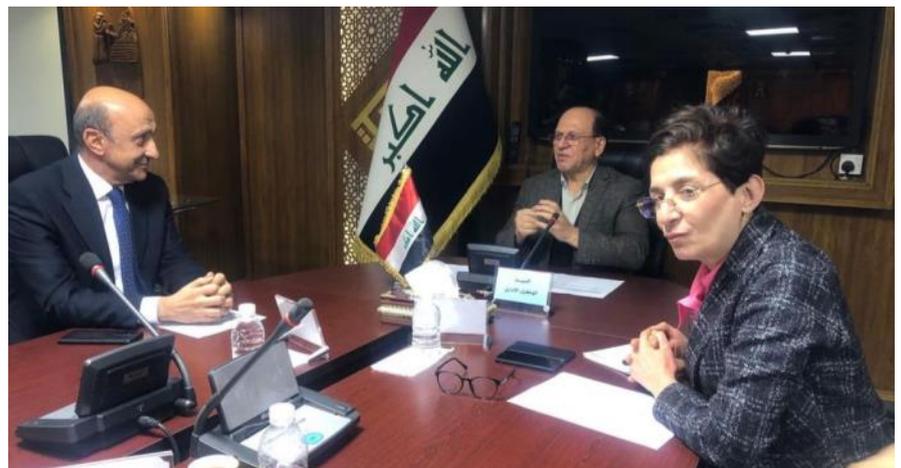
“The climate crisis is a child rights crisis. Children are the least responsible for climate change, yet they will bear the greatest burden of its impact,” said Sheema SenGupta, Representative, UNICEF in Iraq. “Thanks to the generous support of Germany, through this project we can reap the immediate and long-term benefits of safe drinking water, including protection of Al Najaf children from water-borne diseases, enhancing higher school attendance, and young people’s greater productivity at work.”

Vulnerable families are more exposed to climate-related challenges. Without action now, inequalities that children and young people are facing will be further exacerbated by climate change. UNICEF will continue to support the Government of Iraq, in coordination with other UN agencies and partners, to collectively address the challenges of environmental sustainability, and work with children and young people as agents of change, on the value of water and water conservation.

UNICEF and Ministry of Construction, Housing and Public Municipalities, with partners, review UNICEF water, sanitation and hygiene programme in Iraq

Baghdad, 28 November 2022 - “We value our strong partnership with UNICEF in advancing the water sector in Iraq for every child,” said Mr. Yilmaz Abbas, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Construction, Housing and Public Municipalities during the annual review of UNICEF water, sanitation and hygiene programme with partners, held today.

The review aimed at reviewing lessons learned, identifying key achievements and challenges, and proposing recommendations to improve the WASH services, build a climate resilient environment, and empower young people to be changemakers.



First Iraq National Trade Forum connects small businesses to growth opportunities



Baghdad, 1 December 2022 — As the country works to recover from an economic crisis, Iraq's agriculture and agri-food sectors have the potential to contribute to much-needed economic growth and diversification, job creation and enhanced sustainability and resilience – under the right conditions. This was the message from public and private-sector leaders at the opening of the first Iraq National Trade Forum on 28 November 2022.

Held in Baghdad, the two-day forum provided an opportunity for Iraqi small and medium-sized businesses in farming and food processing, packaging and logistics to connect with international suppliers and investors.

Jointly organized by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq, the Forum hosted over 400 participants from almost all Iraqi governorates, including business leaders, international suppliers, investors, banks, policymakers, business support organizations, representatives from local and national authorities, as well as international development partners. Through financial support of the European Union and the Government of Germany (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, KfW), the Iraq National Trade Forum brought together over 100 small businesses to network, forge



business deals and offer investment opportunities, including one-on-one meetings with international suppliers of agricultural inputs and equipment. It also featured an exhibition, "Made in Iraq", where firms representing all Iraqi governorates could display their products.

Quotes

"It is key to build the capacities of Iraqi farmers and involve them in the entire agriculture value chain so they can benefit. Many producers suffer because their agriculture products are not in line with buyer requirements. We believe meaningful partnerships drive the success for sector development." - H.E. Abbas Al Alayawi, Minister of Agriculture, Iraq

"This event showed the best part of a vibrant Iraqi private sector that is ready to contribute to the economic growth and diversification of Iraq. And trade is a core element of this growth. The EU will continue to support the Iraqi government in its path towards the needed economic reforms that will help the private sector to expand and create jobs also in the new green economy." - Agne Gleveckaite, Deputy Head of the EU Delegation - Head of Political Section

"As the UN in Iraq, we have an ever-present responsibility to leave no one behind. We urge companies here today to think creatively: what role are you playing in promoting inclusive economic growth? In the UN's effort to support the Government of Iraq, we ask similar questions: how to ensure the most vulnerable are not left behind, and those most at risk are protected? The UN is here to support such initiatives." - Ghulam Mohammad Isaczi, United Nations Deputy Special Representative, Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq

"Iraq's record oil-driven growth must be accompanied by smart investments, business opportunities, and further advocacy for essential economic reforms, which is what this forum is all about." - Eric Buchot, Representative, Head of country programme, International Trade Centre

"Inadequate livelihood opportunities are among the greatest barriers to the sustainable return and reintegration of displaced persons in Iraq; and in the country's south, where climate change is increasingly felt in agricultural communities, limited livelihoods are an active cause of rural-urban displacement. Through its Enterprise Development Fund and events such as this one, IOM is pleased to work in collaboration with national and international partners to support agribusinesses and tap into the agricultural sector's potential to strengthen food security, sustainable income generation and durable solutions to displacement." - Giorgi Gigauri, Chief of Mission for IOM in Iraq

About the International Trade Centre's SAAVI project

The 'Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy' (SAAVI) project, funded by the European Union, focuses on the development and implementation of sector strategies for high-potential products, as well as on defining market-oriented policies to improve predictability and efficiency in the business environment. SAAVI also helps enhance Iraq's trade policy and supports the country in its WTO accession process.

SAAVI is implemented under the leadership of the Government of Iraq through the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Trade.

The project forms part of the overall European Union Special measure for supporting employment creation and improving economic governance in Iraq. As such, SAAVI is fully aligned with



First Iraq National Trade Forum connects ... (continued)

the activities of FAO, IOM, ILO, UNESCO and GIZ in the domain of private sector engagement and agricultural development.

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“The Iraqi National Trade Forum comes at a very timely moment, as Iraq’s new government has taken up its work recently and is now in the process of defining priorities and developing strategies on the various challenges facing the country in the years to come,” said Philip Holzapfel, Chargé

d’Affaires of the German Embassy during the opening of the Iraqi National Trade Forum held in Baghdad.

“Germany stands ready to support the Government’s effort in this regard. Our ongoing cooperation portfolio in the field of sustainable economic development, private sector support and job creation totals more than 400 million USD, and addresses various levels of engagement including policy reforms, access to finance for small and

medium enterprises (SMEs), public finance management, business integrity and digitalization,” he continued.

“One important instrument of our support for SMEs is certainly IOM’s Enterprise Development Fund (EDF), which has been crucial in creating long-term employment opportunities with a special focus on marginalized groups, including IDPs and host communities as well as women,” the Chargé d’Affaires concluded.

French Ambassador to Iraq visits the homeless shelter in Baghdad

Baghdad, 7 December 2022 - “I am very happy to see the progress made in the rehabilitation of the center in Baghdad. Thanks to UNFPA and UN-Habitat Iraq for implementing this French-funded project”, H.E. Éric Chevalier, French Ambassador to Iraq, stated during his visit to the homeless shelter in Baghdad today.

“The situation of Gender Based Violence survivors requires dedicated action. I am grateful to the Higher Judicial Council, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and all Iraqi

stakeholders for their coordination with UNFPA”, Ambassador Chevalier added.

The partners discussed the project’s progress to increase the capacity of all workers inside the shelter including the capacity of the survivors themselves.

“Thanks to France Government and UN agencies working in the project, we confirm our full commitment to make the survivor’s life better,” Dr. Isam Abdul Lateef, General Director of People with Disability Directorate noted.



New study supports Iraqi private sector development

Erbil, 08 December 2022 - The Ministry of Planning of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has today launched a study on Micro, Small, and Medium-Enterprises (MSMEs) in Iraq. The study provides an evidence base to inform policies and strategies aimed at creating sustainable livelihoods in Iraq, including through MSME development. Funded by USAID, the Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises Survey covered the four governorates of Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Halabja and Duhok and expands on an initial survey covering Baghdad, Basra and Ninewa governorates. The survey is designed to build a comprehensive analysis on MSME structures, trends, business dynamics, challenges and opportunities through up-to-date, reliable, relevant market information and analysis. Key findings of the KRI survey highlight low participation of females in MSME ownership (13%), financing issues, and weak marketing structures.

“MSMEs in Iraq face significant

challenges. As we continue to grapple with the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 in Iraq, this study once again highlights the importance of the private sector in Iraq to create much needed economic diversification and sustainable employment opportunities, especially for vulnerable groups. This critical work could not have been possible without our strong partnership with the Ministry of Planning, and generous support from our longstanding partner USAID,” says Auke Lootsma, UNDP Iraq Resident Representative.

The KRG Minister of Planning, Dr. Dara Rashid, emphasized his support for the initiative. He expressed his appreciation for the important support provided by UNDP Iraq and USAID in designing and implementing the timely study, and noted the importance of continued support to develop an action plan to implement its recommendations.

USAID Director Elise Jensen added that, “MSMEs are a vital part of a healthy economy. They offer opportunities for youth, women, and vulnerable populations to actively contribute to the country’s economic

growth and long-term stability. We are proud to partner with Kurdistan Regional Government counterparts and the private sector to enact critical initiatives and reform projects that empower MSME growth and elevate their role in developing the economy.” The survey is part of UNDP Iraq’s Funding Facility for Economic Reform programme – implemented by UNDP Iraq to promote sustainable poverty-centered economic reform in the country, with generous support of the American people through USAID.



IOM, Finland to support local economic recovery for women and conflict-affected populations in Iraq

Baghdad, 11 December 2022 - In the face of Iraq's deepening financial crisis, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq and the Government of Finland launched a EUR 2,000,000 project to support displacement-affected individuals whose businesses were destroyed or severely damaged by the conflict with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Among internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and host communities across the country, the project will pay particular attention to women and other marginalized groups that face disproportionate barriers accessing the labour market.

Already a significant concern in conflict- and displacement-affected areas struggling to bounce back from the ISIL conflict, livelihoods have emerged as a main factor impeding the return of IDPs to their areas of origin due to the combined effects of a recent drop in oil revenues and the lingering impact of COVID-19 restrictions. In Iraq's south, agricultural livelihoods are increasingly devastated by water scarcity, contributing to a rise in displacement from rural to urban areas.

"Supporting businesses and livelihood opportunities is of critical importance to responding to the needs of IDPs, returnees and host community members," said Chief of Mission for IOM in Iraq, Mr. Giorgi Gigauri. "With the generous support of the Government of Finland, IOM will work



to help mitigate this key barrier to return in order to foster conditions that enable durable solutions for displacement-affected persons – particularly women and other economically-vulnerable groups."

"Private sector plays an important role in promoting women's economic empowerment and creating jobs," stated Finnish Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Matti Lassila. "One key goal of Finland's development policy is to improve the access of women entrepreneurs to finance. Through the IOM's EDF-Women approach, women-led businesses will have access to grants as well as customized support services needed to run successful businesses."

Indeed, the project will support economic recovery and women's empowerment in the labour force by targeting women business owners and

businesses where the majority of the workforce is made up of women to enable business recovery and job creation. Grants will be provided to start-ups and early-stage businesses, and owners of small and medium-sized enterprises will have access to capacity-building and business development services and trainings in areas such as bookkeeping, marketing and savings management. This approach is informed by continued evaluations and research on women's participation in Iraq's workforce and key economic sectors.

IOM Iraq will implement this project in Basra, Dohuk, Erbil, Ninewa, Sulaymaniyah and Thi Qar governorates, working closely with local authorities and community members throughout every stage of the project implementation, from needs identification to final hand-over.

Rehabilitated Iraq-Jordan Border Crossing Point inaugurated, economies to reap benefits

Trebil, 15 December 2022 – Today, the Iraqi Border Points Commission hosted a ceremony to mark the rehabilitation of the Trebil Border Crossing Point (BCP), Iraq's only official entry point with Jordan and a strategic port of exit for exports to the region and beyond. Through this rehabilitation, the economies of both Iraq and Jordan – which faced decline when the BCP closed seven years ago due to the war with Daesh – are posed to benefit from increased cross-border trade.

Supported by the European Union (EU), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Anbar Governorate Authorities, the Border Points Commission and Government agencies



involved in border management to provide infrastructure rehabilitation; specialized technical equipment and

software; and tailored border management trainings, with the aim of supporting the Government of Iraq

Rehabilitated Iraq-Jordan Border Crossing Point... (continued)

(GoI) to improve security and the cross-border movement of people and goods through the BCP, while also revitalizing cross-border trade and the local economy.

This will be the first time that the single window system is implemented in Iraq, an approach that will support the GoI to streamline and optimize the control and clearance process for goods transiting through the border point by allowing traders to submit information required for cross-border movements to a single office, with all relevant government agencies work together in sequence.

The ceremony opened with words from the Governor of Anbar, Dr. Ali Farhan: "Since the liberation operations, the international community has had a strong presence in the governorate and is working on many development

projects, as well as on the rehabilitation of infrastructure and provision of support to displaced persons and returnees. We stress the necessity of this point of exit and its strategic location, and especially its impact on the country's economy, trade and development."

"We thank all the contributors and supporters of this project, and we hope to continue supporting our border crossings to improve the reality of work, which in turn facilitates the process of trade exchange between our country, Iraq, and the rest of the world," added Brigadier Eng. Abdulrahim Qasim Hashim on behalf of Dr. Omar Al-Waily, Head of Iraq's Border Point Commission.

Guillaume Decot, First Secretary of the EU Delegation to Iraq, said, "In addition to the security component,

strengthening Trebil border point and streamlining its integrated border management processes are a way to bring communities together, to promote trade and economic growth, expanding job opportunities."

"We can all witness here today – in these new buildings, infrastructure and equipment – the concrete results of this strong collaboration," stated Head of the Migration Management Division at IOM Iraq, Mr. Darijus Pamparas. "It is important to continue strengthening the border management capacity of the GoI along the border with Jordan, as well as along other borderlines, in terms of infrastructure, equipment, technical knowledge, interagency and cross-border coordination. All of us can play a role in this."



Online business portal delivers results in Iraq

Baghdad, 15 December 2022 - In one year, business.mot.gov.iq has helped almost 3,000 entrepreneurs register a business and put the Middle Eastern nation on the ease of doing business map.

The number of people registering businesses in Iraq through the country's online portal has steadily grown over the past year.

In November 2022, 278 companies were registered through business.mot.gov.iq – more than five times the number recorded during the first month after going live on 8 November 2021.

In just one year, the portal has helped over 2,981 entrepreneurs establish their business as a legal entity in the digital business environment.

Formalizing business operations entails benefits for the entrepreneur, employees and government. The advantages for the business owner include better access to loans and the ability to establish their brand. For workers, a job with a registered company means adequate labour and social protection.

For the government and national economy, registered businesses contribute to tax revenue, social security and the overall gross domestic product (GDP). The registry also helps governments better understand the business environment and how they can provide the right support.

The portal was set up jointly by UNCTAD, the governments of Iraq and the United States, and the Global

Entrepreneurship Network.

From 35 steps to a matter of minutes

By creating an online "single window" for business registration, the partners simplified a process that used to take 35 steps and countless hours of waiting in line at different government offices.

Now everything can be done in just five steps, a few clicks and a matter of minutes. Seven Iraqi agencies, including the ministries of trade and foreign affairs and the chamber of commerce, provide their services through the single window.

"The exciting results from the first year show that there's demand and a need for an online tool for would-be business owners," says Bitia Mortazavi, a project manager in UNCTAD's investment and enterprise division. "Entrepreneurs need to be able to open a company quickly and without too much administrative heavy lifting."

About 95% of those who have used the portal are Iraqi nationals. The others are entrepreneurs from Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon who have decided to open a business in Iraq.

Empowering women and young entrepreneurs

The online tool is helping all entrepreneurs but is especially useful for those who struggle more than others to register their business in person.

These include women, who normally have less time to complete the administrative hurdles due to

traditional roles as caretakers in Iraq's society, and young people, who often lack the financial resources and experience needed to complete the paperwork or hire a lawyer.

Over 150 women entrepreneurs have so far used business.mot.gov.iq. One of them is Sanaa Abdel Rahim Shakeel, a 30-year-old entrepreneur from Baghdad who recently registered Qobat Al Iraq General Trading.

The company, which she started in August this year, imports clothes and other goods from abroad and employs two people full time.

Ms. Shakeel says the process was quick and seamless, allowing her to easily pay online all the fees and take care of follow-up actions, such as collecting the registration certificate and connecting with partner agencies.

"It was a good experience on a properly organized website that is easy to access," she says. "A tool like this is good for entrepreneurship."

She adds that by helping Iraqi women formally establish their businesses, the tool is empowering them to achieve their personal and professional goals.

Putting Iraq on the ease of doing business map

Thanks to the online portal, Iraq is now among the top-rated countries for ease of business registration, alongside Australia, Denmark, Estonia, Kenya, Oman and Sweden. It scores 10 out of 10 across all dimensions of the Global Entrepreneurship Registration ranking of online business registration services.

Online business portal delivers results in Iraq... (continued)

“The simple online process was achieved without needing to change current laws and regulations – a major achievement,” says Jonathan Ortman, president of the Global Entrepreneurship Network.

He adds: “It has also transformed the

role of public servants, from that of administrative paper-pushers to empowered problem-solvers who will continue to help fuel the country’s entrepreneurial ecosystem.”

The success of business.mot.gov.iq has inspired the Iraq Council of Ministers

to initiate plans to extend it from the nation’s capital Baghdad to all 14 Iraqi provinces and to include up to 50 government services, from issuing identity documents, passports and drivers’ licenses, to delivering tax ID cards.



Basra, 13 December 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, and UN-Habitat Iraq’s Head of Program, **Mr Wael Al-Ashhab**, visited the tourist facility built in **Eastern Hammar Marshes** at the edge of Al Shafi Village in Basra Governorate. The facility, which includes a traditional mudhif built-in reeds, was funded by the UNDAF Iraq Trust Fund and implemented by UN-Habitat to promote awareness of the importance of the marshes to the resilience and livelihoods of local communities. The visit highlighted the suffering of these communities as a result of water shortages due to climate change and reduced river flow.



Basra, 14 December 2022 - In Basra today, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Ghulam Isaczai**, and **Sheema Sen Gupta**, UNICEF Representative in Iraq, visited Himrien Primary School for Girls, where UNICEF Iraq, funded by The Netherlands, provides safe water to 1,440 girls through a solar-powered desalination plant.



UN DSRSG/RC/HC **Ghulam Isaczai**, accompanied by UNICEF Iraq Representative, **Sheema Sen Gupta**, also visited new UNICEF premises in Basra, that will host other UN agencies. The new office will strengthen work for every child and young people in the south of Iraq and contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



UN DSRSG/RC/HC **Ghulam Isaczai** and UNICEF Iraq Representative, **Sheema Sen Gupta**, also visited R Zero Project for water management. At the site, they saw first-hand this UNICEF innovative initiative on water recycling to improve access to safe water in Basra Governorate, benefiting an estimated 1.5 million people.

DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Isaczai concludes his visit to the South

Basra, 15 December 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**: “It has been such a privilege connecting with Iraqis from diverse backgrounds across this unique country and seeing the vibrant and important UN work on the ground.

During my trip to the south, I met so

many people determined to build a better future for their communities and for Iraq.

It was magnificent to see the captivating marshland landscapes and the unique rich culture. However, the starkly reduced riverine flows supplying the marshlands threaten the water supply, the lifeblood of the health systems, food, energy, and fisheries.

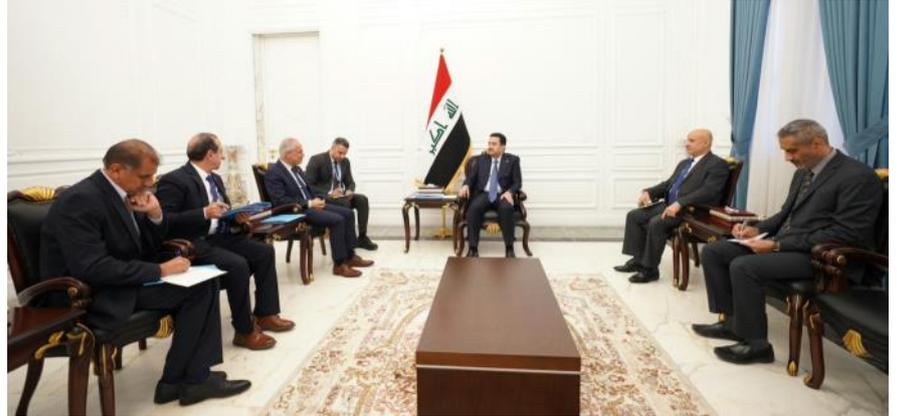
Urgent action is needed to secure water

resources, conserve and restore the wetlands, reduce the degradation of natural resources, and improve water management.

The UN stands ready to help and support the Government of Iraq in tackling climate change and the water crisis by promoting policy dialogue, exchanging best practices, raising awareness, and forging partnerships”.

Prime Minister of Iraq receives DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq and the Head of UN-Habitat Programme in Iraq

Baghdad, 17 December 2022 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczi, and the Head of UN-Habitat Programme in Iraq, Mr. Wael Al-Ashhab, received by the Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Mohammed S. Al-Sudani. They discussed the issue of Yazidi land and property rights. Since 2018, UN-Habitat has been mapping the Yazidis' land and property rights in Sinjar. Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Prime Minister.



Japan provides an additional \$1.38 million for UN-Habitat to support returnees in Iraq to strengthen socio-economic stabilization

Baghdad, 23 December 2022 - The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) welcomes an additional contribution of USD 1.38 million from the Government of Japan to contribute to social stabilization and food security in Iraq through (a) rehabilitation or reconstruction of housing units damaged or destroyed by the conflict, (b) improving access to public infrastructure such as water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities (WASH sector), basic services including schools (education sector), community health centers (health sector) in environmentally friendly approaches, (c) improving access for returnees to marketplaces and capacity development and awareness-raising on food security and resource efficiency in particular. The project will be implemented in Sinjar/Western Ninewa, Ninewa Governorate.

After the invasion of Sinjar district in the Ninewa Governorate by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in 2014, more than 250,000 people were displaced from Sinjar district. Many of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are originally from Sinjar are still caught in protracted displacement seven years

after the official declaration of the 'end of war against ISIL' by the Government of Iraq, and they still face barriers to return, mainly due to severe damage to housing, lack of access to basic services, and lack of livelihood and employment opportunities.

