

UNAMI Herald

Volume 10, Issue 1

January—February 2023



Iraq must seize 'brief window of opportunity' to turn tide of instability

New York, 2 February 2023 - Iraq's political class must urgently seize the current brief window of opportunity to break chronic cycles of instability, the UN Special Representative told the Security Council on Thursday. Highlighting recent achievements and challenges ahead following a year of tensions and political discord, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert said the hope is that the confirmation of the new Government will provide an opportunity to structurally address the many pressing issues.

'Glass half full'

"Effecting meaningful change will take time, as this can only happen through structural change that requires systemic socio-economic reform, stronger institutions and better governance at all levels," she said. "No one can expect Iraq's challenges to be resolved overnight, but I'd also like to see the glass half full."

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert also heads the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), a special political mission established in 2003. Its current mandate includes providing advice, support and assistance to the Government and people of Iraq on advancing inclusive political dialogue and reconciliation.

Joint responsibilities

"The legacy of the past and the many challenges of the present will take time; no Government can go it alone," she said, recalling the tumultuous past two decades, including the 2003 bombing of UN headquarters in Baghdad that killed 22 and injured 150 people only days after UNAMI was established.

"It is of the greatest importance that political parties and other actors prioritize the country's interest above all else," she said. "At the end of the day, it is and remains a joint responsibility."

New Government's achievements

She said that in the first three



months in office, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani has shown commitment. The new Government is tackling the most pressing challenges, including poor public service delivery and high levels of unemployment.

Efforts are also under way to improve public service delivery and fight insidious systemic corruption, including on the recovery of stolen funds and related investigations, she said. She expressed strong support for the Prime Minister's endeavour to make the country a platform for dialogue and investment.

Systemic change is vital

Accountability and managing public expectations are essential, she said, adding that systemic change will prove vital.

"Overpromising and underdelivering can have dire consequences," she cautioned, "and sugar-coating the situation will only add to feelings of frustration and disillusion."

Challenges ahead

Drawing attention to areas of concern, she said delays in much-needed economic reform are palpable, adding every-day pressure on the Iraqi people. Human rights must also be upheld.

"Genuine commitment to human rights is pivotal to any country, including Iraq," she continued. "Silencing, obstructing, dismissing or undermining constructive criticism tarnishes the image of the State and erodes public trust."

Instead, encouraging public discourse enables institutions to flourish and adapt, she added.

Attention is also needed in other vital areas, from significant environmental challenges to the transition from a humanitarian response to development.

Turning to Baghdad-Erbil relations, she said the Iraq Government is committed to resolving differences, including introducing oil and gas legislation. However, swift compromises on outstanding fiscal, administrative, security and electoral disagreements are urgently needed to bridge divisions among ruling parties in the Kurdistan Region. The parties "cannot afford to lose more time," she said.

Recalling her previous Council briefing in October, the Special Representative reiterated that the window to act on several key issues will only be open for a short time. In that vein, she encouraged the Government to take the necessary steps.

In this edition ...

Our partnership with Iraq continues to grow as we shift from humanitarian assistance towards development solutions, with durable solutions as a platform to advance the shift

OpEd by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai

Baghdad, 12 February 2023 - Iraq is emerging from years of instability and conflict, and there is every reason to celebrate that with pride. My tenure in this country has only begun recently, but I have already witnessed significant progress, thanks to the resilience of the people who have made great strides towards paving the way to a more peaceful and stable nation after years of untold hardships. *More on page 36.*

UNDP supports community resilience and Prevention of Violent Extremism across 30 villages in Ninewa

Erbil, 9 February 2023 - The United Nations Development Programme Iraq (UNDP) in partnership with local organization Al-Tahreer Association for Development (TAD), has completed a project to support community resilience and Prevention of Violent Extremism across 30 villages in Ninewa. Many of the 30 villages, within the districts of Ba'aj and Hatra, were used as terrorist bases during conflict with ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and community members who fled the area have since returned. *More on page 10.*

Iraq celebrates first International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism

Baghdad, 12 February 2023 - Today, the United Nations marks the first ever International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when conducive to terrorism. In December 2022, the General Assembly designated this international day to advocate the dangers of violent extremism and the international cooperation required to prevent it. The designation itself was introduced by the representative of Iraq, emphasizing how Iraq has suffered at the hands of terrorist groups. *More on page 11.*

The Ministry of Interior and UNESCO agree to implement programmes to regulate the Internet and Information sector and combat digital crimes