In addition, while Iraq's economic conditions have been gradually recovering from COVID 19 as well as the oil price shocks of 2020, the recovery is being fraught by the impact and significant economic risks posed by the impact of the war in Ukraine.

When Wael Al-Ashhab, Head of Country Programme of UN-Habitat Iraq, visited His Excellency Mr. Futoshi Matsumoto, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, on 8 December 2022, he emphasized the importance of the activities implemented by UN-Habitat towards returnees in order to ensure to create the entire environment for people to lead humanly lives, including constructing and rehabilitating decent homes, providing essential supply such as water and sanitation, and also providing vocational training and creating employment opportunities. With the generous funding from the Government of Japan, UN-Habitat constructed and rehabilitated more

than 1,100 houses accompanied with basic infrastructure for approximately 10,000 returnees in Ninewa Governorate since 2018.

Wael Al-Ashhab expressed his sincere gratitude to the people and the Government of Japan, stating "this project builds on UN-Habitat's comprehensive urban recovery approach, which simultaneously addresses multiple challenges faced by vulnerable returnees. UN-Habitat is committed to promote adequate housing, access to basic services and decent job opportunities for conflict-affected persons in urban settings."

With a contribution of more than USD 56 million since Japanese Fiscal Year 2014, the Government of Japan has been a vital partner to UN-Habitat's Iraq Programme.



Germany helps WFP support Iraqis affected by conflict and climate crisis through resilience-building activities

Baghdad, 28 December 2022 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a generous contribution of EURO 22.5 million (US\$23.9) from Germany to support capacity-building activities in coordination with the Iraqi

Government, as well as empowering youth through vocational training and assisting vulnerable communities in Iraq to rebuild their livelihoods.

This contribution will support WFP's ongoing efforts to support youth from food insecure households to find

pathways towards food security through dignified livelihoods and improving the economic situation of vulnerable communities. To restore farming in agricultural areas affected by conflict, WFP has been providing assistance to local vulnerable farmers

Germany helps WFP support Iraqis affected by conflict and climate crisis through resilience-building activities *(continued)*

through the rehabilitation of irrigation canals and water stations.

“Germany commends the important work of WFP to improve living conditions of vulnerable communities in Iraq. We continue to work with WFP to improve resilience, rebuild livelihoods and strengthen capacities to adapt to the consequences of drought, heat and desalination,” said the German Ambassador to Iraq, Martin Jäger.

In 2021, WFP managed to rehabilitate and restore more than 30,000 hectares of arable land and more than 3,000 kilometers of irrigation and water drainage canals in Iraq benefitting more than 104,000 people.

“Germany has always been one of WFP’s most committed supporters and has dedicated extensive efforts and funds towards supporting Iraq and its people throughout the years,” said WFP Iraq’s Representative, Mr. Ally Raza

Qureshi.

WFP is also focusing on empowering youth through a set of carefully designed vocational trainings and digital marketing courses, enabling young women and men to create livelihoods and reach out to customers online. This approach has already been applied in the south of Iraq and has benefitted nearly 2,000 women and men.

“Iraq is one of the most affected countries by the adverse effects of climate change and we have been witnessing this in data and through our own eyes. With the commitment of Germany and other generous donors, WFP can continue working to assist the people of Iraq with longer term initiatives that ensure they are able to secure livelihoods and earn a living for themselves and their families,” added Qureshi.

In 2023, WFP will continue the vocational skills trainings coupled with lessons on entrepreneurship and online marketing, prioritizing youth and women. Lessons learned from previous initiatives have shown the impact these trainings had on improving the economic situation of trained youth as well as the need to scale up such interventions in other vulnerable areas in Iraq.



Agriculture

FAO Iraq Representative meets the Agriculture and Water Resources Minister of the Kurdistan Region

Erbil, 1 November 2022 – FAO Representative in Iraq, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, met the Agriculture and Water Resources Minister of the Kurdistan Region, Ms. Begard Talabani and discussed FAO activities and programmes being implemented in Iraq.

Discussions were mainly on food security, animal health, agricultural production and food chains, and

supporting and developing the production of agricultural crop seeds that adapt to the climatic conditions of the Kurdistan Region. Likewise, the two sides touched on the process of marketing and promoting local products for farmers, with the provision of training opportunities to strengthen the skills of the Ministry’s extension staff and the local farmers.



20 media and veterinary services extension officers trained on effective communication in Iraq

Baghdad, 4 November 2022 – 20 Media and veterinary services extension officers from 8 Governorates across Iraq attended a four-day technical workshop on effective communication. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq organized the workshop in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture within the framework of the programme “Improving Delivery of Animal Health Services and Disease Surveillance in Iraq” financed under the United States Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA).

The objective of the workshop is to strengthen communication skills of the veterinary services with key stakeholders and concerned public by working with opinion leaders and influencers.

The Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. Mithaq Abdul-Hussein Obaid stressed that, “It is important to work with FAO in Iraq to enhance the capacities of the veterinary services to respond to emergencies related to animal health, how to convey information to citizens and to raise awareness regarding the protection of animal health, including those diseases

common to humans by applying the one health approach”.

FAO Iraq representative Dr. Salah El-Hajj Hassan added that, “Communication plays a vital role in conveying awareness messages about protecting animal health and welfare and promoting veterinary services. The veterinary extension staff monitor, detect, notify and respond rapidly to animal diseases and develop and implement protective animal health and welfare measures. We are happy to have media and veterinary services extension officers with us for the four-day training. Providing accurate

20 media and veterinary services extension officers trained on effective communication in Iraq (continued)

information is essential to engage and empower Iraqis on their animal health issues that affect human health".

Facilitated by the FAO international expert Oby Obyerodhyambo, the workshop adopted a blended format of instructional sessions and experiential learning aimed at improving access to information about basic communication tools, methods and channels. The workshop will enable the participants to develop communication strategies tailored to their interventions and to communicate about the animal health and welfare.



Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) engagement in Iraq

Baghdad, 16 November 2022 - FAO organized a consultative meeting with CSOs Directorate- General Secretariat for the Council of Ministers (GSCM), and Al Aghsan Foundation for Agriculture and Environmental Development to discuss the Roadmap of CSOs Engagement in Iraq. The meeting chaired by FAOR Dr Salah Elhadj Hassan, Programme Division Manager of NGO Directorate GSCM Dr Abbas Gazy, CEO of Alaghsan Foundation Dr Khalid Naji AlAsal .

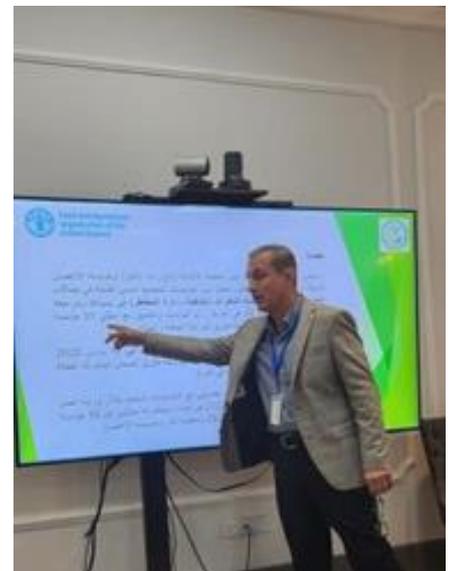
CSOs play key role in maintaining food security and reducing poverty and have increasingly demonstrated their capabilities and potential in designing and implementing programs and projects at regional, national and local levels. FAO aims for coordinating and opening the dialogue areas more broadly with community organizations. The meeting comes after a series of consultation sessions and workshops between all involved stakeholders including CSOs all over Iraq. FAO in collaboration with the Iraqi government and Al-Aghsan Foundation aim to facilitate the coordination mechanisms and engagement approach

of CSOs on country level in programs related to Agriculture, Water, and Environment sectors, focusing on three areas: Natural Resource, Disaster Risk Management, and Climate Change Resilience.

FAOR highlighted the importance of maximizing the collective coordination between all relevant stakeholders is essential in engaging Local CSOs, through capacity building and establishing a dialogue platform.

Jaff Kayan, Senior Policy Expert at FAO Regional Office, participated virtually and confirmed the commitment of this initiative and expressed willingness to support the next actions for supporting the prospects of joint cooperation. FAO Country Office in Iraq will assess complementarities and synergies with other development actors' work in priority areas of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the potential of forming multi-stakeholders partnerships between CSOs, United Nations agencies and other development actors.

The work continuous, Roadmap for



CSOs Engagement in Iraq at its final stages, and FAO looking forward to set further broader meetings having all relevant partners. FAO will continue on facilitating the coordination, and coming actions will give the opportunity to all stakeholders to be engaged.

Sweden contributes USD 10.2 M to Iraq's agriculture sector in Southern Iraq to mitigate climate changes

Baghdad, 17 November 2022 - The Government of Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and represented by the Swedish Embassy to Iraq and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq have signed a four-year, SEK 112 million* (US\$ 10.2 million) agreement to enhance climate resilience of vulnerable agriculture

households in Missan, Al-Muthanna, Najaf and Thi-Qar Governorates.

Activities under the agreement include providing technical assistance; strengthening water management institutions and the water distribution system and enhancing the strategic framework and stakeholder engagement for a climate resilient agricultural development.

Implementing this project, in

cooperation with Ministries of Agriculture, environment, water resources and other national and local stakeholders, will also tackle existing challenges in the development of major value chains by promoting climate smart agricultural practices to mitigate the impact of climate changes and enhance household and community resilience .

Ambassador of Sweden to Iraq, H.E.

Sweden contributes USD 10.2 M to Iraq's agriculture sector in Southern Iraq to mitigate climate changes *(continued)*



Jessica Svårdström says “Sweden maintains its commitment to improving the wellbeing and livelihoods of women and men in rural communities in southern Iraq with enhanced climate smart agriculture practices and management of natural resources, backed by policy support.”

FAO RNE ADG Dr Abdulhakim ElWaer: “its historical moment as Iraq

is carrying the burden of climate change implications on Agriculture, water, environment and welfare of Iraqi people. This generous support will address these issues and I wish to thank the Governments of Sweden and Iraq”. “This partnership between SIDA and FAO Iraq came in timely manner given the water scarcity issues that Iraq’s agriculture is facing which are

expected to be worse over time”. “We are extremely grateful for this contribution which will be instrumental in tackling these challenges and enhancing the climate resilience of local communities,” said FAO representative Dr Salah el hajj Hassan.

Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Dr Mithaq Al Khafaji, said: “This is very important project to mitigate the impact of climate change and water scarcity challenges on the vulnerable families especially in the south of Iraq. I want to address my sincere appreciation to the government of Sweden represented by H.E the Ambassador on this generous contribution, and thanks to SIDA and FAO for making this achievement”.

Iraq Deputy Minister of Environment. H.E. Dr Jassim Alfalahi: “It’s a great opportunity to implement this important project aimed at minimizing the impact of climate change not only for current, but also future generations. Thank you, the Government of Sweden and FAO, for supporting Iraqi people”.

Through EU funded project, FAO establishes stakeholder’s partnerships for Improving date palm and tomato value chains in south Iraq

Basra, 22 November 2022 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Iraq (FAO), held a large consultative meeting in Al-Zubair district / Basra Governorate, with the Agriculture Directorate, Farmers Associations, Al-Zubair Tomato Producers Association, tomato and date palm farmers, with the participation of women farmers from the Office of Rural Women’s Affairs and representatives from the private sector.

FAO Representative in Iraq Dr Salah ElHajj Hassan, confirmed that the project “Restoration and enhance the resilience of agricultural food systems in southern Iraq funded by the European Union and implemented by FAO in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture in Iraq focuses on developing tomato and Date palm sectors, in addition to the buffalo sector, as the main value chains in southern Iraq, pointing to the importance of introducing Farmers Field School FFS programs for implementing a participatory approach in analyzing technical challenges as well identifying and implementing solutions, which will have a profound



impact in strengthening the capacities of both extension staff and farmers.

FAO Representative and FAO team further highlighted that Technical support will be accompanied by marketing interventions that will be based on a partnership including farmers association, MOA and other stakeholders with project initial support.

The interventions and remarks of participants were noted, as well directions and comments of the local authorities, as the Director of

Agriculture and the Head of Farmers Associations in Basra confirmed their commitments in dedicating needed efforts and resources to ensure success for this innovative vision for supporting the marketing of both Tomato and date crops.

The Director of the Rural Women's Affairs Office confirmed that women have a fundamental role within the Tomato Producers Association as they have an active contribution to the sector and are already engaged in important initiative.

FAO Iraq supports livestock breeders and farmers with forage seeds in Nineva



Nineveh, 31 October 2022– The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq held a ceremony in Bashiqa district in Nineva to continue supporting livestock farmers with forage seeds to more than 160 farmers and livestock breeders. The cultivation of fodder in the past

two years has contributed to increase in milk productivity in quantity and quality, as part of the European Union’s funded project “Support to agricultural livelihoods of rural and peri-urban returnees and communities in Nineva Governorate”, and in collaboration with the Ministry of

Agriculture.

FAO Representative in Iraq Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan stated, “farmers in Nineva have adopted the production of fodder crops cultivation which helped them to mitigate the impact of drought and high feed prices” and he thanked the European Union (EU) for the generous support .It is worth mentioning that many farmers have taken the initiative to purchase their own seeds from the local markets. They were eager to spread the cultivation of forage seeds to reach self-sufficiency.

At the end of the ceremony, a number of farmers and livestock breeders highlighted the important role of FAO in developing their work through the introduction of new techniques that will upscale the agricultural sector and increase job opportunities.

Iraq Donor Coordination Group on Agriculture and Water meets in Baghdad to discuss the country’s agriculture sector priorities

Baghdad, 5 December 2022 - Iraq Donor Coordination Group on Agriculture and Water met in Baghdad to discuss the country’s agriculture sector priorities, challenges the sector is facing, in particular irrigation water, and Iraq National Food Security Strategy.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq and the Netherlands Embassy in Iraq co-chaired Donor Coordination Group on Agriculture and Water meeting attended by high ranking officials of the Iraqi Government Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Water Resources, European Union delegation, embassies, UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations.

Iraqi Government Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, and under-secretary officials shared their perspectives on #COP27 and Iraq

National Food Security Strategy, and voiced their support for a Sector Coordination Group on Agriculture and Water (Irrigation) that includes full government participation on addressing agricultural sector priorities.

FAO international experts briefed

participants on the progress in reviewing the Iraq National Food Security Strategy and formulation of an action plan. Participants highlighted a need for concerted efforts and coordinated response to tackle issues challenging country’s agriculture sector.



Roundtable discussions in KRI on the revision of the National Food Security Strategy and Action Plan

Erbil, 8 December 2022 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MoAWR) of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) conducted a roundtable discussion on the review and revision of National Food Security Strategy of Iraq

(NFSS) and an Action Plan to it.

This initiative is part of ongoing discussions at the national and regional levels facilitated by FAO Iraq and its international experts from headquarters and Regional Office for Near East and North Africa to review and amend existing NFSS considering current challenges as well as

developing Action Plan to enforce NFSS.

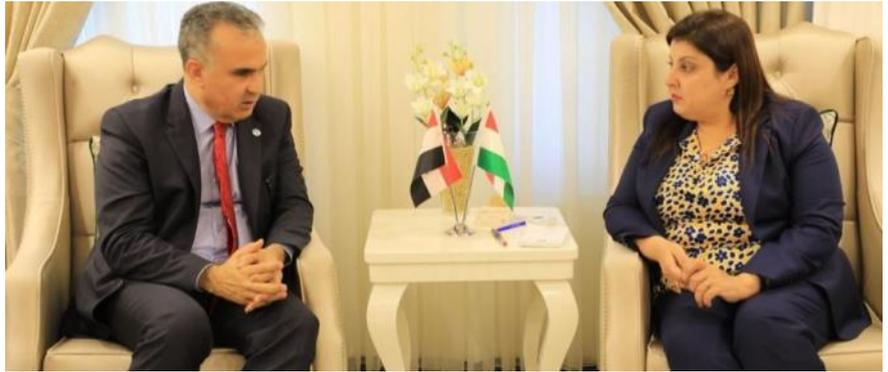
The KRI MoAWR Minister’s Advisor Dr. Rizkar Muhammad Khader and FAO Iraq Representative Dr. Salah ElHajjHassan opened the meeting with welcoming speeches and highlighted a fruitful collaboration between two institutions in supporting farmers and

Roundtable discussions in KRI on the revision ... (continued)

agriculture sector of the country.

Over two days, FAO national and international experts, KRI MoAWR, Council of Ministries, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Planning, Board of Investment, Board of Environment, Chamber of Commerce, Farmers Unions, Agriculture Syndicate and academia had discussed issues affecting agriculture production and food security in the country and KRI, proposed solutions and actions to be included in the updated NFSS and its Action Plan. In addition, participants discussed the potential support of FAO in developing an Investment Map for KRI agriculture sector.

On the sidelines of the workshop, FAO Iraq Representative Dr. Salah



ElHajjHassan met the KRI Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources HE Begard Talabani. In the course of this meeting, FAO Iraq ongoing initiatives in

KRI, NFSS and its Action Plan, as well as future potential collaboration between FAO Iraq and the KRI MoAWR in the agriculture sector have been discussed.

FAO launches the SIDA funded project “Enhanced Climate Resilience of vulnerable agriculture households in Southern Iraq”

Najaf, 15 December 2022 - Under the patronage of the Minister of Agriculture, H.E Abbas JabrAl-Aliawi, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq launched in Najaf the project “Enhanced Climate Resilience of vulnerable agriculture households in Southern Iraq” funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The ceremony chaired by the FAO Representative, Dr Salah ELHajjHassan, was attended by Najaf Governor, high officials from Najaf, Missan, Muthanna and ThiQar, Representatives from the farmers union, academia, private sector and other relevant stakeholders.

H.E Minister of Agriculture thanked the Government of Sweden and FAO for the support provided to improve the wellbeing and livelihoods of women and men in rural communities in Southern Iraq; he also highlighted the importance of improving agriculture practices from traditional to new and more sustainable technologies, in line with the government policy, to mitigate the impact of climate change and water scarcity on vulnerable families.

Governor of Najaf, Dr Majid Al-Waeli said “the project is a great opportunity for Najaf and Southern Iraq, as the country is facing serious environmental challenges including a threat of water shortages”. “I expect the project to optimize water use in agriculture value chains, as well as strengthening coordination between public and private extension services to increase the adoption of advanced production

technologies and practices”.

FAO Representative, Dr Salah ELHajj Hassan thanked the Governments of Sweden, the Government of Iraq and underlined the strong cooperation with the line Ministries, local government and relevant stakeholders. “FAO has a high level of technical knowledge and experience in agriculture, food security and nutrition, especially the international standards and best practices for livelihood recovery and resilience, agricultural and rural development and climate change adaptation”. “FAO activities will continue empowering rural women as agents of change for climate adaptation, said FAO Representative.

The project is designed to respond to the constraints faced by the agriculture sector in terms of water availability due to global climatic change and aim to enhance the climate resilience of farming communities by increasing and

stabilizing water availability at the farm gate; optimizing agriculture and water productivity; and reducing the adaptation deficit of farming communities via specific and tailored trainings and capacity development processes. The activities aim further to strengthen water management institutions and the water distribution regime and to enhance the strategic framework and stakeholder engagement for a climate resilient agricultural development.

The project will be implemented in coordination with the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources and other national and local stakeholders, will also tackle existing challenges in the development of major value chains by promoting climate smart agricultural methodology to ensure gender and social inclusion, ecosystem health and biodiversity and reduced soil, water and air pollution.



Discussion on the extension of social security coverage for workers in Iraq's informal sector held in Mosul

Mosul, 4 November 2022 - A fruitful discussion in Mosul today with government officials, trade union representatives, journalists, academics and researchers on various issues related to the extension of social security coverage for workers in Iraq's informal sector. Hosted at the Northern Technical University, the event was attended by Basma Baseem, Member of the Parliamentarian Committee on Labour, Alyaa Abbas AL-Attar, President of Northern Technical University, Barbara Egger, Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation in Iraq, and Maha Kattaa, ILO Country Coordinator for Iraq.

The event was organized by the ILO, in collaboration with the Media Centre for Civil Society Organization in Iraq, as part of on-going discussions with

multiple stakeholders which aim to contribute to strengthening social protection and related policies - with support from European Union in Iraq.



Alarm is sounding about the worrying situation of occupational safety and health in Iraq, particularly in the oil and gas sector

Basra, 11 November 2022 - The participants in the workers unions workshop on occupational safety and health in the oil and gas sector, organized by the IndustriALL Global Union, and with the participation of a number of workers unions, the International Labour Organization in Iraq, and the National Center of Health and Safety-Basra Branch, are sounding the alarm about the worrying situation of occupational safety and health in Iraq, particularly in the oil and gas sector.

The participants called for addressing this issue with an integrated vision that takes into account the climate change resulting from global warming and environmental pollution. The emission of gases from extraction operations and oil industries is considered one of the main reasons behind the aggravation of this issue in the southern governorates in general and Basra in particular.

The participants pointed to the phenomenon of diseases outbreaks directly related to the activities of certain occupations due to the poor compliance of employers with occupational safety and health measures.

This bleak picture requires all government, business owners, workers unions, civil society organizations, international organizations, and development partners to take serious steps to improve work environment, the most important of which is the development of the legislative framework, and in particular speedy enactment of the Occupational Safety and Health Law in line with

International Labour Organization Convention 155 on Occupational Safety and Health.

The participants also referred to the adoption by the International Labour Conference this year of the right to a safe and healthy work environment as one of the fundamental principles and rights at work.

The participants also called for the establishment of national policies and mechanisms to effectively monitor the compliance of companies operating in the oil and gas sector, taking into account the steps recently taken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs through its close cooperation with the International Labour Organization in Iraq, including the preparation of a national policy, profile and programme for occupational safety and health, emphasizing the continuation of technical cooperation during the coming years in the field of occupational safety and health in relation to the implementation of the provisions of this policy, activating the notification and recording system of accidents and work injuries for workers

as well as occupational diseases developed by the International Labour Organization in Iraq, and periodically building the capacities of the Ministry in the area of strategic compliance planning for occupational safety and health inspections.

In conclusion, the participants agreed that promoting high levels of health and safety at work is the responsibility of the entire community, and the culture of occupational safety and health must be instilled and maintained at the national level, and for all spectrums of Iraqi society, in addition to the media to actively contribute to achieving this goal by giving priority for health and safety in national strategies.

The participants appealed to all parties to develop plans and programs for a just transition to an environment that uses clean energy and technology and that places the protection of workers' health and safety at the top of its priorities since workers are the basic nucleus for building advanced and modern societies.



Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs of Federal Iraq and Kurdistan Region of Iraq, ILO and the European Union launch policies on labour inspection and occupational safety and health

Baghdad, 20 November 2022 - New policies on labour inspection and Occupational Safety and Health were launched in Baghdad on Sunday (November 20) by the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs of the Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government, the European Union (EU) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). The policies will contribute to modernizing the labour inspection system and improve working conditions for workers and their employers, in line with International Labour Standards.

A signing ceremony of the policies took place in the presence of Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Ahmad Al-Asadi, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq Kwestan Mohammed, ILO Country Coordinator in Iraq Maha Kattaa, and EU Delegation to Iraq Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Agne Gleveckaite.

The policies were developed under the framework of the ILO project "Enhancing labour governance, inspection and working conditions in response to COVID-19", supported by the EU. One of the project's key objectives is to strengthen the labour inspection system and improve Occupational Safety and Health through policy development and capacity building. The project is building the capacities of government staff and social partners on these issues and on fundamental principles and rights at work, to promote compliance with national labour legislations and International Labour Standards.

"The policies focus on labour inspection, working conditions and Occupational Safety and Health in Iraq. They are documents that set the basis for effective implementation, including gaps and shortcomings and ways to address them, for policy makers, officials, employers and workers and those working in the fields of inspection and Occupational Safety and Health," said Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Ahmad Al-Asadi. "I would like to extend my appreciation to the International Labour Organization for its effective efforts and to the European Union for its funding and support for our Ministry's



programmes."

"The ILO project on enhancing labour governance, inspection and working conditions in response to COVID-19, which is funded by the European Union, has given us the opportunity to discuss the gaps in the labour inspection system, follow up on working conditions through an Occupational Safety and Health committee, and the development of policies on Occupational Safety and Health and labour inspection. This has increased our adherence to implement these policies developed in close consultation between the ILO and the government, employers and workers in efforts to reach the desired goals, which is to enhance the inspection system, improve working conditions and work towards increasing the number of inspectors and enhancing their capacities," said Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Kwestan Mohammed.

The policy on labour inspection provides guidance on the tasks and key principles related to labour inspection. These include legal frameworks related to inspection visits, modern labour inspection systems, reporting, collaboration between stakeholders, and capacity building, among others.

A national profile for Occupational Safety and Health was developed, setting the basis for the application of a solid Occupational Safety and Health management system. It assesses the status of Occupational Safety and Health at the national level, including gaps and shortcomings, and provides

recommendations for policymakers, government officials, employers, workers and Occupational Safety and Health practitioners. It describes the legislative framework, enforcement and implementation mechanisms and infrastructure in both Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

"These policies were developed through close consultation with the government, employers' and workers' organizations," said ILO Country Coordinator Maha Kattaa. "They are paramount in enhancing the labour inspection system, protecting workers and promoting their safety at work. We will continue to work closely with our constituents to ensure the proper and effective application of these policies."

"The new policies on Occupational Safety and Health and on labour inspection are a further step towards improving conditions for workers and their employers in Iraq, in line with International Labour Standards. It is very reassuring to have policies in place, which will contribute to modernizing the labour inspection system and provide guarantees for protection of the workers. It is an important element for the socio-economic development of Iraq," said EU Delegation to Iraq Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Agne Gleveckaite.

The EU-supported project contributes to the socio-economic development of Iraq through enhancing the application of International Labour Standards and national labour legislation and promoting social dialogue, social justice, and decent work.

ILO holds a debate on the recommendations to strengthen the adequacy, coverage and equity of the social protection system

Baghdad, 28 November 2022 - A roundtable discussion, organized by the Ministry of Planning in collaboration with the ILO, took place in Baghdad last week, bringing together key policymakers, researchers, local development thought leaders and practitioners to discuss findings of a UN position paper on building Iraq's Social Protection Floor. The paper proposes recommendations to strengthen the adequacy, coverage and equity of the social protection system in Iraq.

The event was attended by Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, Deputy Special Representative

of the Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq; Dr. Maher Hammad Johan, Deputy Minister of Planning for Technical Affairs; and Dr. Maha Kattaa, ILO Country Coordinator in Iraq.

It included presentations by keynote speakers from the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the ILO, stimulating discussion on reform options to build a coherent, effective, and impactful social assistance system that contributes to a vision of economically productive and socially inclusive Iraq -with EU support.



ILO-UNHCR policy dialogue examines access of host communities and forcibly displaced persons to Iraq's labour market



Erbil, 2 December 2022 - A policy dialogue was organised by the ILO and UNHCR in Erbil on Thursday (December 1) to discuss the findings of a new ILO report, which examines the access of host communities and forcibly displaced persons to the labour market, employment, livelihood and training opportunities.

The one-day event brought together key government representatives, social partners, academia, and key stakeholders. Participants reviewed the findings, which focused on international standards and legal frameworks related to rights to work and rights at work, business registration and access to finance, employment services, and access to vocational training. They exchanged feedback on next steps in terms of recommendations that can support efforts to promote decent work for forcibly displaced and host community members in Iraq.

"Despite many challenges, Kurdistan Regional Government is taking efforts to strengthen social protection laws and work with the private sector for employment generation. The ILO has supported us with the capacity building and by providing inputs to our employment policies. We are proud of

being able to provide equal treatment to internally displaced persons and refugees. We welcome these efforts improving access to our services," said Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Zakia Syed Saleh.

Head of Relations at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Federal Government, Zeinab Fadhil, added: "We are coordinating with different ministries in the government and with civil society to support forcibly displaced persons. We hope to continue our collaboration and dialogue on the safe return and reintegration of displaced people."

The report "Review of national policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks, and practice in Iraq" examines the extent to which communities affected by displacement in Iraq have access to the labour market at the institutional level, as well as the capacities of relevant actors, such as the government, institutions, partners, and NGOs to intervene effectively.

"It aims to establish a baseline situation in relation to the access of refugees and IDPs to the labour markets at the policy and institutional level," explained ILO Country Coordinator for Iraq, Maha

Kattaa. The report reflects on the gaps between policy and practice; and propose key recommendations that can support policy, legislation and regulatory development and reform.

"Such research and dialogues are important as policy interventions go hand-in-hand with the work on the ground to support the improvement of livelihoods. Improving self-reliance of refugees will improve their own prospects and will allow them to contribute to their host communities," added Rochus Pronk, Deputy Ambassador for Government of the Netherlands in Iraq.

The report forms part of a series of similar studies which are being conducted in different countries in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, by the ILO under the PROSPECTS Partnership, which is supported by the Government of the Netherlands. It will guide the implementation of activities under PROSPECTS and related programmes.

"We believe that the report and the dialogue is just a beginning to work towards finding solutions for a complex issue of extending labour market access to forcibly displaced persons. The ILO has a mandate to extend decent work opportunities to everyone and will continue to facilitate this dialogue in the future," said Senior Adviser to the Deputy Director General-Policy at ILO, Tine Staermose.

Under the PROSPECTS partnership, ILO and UNHCR are working with UNICEF, the International Finance Corporation and the World Bank, to support the national agenda of promoting inclusion and socio-economic development. The partnership aims to empower forcibly displaced and host community members to meet their needs with a focus on three main pillars; education, employment and protection.

ILO holds a workshop on assessing risks and monitoring occupational accidents and diseases in the agriculture sector



Baghdad, 7 December 2022 - The International Labour Organization (ILO) held a three-day capacity building programme for 20 inspectors from Federal of Iraq and Kurdistan Region of Iraq in assessing risks and monitoring occupational accidents and diseases in the agriculture sector, as

part of broader efforts to improve Occupation Safety and Health and labour inspection in Iraq.

With the support of the European Union, the ILO, the government and social partners have developed policies on labour inspection and Occupational Safety and Health, which seek to contribute to modernizing the labour inspection system and improve working conditions for workers and their employers, in line with International Labour Standards.

Agriculture remains one of the most hazardous economic sectors in the world, including that in Iraq. The

Government of Iraq has ratified ILO's Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), reaffirming its commitment to improving occupational safety and health, and working conditions for the sector's workers.

In addition, an effective inspection system is essential to promote and monitor compliance with OSH legislation.

The training is being implemented under the framework of the "Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Iraq" project, funded by the European Union in Iraq.

Roundtable discussion on the integration of a public works programme in Iraq's social protection landscape

Baghdad, 19 December 2022- (ILO News) The Ministry of Planning and the International Labour Organization held a roundtable discussion in Baghdad on Monday (December 19) to discuss how a public works programme may fit within the social protection landscape in Iraq. The discussion was based on a newly developed paper by the ILO and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, that examines how relevant such a programme is to the Government's objectives of addressing high levels of unemployment particularly among youth and women, while supporting working age adults in receipt of social assistance to transition out of poverty and into decent employment with effective access to social security coverage.

The event brought together policymakers, researchers, local development thought leaders and practitioners to exchange ideas, knowledge, and experiences on the relevance of and potential for establishing a public employment programme in Iraq.

It forms part of a series of inclusive roundtable discussions to support the Government of Iraq in reforming its social protection system, through policy debates on key issues related to the future of social protection in Iraq, with the support of the European Union.

In Iraq, the creation of a public works programmes is considered a key priority for both economic reform and sustainable development, as outlined in the White Paper on Economic Reform adopted by the Government of Iraq in 2020, as well as the Iraq Vision for Sustainable Development 2030, as drafted in 2019 by the Ministry of

Planning.

Public works programmes have the potential to reduce unemployment and underemployment, by directly creating employment opportunities and promote social protection by providing income support in the form of the wage. Work conducted under such programmes also aim to contribute to the public good, including by delivering infrastructure, providing social services, and promoting climate resilience. And the engagement of the private-sector as contractors and suppliers can also contribute to private-sector growth and formalisation where complementary support is provided.

The paper aims to highlight key factors to consider in the design and implementation of such a programme, including how it relates to existing social protection and employment programmes; the importance of embedding decent work principles and skills training to support participants into decent work; and factors to consider when identifying projects to be implemented as part of the programme.

The paper highlights key international good practices from multiple countries such as Austria, Greece, Argentina, Mexico, South Africa and Jordan. It outlines key steps to be taken by various actors in Iraq in the development of such a programme, where the "Government of Iraq will be in the driving seat in designing and implementing the programme, and in leading the coordination with external actors involved in relevant sectors therein." Key partners include the private sector, civil society actors and community based organisations, the donor community, and humanitarian and development partners, including UN agencies.



Key priority areas include initiating evidence generation, assessments and analyses to inform programme design and implementation; identifying sustainable sources of financing for the scheme; adopting key policies, and SOPs; and strengthening the capacities at national and sub-national levels to effectively implement the programme.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs said that based on the joint paper, which was developed in collaboration with the ILO, the ministry has prepared a preliminary study on the creation of 100,000 job opportunities through a public works programme, which will be implemented jointly with concerned ministries and partners. It will soon begin consultation with the ILO to put this scheme into practice.

The paper complements a UN position paper, led by the ILO, titled "Building Iraq's Social Protection Floor Framework and Recommendations" to respond to opportunities to consolidate Iraq's fragmented system of social assistance into a coherent Social Protection Floor.

Egypt's digitalization of the labour inspection and occupational safety and health systems experiences shared with Iraqi guests



Cairo, Egypt, 20 December 2022 - A delegation bringing together ILO's tripartite constituents from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, employer and worker organizations of Federal Iraq and KRI, took part in a three-day study tour to Egypt, where they met with counterparts and exchanged experiences, knowledge and lessons learnt on issues related to Occupational Safety and Health and labour inspection.

The visit, organized in coordination

with International Labour Organization ILO Cairo, centered around Egypt's digitalization of the labour inspection and occupational safety and health systems, and ILO's support to the Ministry of Manpower in Egypt in developing these systems, which are critical in improving the working environment for enterprises and workers.

Key highlights of the visit included meetings with the Ministry of Manpower, the National Center for

Occupational Safety and Health, the Labour Inspection Directorate in Alexandria, the Federation of Egyptian Industries, and the company which developed the labour inspection system. The delegation examined the importance of digital transformation in facilitating and organizing labour inspection, and the important role it plays in helping inspectors and the ministry overcome several challenges and obstacles.

In addition, representatives joined a labour inspection team on a visit to two factories in the industrial zone of Alexandria, where they learnt first-hand about the mechanism of the system and the application of the digital inspection process.

The visit is part of broader efforts under an ILO project, supported by European Union in Iraq, to "Enhance Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID- 19 in Iraq". One of the key elements under this project is to strengthen the labour inspection system and improve occupational safety and health in line with international labour standards, through policy development and capacity building.

Tripartite steering committee for Decent Work Country Programme discusses progress made in the implementation of the programme to promote decent work in Iraq

Baghdad, 24 December 2022 - A meeting took place at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Baghdad, bringing together representatives of the ILO and its tripartite steering committee for Decent Work Country Programme to discuss progress made in the implementation of the programme to promote decent work in Iraq.

The Decent Work Country Programme for 2019– 2023, which is being

implemented by the ILO and its tripartite partners - government, employer, and worker representatives – centres around three key priorities:

- Supporting private sector development and job creation
- Strengthening social protection and addressing child labour
- Strengthening labour governance and social dialogue

Find out more: <https://bit.ly/3hJjVWV>



Mine Action

UNMAS: Victim assistance is one of the five pillars of Mine Action

Baghdad, 25 October 2022 - As one of the five pillars of Mine Action, victim assistance is an important component. Recently, the UNMAS in Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme met with the Victim Assistance Department of the Directorate for Mine Action and the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention on the Prohibition of the

Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

Discussions covered: support to the Government of Iraq in implementing their obligations as a State Party to the convention related to assistance to victims of anti-personnel mines; the recent increase in explosive ordnance

related accidents; and upcoming dialogue with Iraqi mine action stakeholders invested in victim assistance.

UNMAS remains committed to support advocacy efforts of the national mine action authorities to provide sufficient and quality services to victims and to address their needs.

UNMAS in Iraq supported the first phase of the Prioritization

Baghdad, 3 November 2022 - UNMAS in Iraq supported the first phase of a two-day Prioritization Process Workshop for the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA). Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS in Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme (CMAP), delivered opening remarks and highlighted the importance of coordination and prioritization in the mine action sector. In addition, the CMAP called on the Government of Iraq to take the lead and allocate appropriate state budget funding for humanitarian mine action.

The Director General for the DMA chaired the workshop with the presence

of twelve Heads of the department including; Planning, Information Management, Victim Assistance, and Explosive Ordnance Risk Education, as well as representatives from the Regional Mine Action Center South and

Mid-Euphrates. Moreover, the workshop also reviewed and assessed current processes and methodologies and how these can be improved to ensure that tasks with the most humanitarian impact are prioritized.



Baghdad, 8 November 2022 - UNMAS in Iraq Chief of Mine Action Programme, **Pehr Lodhammar**, participated in the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs Vienna conference on "Updating our vision for disarmament", chaired by Under-Secretary-General Melissa Fleming. You can watch the full video at: bit.ly/3fWP1s6



Baghdad, 27 November 2022 - The Director General of DMA, **Mr. Bakir Sahib Ahmed**, met today with the UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, **Mr. Pehr Lodhammar**, and discussed with him the ways of joint technical cooperation.

UNMAS: France renews its commitment to protecting civilians impacted by Explosive Ordnance in Iraq

Baghdad, 15 November 2022 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) welcomes the contribution of EUR 500,000 (approximately USD 495,370) from the Government of France, which will support the Government of Iraq in its efforts to protect civilians impacted by the threat of explosive ordnance and enable humanitarian action, peacebuilding and socio-economic development.

Legacy landmine contamination and other explosive remnants of war left from four decades of war and conflict, continue to threaten the lives of the Iraqi communities and to cause significant numbers of civilian casualties in southern Iraq, particularly in the Basra Governorate. This contribution will support the ongoing clearance of explosive ordnance in the Shatt Al-Arab region near the city of Basra. This clearance will enable

infrastructure-enhancing socio-economic development in this region

The project will support the Government of Iraq to meet its obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), in addition to directly supporting the Iraqi Directorate for Mine Action to clear areas, to provide safe spaces for returnees, and to protect the population from explosive threats. The project will also provide explosive-ordnance risk-education and deliver lifesaving messages in the area of Shatt Al-Arab, enabling pilgrims and local community members to transit through the area safely.

In response to the extensive legacy contamination in Iraq, UNMAS will continue its clearance operations that began in 2021, and has resulted in the clearance of 995,794 m² of contaminated areas and the removal of

6,344 items.

Eric Chevallier, the Ambassador of France to Iraq stated that, “this latest substantial financial commitment by France to UNMAS demonstrates once more our steadfast support to all of the Iraqi people in helping rebuild and render safe their country. In this case, France is proud to support reconstruction and development efforts in southern Iraq.”

Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, Chief of the UNMAS Programme in Iraq, explained: “France is, and has been over the years, an important partner to UNMAS and the Government of Iraq. For five years they have generously support our activities. This commitment positively impacts the local community and enhances Shatt Al Arab’s and Basra’s economic development making land available for agricultural production and economic development”.

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

Baghdad, 15 November 2022 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of EUR 1,000,000 (approximately USD 980K) from the Government of Belgium, which will support the Government of Iraq in protecting civilians impacted by the threat of explosive ordnance and enabling humanitarian action, peacebuilding and socio-economic development.

Thirty-seven years of conflicts, with the most recent conflict perpetrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), makes Iraq one of the world's most contaminated countries in the world, with approximately 2,879 square kilometers of land affected. Since 2014, millions of Iraqis have been displaced and nearly 1.2 million remain internally displaced.

This generous contribution from the Government of Belgium supports clearance and explosive ordnance risk education work. It will help to enable the safe and dignified return of internally displaced people, as well as reconstruction efforts, and will support the clearance of explosive ordnance in areas liberated from ISIL as well as the clearance of legacy contamination in

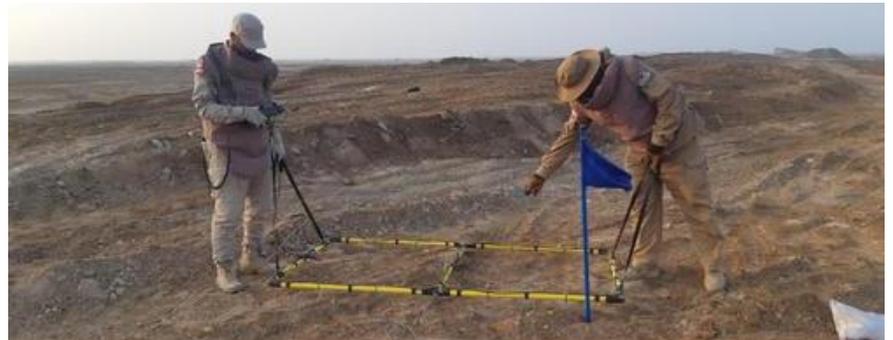
southern Iraq.

UNMAS adopted a strategy to ensure continuous and optimal support to the Government of Iraq by increasing the national mine action capacity through a partnership model whereby international mine action organizations collaborate with national NGOs, leading the way for localization and sustained mine action responses in Iraq.

Mr. Serge Dickschen, Belgium's Ambassador to Iraq, stated: "Belgium is pleased to continue its long-standing and fruitful partnership with UNMAS in Iraq. Despite the significant progress made in recent years, contamination by explosive ordnance remains a major obstacle for the return of Iraqis affected

by the successive conflicts and a hindrance to social and economic development. Belgium particularly welcomes the increased emphasis placed by UNMAS on strengthening the capacities of national demining actors."

Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, Chief of UNMAS Programme in Iraq, added: "The generous contribution from the Government of Belgium will enable UNMAS to continue providing sustainable solutions to address explosive contamination by increasing, strengthening and sustaining the national operating capacity. The Belgian Government has been a steadfast and important partner to the United Nations in this area."



The Government of Italy continues its support to UNMAS explosive hazards management activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 23 November 2022 - The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) welcomes an additional contribution of EUR 1,000,000 (approximately USD 999,500) from the Government of Italy, which will support life-saving mine action activities in Iraq. Activities will include delivering sustainable and efficient explosive hazard management and providing technical and advisory support to national mine action authorities.

Iraq suffers from various types of contamination due to decades of war and conflicts that is now threatening the lives and safety of Iraqi communities. The financial contribution from the Government of Italy will support the clearance of explosive ordnance in the areas liberated from ISIL and in southern Iraq. It will further support explosive ordnance risk education efforts to protect the most at-risk populations, notably the returnees and IDPs, as well as delivering explosive ordnance risk education/sessions for at-risk workers

who undertake high-risk activities.

The generous contribution will support a nationally led and implemented mine action response. UNMAS provides training and technical advice to national authorities to further enhance the Iraqi national clearance capacity in line with national and international mine action standards. Furthermore, it supports the Government of Iraq in strengthening coordination between

government entities and supports mine action decision-making across the country.

Through this contribution, national capacity enhancement will also be supported through a partnership model that brings together international mine action NGOs with local NGOs to pave the way for localization and a sustainable mine action response in Iraq.



The Government of Italy continues its support ... (continued)

On the occasion, H.E. Maurizio Greganti, Ambassador of Italy, stated “We commend the work of UNMAS in Iraq, as demining is a key factor to facilitate the return of IDPs to their communities of origin as a safe and stable environment. Italy has long been a friend of the Iraqi people and supporter of the stabilization of the Country, and we are proud to contribute also through mine action response and explosive hazard management.”

Mr. Cabasino - Director of the Amman Office of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) confirmed that “the Italian Cooperation has been contributing to UNMAS activities in Iraq since 2016, which is a testimony to Italy’s full commitment to supporting mine actions in context characterized by humanitarian needs and protracted crises, thus protecting civilians, enabling humanitarian action, socio-economic development, and peacebuilding.”

“The generous contribution from the government of Italy will support the government of Iraq in protecting vulnerable civilians from the threat posed by explosive ordnance and will also enable safe and dignified returns of IDPs, provide safe spaces for children to play in safety, and support affected communities to use their farmlands freely,” said Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, Chief Mine Action Programme, UNMAS Iraq.

Training for Iraqi Ministry of Interior EOD/IEDD teams on the UAV’s has been ongoing for the last three years

Baghdad, 6 December 2022 - Thanks to the generous support from its donors, UNMAS in Iraq is able to train its national partners on how to incorporate modern unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV’s) to assist with non-technical survey (NTS) tasks.

Training for the Iraqi Ministry of Interior (MoI) EOD/IEDD Teams on the UAV’s has been ongoing for the last three years and is a reoccurring feature amongst the training courses delivered by UNMAS. The Iraqi Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) has lately recognized the value of the UAV’s for NTS tasks.

A joint MoI/DMA training course was completed on 30 October at the Salman Pak EOD Police Training Center.



UNMAS: German delegation visits a clearance site in Sinjar

Sinjar, 6 December 2022 - UNMAS in Iraq hosted a visit from the German Embassy in Iraq. The visit, which included the German Ambassador, H.E. Excellency Martin Jaeger, and the Director of Middle East and North Africa with the German Foreign Office, Mr. Tobias Tunkel, brought the delegation to an operational clearance site in Sinjar. Here UNMAS implementing partner, Global Clearance Solutions, delivered a brief on the ongoing survey and clearance activities and the impact from the residential area clearance project funded through the German contribution.

During the visit, a group of beneficiaries and explosive ordnance survivors met with the German delegation and expressed their gratitude for the efforts made to support and enable safe and dignified returns to their places of origin.