Baghdad, 26 January 2023 - The Ministry of Interior and UNESCO Iraq Office agreed to cooperate in implementing a number of activities and programmes that will contribute in regulating the Internet and Information sector and combating digital crimes. *More on page 24.*

New paper trails: expanding access to civil documentation for children in Iraq

Ninewa, 24 January 2023 - During the conflict with Daesh, thousands of families were displaced from Iraq's Ninewa Governorate. Many of them lost important documents - such as birth, marriage and nationality certificates - and, as a result, still face difficulties accessing basic services. For children without birth certificates, this reality is particularly complex, as they are required to go through an age determination process prior to securing their documentation. Securing the birth certificate and in turn the national ID is a prerequisite for children to be enrolled in schools. In Ninewa, this is no easy feat. *More on page 31.*

ISIL terror threat still high and increasing in conflict zones, Security Council hears

New York, 9 February 2023 - Despite leadership losses and diminished cash reserves, the extremist group ISIL, or Da'esh, continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, the UN counter-terrorism chief warned on Thursday in New York.

Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov briefed the Security Council where he presented the latest UN report on the terrorist organization, underlining the need for concerted global action. Mr. Voronkov began by focusing on the plight of victims and survivors of terrorism worldwide.

More on page 5.

UNAMI Herald is published bi-monthly by the Public Information Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq.

PIO Director: Samir Ghattas

Editor-in-Chief: Ivan Djordjevic

Editorial Board: Samir Ghattas, Jean El-Alam, Ivan Djordjevic, Laila Shamji, Celia Thompson, Sarmad Al-Safy.

Photos: UNAMI PIO, UNHCR, UNCHR, UNICEF, IOM, OCHA, UNFPA, WHO, UNESCO, UNOPS, UN Habitat, UN Photo, UN Women, UNIDO, UNMAS, UNDP, WFP and as credited.

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

SRSJ Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert: “It is of the greatest importance that political parties and other actors prioritize the country’s interest above all else. It is and remains a joint responsibility.”

New York/Baghdad, 2 February 2023 – On its 9253rd meeting United Nations Security Council deliberated situation concerning Iraq.

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

“Madam President,
Distinguished members of the Security Council,

In May 2003, nearly 20 years ago, the Council adopted Resolution 1483 to chart a way forward for post-Saddam Iraq. Sergio Vieira de Mello was appointed as the Secretary General’s Special Representative, for four months, to help set up UN operations at their early stages.

At the time, he stated: The people of Iraq, as we know only too well, have suffered and have suffered enough. It is time that we all [...] come together to ensure that this suffering comes to an end, and that Iraqi people take their destiny into their own hands [...].

That same year, mid-August 2003, the Council established the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, UNAMI. A few days later Sergio de Mello and 21 colleagues lost their lives in an attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. Another 150 colleagues were wounded in the blast. And while they fell victim to the violence they were committed to stop, our work continued. But yes, 2023 will surely be a year of remembrance – in many ways. And I would like to use this opportunity to thank the successive Iraqi governments for the constructive working relationship that they have maintained with the United Nations throughout these two decades.

Madam President,

In the past 4 years, I often said that Iraq’s situation could hardly be judged without placing it in the context of Iraq’s history as decades of trouble continue to impact the present. And this still holds true today. Iraq’s challenges did not arise overnight. And dealing with both the legacy of the past and the many challenges of the present it will take time – no matter who is in the driving seat. It should also be underlined that no government can go it alone. In other words: it is of the greatest importance that political



Photo: UNAMI PIO / Sarmad Al-Safy

parties and other actors prioritize the country’s interest above all else. At the end of the day, it is and remains a joint responsibility.

Now – as any government will require both time and broad political support to move Iraq forward, let me emphasize the importance of managing public expectations. Overpromising and underdelivering can have dire consequences. And sugar-coating the situation will only add to feelings of frustration and disillusion.

Madam President,

Some three months ago, the Council of Representatives confirmed Iraq’s new President and Government – ending more than a year of tensions, political discord, and power play. Three out of 23 cabinet ministers are women. Needless to say: we eagerly await a further increase of women in decision-making positions. Looking ahead, and as I explained, no one can expect Iraq’s challenges to be resolved overnight, but I’d also like to see the glass half full.

In my most recent briefing to the Council, last October, I emphasized (not for the first time) that, since 2003, too many opportunities to conduct meaningful and much-needed reform have been wasted, while stressing that pervasive corruption is a major root cause of Iraqi dysfunctionality. I made it clear that it is past time to act on several key issues, and that the window to do so is only brief.