UNMAS would like to thank the Government of Germany for its generous support towards mine action

activities in Iraq since 2016 and is looking forward to continued collaboration.



The Republic of Korea generously supports UNMAS mine action activities in Iraq

Mosul, 6 December 2022 - UNMAS in Iraq recently organized a field visit for the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Choi Sung-Soo, to the Al Shifa Hospital Complex in Mosul, Ninewa Governorate. UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, and UNMAS implementing partner, Global Clearance Solutions, delivered a brief on the explosive ordnance clearance operations at the hospital, which took nearly two years to complete.

Al Shifa hospital was used as an ISIL headquarters during the occupation of Mosul, and by 2019, UNMAS and its implementing partners had removed over 2,000 items of explosive ordnance, ranging from improvised hand grenades to missiles. The clearance enabled the Government of Iraq and the Ministry of Health to remove vital



hospital equipment and relocate it to Al Khansa Hospital in East Mosul to prevent looting.

The Republic of Korea provided financial contributions in 2016 and 2017 during the start of the UNMAS programme in Iraq. The contribution enabled UNMAS to expand its

clearance operation sites during the initial stages of the programme.

UNMAS would like to thank the Government of the Republic of Korea for their generous support in facilitating mine action activities in Iraq and looks forward to the further collaboration.

25th anniversary of the Convention against Personnel Mines commemorated on-line

Baghdad, 12 December 2022 - On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, was invited by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) to join the webinar "Läget i världen när det gäller minor" (The Global Landmine Situation) and delivered a presentation for the Swedish UN Association, which has been an active member of ICBL since the 1990s.

Mr. Lodhammar delivered a presentation for more than twenty-five people joining the webinar as well as an upper secondary high school class, on mine action in Iraq and how explosive ordnance, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are affecting local communities. Mr. Lodhammar also highlighted the role and responsibilities of UNMAS Iraq in mitigating and reducing the threat from explosive ordnance.

The event aimed to help boost UNA-

Sweden's efforts to mobilize resources for mine action globally.



Denmark – UNMAS Iraq consultations on the Mine Action in Iraq

Baghdad, 7 December 2022 - Since its inception in 2015, the Government of Denmark has been a constant and generous supporter to the UNMAS programme in Iraq. Throughout the years, Denmark has donated over USD 30 million to UNMAS Iraq enabling operations both in the areas liberated from ISIL and in the most southern governorate of Iraq as well as technical advisory support to Government of Iraq mine action entities. Flexible Danish funding has also allowed UNMAS Iraq to deliver life-saving explosive ordnance risk education support to IDPs and vulnerable communities.

Recently, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme (CMAP), Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, met with the Danish Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Christian

Thorning, at the Embassy of Denmark in Baghdad. The CMAP discussed ongoing advocacy efforts to the Government of Iraq to allocate federal budget funds to mine action, which was fully supported by Ambassador Thorning.

Mr. Lodhammar and the Ambassador also discussed how mine action activities can contribute to another critical agenda in Iraq; the issue of climate change and broader environmental issues. UNMAS Iraq has for close to two years, been operating in Shatt Al-Arab area, Basra governorate, which used to be one of the biggest date producing areas in the world. Clearing contaminated areas here will enable the locals to, once again, enjoy plantation of crops trees



and other vegetation, which will in turn support the enhancement of the economic development of Basra. UNMAS looks forward to extending its cooperation with Denmark.

UNMAS and Finish delegation visit to an clearance site in Tel Kaif

Mosul, 16 December 2022 - UNMAS in Iraq recently organized a field visit for the Finnish Ambassador to Iraq, H.E. Matti Lassila, to an explosive ordnance clearance site in Tel Kaif and Al Shifa Hospital Complex in Western Mosul, Ninewa Governorate. UNMAS in Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, Mr. Pehr Lodhammar and UNMAS implementing partners (IPs), the Health and Social Care Organization in Iraq, and DanChurchAid, delivered a brief on the clearance efforts undertaken in Iraq.

Localization of Iraq's mine action sector is top priority for UNMAS and donors. During the visit, discussions covered the progress of the partnership model implemented by UNMAS. Mr. Lassila and Mr. Lodhammar also interacted with the female searchers and discussed challenges and the impact of the work.

At Al Shifa hospital, UNMAS IP, Global Clearance Solutions, delivered a

briefing on the clearance work at the hospital, which took nearly two years to complete. During the operation, over 2,000 items of explosive ordnance were removed. To finish the visit, the delegation visited the Al Maedan district to observe the level of

destruction and the remaining need for clearance and reconstruction.

UNMAS would like to thank the Government of Finland for having supported mine action activities in Iraq from 2017 to 2019 and looks forward to further collaboration.



New Zealand contribution enables UNMAS Iraq to continue supporting the Government and the National Mine Action operators

Baghdad, 26 December 2022 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes a renewed contribution of NZD 2,490,000 (approximately USD 1,622,000) from the Government of New Zealand, increasing the total contribution from New Zealand to NZD 5,740,000 million (approximately USD 3,084,000) since 2018.

The threat from explosive ordnance contamination across Iraq, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in the areas liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as well as legacy mines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) from previous conflict over the past four decades, continues to endanger the lives of Iraqi people. Explosive ordnance also hinders the safe return of displaced communities and prevents productive use of land for housing and livelihood activities.

The additional funding from the Government of New Zealand will further reinforce UNMAS Iraq's advisory and technical support to the national mine action authorities, namely the Directorate for Mine Action and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency. Through continued technical support, the ability of the national authorities to autonomously lead, manage and implement mine action responses in Iraq will expand. In

addition, the funding will support Iraqi national NGOs through the UNMAS partnership grant model where international NGOs transfer knowledge and experience to national operators.

On the occasion of renewing the contribution, Mr. Sam O'Connor, Charge d'Affaires a.i., New Zealand Embassy to Iraq (Resident in Abu Dhabi) stated, "New Zealand is pleased to continue supporting UNMAS' efforts to help Iraq rid itself of unexploded mines and other ordnance, and reduce the injuries and deaths that they cause. It is very encouraging to hear that Iraqi organisations and authorities are increasingly leading this work, and that UNMAS is on track to strengthen

the national response to explosive ordnance."

"The generous three-year contribution from the Government of New Zealand, will enable UNMAS Iraq to continue the necessary support to the Government of Iraq and national operators. With continued assistance from New Zealand, UNMAS will continue to strengthen the national response to protect civilians from the legacy of explosive ordnance and will by extension enable humanitarian, stabilization and reconstruction efforts to go forward unhindered by the explosive ordnance menace", said Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, Chief Mine Action Programme, UNMAS Iraq.



Ahead of anti-corruption day, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq launches a new hotline



Erbil, 1 December 2022 – The Kurdistan Regional Government have officially launched a special hotline to receive complaints about corruption and wrongdoings committed by national and state institutions and officials. It is being led by the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's Commission of Integrity, an independent government body responsible for fighting corruption.

The hotline was launched at an event in Erbil today ahead of International Anti-Corruption Day, commemorated on 9 December every year. The hotline encourages individuals to report corruption incidents anonymously by calling the toll-free number 1015. The complaints will be recorded, assessed and depending on their nature either investigated, referred to other agencies or archived. The Commission will further report annually to the Parliament and the public on the hotline's performance.

The hotline was established with support from UNDP and the European Union. The support included developing the reporting and complaint tracking system, training designated

staff and public communications about the hotline. This further ties into a longstanding partnership between the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's (KRI) Commission of Integrity and UNDP to strengthen legislative and strategic anti-corruption frameworks and to improve its investigative capacity in line with international principles and standards.

"The launch of this hotline is a sign of the continued commitment of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's Commission of Integrity to deliver on Iraq's own regional and international commitments and respond to the clear expectations of Iraqi citizens. We thank UNDP for its support and cooperation in strengthening our anti-corruption frameworks and improving our capacities," says Dr Ahmed Anwar, the Chairman of the KRI Commission of Integrity.

"Corruption undermines building strong, accountable, and effective institutions, and most importantly, affects public trust. Therefore, involving Iraqi citizens can help hold accountable those responsible for corruption crimes and enhance the

responsiveness of public institutions. The hotline is a bold step towards improving citizen reporting by creating a climate of support for anti-corruption reforms, fostering public trust in state institutions and increasing public accountability," says Auke Lootsma, Resident Representative, UNDP Iraq.

"We are incredibly grateful to our longstanding partner, the EU, for its enduring commitment to supporting one of the most complex and challenging undertakings in Iraq, and to our partners across the Iraqi and Kurdish Region state institutions for entrusting UNDP to lead this effort," he adds.

In addition, the event also included an art competition and cultural performance by young people, showcasing their creativity and desire for an Iraq and Kurdistan Region free of corruption. It included a stunning exhibition of art expressing young people's perspective on the impact of corruption on Iraq's development and recovery from years of instability and conflict.

Background:

The Anti-Corruption and Arbitration in Iraq project is European Union-funded and builds on Iraq's national efforts to improve transparency and accountability across state institutions and supports Iraq in delivering to its national and international commitments regarding the fight against corruption, to support the Iraqi institutions in the revision of anti-corruption laws, promote their alignment with international standards, and provide specialized on-demand training and mentorship opportunities for corruption investigators and integrity judges.

UNODC supports Iraqi Ministry of Interior's forensic services to identify illicit drugs

Baghdad, 8 December 2022 - The increase of transnational drug trafficking is posing a significant task for law enforcement services, within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, including in Iraq. The Government of Iraq considers combatting drug trafficking as a priority. Tackling drug trafficking brings to the forefront the invaluable role of forensic services within law enforcement. Forensic services are facing an increasingly difficult task of responding to the threat of drug trafficking, due to the challenges of

identifying the drugs seized and having skilled forensic specialists to do so as well as the large number of samples seized.

In response to the needs of the Iraqi forensic services, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is delivering a 5-day workshop, within the facilities of the Criminal Evidence Investigation Directorate (CID), Ministry of Interior, in Baghdad between the 5th and 10th of December 2022. The event is part of UNODC's project on "Strengthening the Capacities of Iraqi Law Enforcement

and Criminal Investigation Services (2019-2023)," funded by the U.S. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

During the opening of the training, Major General Firas Thamer Alallam, head of the CID, highlighted the role played by Iraqi forensic experts in supporting law enforcement services through their work to help tackle the challenges of drug identification.

The workshop targeted specialized technical forensic experts from within the Ministry of Interior and was provided by international expertise on

UNODC supports Iraqi Ministry of Interior's forensic services to identify illicit drugs *(continued)*

the Gas Chromatography–Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS) techniques, an efficient method of choice in routine laboratory drug identification. Participants will be exposed to the fundamentals of operation and maintenance of the GC-MS equipment and interpretation of results, through theoretical and practical work. The training will ensure the development of sustainable and efficient forensic expertise within the Iraqi law-enforcement services. Such effective forensic bodies achieve better results and hence help restore confidence in law enforcement institutions while ensuring full respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Mr. Ali Elbereir, Senior Programme Coordinator and Head of the UNODC Iraq Office, expressed that “Forensic services provide the main method for acquiring evidence to be used in court within the criminal justice process,



ultimately leading to bringing justice to the victims and holding criminal networks and individuals accountable for their crimes. For this reason, supporting Iraqi forensic teams to carry out the responsibilities under their command has been one of the priorities at UNODC.”

The efficient use of GC-MS systems in law enforcement forensic laboratories

enables a sustainable process to identify drugs and extends to the disciplines of explosives investigations, fire investigations, and counterfeit-drug detection. GC-MS techniques are utilized by the forensic services of the Ministry of Interior in Iraq, thereby provision of training for the GC-MS devices operation and maintenance is of critical importance.

SRSO Hennis-Plasschaert: “Systemic change will prove vital for Iraq’s future”



Baghdad, 9 December 2022 - Message from Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, UN SRSO for Iraq on International Anti-Corruption Day:

“Pervasive and systemic corruption is one of the biggest challenges facing Iraq. Its economic cost and negative impact on stability and prosperity are enormous. It undermines progress, deprives citizens of their rights, discourages international investment and robs the State of the resources

needed to deliver to its people better schools, hospitals, roads, and countless other public services.

I said it many times before, most recently at the UN Security Council in October: corruption is a major cause of Iraqi dysfunctionality, and keeping the system ‘as is’ will eventually backfire. Iraq’s most recent high-profile corruption case, the so-called “theft of the century”, will unfortunately not be the last, and we can only hope that it serves as a wakeup call. There is no denying it, systemic change will prove vital for the country’s future. This change, however, will not happen overnight. It will require intense work and perseverance, collective efforts, and the understanding that the time to act clean is now.

While the government has taken a number of encouraging steps, it is no secret that these efforts may be obstructed or undermined by those who

stand to lose. But let me emphasize, they should be given no respite.

This year’s International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD) seeks to highlight the crucial link between anti-corruption and peace, security and development. Under the theme “Uniting the world against corruption”, it stresses that tackling this crime is the right and responsibility of everyone. In this spirit and for the sake of future generations, let us all work together, in Iraq and elsewhere, whether as individual citizens or those holding public office, to fight for accountability, transparency and the rule of law. To build a system that serves the need of society instead of serving a closed community of collusion that has very little concern for the national interest. Extracting state resources for private and partisan interests must stop. And ensuring accountability across the spectrum will be essential.

On International Anti-Corruption Day, UN and EU call for action against corruption in Iraq

Baghdad, 9 December 2022 - On International Anti-Corruption Day, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union (EU) support the Government’s

efforts to combat corruption and encourage it to continue the path of ambitious reforms.

Reform is key to ensure the Government’s drive to end corruption is

successful and sustainable, said UN Resident Coordinator Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai. “Strengthening Iraq’s anti-corruption legislation, investigation capacity, advancing fiscal

On International Anti-Corruption Day, UN and EU call for action against corruption in Iraq *(continued)*

accountability, and improving transparency and public reporting are necessary tools for achieving results.”

“Ending corruption will ensure everyone has equal access to basic services like justice, health, education, transportation, water and electricity. To turn the tide against corruption, there needs to be strong political will to build responsive institutions,” said Auke Lootsma, Resident Representative, UNDP Iraq.

“We stand committed to working with Iraqi federal and Kurdistan Region state institutions to improve their transparency and public accountability through anti-corruption reforms, strengthening the rule of law and

restoring the public's confidence in the institutions.”

The Ambassador of the European Union to Iraq, Ville Varjola, said, “Everyone - citizens, civil society, private sector, media and the government - has the responsibility to tackle corruption. Through this EU-funded initiative, we are working closely with all of them to respond to this call for change. We are looking forward to joining a united front to fight corruption to benefit the people of Iraq.”

The EU and UNDP are currently collaborating on the 'Anti-Corruption and Arbitration in Iraq' project, which builds on Iraq's efforts to improve

transparency and accountability across state institutions. The project supports Iraq's fight against corruption by supporting institutions to revise its anti-corruption laws and providing specialized on-demand training for corruption investigators and integrity judges.

About International Anti-Corruption Day:

On 31 October 2003, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention against Corruption and designated 9 December as International Anti-Corruption Day to raise awareness of corruption and the Convention's role in combating and preventing it.

Healthcare

Global Handwashing Day 2022 marked in Iraq

Baghdad, 18 October 2022 - “The Ministry of Environment, in cooperation with UNICEF, is leading the ‘Hand Hygiene for All Steering Committee’ because we believe that handwashing is one of the key strategies that prevents the spread of diseases,” said His Excellency Dr. Jasim Al Falahi, Minister of

Environment during the celebration of Global Handwashing Day 2022.

Today, the Ministries of Environment, Education and Health; non-governmental organizations, private sector, and UNICEF marked Global Handwashing Day 2022, under the theme ‘United for Universal Hand Hygiene’.



WHO and Ministry of Health ramp up efforts to keep Iraq polio-free

Baghdad, 24 October 2022 - The World Health Organization (WHO), in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, increased efforts to enhance polio eradication activities to protect children and maintain the polio-free status in Iraq.

Iraq has been certified polio-free since 2017 but is still vulnerable and at high risk of poliovirus importation/emergence. Iraq is also a destination for frequent mass gathering events, receiving visitors from other countries, including polio-endemic Afghanistan and Pakistan and other countries experiencing circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus outbreaks.

“Maintaining the polio-free status in Iraq is a top priority for WHO and the Ministry of Health in Iraq, especially following the disruption of routine immunization caused by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq. “This year, we have doubled efforts to sustain

the achievements made over the past years.”

Throughout 2022, WHO scaled up the overall polio eradication activities with different support missions involving global and regional polio experts joining the WHO country office to advance the polio eradication strategies. Several training workshops on polio outbreak preparedness and response were held in Baghdad and all

Iraqi governorates, targeting provincial managers of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), surveillance officers and the National Polio Laboratory staff.

Milestones achieved towards polio eradication

The year 2022 has seen significant milestones in polio eradication with the establishment of environmental surveillance to complement



WHO and Ministry of Health ramp up efforts to keep Iraq polio-free *(continued)*

surveillance among children and acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) cases. WHO and the Ministry of Health successfully launched environmental surveillance in the first two sewage sites in Baghdad. Later, WHO and the Ministry of Health extended the environmental surveillance to the remaining five high-risk governorates based on the national environmental surveillance plan.

The National Polio Laboratory was accredited by WHO in August 2022, paving the way for further achievements in the field of polio surveillance.

Iraq has also met all readiness requirements for using novel oral polio type 2 vaccine (nOPV2) under the Emergency Use Listing (EUL). The requirements included coordination,

vaccine management/ cold chain, surveillance, safety, ACSM (Advocacy, Communications and Social Mobilization), and laboratories.

In addition to surveillance efforts, the protection of children is ongoing, with 1,183,247 OPV and IPV doses administered so far in 2022 to enhance the immunity profile of children in Iraq.

Mainstreaming polio functions into health systems

In June 2022, the integrated public health functions mission from WHO HQ and the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) visited Baghdad to evaluate the polio transition process in Iraq and commended the efforts made so far and invited Iraq to persevere in improving

essential immunization, disease surveillance, and outbreak preparedness and response, both in primary health care centres and beyond.

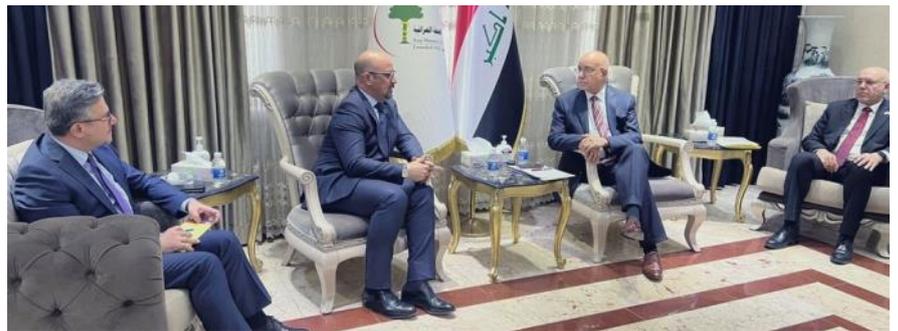
Polio transition planning will provide a clear roadmap to maintain the well-structured networks that have historically contributed far beyond polio eradication, which is crucial in reaching underserved communities in some of the most vulnerable settings, including Iraq.

"With all the achievements made towards polio eradication in Iraq, we are confident to preserve the polio-free status. Yet, we are well-prepared to avert any possible polio circulation," Dr Zouiten affirmed.

WHO Representative in Iraq meets the Iraqi Minister of Health

Baghdad, 2 November 2022 - WHO Representative in Iraq, Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, met with His Excellency the Iraqi Minister of Health, Dr. Saleh Al-Hasnawi.

During the meeting, Dr. Zouiten stressed the organization's continued support of the health system in Iraq and to strengthen the strategic partnership with the Ministry of Health to achieve comprehensive health coverage in Iraq.



Risk communication and community engagement: a strategic investment to fight outbreaks in Iraq

Baghdad, 3 November 2022 – Over the past few years, risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) has become a core pillar in WHO's work in its quest to enhance community participation in the preparedness and response to different health issues, including emergencies and outbreaks. This strategic investment was further



emphasized during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Iraq, WHO and the Ministry of Health managed to reach millions of people through various awareness activities and multiple approaches to reach different community groups in response to COVID-19, the Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever and cholera outbreaks, as well as other health concerns.

"RCCE hasn't only helped in building trust among communities across Iraq, but also in increasing their sense of ownership and accountability to take action to address health hazards," said Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq.

"We had to look for a new way to deal with new demands. We had to look for ways to reach the public directly. And this is where we are at this point in time."

During the Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever outbreak, the WHO team worked with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture to consolidate the coordination and response to the outbreak by reaching the most affected areas in the southern governorates and delivering messages to the communities at large. High-risk groups like butchers, households and livestock traders were also reached.

Mass gathering events

Concerned with the public health risks during mass gathering events, WHO, along with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society and the Ministry of Health, joined forces to inform the communities and the Arbaeen visitors to ensure they are equipped with prevention methods, so they keep themselves healthy and safe.

Around 18 500 sessions were conducted in 572 high-risk areas in 11

Risk communication and community engagement: a strategic investment to fight outbreaks in Iraq *(continued)*

governorates, reaching 139 000 people. 250 field volunteers and outreach teams from WHO and the IRC were trained and mobilized to perform thousands of meetings with the high-risk groups. They succeeded in reaching hundreds of thousands of people with health education materials and messages on the prevention of diseases, including Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever, cholera and COVID-19.

Enhancing health messages on social media

WHO's RCCE adopted new trends and approaches to reach an audience with eye-catching, appealing products and contextualized materials in line with

the Iraqi culture, norms and dialects.

WHO-team-reached-millions-of-people-through-various-awareness-activities-on-CCHF-in-Iraq

The WHO team reached millions of people through various awareness-raising activities on Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever in Iraq

Through the past year, dozens of high-quality videos, motion graphics, animations, cartoons, radio drama and infographics were produced in Arabic and Kurdish to disseminate awareness messages on different outbreaks hitting Iraq. Celebrities and community influencers were also engaged to help amplify these messages on different platforms.

RCCE workshops and capacity-building sessions targeted around 4500 faith and tribal leaders and more than 9000 frontline responders, including health workers, health educators and community volunteers. These training workshops contributed substantially to building the capacity of these groups to convey health messages on preventive measures against different diseases.

"We will extend the scope of RCCE to other noncommunicable diseases and communicable diseases, and we will definitely make RCCE one of a flagship programmes that we will use in our quest to promote health, serve the vulnerable, and keep the world safe," Dr Zouiten said.

With the support of WHO's core contributors, Burn and Reconstructive Surgery Hospital in Sulaymaniyah completes 2nd phase of its renovation and expansion project



Sulaymaniyah, 9 November 2022 - The World Health Organization (WHO), in coordination with the Sulaymaniyah Directorate of Health, inaugurated the Burn and Reconstructive Surgery Hospital in the city of Sulaymaniyah in KR-I after the completion of the 2nd phase of the renovation and expansion project of the hospital.