In its first three months in office, Iraq’s new government – under the lead of Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani – showed its commitment to tackle the most pressing challenges facing the country, including endemic corruption, poor public service

delivery and high levels of unemployment.

On the fight against corruption, the government has taken a number of important steps, including with regards to the recovery of stolen funds and the investigation of corruption allegations.

And I can only encourage the Iraqi government to persevere, as those who stand to lose will undoubtedly seek to hinder these efforts. But if Iraq is to build a system that serves the need of society instead of serving a closed community of collusion, then ensuring accountability across the spectrum, is absolutely essential. This means giving no respite to those who extract state resources for private and/or other interests. Moreover, systemic change will prove vital. I spelled it out so many times: throughout the years Iraq’s corruption turned into a system – that is, going beyond a collection of individuals or a series of events.

Ongoing government efforts to improve public service delivery should also be acknowledged. That said, and being mindful of managing public expectations, I would like to recall that effecting meaningful change (that positively impacts the lives of all citizens) it will take time – as this can only happen through structural change that requires systemic, socio-economic reform, stronger institutions and better governance at all levels.

Also, and there is no denying it, delays in much-needed and long-awaited economic, fiscal and financial reform are palpable throughout the country. Most recently, it has been concerning to see the increase in the exchange rate on the parallel market adding to the pressure on everyday Iraqi women and men. On the short-

SRSJ Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert: “It is of the greatest importance that political parties and other actors... (continued)”

term, it is obviously essential that the federal budget is passed ASAP. A further delay will only result in worsening the situation due to the well-known spending constraints.

Now - on this topic, I would like to (yet again) caution against measures that will result in further bloating Iraq's public service. Despite the pressing need to address high levels of unemployment, Iraq can simply not afford to add to the burden of an already extremely inflated public sector. And in a related observation, let me reiterate that oil dependency leaves the Iraqi economy more vulnerable to external shocks. Iraq should thus prioritize sustainable economic diversification, including the development of a value-adding, employment-generating private sector.

Madam President,

There are of course many other areas that require the immediate attention of Iraq's government. From the significant environmental challenges; the importance of energy independence; the continued returns of Iraqi nationals from Al-Hol and other camps and prisons in North-eastern Syria; the need to swiftly implement the Sinjar Agreement; the long-awaited finalization of the Kirkuk-dialogue; the transition from humanitarian response towards durable solutions and development; to issues such as constitutional amendments and substantive progress on security sector reform - to name but a few.

I will certainly report on these issues in future briefings but there's one more area I would like to mention now. That is, the protection and promotion of human rights, including accountability for human rights violations and abuses. To again quote Sergio Vieira de Mello - before he flew out to Baghdad in 2003: I believe, he said, that respect for human rights is the only solid foundation for durable peace and for development. In line with these words, let me here emphasise that silencing, obstructing, dismissing or undermining constructive criticism achieves one thing only: it tarnishes the image of the State and erodes public trust. Whereas encouraging public discourse enables institutions to flourish and to adapt. Needless to say: genuine commitment to human rights is pivotal to any country, including Iraq.



Madam President, turning to Baghdad-Erbil relations. The government programme expressed commitment to resolve outstanding issues between the federal and the Kurdistan Regional Governments, including legislating the oil and gas law within six months.

Some initial steps have been taken to this end, including a number of high-level visits and the creation of joint technical committees. Dynamics were generally described as positive, and that is a good thing. Yet a structured dialogue, which remains of great importance to institutionalize relations, such dialogue is still missing. And crucially, these consultations are yet to translate into concrete agreements, including, as mentioned, on the pressing issue of the 2023 federal budget.

All things considered, it is our hope that the recent ruling of the Federal Supreme Court does not stymie ongoing negotiations on the budget. We wish instead that both Baghdad and Erbil remain incentivised to reach a lasting arrangement so as to move away from constant crisis management.

Zooming in on the Kurdistan Region. In my previous briefings, I outlined the risks of political infighting. Regrettably, divisions among ruling parties in the Kurdistan Region continue to have adverse effects on its institutions and its people. It even translated into one coalition party boycotting the cabinet sessions since October.

Last Saturday, a meeting of the parties in Sulaymaniyah offered a glimmer of hope. While this meeting in itself was an important message, I cannot but emphasize the need to act quickly and pragmatically. To be clear: the Kurdistan Region's political

parties cannot afford to lose more time. Hence, swift compromises on outstanding fiscal, administrative, security and electoral disagreements are urgently needed.

On Iraq's external relations, Madam President, I am pleased to report that the Iraqi government continued its policy of openness and balance, based on mutual interests and also respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and good neighbourliness. And as I stated during the “Baghdad II” conference in Amman on 20 December, I wholeheartedly support Iraq's Prime Minister in his endeavour to make Iraq a platform for dialogue and investment. That said, Iraq continues to face repeated and destabilising violations of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

To state the obvious: messaging by strikes does nothing but recklessly heighten tensions, kill people and destroy property. Again, established diplomatic instruments are at everybody's disposal, also when neighbours are faced with perceived national security threats. For Iraq to further bolster its domestic stability, it is incumbent on us all to help foster an enabling environment.

Madam President,

Anticipating the next speaker, let me just reiterate that Iraq remains one of the most explosive ordnance-contaminated countries in the world. Nationally-led clearance efforts, including national budget allocations, are truly commendable. However, the sector as a whole remains underfunded. Consequently, Iraqi civilians pay the price. In 2022, explosive remnants of war continued to be the leading cause of child casualties in Iraq and caused overall one third of civilian casualties. I can

SRSJ Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert: “It is of the greatest importance that political parties and other actors ... (continued)”

therefore only encourage the international community to continue its support.

Madam President, allow me to turn to the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property - including the national archives. We, of course, highly welcome the steps taken by the Government of Iraq to encourage more witnesses to come forward. We also commend the continuous cooperation of the Members of the Tripartite Commission on the provision of satellite imagery. Both

are vital to efforts for the identification of other potential burial sites.

In conclusion, Madam President, I would like to convey both a sense of hope, and a sense of urgency. The hope is that the confirmation of Iraq's new government will provide an opportunity to structurally address the many pressing issues facing the country and its people. The urgency is for Iraq's political class to seize the brief window of opportunity it is awarded, and to finally lift the country out of recurring cycles of

instability and fragility.

Lastly, allow me to congratulate (once more) Iraq's national football team for its recent Arabian Gulf Cup victory. It is worth noting that Iraq hosted the tournament for the first time since 1979 – after decades of isolation, violence, strife, and tensions. In my humble opinion, a great testimony to Iraq's return to normality and its potential to rally not only the nation but also regional partners around a common and positive objective.

Explosive ordnance remains a major obstacle to stabilization efforts and development

New York/Baghdad, 2 February 2023 – On its 9253rd meeting United Nations Security Council deliberated situation concerning Iraq.

Also briefing the Council, civil society representative Dr. Ahmed, of the Iraqi Health and Social Care Organization, said explosive ordnance remains a major obstacle to stabilization efforts and development. Indeed, Iraq is one of the most ordnance contaminated countries in the world. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reports that Iraq has approximately 2,995 square kilometres of recorded contaminated areas.

“The Mine Ban Convention obligations will not be met in the current conditions,” Dr. Ahmed said. Citing recent deadly incidents, he pointed to an International Organization for Migration (IOM) report that 1.2 million Iraqis are still displaced, with a slow return rate, as many say they cannot return to their homes due to ordnance contamination.

Rethinking and planning programmes with partners must be aligned with national efforts and



expedited, he said. Currently, mine-action plans completed in mid-2022 are still awaiting the Government's endorsement.

Lately, due to various factors, donor funds are dwindling, threatening ongoing efforts, he said. New priorities for donors in the post-COVID-19 era exist, however, Iraq still faces enormous challenges. As such, national non-governmental organizations have been deeply affected and their survival is really at stake.

Civil society needs support

Civil society needs support to contribute to a functioning democratic system, he said. Localization must be about ownership and empowerment, requiring effective planning and ensure strategic factors are integrated in programmes.

The development of mine-action programmes is not a journey, but a destination, he said, emphasizing that the stark gap between rhetoric and action must be addressed.

By UN News.

ISIL terror threat still high and increasing in conflict zones, Security Council hears

New York, 9 February 2023 - Despite leadership losses and diminished cash reserves, the extremist group ISIL, or Da'esh, continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, the UN counter-terrorism chief warned on Thursday in New York. Under-Secretary-General Vladimir

Voronkov briefed the Security Council where he presented the latest UN report on the terrorist organization, underlining the need for concerted global action.

Mr. Voronkov began by focusing on the plight of victims and survivors of terrorism worldwide.

“Because beyond the headlines and behind the numbers, there are numerous people and communities who were affected by the heinous crimes of Da'esh and other terrorist groups and individuals,” he said.