The three-phase project which started in July 2020 with a total cost of US\$1,250,000 will enable the 65-bed facility to provide advanced healthcare services to burn cases including explosion and war casualties, all types of skin cancers, and children with congenital anomalies.

The project also came in line with WHO quest to transition its support from pure humanitarian to developmental

investments in the health sector in Iraq to ensure long-run responses to the growing health needs of approximately 33,000 Syrian Refugees and over 150,000 internally displaced population (IDPs) that are still hosted by Sulaymaniyah community of about 1.5 million people.

"This project is a demonstration of the strategic shift in the active partnership with the national health authorities, donors, and implementing partners," said Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq.

"Such major lifesaving investments are the cornerstones for WHO transition from pure humanitarian responses to wider developmental programs focusing on building resilient health care system in Kurdistan Region and Iraq at large,"

he added.

The facility is now functioning with a new well-equipped structure and better-prepared medical staff to undertake lifesaving interventions of the highest standards. As of November 2022, more than 1133 major, 178 burn, and 1208 plastic surgeries were conducted.

"The support of our generous donors and national counterparts has enabled WHO to embark on more sustainable healthcare projects that will lead to a smooth transition from good to best in all health areas in the country," Dr. Ahmed concluded.

The renovation and expansion of Sulaymaniyah Burn and Reconstructive Surgery Hospital to better respond to the health needs of all vulnerable segments of the Iraqi society, especially refugees and IDPs, would not have been possible without the generous contribution by the US Department of State Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM).



IOM is holds a workshop series across Iraq on disaster risk reduction (DRR)

Baghdad, 9 November 2022 - Iraq is at risk of multiple natural and man-made hazards, such as droughts, desertification, earthquakes and floods. Conflict-affected communities, including displaced populations, are particularly vulnerable to these disasters.

Toward preventing and preparing for such disasters and the population movements they often cause, IOM is holding a workshop series across Iraq on disaster risk reduction (DRR). The latest round lasted two days and was attended by government representatives from Ninewa and Salah al-Din governorates, as well as by senior officials from the Government of Iraq. The workshop hosted discussions and exchange of expertise on response coordination and procedures; the development of a visualized decision-making process; the establishment a unified community rapid assessment to

report disasters; and more. This latest installment in the series built on the outcomes of the IOM Iraq DRR workshops that were held over the past few months in several governorates including Kirkuk, Basra, Najaf and Babylon.

IOM continues to support coordination between disaster preparedness and response actors at the national and governorate levels in Iraq.

This series was made possible by support from the Government of Canada.



IOM Iraq provides a training for healthcare workers on common diseases at the level of primary healthcare

Kirkuk, 11 November 2022 - In Iraq, public health care provision has been weakened by cycles of conflict and displacement.

IOM partnered with the Directorate of Health (DoH) in Kirkuk Governorate to provide a training for 15 healthcare workers on common diseases at the level of primary healthcare. The training covered screening, case management and referral pathways for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as hypertension and diabetes mellitus, common geriatric diseases

and conditions affecting the elderly, and more. It also covered screening and early detection of hearing and vision impairments in children under 5 years old. Participants covered all districts under the Kirkuk DOH, including Kirkuk, Hawija, Dibis and Daquq.

This programming is part of IOM's support to strengthen public health services and build the capacity of health staff across Iraq.

This activity was made possible with the support of the Government of the Republic of South Korea.



WHO enhances capacity on polio monitoring and updated response mechanisms and on collecting, transferring and diagnosing samples related to COVID-19 and epidemic-prone diseases

Baghdad, 13 November 2022 - WHO, in partnership with the Iraqi Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Health of the Kurdistan Region, has conducted nine workshops since last October targeting 350 monitoring and immunization officials from all health sectors in Iraq to enhance their capacity on polio monitoring and updated response mechanisms.

In collaboration with USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, Ministry of Health and Kurdistan's Ministry of Health, WHO conducted four workshops on collecting, transferring

and diagnosing samples related to COVID-19 and epidemic-prone diseases, targeting 120 lab technicians

and specialists from all Iraqis governorates.



Kangaroo mother care is ensuring premature babies thrive in Iraq

Sulaymaniyah, 17 November 2022

- Shaneen was just 26 weeks into her pregnancy when she suddenly went into labour. "I had no hope when the baby was arriving so early," she remembers.

Despite her worries, she delivered a healthy son, Mateen. "When he was born, he started crying. The doctor told me that he is in good health. This planted hope in my heart."

Mateen was rushed to an incubator at Sulaymaniyah Maternity Teaching Hospital to receive the care he needed. The facility is in the city of Sulaymaniyah, which is in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

At this hospital, around 600 babies enter the pre-term unit every month. Most of the stays are short, but some infants require extensive care.

How kangaroo mother care can help a baby and caregiver bond

Mateen is among the babies who are benefiting from kangaroo mother care. It's a method that helps infants to adapt to life outside the womb. Skin-to-skin contact is a core component. The baby snuggles on the parent's chest, finding a position that is comfortable, often with a blanket wrapped around them, almost like a kangaroo's protective pouch.

For parents of premature babies that need feeding tubes and equipment to keep them alive, cuddles can seem out of reach. But kangaroo mother care allows for that physical and emotional bonding.

Mateen is now almost a month old. "When I hug my baby and breastfeed him, I feel great, especially as I have been trying for this baby for 14 years," says Shaneen.

Three other mothers, Chawan, Shenkin and Sozi, are also watching over their tiny bundles of joy at the kangaroo mother care facility. It's one of 15 units that UNICEF is supporting in Iraq.

Chawan's baby, Sekhak, is just over one month old and is preparing to leave the unit in the next few days.

"I feel boundless joy every day I see her growing in front of my eyes. She is now my life, and I will be taking her home very soon," says Chawan.

"Kangaroo mother care can reduce the time a premature baby needs to stay in hospital. It helps both mother and baby in numerous, mutually beneficial ways," says Hipgrave. "Babies need to establish feeding and reach a sufficient weight before they can go home, and doctors need to be



able to see that body temperature control is stable. Kangaroo mother care can help reach these milestones more quickly."

"For parents, it can help them feel more confident about looking after a very delicate child."

The transition from incubator to going home

Loujian is another mother who's thankful for kangaroo mother care. Her daughter Rose was born 12 weeks early. After 45 days on the unit, Loujian was finally able to take her home. Rose is now 6 months old and Loujian has brought her in for a follow up visit.

"This place was like a miracle to me. It completely changed my life. Little by little, my daughter's health improved."

The premature babies being cared for also receive the routine immunizations they need to grow up healthy. Those include vaccines for polio and tuberculosis. For premature babies, the timescale for administering the doses is based on weight rather than age – they must reach 2kg before they're vaccinated.

Meet the healthcare hero running the ward

Alwand Rafeeq is the head of the neonatal section. She's incredibly thankful for the work that she's a part of every day.

"I love my job very much and I feel a great commitment to these children," she says. "I feel very proud of myself and the staff that make sure these babies leave here in good health."

"We provide instructions to parents on how to continue kangaroo mother care at home. We keep in touch with the mothers, and they send us pictures of their children," Rafeeq

says.

Mohammed is 6 months old and among those babies that have graduated from the clinic. His mother, Sazan, carried him home from the hospital wrapped in a pouch, and continued kangaroo mother care at home.

"My wife became pregnant with quadruplets following IVF. She went into labour early, at 28 weeks," says Mohammed's father, Zheer. "The babies weighed just 800 grams each." Tragically, Mohammed was the only one of the quadruplets to survive. He was admitted to the clinic and after just a few weeks he had grown to over 2kg, so he was able to receive his vaccinations and eventually go home. The family are grateful for the kangaroo mother care unit. "They made us feel like we counted. They treated us like a family. Breastfeeding improved thanks to the care and that made both my son and wife stronger," says Zheer.

The simple, effective measures of kangaroo mother care have been proven to save lives and improve the rate of early weight gain among low birthweight and premature babies. With UNICEF's support, five more units will open in Iraq by the end of 2022. That means even more babies will be wrapped in love.



World Health Organization opens its new office in Basra

Basra, 16 November 2022 - The World Health Organization opened its new office in Basra Governorate to expand its scope of work in Iraq. The office will also work to support health interventions in southern provinces to further enhance their support for comprehensive Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and ensure coordination of health response efforts

in these regions.

Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO representative in Iraq said: "A perfect team work that finally yielded results. We are proud to inaugurate this new WHO Iraq Office, which is critical to enable progress towards Universal Health Coverage not only in Basra, but also in all southern governorates in Iraq."



Taking care of the youngest: Mosul's only pediatric hospital, Ibn al-Atheer, and University's Kindergarten reopen



Mosul, 16 November 2022 - The newly rehabilitated Ibn al-Atheer Hospital was officially inaugurated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Federal Republic of Germany, the Ministry of Health and the Ninewa Governorate. As the only pediatric hospital in Mosul, Ibn al-Atheer will provide medical services to approximately 50,000 children annually.

Built in the late sixties, the hospital provided medical services to Mosul and surrounding areas in Ninewa, servicing a catchment population of over 500,000 children. However, the hospital was left significantly damaged during the ISIL conflict. As a result, only 135 of its original 261 beds, about 50 percent of its designed capacity, could be used. Only the most critical cases could be admitted and treated, since the hospital functioned with great difficulty due to the scale of destruction.

Through the Funding Facility for Stabilization, UNDP rehabilitated the entire building, including civil, sanitary, mechanical, and electrical works. Today, the hospital is operated and managed by the Ninewa Directorate of Health with over 400 medical and 200 administrative staff. In addition to providing improved health care services for children, the hospital will help retain hundreds of highly skilled medical personnel in Mosul.

The Kindergarten at the University of Mosul was also inaugurated today. It

provides on-site childcare services for the University's professors, researchers and students. It is staffed by 35 teachers who provide daycare services to over 180 children. This will allow employees and students to continue their work or studies, while raising a family. The kindergarten is also home to a small puppet theatre set up by one of Ninewa's best-known puppeteers.

"The people of Mosul suffered greatly during the brutal ISIL reign. Due to its historical significance and massive destruction, UNDP prioritized rebuilding Mosul. Today's reopening of Ibn al-Atheer hospital and Mosul University's kindergarten is an important milestone in rebuilding this iconic city. With over 900 rehabilitation projects completed in Mosul, UNDP has worked tirelessly alongside the international community, the Ninewa Governorate and local community leaders to restore the city's vibrant life," says UNDP Resident Representative for Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad.

"We would not be here today if not for the generous support from our largest and longest-standing partner, the Federal Republic of Germany. Together with Germany, we have made tremendous contributions towards stabilization in Iraq. We will continue to work together to safeguard the hard-won stabilization gains made since 2015 and to prevent ISIL resurgence," she adds.

"Rebuilding and improving public

health services such as the Ibn Al Atheer pediatric hospital remains an urgent priority in Mosul. I am proud that Germany was able to help achieve this ambitious goal by funding the hospital's reconstruction. Overall, Germany has invested more than one billion USD in helping reconstruct Nineva Governorate," says Annette Chammas, Head of the Middle East Division of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The rehabilitation of the Ibn al-Atheer Hospital and the University of Mosul's kindergarten school is funded by the Federal Republic of Germany, provided through KfW Development Bank.

"We at KfW Development Bank are pleased and honored to join in celebrating the inauguration of the Ibn Al Atheer pediatric hospital and University Kindergarten. Both facilities are indeed very special as they will directly contribute to the future of Iraq. The Hospital will provide essential health services to those in need and the kindergarten will provide a safe space where children will develop their talents and both emotional and physical skills," says Dr Christine Heimburger, Director of KfW Development Bank for Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq.

UNDP is the leading implementer of stabilization activities in Iraq. To date, UNDP has completed around 3,400 stabilization projects across the liberated areas of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din. The programme has assisted 4.95 million internally displaced people to return home.



IOM Iraq provides Al-Askary primary healthcare clinic in Kirkuk's Hawija district with pharmaceuticals

Kirkuk, 30 November 2022 - In locations with the greatest vulnerabilities, provision of essential health services remains of critical importance.

Recently, IOM Iraq provided Al-Askary primary healthcare clinic in Kirkuk's Hawija district with pharmaceuticals necessary to treat the area's most prevalent diseases. Al-Askary clinic serves a population of over 45000.

In collaboration with the Government of Iraq's Ministry of Health, IOM continues to strengthen primary health services in IDP camps, informal sites and remote and underserved communities across several governorates including Kirkuk, Ninewa, Dohuk, Erbil, Anbar and Baghdad. IOM supports primary healthcare clinics to deliver basic

services, including medical consultations, maternal and child health services, non-communicable disease management and laboratory and investigation services to promote high-quality health care. This support

covers staffing, basic rehabilitation and the provision of essential medicine, medical equipment and supplies.

These activities were made possible with the support of the Government of Germany.



Annual results of UNICEF and Ministry of Health joint programme reviewed

Baghdad, 4 December 2022 - "We are very appreciative of UNICEF efforts in supporting the Ministry of Health programmes," said Dr. Riyadh Al-Hilfi, Director General- Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health, during the annual review of UNICEF and Ministry of Health joint programmes.

The review highlighted key achievements during 2022, lessons learned and way forward. More than 40 people participated in the review, including Ministry of Health officials, WHO and UNICEF team.



WHO, in collaboration with USAID, delivers equipment to the national blood bank in Erbil

Erbil, 12 December 2022 - Blood is a health product that has no price and cannot be bought or sold, but it is crucial to saving the lives of people in need.

WHO, in collaboration with USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, delivered equipment to the national blood bank in Erbil to ensure adequate, safe transfusion of blood.



Essential medical equipment and supplies worth about US\$ 171,000 delivered to Erbil's Maternity Hospital

Erbil, 7 December 2022 - To ensure that Syrian refugee infants and mothers have access to quality healthcare services, WHO, with

support from the U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and Kuwait, delivered essential medical equipment and

supplies worth about US\$ 171,000 to Erbil's Maternity Hospital.



3-day training on oxygen safety held in Basra

Basra, 11 December 2022 - Medical Oxygen is a life-saving essential supply but can also cause a fire or explosion if not handled properly.

WHO, with support from JICA - Japan International Cooperation Agency, began a 3-day training on oxygen safety, targeting 30 engineers and health workers from 12 hospitals in Basra and Dhi Qar governorates.



UNICEF donates personal protective equipment worth over \$2.5 million to KRI Ministry of Health



Erbil, 12 December 2022 – UNICEF today handed over personal protective equipment (PPE) worth \$2.5 million to the Ministry of Health. The ceremony was held in the presence of the Minister of Health of the Kurdistan Region Government, Dr. Saman H. Barzangy, and the UNICEF Representative in Iraq, Sheema Sen Gupta.

The supplies include coveralls, face shields and goggles for use in the Kurdistan Region response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This donation adds to PPE previously supplied this year, worth \$1.23 million, to support safe practices during the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in all governorates.

"COVID-19 is still among us, and we need to continue working together to avoid new transmission of the virus, putting public health at risk and hampering children's rights who suffer the secondary impact of the pandemic. These supplies attest to UNICEF's continued support for Iraq's response to the pandemic, including through

protecting health workers at the front line of COVID-19 prevention and treatment" said Sheema Sen Gupta, UNICEF Representative to Iraq.

"I would like to highlight UNICEF's support in the previous years, including immunization programs, maternal and infant care, and nutrition programs, as well as COVID-19 response. These PPE requirements will enhance the Ministry of Health of the KRI's ability to respond to the current outbreak of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases", Dr. Saman H. Barzangy Minister of Health of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The PPE supplies are part of UNICEF's broader support for the pandemic response, and for routine immunization efforts in Iraq. These efforts are funded by donors including Germany, the United States and the European Union and includes outreach immunization that has contributed to around 20% of the total COVID-19 vaccination nationwide.

UNICEF has also supported the registration of recipients and reporting of COVID-19 vaccination in over 1,400

facilities through the provision of Wi-Fi devices, internet subscriptions, laptops and through building the capacity for data managers. Since the COVAX rollout began, UNICEF has provided over 12 million vaccination cards and trained 7,600 health care workers on vaccine management, administration, and adverse events management.

As part of the work to strengthen the cold chain system, only this year, UNICEF provided 653 refrigerators, 8 cold rooms, over 2,400 vaccine carriers, 1,200 cold boxes, 10,000 thermometers and installed 93 remote temp monitoring system in all province and district vaccine store,. From a technical perspective, UNICEF supported Ministry's work to improve planning capacity and introduced real-time stock management system in 21 districts during 2022.

All this work contributed to increase immunization coverage for under 5 children, with Diphtheria tetanus toxoid and pertussis (DTP3) and Measles vaccination rates at over 90%, the highest level in 2 decades.

To boost up immunization efforts, by the end of the year, UNICEF and WHO will be supporting a multi-Antigen Campaign for 10 working days - 1,053 teams will be deployed to deliver more than one million doses to children in remote and inaccessible communities.

End of year efforts will be complemented by a nation-wide campaign with COVID-19 vaccination messages and prevention messages, that will be launched through TV ads and billboards.

In humanitarian settings, the reproductive health of women and girls are often overlooked

Baghdad, 02 November 2022 - In humanitarian settings, the reproductive health of women and girls are often overlooked. It is important for their wellbeing to have information on

their reproductive health and rights and know where to access services.

With the support of the EU - ECHO, UNFPA through community mobilizers brings key information about family

planning and SRH service to women in camps. This ensures that they understand their rights to make informed choices.

WHO gives fresh momentum to secondary health care services in Kurdistan Iraq



Erbil, 18 December 2022 – The World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health of the Kurdistan region of Iraq, has just completed the renovation and expansion of a neonatal intensive care unit in the maternity teaching hospital in Erbil.

The unit can now deliver advanced lifesaving services for newborns of refugees, internally displaced populations (IDPs), and the Erbil hosting community of approximately 1.6 million people. The unit has been established on an additional space of 377 square metres to accommodate 92

newborns in fully equipped incubators with an up-to-date monitoring system installed according to international standards. Medical air and oxygen, a new 3-bed isolation room, a laboratory and milk preparation areas have also been provided.

“The best gift we could give to our children is a healthy new start in life, and this is what we are doing in this unit, to provide intensive neonatal care to premature needy newborns,” said Dr Ahmed Zouiten WHO Representative in Iraq. “Our vision for a solid and compatible health care system in Iraq starts here in maternity and neonatal

health care facilities in which sustainable health projects are recognized as the ultimate solutions to the growing health needs of the Iraqi people and a step towards achieving universal health coverage,” he added.

The facility receives an average number of 300 to 400 cases a day, the majority are pregnant women from middle- to low-income families who cannot afford private health care costs. “The inauguration of this project today showcases the remarkable impact of donor contributions to improving the health sector in Iraq. It will certainly boost the quality and quantity of primary and secondary health care services in these facilities and serve as the model that WHO and health authorities at both central and Kurdistan regional levels are considering to replicate in many other parts of the country,” Dr Ahmed Zouiten explained.

WHO in Iraq would like to thank the United States Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migrants for their generous support which has enabled WHO to fund sustainable projects and provide access to affordable essential and specialized health care services targeting all in need with a focus on the most vulnerable population of refugees and IDPs across Iraq.

Family Planning

British Embassy Iraq funds sessions on family planning for women and young people in Iraq facilitated by UNFPA

Erbil/Mosul, 15 November 2022 - Gulzar attends the sewing course organized by UNFPA at the Erbil Youth Centre. She occasionally attends sessions on Family planning, too.

During a UK visit to the youth center, she said that she had learned a lot about family planning, and she is passing on the information to her children.

The British Embassy Iraq funds sessions on family planning for women and young people. The sessions deliver appropriate information about available and accessible family planning methods to couples and individuals. This enables couples and individuals to make informed choices about the number, spacing, and timing of children and voluntary use of their choice of contraceptives.

And when doctors have access to

accurate and reliable data, they can provide better services to women and girls.

UNFPA, with the support of the British Embassy Iraq, trained 27 doctors of the Ninewa Directorate of Health on specialized family planning. The training is part of a series of training

on decision-making tools, postpartum and family planning services for doctors and nurses across Ninewa. It aims to build the capacity of government health workers and acquaint them with the different types of family planning methods and how to deliver the services.



Annual results of UNFPA country programme reviewed

Baghdad, 11 December 2022 - UNFPA Iraq, jointly with the Ministry of Planning, reviewed the annual results of the UNFPA country programme during a meeting with all stakeholders, including the government of Iraq and KRI, civil society and donors.

The event provided an enriching opportunity for a constructive discussion about the key achievements and lessons learned in 2022 and addressed the priorities for 2023.



Mental Health

To commemorate the World Mental Health Day, IOM Iraq organizes an event at Lalish – site of the Yezidis' holiest temple



Lalish, 31 October 2022 - In conflict-affected contexts like Iraq, mental health needs tend to be greater and more complex. This is especially evident among internally displaced persons (IDPs), who tend to face difficulties in securing adequate housing and access to basic services, putting both their physical and mental health at risk.

To continue the commemoration of World Mental Health Day, IOM Iraq organized an event at Lalish – site of

the Yezidis' holiest temple. The participants visited seven locations in Lalish, before taking part in a session on mental health and psychosocial wellbeing provided by IOM's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) team. Baba Chawish, an influential Yezidi religious leader, welcomed the group and made a speech encouraging participants to turn to their inner peace during times of stress. The day's events were attended by 10 Yezidi families residing in Qadia Camp

for IDPs. The group of participants was mixed, and the MHPSS team made special provisions for children, attendees with disabilities and survivors of ISIL crimes that had specific MHPSS needs. The IOM team had conducted a consultation session with the beneficiaries before the program started to ensure that it was in line with their expectations and that they would feel comfortable during the visit.

"It is the first time that my two children, a girl and a boy, have visited this place [Lalish]," one participant explained. "They were always asking us to bring them here, but due to the economic challenges, we could not do it. It was the first time they didn't feel dizzy while travelling in the bus because they were so excited about coming here."

This event was made possible with support from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

Huda participated in an IOM Iraq livelihood project that integrated mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)

Baghdad, 6 November 2022 - In conflict- and displacement-affected contexts like Iraq, mental health needs tend to be greater and more complex. The exposure to traumatic events, financial insecurity and social isolation that often comes with the experience of displacement puts both the physical and mental health of IDPs at risk.

"My family and I were displaced in 2006 from our house in Al-A'amel neighborhood to Abu Ghraib district in Baghdad due to sectarianism. At first,

the situation was uncomfortable because the area was new to us and the people had different ideas, but we have adapted over the years," said Huda, 29. When her marriage fell apart after only one year due to problems between families, Huda became subject to the stigma that follows divorced women in Iraq. She pushed forward with dignity, but unable to find employment, she began to feel useless.

"Job opportunities in Abu Ghraib district are very few, almost non-

existent, and this causes me to feel depressed," Huda continued. "I hope to return to Al-A'amel, where there are more job opportunities."