Still a concern

The Da'esh threat remains high and

ISIL terror threat still high and increasing in conflict zones, Security Council hear *(continued)*

has increased in and around conflict zones where the group and its affiliates are active, he reported.

Their expansion in central and southern Africa, and the Sahel, remains particularly worrying.

“Previous reports raised concerns over an increased risk of attacks in non-conflict areas by unaffiliated lone actors and small cells inspired by Da’esh as pandemic-related restrictions eased,” he told ambassadors.

“While this has not materialized over this reporting period, the level of terrorist activity continues to be a concern to Member States.”

Tech-savvy terrorists

Da’esh also continues to use the Internet, social media and video games for propaganda and recruitment purposes, along with new and emerging technologies, such as unmanned aerial systems, or drones. Meanwhile, scores of people affiliated with the extremists, including children, remain in camps and detention facilities in northeast Syria.

Mr. Voronkov drew attention to the dire situation, warning against the far-reaching consequences and slow pace of repatriations.

Foreign fighter fears

He emphasized that the foreign terrorist fighter issue is not exclusive to Iraq and Syria, but a global challenge, with implications that go beyond accountability and prosecution for crimes.

Fighters with battlefield experience who are relocated to their homelands, or to third countries, further compound the threat.

“As noted in the report, terrorist attacks committed by such individuals have proven to be particularly lethal compared to those committed by purely homegrown terrorists,” he said.



“There are also instances of some radicalized women associated with Da’esh who reinvent themselves as recruiters, indoctrinating others, and, in particular, children.”

Rooted in rights

Mr. Voronkov outlined three recommendations to address the persistent threat posed by Da’esh and its affiliates.

He called for multidimensional approaches, with “more complementarity” between security responses and preventive measures. These strategies must be gender-sensitive and anchored in international law and human rights. Finally, given the increased threat from conflict zones, he stressed the need to better understand the complex relationship between conflict and terrorism.

Cooperation and compliance

Another top UN official, who also briefed ambassadors, underscored the importance of greater global collaboration in defeating the terrorists.

“Only by working multilaterally and cooperatively will we succeed in mounting an effective response to the evolving global terrorist threat,” said

Weixiong Chen, acting head of CTED, the secretariat for the Council’s own Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC). “Our measures must be tailor-made, age and gender-responsive, and human rights-compliant,” he added. Mr. Chen also reported on recent efforts to address terrorists’ use of new and emerging technologies, such as the Delhi Declaration, adopted last October in India.

The Declaration aims to cover main concerns surrounding issues that include the abuse of drones, information and communication technologies, and new online payments and fundraising methods. Focus on gender

Meanwhile, civil society representative Franziska Praxl-Tabuchi, underscored why gender-responsive approaches must be included in counter-terrorism programmes and policies.

This is not just a matter of realizing the participation of women, she said, but is instead about ensuring inclusive, equitable participation and leadership of people of diverse gender identities.

“It requires accounting for the experiences, needs, and challenges of individuals and recognizing how gender identities relate to other identity factors,” said Ms. Praxl-Tabuchi, who spoke on behalf of the Global Center on Cooperative Security, an independent, non-partisan policy and research institute.

“Simply put, integrating a gender perspective is a prerequisite for successful human rights-based and people-centered policies and programmes intended to address peace and security issues, including those that aim to counter violent extremism and terrorism.”



Joint statement by Iraq's Prime Minister and the UN on the decision to grant Yazidis ownership of their lands in Sinjar after 47 years of denial

Baghdad, 4 January 2023 - Thousands of Yazidi families in the Sinjar district of Ninewa Governate have been deprived of owning their residential lands since 1975, due to discriminative policies. On 27 December, the Council of Ministers approved a decree that contributes to a comprehensive solution for Yazidis with regards to land ownership. The decree grants ownership of residential lands and houses to the occupants of the 11 residential collective townships: Khanasur (Al-Tamim), Dogri (Hattin), Burek (Yarmouk), Kohbel (Andalus) in Shimal sub-district/Sinjar district, Tal-Qasab (Al-Baath) in Qairouan sub-district/Sinjar district, and Tal-Uzair (Al-Qahtaniya), Siba Sheikheder (Al-Jazeera complex) and Karzarak (Al-Adnaniya) Al-Qahtaniya sub-district/Al-Baaj district, (Zorava) Al-Orouba and Dohola (Al-Qadisiya) in Shimal sub-district/Sinjar district, and Tal-Banat (Al-Walid) in Qairouan sub-district/Sinjar district.

The Iraqi Prime Minister, Mr. Mohammed S. Al-Sudani, said: "The