Indeed, a needs assessment conducted by IOM in 2020 found that a lack of job opportunities continues to be one of the most significant challenges among IDPs, returnees and host communities, causing anxiety and distress, and negatively impacting their mental health and well-being. Women in particular face disproportionate

Huda participated in an IOM Iraq livelihood project that integrated mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) *(continued)*



challenges to accessing employment. After hearing about the opportunity through her sister, Huda participated in an IOM Iraq livelihood project that integrated mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). This integrated programming – referred to as MLI – brings MHPSS into existing or new livelihood projects to prepare livelihood programme participants to manage and mitigate unexpected work-related stressors; strengthen their positive coping mechanisms; and simultaneously build life, social and

soft skills to contribute to livelihood success.

In Abu Ghraib, MLI programming is implemented in partnership with the Shams Al-Hayat sewing workshop. "Through the mental health sessions and the sewing workshop, I learned many things that are necessary for life," said Huda. "For example, I learned the art of sewing and fashion design from my colleagues in the workshop. From the sessions, I learned patience, self-confidence and time management. I also shared ideas and

learned new things with the rest of the women," she went on. "I hope that such sessions will continue."

Since participating in IOM's MLI programming, things have changed for Huda.

"I want to open a shop for sewing clothes," Huda expressed with excitement, "and I am also motivated to continue my studies, as I dream of becoming a lawyer in order to defend women's issues."

In Iraq, MHPSS and livelihood needs remain among the top priorities for returnees and people in displacement. In an enabling, supportive environment, displacement-affected persons – including the most vulnerable among them – can better empower themselves to persist both emotionally and materially until durable solutions to their displacement can be achieved.

IOM Iraq's MLI activities in Abu Ghraib were made possible thanks to support from the the Government of Germany, through KfW.

By: Rafal Abdulateef, IOM Senior Public Information Assistant

Environment

Updating Iraq's National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan (NESAP)

Baghdad, 18 October 2022 - A country's national environmental strategy is a set of initiatives designed to reduce the country's negative impact on the natural environment, such as reducing energy and oil consumption, and aiming to increase the dependency on sustainable resources and renewable energy.

Iraq's most recent National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan (NESAP) was drafted in 2013 and aimed at framing the environmental work since. However, the war against ISIL started in the beginning of 2014 and the land liberation process lasted until the end of 2017, just during the proposed time for the NESAP to be put into action. With the current situation in Iraq being more stable, along with the strong commitments that Iraq has made to tackle climate and environment issues, it is now time to launch a new NESAP for Iraq. Through The Ministry of Environment (MoEn), UNDP is supporting the

Government of Iraq in updating its current strategy with the funding of US Aid and via a series of consultative workshops in October and November 2022. In order to explore the sectoral ministries' plans to update the environmental strategy based on their particular goals and in alignment with the national context, UNDP has offered a scoping mission¹ for the experts on environmental strategy.

In addition to the significant hit the Covid-19 pandemic caused the Iraqi

environmental sector to suffer, Iraq has also made commitments to the UNFCCC and the Paris Accord through the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)², all of which has made it a necessity for the MoEn to update the environmental strategy starting in 2023 and lasting through 2028.

In order to verify the data gathered as provided by the MoEn, and to compare it to what was formally published online by sectoral ministries, UNDP is



Updating Iraq's National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan (NESAP) *(continued)*

drafting the baseline report for the updated environmental strategy and for discussion and consultation with sectoral ministries representatives (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Planning and other stakeholders), as well as those from The General Secretariat for the Council of Ministries and the Board of Environmental Protection and Improvement in Kurdistan Region.

During the discussion, consensus of the participants was sought on the baseline report, the table of contents and the

general format of the new environmental strategy.

A new environmental strategy means a renewed commitment to the environmental work that aligns with the national and international priorities and the NDC and would accelerate Iraq's transition to a more environmentally resilient country for the coming years, in its different sectors.

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1 A scoping mission's objective is to allow experts to assess the local context

and to verify the provided data.

2 The Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) is the plan to adapt to climate change and reduce emissions. It is submitted every 5 years to the United Nations Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat. All countries that join the Paris Agreement are required to communicate and maintain their climate actions and the contributions they intend to achieve regarding reduction of emissions of Green House Gases.

DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Isaczai: "Inclusive water governance is key to addressing the water problem in Iraq"

Baghdad, 4 November 2022 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, attended today the Iraq's "Internal Water Resources Management and Solution" workshop. Here is the text of his remarks:

"Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is a privilege to be here this morning at the invitation of Bahr Alolom Forum at the 1st workshop conference under the theme, Iraq's Thirst.

The land of the two rivers – Euphrates and Tigris rivers-the site of ancient Babylonia, home to Gilgamesh...

Two majestic rivers with ancient paths have carved this rugged land and built human civilization. Both rivers have stood witness to olden societies, their rise and fall, their struggles and overcoming adversities.

The oldest human civilization in Mesopotamia provided well-organized and highly efficient hydraulic systems, sophisticated irrigation, and flood control structures.

Statement of the problem

But today, the water situation in Iraq is alarming.

In 2021, the country experienced its second driest season in 40 years due to record low rainfall.

Northern Iraq was particularly affected by drought, while the southern part of the country experienced a decrease in fresh water supply; both resulted in significant crop failures.

Over the last 40 years, water flows from the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, which provide up to 98% of Iraq's surface water, have decreased by 30-40%.

Compared to 2015, Iraq's overall water supply is expected to decrease by up to 60% by 2025.

Pressures on the country's water resources include dam construction by neighboring countries, intensive water usage in Iraqi agriculture, unsustainable domestic water consumption, the impact of violent conflicts and wars on water infrastructure, and the consequences of climate change.

The decrease in Iraq's freshwater supply has dramatic consequences for households' sanitation needs, irrigation, hydroelectricity production, and sustaining ecosystems, and it adds to the already existing tensions between the riparian states – within, but also beyond the water sector.

When discussing water scarcity, we must equally address water quality.

Declining water quality has become one of Iraq's major challenges, particularly in the south.

For instance, during the 2018 water crisis in Basra, more than 120,000 people were hospitalized with water-borne diseases, following similar incidents in 2009 and 2015.

These water quality impacts have contributed to urban migration and public demonstrations that shape political and security dynamics in the region.

UN activities

The UN is engaged with the Government on several strands of work covering water, sanitation and hygiene, water resources management, water quality and management of water related disasters.

We are responding to humanitarian needs of refugees, IDPs and returnees



and other citizens as well as helping the government to address structural problems and to facilitate regional dialogue and cooperation on both water and the environment.

Concretely, this means improving access to safe drinking water in cities such as Basra; rebuilding irrigation infrastructure; promoting Climate Smart Agriculture with extension officers in the field and facilitating capacity building within the Ministry of Water Resources and other ministries

Recommendations

Inclusive water governance is key to addressing the water problem in Iraq. Water managers at all levels need to ensure communities are resilient to water scarcity pressures as well as water excesses, all the while ensuring the natural system and its associated ecosystem services are protected and enhanced.

Water diplomacy channels need constantly to be kept open for transboundary exchange and

DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Isaczai: “Inclusive water governance is key to addressing the water problem in Iraq” *(continued)*

negotiation as key for securing the water inflow of the Euphrates and Tigris.

Water pollution and water use inefficiency on the other hand can fully be addressed on a purely domestic level, while focusing on:

Participatory dialogue processes engaging key stakeholders.

Modernizing and expanding water treatment plants, supporting enforcement frameworks, and engaging in public awareness campaigns and dialogue.

Modernizing and repairing outdated and damaged water infrastructures as well as water-intensive industries, and Investments in water and irrigation

infrastructure as well as innovative irrigation practices.

Climate change adaptation might be an avenue for cooperation that goes beyond resource distribution and water quotas, and joint multi-purpose projects could help manage remaining water resources in a more efficient way.

I call on all Iraqi stakeholders to jointly address water scarcity immediately.

July this year the General Assembly declared access to a clean and healthy environment a universal human right, specifically recognizing access to clean water.

I repeat, water must not be source of conflict, but an area of cooperation.

I can assure you that the UN family in

Iraq – UNAMI and the UN Country Team - stands ready to consider requests for support in any of the areas that will be addressed over these next two days.

Adding to that, I am inviting all stakeholders ranging from non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions, the scientific community, and the private sector to participate in next year's UN 2023 Water Conference, which will take place at UN Headquarters in New York, 22-24 March 2023, and co-hosted by Tajikistan and the Netherlands.

Thank you.”

Iraq stands up for the environment at COP 27, UN climate change conference

Baghdad, 05 November 2022 – More than 200 Iraqis representing government, youth and civil society are participating in COP27, the 27th annual United Nations Conference on Climate Change, organized by the United Nations in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

Climate change is a reality in Iraq, and a priority for the UN family in the country. It has devastating impacts on the lives of all Iraqi citizens, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, and the urgency for action crosses all political, ethnic, social and geographic lines.

The Iraqi delegation to the 6-18 November 2022 COP 27 includes representatives from the government, youth, civil society and private sector.

“Iraq is at the frontlines of the climate crisis and one of the countries in the world most vulnerable to climate change, while its citizens suffer from the devastating impacts of heat waves, sand and dust storms, flash floods, droughts, land degradation, inundation due to sea level rise and water scarcity,” said Resident Coordinator Ghulam Isaczai, adding, “UN Iraq will continue working every day to show that climate commitment is about action, coordinated solutions and engagement at all levels.”

The work of UN entities in Iraq takes into consideration the environmental impact of climate change, with a focus on ensuring that actions and projects are environmentally friendly and prioritize the most vulnerable communities, including women,

children, young people, and persons with disabilities.

On the ground, in Kirkuk, the UN initiated a tree-planting campaign to raise awareness about climate action and expand the 'Green Belt' to mitigate dust storms. UN-Habitat Iraq created nearly 12 hectares of public green spaces so far and planted over 5,000 trees to reduce the impact of sandstorms.

UNDP supported the Government of Iraq to develop and ratify climate change policy through the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) that addresses both mitigation of greenhouse gasses and adaptation towards climate change, with a focus on gender and the private sector, and continues to provide capacity development and piloting of projects to support the implementation of the NDCs.

FAO continues to enhance climate resilience of vulnerable agriculture households in Iraq's rural areas in partnership with the relevant governmental institutions and renews its commitment to continue supporting the local communities, including buffalo producers in the Marshes. FAO is also promoting climate-smart agricultural practices to address water scarcity, heat and drought under projected climate change scenarios, preventing food loss and waste, and addresses the degradation of valuable natural resources such as soil and water, in addition to supporting with near real time remote sensing data to monitor land and water productivity.

In the past two years, over 1.5 million Iraqi people gained access to safely managed water services, and a half million gained access to safely managed sanitation services through UNICEF's work with the national authorities. UNICEF is asking national stakeholders to take rapid action to protect every child and young person by providing critical services, prepare them by building their capacity, and prioritize children and young people in climate funding and resources.

UNWomen will use COP 27 to underline how gender equality can strengthen climate action and mitigate impacts as well as highlight women's voices and leadership as a key driver of climate change successes. It will leverage strengthened global commitment to increasing and ensuring a more gender-equal approach towards climate, environment, and disaster risk reduction. Additionally, the UNFPA Iraq Country Office is working jointly with the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Planning to develop a study on the impact of climate change on women/girls as well as vulnerable groups in Iraq.

WFP has supported smallholder farmers with adaptation measures and the Ministry of Water Resources with pilot projects for modern irrigation systems. WFP is also funding climate change mitigation and adaptation actions for reforestation, mangrove planting and marshland conservation. WFP is also working with the government to develop early-warning systems to trigger action before

Iraq stands up for the environment at COP 27, UN climate change conference *(continued)*

extreme weather events impact vulnerable families, allowing them to take preventive action.

At COP 27, IOM draws on its extensive research to highlight water scarcity in Iraq, which destroys agricultural livelihoods and drives internal displacement from rural to urban areas – areas that already struggle to provide basic services to residents and where social tensions continue to rise. This growing displacement will have a disproportionate impact on persons with disabilities, who already face social marginalization, difficulty

finding employment and higher barriers to accessing services. Informal settlements (where climate migrants typically end up living) and poor quality roads create significant barriers for their freedom of movement, independence and quality of life.

Let's all work together towards building a sustainable Iraq and end the environmental crisis!

Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, Deputy Special Representative, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq
Dr. Salah ElHajjHassan, FAO

Representative in Iraq
Giorgi Gigauri, IOM Iraq Chief of Mission

Zena Ali-Ahmad, UNDP Representative in Iraq
Dr. Rita Columbia, UNFPA Representative in Iraq

Wael Ashhab, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq
Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq
Dina Zorba, UNWomen Representative to Iraq & Yemen

Ally Raza Qureshi, WFP Representative to Iraq

Climate change is the biggest threat Iraq has ever faced, but there is hope to turn things around



Op-Ed by Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq

Baghdad, 12 November 2022 - When I travelled to Baghdad a month ago to assume my duties in Iraq to help coordinate our support to the government and people in need, the land of the two rivers was totally different from what I had seen two decades ago when I first worked in Iraq. Dust filled the air, kicked up by hot winds. Swathes of arid land dotted by stubborn palm trees patiently struggling to withstand the elements of nature. This is not the Mesopotamia as described in the history books, the land of civilizations. When I asked Iraqis and others who have been here for many years, I was told it was never like this before. Clearly, climate change has taken its toll on this country.

In the course of my profession, I've been to so many countries and I've seen

many problems, but the effects of climate change here are dramatic. This beautiful and fertile land, known throughout history for civilizations sprouting around the mighty rivers Tigris and Euphrates, now stands on the frontline of a global climate crisis as the world's 5th most vulnerable country.

I would have liked to be more positive in my first address to the Iraqi public, but the reality is hard to hide. I must say that all is not lost. There is hope to turn things around, and it is for Iraqis to take the lead.

With the 27th UN Climate Change Conference – COP27 – proceeding in full swing in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, it is important to look at environmental issues and challenges in Iraq and what needs to be done about them. COP 27 will build on the outcomes of COP26 and respond to the acute global climate emergency – from urgently needed mitigation efforts in cutting greenhouse gas emissions, to building resilience and adapting to the inevitable impacts of climate change. COP 27 needs to deliver on the commitments to finance climate action in developing countries, including Iraq. COP 27 is an important opportunity for world governments to stick to and further develop their climate commitments (Nationally Determined Contributions) while transferring the climate change spirit and awareness back to Iraq.

We all are aware of the problems here: extreme weather events and changes in climate patterns such as heat waves, heavy rains, rising temperatures and increased variability and unpredictability of rainfall; sand and dust storms; prolonged droughts; land

degradation; flash floods; and water scarcity.

In 2021, Iraq experienced its second driest season in 40 years due to record low rainfall. Over the last 40 years, water flows from the Euphrates and Tigris, which provide up to 98% of Iraq's surface water, have decreased by 30-40 percent. The historic marshlands in the south, a natural heritage wonder, are drying up. Iraq's temperatures are soaring, with the highest of nearly 54°C recorded in Basra. Low river water means seawater is pushing into southern lands, with salination threatening agriculture. The livelihood and even existence of entire communities are at stake.

Climate change in Iraq not only affects Iraq's agricultural sector but also is a severe threat to fundamental human rights, creates barriers to sustainable development and worsens the country's environmental, security, political, and economic challenges.

The data and science are clear. While climate change is affecting many countries, some of the measures to mitigate its impact start at home. We must act now and start moving towards a climate-resilient economy, while equally addressing adaptation and mitigation. We all have a responsibility to safeguard our collective future and work together towards the greater good.

We can begin by taking concrete steps at home. Each person needs to make better and more responsible choices whether it's through what they eat, how they travel, how they conserve water and electricity and what they buy.

Restoring damaged ecosystems is an

Climate change is the biggest threat Iraq has ever faced, but there is hope to turn things around *(continued)*

important first step and water management is key. Managing water resources will require both diplomacy and tackling Iraq's own water pollution and inefficiency problems. Hence, no waste by running taps, excessive use for gardening and polluting the rivers and streams. Iraq needs to modernize and expand water treatment plants, repair outdated and damaged water infrastructure, enforce water use limits, and invest in new irrigation infrastructure, water harvesting and promote innovative irrigation practices. Dialogue and engagement with neighbouring countries to ensure a fair share of water is critical.

Utilizing solar energy, cost effective and abundant from the powerful sunrays throughout most of the year, and improving energy efficiency by reaching zero gas flaring as well as simultaneously building up renewables, such as wind and hydro, will certainly help reduce toxic emissions and cost.

Campaigning for the environment, promoting large-scale recycling and other sound environmental practices, involving the youth who make up more than half of Iraq's population in climate-related matters from early life, guarantee the success of any efforts to save our planet.

Public advocacy - and accountability -

also can encourage private local and international investment to enable green start-ups in the agriculture, waste, and energy sectors. Reviving Iraq's agriculture in the south, its date industry, is one example.

There is still time to turn things around. With climate action backed by Iraq's leaders and people, we have a real opportunity to leave a better Iraq for our next generation. I am encouraged that as well as joining the Paris Agreement, Iraq is pioneering its Green Paper, enshrining climate adaptation in policy.



Water crisis in focus: streams run dry in Southern Iraq

Al Hadam, 17 November 2022 – Mohsin Faleh is a 30-year-old farmer in the southern Iraqi community of Al Hadam, Missan governorate. His face was weary as he surveyed the barren land that bears the scars of a complex water crisis that is expected to worsen. “I don't remember the last time it rained; I think two years ago,” Mohsin commented in early October, on a day when temperatures hovered in the 40-degrees Celsius range.

Iraq has two main sources of water – the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The intake of water from both rivers is decreasing at an unprecedented rate, due to the construction of upstream dams and a prolonged drought.

Climate change, rising temperatures and the diversion of river water also mean that residents in Al Hadam struggle to access adequate water for use in their homes. This water scarcity is forcing some residents to uproot their lives and families.

Iman has six children and meeting her family's water needs is difficult and expensive. “We are thinking of moving to the city because there is no water. We have to buy water,” said Iman, who was born and raised in Al Hadam.

Mohsin recalled that rainfall was predictable during his childhood, with rain arriving every year during the autumn season. The young farmer has observed dramatic changes to the climate, the soil and the water resources surrounding his community over the last few years.

Drought conditions are exacerbated not only by the decreased water levels in sub-canal systems near Al Hadam, but by their high saline content, making

farming nearly impossible.

Dwindling fresh water enables the salty tidewater of the Persian Gulf to seep into the Tigris and Euphrates, which feed sub-canal systems like in Al Hadam. The high salt content then depletes the parched farmland even more. Even the arrival of autumn rains may not be enough for the cultivation of farmland to sustain the region's agricultural livelihoods.

Back in 2007, a water pumping station was installed to increase water flow in the area but quickly fell into disrepair and was eventually ransacked for mechanical parts, leaving the community without reliable water access.

In 2022, IOM Iraq worked with a local company to restore the water pump for use. The pump now draws water from a nearby sub-canal, where it is treated and distributed to families in two of Al Hadam's villages for household use.

While the installation of the pump

provides some relief to the community, the scale of water needs in the area is outsized. Displacement of families is a reality in the community's 13 villages, as water scarcity relentlessly takes its toll on agriculture and farming – the main source of income in Missan.

IOM Iraq provided Mohsin, and 79 other farmers from the community, with Individual Livelihood Assistance (ILA) in the form of a cash grant that he has used to buy farming tools and supplies in anticipation of the rainy season.

Ongoing interventions are needed at the governorate and national levels to harness existing resources and find adequate solutions for families in hard-hit areas like Al Hadam.

The ILA project and water pump restoration in Al Hadam were made possible with support from the US Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM).



Iraq actively participates in COP27, UN Climate Change Conference

Baghdad, 20 November 2022 – Iraq is ranked as the fifth most vulnerable country to climate change, with extreme weather events across the country demonstrating the immediate impact on Iraqi communities, making Iraq's participation in COP27, the 27th annual United Nations Conference on Climate Change, more vital than ever. Organized by the United Nations in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, the 06-18 November conference has now closed.

The Iraqi delegation to COP27, composed of over 100 government representatives, civil society representatives, and youth and women representatives, participated in the conference with high visibility. This year was the first time Iraq had a youth delegation, with three youth representatives. Over half of the Iraqi delegation were women, and over 60% of the negotiating team were women as well.

The summit closed early Sunday with a historic agreement to set up a "loss and damage" fund for developing countries, an issue that the Iraqi negotiators have heavily pushed for, along with the G77 Group and the Arab Group. The Iraqi negotiators were also active in negotiating articles of the Paris Agreement regarding Carbon Markets and Technology Transfer.

The delegation participated in meetings with UNDP's Regional Bureau for Arab States, UNFCCC, UN Regional Collaboration Centers, the Adaptation



Fund, NDC Partnership, Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, UNEP and UN Habitat. The delegation was successful in bringing in more technical and financial support to Iraq from the international climate funds.

UNDP Iraq Resident Representative Zena Ali-Ahmad states, "Iraq's active participation in COP27 this year echoes the vital impact of climate change on this country. The environment is a current focus for UNDP in Iraq, including the detrimental impact of climate change on Iraq's most vulnerable populations. UNDP will continue to support Iraq to prevent further impacts and mitigate the effects of climate change on development during Iraq's fragile recovery period."

The Iraqi Deputy Minister of Environment, Dr. Jasim Abdulazeez Humadi says, "This conference is of a

particular importance given the serious challenges that climate change imposes on the region and the world. We are suffering from the imminent danger of drought and land degradation in addition to a big decline in our water resources, and this, of course, is one of the essential issues that we are working on with a promising government programme."

UNDP Iraq's Environment, Energy, and Climate Change Programme implements projects that aim to promote environmental sustainability and community resilience through mapping and addressing the risks associated with environmental degradation, climate change and disasters, in addition to working closely with the Iraqi government through the Ministry of Environment to support the implementation of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

Iraq faces a complex water crisis that's set to continue

Maysan, 23 November 2022 - Iraq faces a complex water crisis that's set to continue. In Iraq's main water sources is declining at an unprecedented rate, due to the construction of dams in the source regions and a prolonged drought.

The impact of climate change, rise in temperatures and river water diversion is most tangible in the southern governorates of Iraq. In the demolition community in Maysan Province, residents often struggle to get enough water to use in their homes. The displacement of families has already been observed in 13 villages in the community, where water scarcity is affecting agriculture and agri-work - major sources of livelihood opportunities in Maysan Province.

The water pumping station installed in 2007 to increase the amount of water reaching families in the area was in

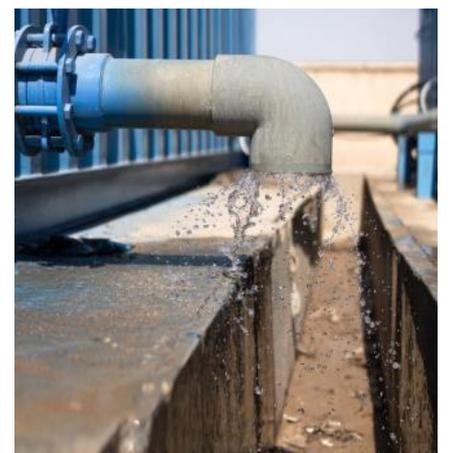
poor shape after one year of installation; it was eventually looted for its mechanical parts.

In 2022, the International Migration Organization in Iraq recruited Rawabi Al-Kazemiyah Company to rehabilitate the water pump for use. The company did all reconstruction work, including installing the electrical panel to run the pump, and cleaned out the tanks to store treated water. The pump draws water from a nearby sub-channel, where it is treated and distributed to families in two of the demolition villages for home use, including washing clothes, bathing, etc.

Continuous deterioration in water quantity and quality will lead to increased risk of displacement in Iraq due to water scarcity; continuous interventions at the provincial and national level are needed to best harness available resources and find

suitable solutions for families in the most affected areas Damage.

The water pump in the demolition has been restored with support from the US Department of State, Office of Population, Refugee and Immigration.



Experts exchange ideas during a workshop on environmental degradation, adaptive solutions for resilience to displacement



Baghdad, 05 December 2022 - Environmental degradation – aggravated by climate change – is driving large-scale displacement in Iraq. The Government of Iraq has identified this as a priority concern to address.

On November 29 and 30, Iraq's Special Envoy on Climate Change, Dr. Fareed Yasseen, chaired a workshop on Environmental Degradation and Adaptive Solutions for Resilience to Displacement, attended by experts representing senior government officials, religious endowments, NGOs and academia from all governorates

across Iraq.

The workshop featured opening remarks by Dr. Yasseen, UN Resident Coordinator Ghulam Isaczai and Deputy Minister of Water Resources Hussein Al-Bakka.

The group of experts engaged in a fruitful exchange of ideas for adaptive solutions to environmental degradation, and identified possible resilience-building measures to reduce the risk of displacement, in line with available resources and the Government of Iraq's Nationally Determined Contribution – an action plan to cut emissions and adapt to

climate impacts, committed to under The Paris Agreement.

IOM Iraq's Chief of Mission, Mr. Giorgi Gigauri, and Representative for WFP in Iraq, Mr. Ally Raza Qureshi, spoke to affirm support for the Government of Iraq's efforts to bolster the resilience of communities affected by climate change. The workshop concluded with the Iraqi Special Envoy on Climate Change thanking participants and urging them to action.

"We need adaptive, transformative and long term solutions that build resilience against displacement resulting from climate change – at the community and policy levels," UN Deputy Special Representative, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, said at #Iraq's Environmental Degradation and Adaptive Solutions for Resilience to Displacement workshop today, adding "the UN stands ready to work with the government of Iraq in all its efforts to protect the environment, for present and future generations."

Organized by the office of Iraq's Special Envoy on Climate Change, this workshop was made possible by the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Iraq, with support provided by WFP and IOM Iraq.

UNAMI Climate Action Hackathon in Basra supports Iraqi youth political engagement with the government on climate change

Basra, 9 December 2022 - Iraqi youth supported by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) had the opportunity to present their ideas to the government on how best to tackle climate change. Twenty women and men from seven provinces engaged with government officials, including the minister of youth and sports and the climate as well as youth and sports advisers to the prime minister, at the Second Climate Action Hackathon that was held in Basra on 1-3 December.

Organized by the Office of Political Affairs and Analysis, the Hackathon brought together the youth from the provinces of Basra, Najaf, Baghdad, Thi Qar, Erbil, Sulaimaniya, and Dohuk. Out of more than 100 project submissions, 10 initiatives proposed by the youth were selected for a two-day intense project ideation.

Nine youth groups presented the results - proposals on how they aim to address climate change - to a panel of experts consisting of the Prime

Minister's Adviser on Youth and Sports, Dr. Shahba Ahmed al-Azzawi, the Head of the Environmental Department, Dr. Waleed al-Mousawi, and the Head of Basra directorate for Agriculture, Hadi al-Ziyadi. The panel provided the youth groups with feedback on their initiatives and listened to the recommendations and requests for support.

At the closing session on 3 December, the Minister of Youth and Sports, Ahmed al-Mubaraqaa, highlighted in his address to the participants the importance of youth in building the future of Iraq and promised the continued support of the government to youth and their initiatives. The Prime Minister's Adviser for Youth, Dr. Qasim al-Zalimi, welcomed the constructive suggestions the youth had made during the hackathon and promised to support concrete and realistic proposals.

To ensure sustainability after the competition, UNAMI will continue to support the development of the youth

initiatives, together with the cohort of the First Climate Action Hackathon that took place in Kurdistan Region in 2021, and establish communication channels between the 'Hackathonians' and the Iraqi leadership at both the national and local levels.



Federal Ministry of Environment, Kurdistan Board of Environment, CSO & KRSO with technical support from UNFPA organize a consultative workshop on the impact of climate change on women and girls



Erbil, 12 December 2022 - The Federal Ministry of Environment, the Kurdistan Region's Board of Environment, Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), Kurdistan Region Statistical Office (KRSO), and UNFPA organised a workshop on 11-12 December in Erbil on the impacts of climate change on women and girls and how to design durable solutions to enable people and communities to adapt.

In 2021, UNFPA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, and Kurdistan Region's Statistic Office, launched the results of the Iraqi Women Integrated Social and Health Survey II, which offered integrated data showing the change in women's economic and social status in Iraq since 2011. Following the I-WISH-II Survey, UNFPA, with the Federal Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Planning, will conduct a rapid study on the impacts of climate change on the lives of women and girls in Iraq.

To prepare for this study, UNFPA

organised a consultative workshop attended by relevant stakeholders in both governments, the private sector, civil society organisations, and youth activists to brainstorm on designing the structure of a study. The objective is to ensure that national climate policies incorporate novel solutions and opinions from different groups of people and include sexual and reproductive health and rights issues.

Speaking at the event, Dr Dhiyaa Khadim Awad, the chairman of CSO at the Federal Government, stated and reiterated the importance of people-centric policies and said that: "we hope that this workshop will come up with a raw outline for the upcoming thematic study, which is anticipated to be conducted in 2023 and will be based on qualitative research aimed at various sectors with a particular focus on choices of empowering women and girls to deal with climate change."

For her part, Ms Lamees Muneef, Head of the Gender Unit at the Ministry of Environment, highlighted the role played by the Ministry of Environment

in reducing the adverse effects of climate change on people in general, women, and children, and said that: "we are pleased to present our work and role at this workshop, particularly in light of the COP27 conference that took place in Egypt. We amplify our commitment to empowering women and are prepared to collaborate on this study with the Ministry of Planning and UNFPA."

The Kurdistan Region Statistic Office representative also emphasized the significance of this study and noted that the data and findings from it must serve as a significant foundation for developing national plans and strategies.

Mr Garik Hayrapetyan, UNFPA Deputy Representative to Iraq, during the workshop reiterated that the workshop supports a multi-sectoral approach to accelerate climate actions and said that "developing a national strategy to identify the potential opportunities and existing gaps is urgently needed to avoid massive displacement and wasting natural resources."

The government representatives, the private sector, CSOs, and youth activists contributed to the discussion over the upcoming study. They expressed interest in being part of the study and advocating for improving legislation, policies, and programmes around climate change.

The impacts of climate change affect us all. The time to act is now. Let's work together to find long-lasting solutions to help people and communities adapt to climate change and ensure that livelihoods are protected.



DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq meets with the newly appointed Minister of Environment

Baghdad, 21 December 2022 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, met with the newly appointed Minister of Environment, Dr. Nizar Mohamad Amed. They discussed Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), water resources management, pollution-gas flaring, strengthening

capacities of MoE, climate finance, and adaptation.

The DSRSG highlighted environment

being at the top of the UN agenda.

Photo courtesy of the Iraq Ministry of Environment.



The community information center for the #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul Initiative opens in Mosul

Mosul, 13 November 2022 - Iraqi Minister of Culture, Dr. Ahmed Fakak Al-Badrani, and Mr. Paolo Fontani, UNESCO Representative to Iraq, recently opened the community information centre for the #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul Initiative in the presence of MP Muzahim Al-Khayat, and leaders from the community.

"This community engagement centre will serve a very important task of informing the community members and also the visitors to the city of Mosul about the heritage preservation work undertaken" with these words the European Union's Head of Cooperation Development, Ms. Barbara Egger, welcomed the opening of the new UNESCO community centre for the #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul Initiative,

generously funded by the European Union in Iraq.

Within the opening of the community centre, H.E Noura Al Kaabi delivered a message of encouragement to the

UNESCO team working firsthand to #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul, implemented by UNESCO in partnership with the United Arab Emirates.



UNESCO, with generous funding from the European Union, is rehabilitating Al-Ashar Canal in Basra

Basra, 24 November 2022 - UNESCO, with generous funding from the European Union, is rehabilitating Al-Ashar Canal with materials suited to the architectural context of the Old City of Basra.



The bells began their journey from Normandy to Ninewa

Paris, France, 6 December 2022 - UNESCO Director-General, Ms. Audrey Azoulay said: "A lot of emotion yesterday in Normandy, in the Cornille-Havard family bell foundry: the workers have just finished manufacturing the new bells for the Our Lady of the Hour church in Mosul, currently being rebuilt by UNESCO with the United Arab Emirates.

The bell tower of Our Lady of the Hour is a landmark for all communities of Mosul. To bring this church back to life, UNESCO is using traditional techniques and materials. In the same way, we benefit from the know-how of this foundry that has been manufacturing bells since 1865.

In addition to producing bells for countries all over the world, Cornille-Havard also produces the bas-reliefs for the commemorative sites of The American Battle Monuments



Commission, such as the American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, contributing to the memory of the Normandy Landing.

Now the bells will begin their journey from Normandy to Ninewa, from the village of Villedieu-les-Poeles to Mosul. And they will ring again from the bell

tower of the Our Lady of the Hour church by next spring.

I warmly thank the United Arab Emirates, the funder of the work, as well as the Iraqi authorities and the Dominican friars with whom we are working hand in hand for the reconstruction of this church".

Restoration of the Al-Tahera Syriac Catholic Church in Mosul continues

Mosul, 17 December 2022 - One step closer towards reviving Al-Tahera Syriac Catholic Church in Mosul. The central columns of the church are rising again. UNESCO is preserving the church's history by strengthening and reusing the original alabaster column drums that were recovered from under the rubble. The work is being done in partnership with the United Arab Emirates and in cooperation with the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage Nineveh.



DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai visits Erbil Citadel

Erbil, 22 December 2022 – UNESCO was pleased to welcome UN Deputy Special Representative, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, at the World Heritage site of Erbil Citadel to witness firsthand the remarkable achievements that are taking place within project “Support to livelihoods through culture heritage development”, funded by the EU. Guided by the UNESCO Iraq Office Chief of Culture, Junaid Sorosh-Wali, he was impressed with the work UNESCO has been undertaking in partnership with the Kurdish authorities to rehabilitate some of the historical buildings in the Citadel which has suffered from years of neglect. “UNESCO’s work is methodical and professional to ensure the preservation and original construction and character of the remains”, he said.



SMEs in the cultural sector seek assistance in order to recover and develop

Baghdad, 27 December 2022 - As Iraq recovers, SMEs in the cultural sector seek assistance in order to recover and develop. The EDF-Culture Bazaar: Creative Industries Show was organized in partnership with UNESCO as part of the 'Reviving Mosul and Basra Old Cities'. The event presented an opportunity for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) granted under the EDF-C programme to exhibit and showcase, as well as sell their products inside a bazaar. "A magnificent initiative to enhance the Mosulawi strong identification and belonging, as well as a social activity that deserves all of our support and encouragement in order for Mosul's

identity to be restored," Professor Naser Abdulrazaaq stated.

The bazaar was supported by the European Union.



UNESCO and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research discuss Critical thinking and media and information literacy



Baghdad, 27 October 2022 - UNESCO and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research trained 289 student leaders (130 female) from Mosul, Ninewa, Al Hamdaniya, Al Anbar and Al Falujah

universities on Critical Thinking and Media and Information Literacy. The two days training workshop was conducted by the UNESCO trained Master Trainers, from the same Universities in Ninewa and Al Anbar

Governorates. Training focused on further enhancing the knowledge and skills of the university students to critically engage with media content, prevent hate speech, intolerance, extremism, and actively promote peaceful co-existence, especially online. The training is a part of the “Gendered Approach to Preventing Violent Extremism through Education n Iraq” project, funded by the Government of Canada. UNESCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the relevant universities, will ensure the continuity of this training to reach wider number of students through the trained student leaders and Master Trainers.

Cities must take bold action to recover from the triple ‘C’ crises— COVID, climate crises and conflict— in order to reduce growing inequality

Baghdad, 27 October 2022 - This month, UN-Habitat Iraq will be wrapping up the vocational training courses it provided in the conflict-affected cities of Telafar and Baiji.

The courses, funded by the European Union and developed in partnership with the government-run Vocational Training Centres, have focused on developing much needed construction skills and entrepreneurship among unemployed youth. Recent trainees have been offered periods of apprenticeship followed by job opportunities in UN-Habitat projects or local businesses.

By the end of this month, we would have trained over 900 vulnerable men and women in the cities of Mosul, Telafar, Heet, Baiji and Yathrib.



UNICEF, funded by BMZ, trains 180 teaching staff in Basra

Basra, 3 November 2022 - A quality education #ForEveryChild!

UNICEF, funded by Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ), has trained 180 teaching staff in Basra in collaboration with Basra Department of Education.

Thanks to this training, children will learn how to build a business, personal empowerment and active citizenship.



Two months into the implementation of the Refugee Education Integration Policy, UNHCR meets with refugee children, their parents and teachers to discuss its positive impact

Erbil, 14 November 2022 - Today, a delegation from UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency visited Raber Primary School in Kasnazan town, Erbil Governorate, where students from refugee and local communities attend school together.

With the start of the 2022/2023 academic school year, the Ministry of Education (MoE) of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) introduced the Refugee Education Integration Policy (REIP) to support refugee children to access quality, inclusive and sustainable education through the public education system.

The policy aims at strengthening the inclusion and participation of refugees in community life in the KRI; and will be implemented gradually, starting with the first to fourth grades in the current academic year. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has set an example with its landmark decision to welcome refugees into the public education system.

In addition, the MoE recruited more than 400 qualified refugee teachers to help public schools in coping with these additional students. This provides opportunities for these qualified teachers to contribute to the society that welcomed them.

The delegation, led by Mr Jean-Nicolas Beuze, the Representative of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Iraq, visited the school to observe the achievements of this much-welcomed policy.

During his visit, Mr Beuze, along with the UNHCR education team, met with the students as well as with refugees and local parents and qualified refugee

teachers. The discussions provided UNHCR with valuable insights that will help continued support to the MoE as well as refugee parents with a view, in the years to come, to ensure quality education for all refugee children in KRI.

"It is heartening to see refugee students studying and interacting naturally with fellow students from the community hosting them. This positive step towards inclusion paves the way for refugee students to pursue higher education and work opportunities. It will help them lead prosperous lives and contribute to the communities in KRI which welcomed them," said Jean-Nicolas Beuze, the Representative of UNHCR in Iraq. "We thank the people and the Government in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, especially the Minister of Education, who decided to implement this new policy: this completes the remarkable support given to refugees in KRI."

Around 270,000 refugees and asylum-seekers reside in KRI. The first implementation phase of the REIP is targeting grades one to four in the academic year 2022/23, which represent some 30,100 children. From data available to UNHCR's partners in mid-October 2022, the school enrolment rate of refugee children in KRI in grades one to four has seen an increase up to 9%.

UNHCR is working closely with the MoE and education partners to empower students, teachers and parents from refugee communities and facilitate access to quality education for all. UNHCR, in coordination with education partners and the Directorates of Education, provides Kurdish language classes to parents, teachers and students in grades 1 to 4; and invests in school infrastructures.



Refugee Education Integration Policy allows Ahmed to go back to school

Dohuk, 17 November 2022- Arriving in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) in 2012, Ghalib and his family have been living in different areas in Dohuk governorate (Kurdistan Region of Iraq, KR-I) since they arrived from Syria in 2012. After having fled violence in their home country, the family struggled to make ends meet in exile in KR-I. The family of seven children, of whom one is visually impaired and another one with a development delay, started their journey in exile in Dohuk city for seven years and ended up in Domiz refugee camp in 2019. The family moved to the

camp as life outside was too expensive. After moving to Domiz camp, Ghalib tried his best to enroll three of his children into one of the schools in the camp. As his children had been enrolled in public schools in KR-I, they had been learning in the local Kurdish language the Kurdish curriculum while the schools in the camp were still at the time teaching in Arabic. Thus, Ahmed and his two siblings remained out of school for the past three years.

In September 2022, Ghalib was able to re-enroll three of his children in school, thanks to the implementation of the

Refugee Education Integration Policy (REIP) by the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Education. Now Ahmed and his siblings can go to school and learn with their classmate.

"Ahmed was a top student. I felt really upset seeing him out of school and worried about his future. When I learned about the new education policy this year, I did not waste a second to approach the Directorate of Education to obtain all necessary documents and register him at the local public school." – said Ghalib (Ahmed's father).

At Jivan School, Ahmed was the oldest

Refugee Education Integration Policy allows Ahmed to go back to school *(continued)*

of his classmates as he had to start over to make up for the years he did not go to school. The age gap with the other students does not discourage him in any way. He is simply happy to be back in school, again. In addition, he was selected by teachers as a class representative, which made him very proud. "I am excited to be back in school. I really missed flipping pages of textbooks and being with my classmates. I did not know what the future will be like for me and my sister. Coming back to the school really gives us hope." – Ahmad said enthusiastically.

As for Sibar, she had started her first-grade last year in a school with the curriculum taught in Arabic. This year, her teachers speak in Kurdish which she is excited about. "I am happy to study in the language I speak with my family and my friends." – said Sibar.

Globally, UNHCR and partners work closely with the governments to advocate for access to quality education for refugees in the public education system of the country hosting them. The REIP is a successful example, spearheaded by the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Education (MoE). The implementation of the REIP this year ensures that refugee children grade one to four have better opportunities to integrate into the local society. It allows all children to have equal access to quality education, and to be part of the same society by fostering relationships between refugee and host community children who attend school together. Not only benefiting students, the REIP also supports the regularization of qualified Syrian teachers to be entitled to equal benefits as the local teachers – which is a major success as it also helps refugee



make a living and support the educational system that has welcome additional students.

By Jatuporn Cheewasrirungruang, Assc Community-Based Prot Officer and Nicole Teta Nokam, Education Officer/UNHCR Iraq

Back to school – with a smile

Baghdad, 16 November 2022 - Kamal, Raghad, and Ahmed dreamt of one day being able to go to school. Lack of civil documentation prevented it!

They live in Bir Jari in Sinuni, a remote village on the Iraqi-Syrian border where access to civil documentation is extremely difficult.

UNHCR, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, facilitated a mobile mission to Bir Jari, which issued civil documentation to those who needed it.

They are now enrolled in school, and we'll let their bright smiles tell the rest of the story.



200 young unemployed men and women from Talafar district complete 20 vocational training courses

Talafar, 29 November 2022 - UN-Habitat has recently joined its implementing partner Aid Gate Organization AGO in celebrating the graduation of 200 young unemployed men and women from Talafar district who have completed 20 vocational training courses in construction skills and sewing followed by 2 weeks of on-the-job training.

The initiative, delivered in partnership with the Mosul Vocational Training Centre (VTC), was funded by the European Union under its local development programme.

The enthusiasm of the graduates was palpable as they were lauded for their efforts and received their certificates

and tools boxes. For many young men and women trying to access the job market in smaller towns, being able to improve their skills and competences through vocational training courses radically increases their chances to find employment in their field of choice.

In their speeches, the Mayor of Talafar and Mosul's VTC representative promised that they would include the names of the graduates in the database of the Career Seekers portal managed by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.



IOM Iraq coordinates with Qayyarah Directorate of Health to support pre-school health assessments in Jeddah 5 camp for IDPs

Ninewa, 2 December 2022 - Pre-school health assessments for new students is mandatory for registration and enrollment in the first grade of primary school. Without these pre-school health check-ups, students will not be eligible to enroll in school or access education services.

This November, IOM Iraq coordinated with the Qayyarah Directorate of Health to support pre-school health assessments in Ninewa Governorate's Jeddah 5 camp for IDPs. The assessments included screening for weight, height, vision and dental health, and vaccination status. During the checkups, IOM's health team also

delivered key awareness messages to the children on basic hygiene practices. During this two week campaign, IOM conducted health check-ups for a total of 258 students (130 boys and 128 girls).

"At first, I was hesitant about the medical examination, so I didn't encourage my children to participate. However, after the IOM awareness team came and highlighted the importance of the school health campaign, I went to the school with my children and found that the check-up and vaccination services were beneficial for our children's health. Now, I encourage all parents to do the

examination for their children and to get all the necessary vaccines," said one mother of two in Jeddah 5 camp.

This activity was made possible with support from the Government of the Republic of Korea.



ILO, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of KRI partner to develop vocational training for youth in Dohuk



Erbil, 30 November 2022 - The ILO and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government have signed an implementation agreement on Wednesday (November 30), to develop market-relevant vocational training programmes for young host community members, internally displaced persons and refugees in the Governorate of Dohuk.

The programmes will equip young women and men with the needed technical and professional competencies, and life skills to improve their employability and facilitate their transition to decent jobs.

Under the agreement, the ILO will be working directly with the ministry's Vocational Training Centre in Dohuk to design and implement a competency-based training and curricula for vocational training programmes, in selected market-relevant occupations. It will provide capacity-building to the curriculum developers and vocational instructors across the different phases of the training programmes, together with Training of Trainers (ToT) on emerging market technologies targeting vocational instructors in all vocational training centres in KRI.

The initiative is part of efforts under the PROSPECTS Partnership, funded by the Government of the Netherlands. Under PROSPECTS, the ILO is supporting thousands of forcibly displaced persons and host community members to access more and better livelihoods and decent job opportunities through different interventions.

"The support for the Vocational Training Centre in Dohuk will offer new market-relevant vocational training courses such as those in photography, manual sewing, and computerised diagnostic of vehicles, that will equip young people with the skills needed for employment or starting their own businesses," said Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Zakia Syed Saleh.

"Vocational trainings are key in improving young people's employability and income, while ensuring they are well equipped to meet the needs of the labour market," said ILO Country Coordinator for Iraq Maha Kattaa. "Our collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is a positive step in further empowering young women and men from refugee, internally displaced and host communities, through technical and professional

competencies, helping them transition to decent employment" added Kattaa, during the signing ceremony, which was attended by a number of senior officials, including Special Advisor to the Deputy Director General-Policy at ILO, Tine Staermose.

Eight market-relevant occupations were identified by the Vocational Training Centre in Dohuk in the sectors of agriculture, construction, handicraft, service, craft, and related trades. Twenty-three vocational training courses related to these occupations will be implemented, targeting 345 women and men jobseekers, including persons with disabilities, and older siblings of children at risk of child labour from the different communities.

In addition to technical training, trainees will engage in sessions on life skills, Occupational Safety and Health, the Labour Law and Social Security. Those interested in starting their own business will be referred to ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB), designed to support small-scale entrepreneurs to start or grow their businesses. The ILO will also support establishing a number of booths in Sarsink sub-district in the Dohuk Governorate that enable graduates from the vocational training courses to sell their products.

Moreover, the ILO will rehabilitate existing vocational training centre facilities in Dohuk city and Sarsink through the use of its Employment Intensive Approaches. The centres' rehabilitation will increase training capacity in both locations, and improve the inclusiveness of those workshops, by making them accessible for persons with disabilities.

Technical Universities approved to adopt the Bologna Process

Baghdad, 14 December 2022 - UNESCO congratulates the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and thanks H.E. Dr. Naeem Abd Yaser Al-Aboudi for the approval for the Technical Universities to adopt the Bologna Process. H.E. Minister's decision to approve the implementation of Bologna Process and accompanying tools is an important in rebuilding and strengthening the quality of Iraq's higher education.

It has been a great pleasure for UNESCO to cooperate with the MoHESR on the EU funded TVET 2 project and appreciate the commitment and application of the Advisors and Officials at the MoHESR and the Presidents of the Technical Universities and their teams to produce new Bachelor's degree programmes in ICT, Hospitality and tourism and in

Construction. UNESCO looks forward to working

with MoHESR in the roll-out to other Universities in Iraq.



WFP and Iraqi Ministry of Education and Scientific Research launch the “Jousour” youth initiative for digital skills

Baghdad, 22 December 2022 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research today launched the “Jousour” (Bridges) initiative to provide youth with marketable digital and English language skills to boost their employability and enable them to build better livelihoods.

Jousour is a bridge that can connect Iraqi youth with jobs through the pathway of digital skills. It is an extension of WFP's award-winning EMPACT (Empowerment in Action) programme that is already being successfully implemented, since 2016, in Iraq and other countries such as Lebanon, Palestine, Turkey, Colombia, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

The programme was designed by WFP Innovation Accelerator based in Munich focusing on the development of transversal, entrepreneurial and technology skills required to succeed in the digital market. WFP is increasingly leveraging the digital economy to build the resilience of urban, displaced, and vulnerable households. With an internet connection, a device, and sufficient IT skills, young refugees and food-insecure youth can change their lives. EMPACT equips students with in-demand tech skills and matches their newly found talent with IT vacancies in private sector companies and online job marketplaces.

“We're very excited about our

collaboration with the Government of Iraq in scaling up one of our successful projects. The Jousour initiative will help Iraq's youth with marketable skills that build bridges (Jousour) towards a better life,” said WFP Iraq's Country Representative, Mr. Ally Raza Qureshi. “Seeing our partners in the government, the development community, the NGOs and private sector and the media in this ceremony today is a testament to the keen interest of all parties in helping young Iraqi women and men to achieve their dreams and pursue their livelihoods.”

As a result of WFP's ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Jousour initiative will be adopted and implemented by the Government of Iraq on a wider scale in universities and tailored to the Iraq context, with an emphasis on developing a future workforce that is equipped with enhanced digital skills that are in demand. This initiative aims to create solutions that enhance opportunities and contribute towards tackling the challenge of youth unemployment.

Through this initiative, Iraqi youth can prepare for emerging careers, contributing significantly to solving the unemployment challenges. It's a win-win

outcome: young people at risk of hunger find stable jobs and generate life-saving income, and employers can hire



qualified staff to meet their tech needs. Both contribute to a more productive economy and sustainable development. Generous funding from WFP's donors, such as Germany, enabled the launch of this initiative that will tackle unemployment in Iraq, one of the country's serious economic issues facing about 27% of Iraqi youth.

Since its inception in Iraq, EMPACT (Jousour's predecessor) programme has helped over 9,000 young women and men with digital skills and English language lessons. Many of these graduates were able to utilize the skills they learned in creating and finding work opportunities that helped to change their lives.

Vocational training initiative gives families of working children chance to improve skills and employability in Iraq

Dohuk and Zakho, 23 October 2022 (ILO News) - Hevin Mala Ali is a Syrian refugee who fled to Dohuk, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq nine years ago. She recently took part in a vocational training programme specialised in sewing.

During the month-long training, Hevin acquired many new skills; from learning how to sew to writing a CV and numerous life skills. She has also been given a sewing machine to help her set up a small home-based business, which she hopes will generate some income.

Most importantly, Hevin hopes that by providing for her family, her young son will no longer have to work.

“I will try to make use of the sewing machine, and generate an income for myself and my family, so we are not reliant on anyone,” said Hevin.

“My son will no longer have to work on the streets.”

Hevin is one of over 140 women and men - parents and caregivers of working children - who have been enrolled in vocational training programmes aimed at improving their skills and employability in efforts to reduce the pressure on their children to work.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is implementing a project to tackle the worst forms of child labour amongst IDPs, refugees, and vulnerable host communities in Iraq, with the support of the European Regional Development and Protection Programme for Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq (RDPP II).

The project, which is implemented in collaboration with the Kurdistan Save



the Children and Al-Taheer Association for Development, targets vulnerable children in or at risk of child labour.

As part of the response to address the root causes of child labour, the project expanded its support to the families of those children through providing trainings which focus on sewing for women, electric installation and haircutting for men, targeting families in Dohuk and Ninewa governorates.

Khaled Mowafaq Salim is a resident of Dohuk and has just completed his training. “I am now a proper barber and I can work on my own, and rely on myself. I hope that in the future I will be able to set up a small business project so that my children will no longer have to work.”

The families were selected through an ILO-supported Child Labour Monitoring System which was developed to identify working children and ensure their referral to the appropriate services for support.

Through the monitoring system some of the most urgent cases of child labour

were identified, with older siblings of working age and caretakers targeted through skills development and income generation activities, such as those which took place recently.

The trainings ensured that participants were given information on career guidance, Occupational Safety and Health and Social Security – key areas which the ILO focuses on to promote and mainstream Decent Work Principle, with the aim to increase their employability.

For Hevin, Khaled and the other families, setting up a small-scale business is challenging. Yet, giving the participants tool kits and machinery will help them kick-start their projects.

“I can now do this work from home and at the same time support my children and family,” said Siham Mohammed Hassan, whose children were selling water on the streets. “I hope that my children will continue to go to school and have a good future, with the support of this profession that I learned here.”

UNDP, UNFPA, and Government of Iraq empower youth to achieve Sustainable Development Goals

Erbil, 27 October 2022 – Today, the United Nations Development Programme Iraq (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have signed an agreement to jointly support the Government of Iraq in assessing the status of youth development in Iraq toward strengthening youth-focused policies, programmes, and budgets.

The Joint Cooperation Framework (JCF) will be implemented in cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Planning to ensure national ownership, effective partnership, and coordination, including cooperation with other

relevant Iraqi government ministries. The project will begin in January 2023 and end in December 2024.

With a focus on adapting youth development index methodology to the Iraqi context, the project includes an in-depth analysis to identify the opportunities and challenges at each dimension of youth development in Iraq, which will form a basis to tailor policies and programmes to progress or regression of youth development as needed in various areas.

According to the Central Statistical Organization of Iraq, around 33% of the population in Iraq is between 10 and 24

years old, and the number of young people in Iraq is expected to reach 17.3 million by 2031. Ensuring accurate data on youth development at the governorate level will facilitate policy dialogue on youth engagement in reaching the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in Iraq.

“Addressing the needs of youth is an absolute priority for stability, prosperity, and the long-term future of Iraq. The UN is working with the government to empower youth as they are our best hope to build a more peaceful future,” said Resident

UNDP, UNFPA, and Government of Iraq empower youth to achieve Sustainable Development Goals *(continued)*

Coordinator Ghulam Isaczai, adding “We simply will not be able to end poverty, ensure gender equality, reverse climate change, and achieve the SDGs by 2030 if we fail to empower young people in all their yearning to create a better life for Iraq.”

“Monitoring the progress of development factors related to Iraq’s growing youth population is vital to implement actions that will benefit both the burgeoning youth population, and Iraq’s progress to achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. This agreement is beneficial for all parties involved, towards inclusive progress in Iraq,” emphasized UNDP Iraq Resident Representative Zena Ali-Ahmad.

“The young people of Iraq are a valuable resource for the country’s sustainable development. However,

they require all stakeholders’ support to fulfil their aspirations. UNFPA is proud to partner with UNDP to assist the ministry of planning and the governorates in building a reliable

database on youth development to ensure better policies and programmes for youth empowerment,” Dr. Rita Columbia, UNFPA Representative stated.



Iraqi youth identify need for greater support on entrepreneurship

The International Trade Centre (ITC) conducted the Iraq National Youth Entrepreneurship Barometer

Baghdad, 27 October 2022 - The International Trade Centre (ITC) conducted the Iraq National Youth Entrepreneurship Barometer to identify the challenges that youth face in setting up an enterprise. The survey was also instrumental in assessing the youth’s perception of the business environment in the country.

The findings and recommendations of the Barometer were presented at the ITC Youth Workshop held in Baghdad. The workshop was organized through the European Union funded “Strengthening the agricultural and agri-food value chain and improving trade policy in Iraq” (SAAVI), implemented by the International Trade Centre. The Barometer was produced jointly with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

More than 25 youth entrepreneurs, representatives from ministries, key organizations and associations attended the workshop to discuss the results of the Barometer.

Local stakeholders were introduced to the next steps in addressing the challenges at the workshop.

Ministry representatives including the Assistant General Manager for the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Faisal Kadhim, and the Directorate of



Vocational Education for the Ministry of Education, Ms. Aula Hashim Al-Obaidi attended the workshop.

More than 600 youth across five governorates (Baghdad, Basra, Ninewa, Anbar, Kirkuk), participated in the Barometer, sharing their views on issues affecting youth entrepreneurship. 79% considered entrepreneurship to be a desirable career choice. However, 92% had never received support from an incubator, an accelerator or a youth association. 68% of respondents identified access to finance as a key hurdle in setting up a business.

The Youth Barometer findings underscored the need to support youth by providing access to participatory networks for utilizing training

opportunities and building their capacity as entrepreneurs. This includes technical assistance, peer support and guidance, access to experts, and finance.

Mr. David Cordobes, Head of Youth & Trade Programme at ITC, opening the workshop said, “Today the SAAVI project takes another step forward for supporting youth by presenting the first report of the Iraq Youth Barometer. This bi-annual stock taking aims to gain a greater understanding of how youth perceive the business ecosystem. This first report will serve as a key guide in addressing critical challenges to youth participation in the agri-business value chain. The activities, which are initiated today will have far-reaching implications on the

Iraqi youth identify need for greater support on entrepreneurship *(continued)*

Iraqi business landscape and the capacities of youth and influence the activities to be implemented under SAAVI.”

Key recommendations include:

Government, donors and development partners should work with financial institutions to provide affordable and accessible financial services with lowered requirements specifically for youth, such as reduced collateral, to access finances for their businesses.

Clarify government focal points, regulations and laws surrounding registration, business incorporation, licenses, etc. and promote awareness raising campaigns to share this information with aspiring entrepreneurs at a local level.

Business ecosystem support systems for youth in the form of training,

mentorship, information exchange, and internship and apprenticeship opportunities need to be fostered

The private sector should develop links with secondary schools, universities, and TVET programs to improve knowledge about entrepreneurship opportunities and better inform skills in demand in certain industries.

Raise awareness on economic opportunities for youth and women along the agricultural value chain and promote local and national role models embodying the realization of entrepreneurial aspirations and ambitions, together with the private sector and education institutions.

The ITC is also setting up Young Entrepreneurs (YE!) Chapter in Iraq to support youth entrepreneurs to access

networks, experts, and technical assistance to build scalable agri-business ventures in consideration of the findings. The Chapter will serve as an immediate step towards addressing the challenges highlighted by youth in establishing a business.

ITC will collaborate with Oxfam Iraq Response Innovation Lab (IRIL) to support the expansion of this Chapter in Iraq. Activities for youth entrepreneurs to expand their skills and their access to networks with the Ye! Chapter will commence in November 2022.

The IRIL is currently setting up the workplan for the coming year and has opened a call for the Ye! Advisor to ITC for Iraq.

Marking World Children’s Day, UNICEF calls for active youth participation and engagement on climate change and early childhood development by appointing its first two Youth Advocates in Iraq

Baghdad, 20 November 2022 – On World Children’s Day, UNICEF in Iraq has appointed the country’s first two Youth Advocates, Tuqa AlBakri and Mujtaba Alshawi, as Early Childhood Development and Climate Change Youth Advocates respectively.

In the appointment ceremony, Tuqa and Mujtaba signed their appointment with Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq. Both young people will advance two key UNICEF priorities, early childhood development and climate justice, by mobilizing and supporting other young people working and advocating for these issues.

“The appointment of Tuqa and Mujtaba is another step forward in raising young people’s voices on key priorities for children and young people of Iraq which require immediate action, in line with UNICEF’s commitment to promoting meaningful participation of young people in Iraq,” said SenGupta. “The latest UNICEF report on extreme heatwaves and temperatures for Iraq in coming years confirms the urgent need for climate action today. In addition, new generations need stronger early childhood programmes to develop and thrive – we must not forget, early years are the most important in the life of a child!”

“On UNICEF’s Global Day of Action for children and young people, we much appreciate the efforts of the Iraqi



Government towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,” said SenGupta. “UNICEF remains committed to supporting the Government to realize the rights of every child in the country.”

Tuqa, 20 years old, is a medical technology student in a university in Baghdad. Actively working as a member of the UNICEF-supported Young People Advisory Group since April 2021, she is a passionate advocate for child rights, especially the rights of the youngest children.

“I am honoured to be appointed as Early Childhood Development Youth Advocate especially marking World Children’s Day,” says Tuqa. “This appointment provides me with the

opportunity to advance the rights of younger children, whose voices remain unheard.”

Mujtaba, 20 years old, is a dental school student in Misan University. As a member of the Young People’s Advisory Group, he has been advocating for climate action and the environment at national and international levels. In September 2022, Mujtaba represented Iraq’s youth at the United Nations General Assembly, where he met with senior officials including UNICEF Executive Director, Catherine Russell, and Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Climate Action and Just Transition, Selwin Hart and called for climate justice for young

Marking World Children’s Day, UNICEF calls for active youth participation and engagement on climate change ... (continued)

people in Iraq.
 “Today’s appointment provides me with a greater opportunity to raise the voices of Iraqi youth around climate action and justice,” said Mujtaba. “By delivering on climate change commitments and climate adaptation, we can make communities more resilient and ensure a more advanced and sustainable future for every child and young person in Iraq.”
 On World Children’s Day, UNICEF is also marking the day in Baghdad by

turning blue the Al-Tahrir Square and Save the Culture Statue in Baghdad; children taking over for a day the key positions in Iraq, such as Toyota CEO, and with social media messages from key influencers, such as the captain of the national football team, Ali Adnan, to reimagine a better future for children.
 World Children’s Day commemorations organized by UNICEF will conclude with an event on November 21 in Baghdad, in coordination with the

Child Welfare Commission, to highlight children’s success stories and stress the importance of the Early Childhood Development Strategy.
 UNICEF seizes World Children’s Day, as an opportunity, to remind the Government of Iraq of its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Iraq ratified on June 1994.



United Nations in Iraq celebrated World Children’s Day



Baghdad, 20 November 2022 – UNICEF turned Baghdad blue for World Children’s Day. Al Hurrya Monument in Tahrir Square and the Saving Iraqi Culture Monument went blue for this occasion.
 On World Children Day Yousef, 10, took over the role of Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq. He met with the staff and called on the government and UNICEF to hear the voices of children.

He promised to advocate for a non-violent culture in his school, supported by UNICEF and funded by the German Government (BMZ).
 I n c o m m e m o r a t i n g #WorldChildrensDay in Dohuk, a group of children visited UNICEF field office. They engaged with UNICEF team who were dressed in blue in support of child rights.
 U N - H a b i t a t c e l e b r a t e d #WorldChildrenDay in Telafar, a city

located in the north of Iraq that suffered very visibly the brunt of the occupation and conflict with ISIL.
 Here the team has managed to transform a forgotten pocket of land full of debris and garbage into a lively garden for ladies to enjoy and spend time with their children enjoying the new playground.
 In Mosul children can celebrate World Children Day in the recently inaugurated Al Yarmouk Park whose opening they eagerly waited for.
 In line with this year’s theme “Inclusion, for every child”, the children playground areas have been designed to create a truly inclusive and embracing play experience to meet the developmental needs of the child by intentionally providing opportunities for physical, cognitive, communicative, social/emotional, and sensory development.
 These initiatives were organized under the European Union funded programme “Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development”.



International Volunteers Day celebrated in Iraq

Baghdad, 5 December 2022 - The International Volunteers Day (IVD) is commemorated on 05 December every year and United Nations in Iraq would like to thank all UN Volunteers within our respective entities for their tireless commitment to drive positive change in Iraq.

In 2022, the UN Country Team in Iraq mobilized 156 UN Volunteers across 8 UN Agencies and UNAMI (among them 54 nationals, experts, specialists, youth, community volunteers) and we hope we will continue year after year to promote the spirit of volunteerism with

an emphasis made on the IVD theme of this year: solidarity through volunteering – Together, Act Now.

When people are encouraged to get involved in solving problems, the solutions are more likely to be feasible and more lasting. For the generations to come, people must take responsibility for the changes needed now. Recognizing, encouraging, and supporting volunteerism are essential for a more just future for all.

We aim to recognize and to thank all UN Volunteers in Iraq for being the front line in implementation!



Ministry of Youth and Sports and UNICEF jointly announce the forthcoming online National Youth Volunteering Platform, marking the International Volunteer Day

Baghdad, 5 December 2022 – The forthcoming online National Youth Volunteering Platform was announced today by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) and UNICEF and will be operational in coming weeks. The announcement came as part of the events marking International Volunteer Day, under the theme Solidarity through Volunteering. The online platform will follow the offline structure launched by MoYS and UNICEF in 2021.

The online platform, to be operational at Federal level, will be ready in coming weeks and is part of the overall engagement of UNICEF with MoYS to ensure a meaningful volunteering programme is available in Iraq.

Over 350 young volunteers, out of the almost 5,000 young volunteers engaged country-wide as part of the offline National Youth Volunteering Platform since its launch last year, carried out various activities in Abu Nauwas Street in central Baghdad, with the presence of the Minister of Youth and Sports, HE Ahmed Mohammad Al Mubaraq'a, and the UNICEF Deputy Representative, Ken Legins. The activities, ranging from cleaning the streets to greening the environment, highlighted the power of young people's collective action to drive positive



change through volunteerism.

“We are committed to supporting the National Volunteering Programme to encourage unity and urgent action and promote volunteerism among young people, but also to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of young volunteers in Iraq,” said HE Ahmed Mohammad Al Mubaraq'a, Minister of Youth and Sports.

“Young volunteers are the most effective changemakers. They have a unique power to galvanize their peers around issues they are passionate about,” said Ken Legins, UNICEF Deputy Representative in Iraq. “UNICEF remains committed to supporting and promoting the development and participation, including volunteering of young people, because they are making a difference for every child.”

“Since I joined the National Volunteering Programme, I am actively and systematically contributing to my community, but also building my self-

esteem,” said Aya Al-Saidy, 23, a young volunteer.

The International Volunteer Day is about togetherness to act now. It aims at galvanizing the power of young people to work together to advance the rights of children and young people, especially the most impoverished. It is a means to raise the voices of young volunteers to the attention of decision makers, and showcase volunteers in action, and the contributions they make in the society.

UNICEF works with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Government of Iraq, as well as with the Ministry of Culture and Youth of the Kurdistan Regional Government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to promote young people's civic engagement, especially the most impoverished. This is carried out through empowering young people aged 10-24, to design and lead civic engagement initiatives in their own communities on a voluntary basis.

Volunteer's story: Sarwah Qader, Iraq

Northern Bahr El Ghazal, 5 December 2022 – Ms. Sarwah Qader from Iraq is currently serving for peace in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). A Gender Affairs Officer, Sarwah convenes and connects with community members every day to ensure that the voices of women are fully included in peacebuilding. In this short conversation, Sarwah tells us why her job is so meaningful.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I have grown up with stories about war. Being from Iraq, conflict is nothing new to us. So, from an early age I was always committed to building peace because I had firsthand experience of what the alternative looked like, especially the devastating toll on women and girls. UNMISS is my first UN Peacekeeping mission and I've also worked with several international nongovernmental organizations.

Could you tell us a bit more about your job and the impact you have on the ground every day?

Being a Gender Affairs Officer, I am an advocate for equal rights for women every day. On the ground in Aweil, I usually don't sit in an office but am in the midst of communities raising awareness on the need for women to be fully included in politics, governance and decision-making. South Sudan has an overwhelmingly patriarchal structure and though women constitute 50 per cent of society, their voices are often not heard or counted.

My work ensures that we trickle down the understanding among entire communities—women, men and children—that sustainable peace is



only possible if women are fully empowered to participate in taking decisions that impact them directly. With South Sudan fast approaching elections, equal rights for women are critical, I believe.

The other important arc I work on is preventing and ending violence against women and affecting behavioral change slowly but surely by lobbying for an end to harmful cultural practices such as early or forced marriages for girls.

What do you like most about being a UN Volunteer?

Being a UN Volunteer has enriched my own practice as a gender equality advocate. My skills, experience and time have been valued by UNMISS and I have been lucky enough to work on programmatic issues that lie at the heart of what we're trying to achieve as the world's largest UN Peacekeeping mission – upholding human rights and shoring up support for gender equality so that peace can be durable. It's a cause larger than myself.

What's one thing you have learned since starting your mission?

I think the most important lesson I've learnt is that you must practice what

you preach. If you interact with community members, you must be authentic. I believe in equality, and I believe that women and girls are anchors of peace across the world. I think it is my own conviction that has allowed me to be an effective bridge between host populations and UNMISS. It's been a steep but rewarding learning curve.

Do you have a message for other young people who want to follow your career path?

There's nothing more fulfilling than serving for peace. I strongly urge all young people to join the UN Volunteer programme and, if they are lucky, they will be deployed to a UN Peacekeeping mission. It's not easy, but you truly make a tangible difference in improving people's lives as a peacekeeper.

Any message for the people of South Sudan?

My message to the people of South Sudan is to encourage them to uphold human rights, including the rights of women. My dearest wish is to see this rich and vibrant country have a peaceful, prosperous future.

Text and photos by UNMISS.

UNAMI celebrates World Arabic Language Day

Baghdad, 18 December 2022 - UN Arabic Language Day is observed annually on December 18. The event was established by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2010 seeking "to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity as well as to promote equal use of all six of its official working languages throughout the organization". December 18 was chosen as the date for the Arabic language as it is "the day in 1973 when the General Assembly approved Arabic as an official UN language".

Watch the video at <https://youtu.be/TiSSJKAxXHA>
Video produced by the UNAMI Public Information Office / Sarmad Al-Safy in cooperation with UNICEF Iraq.

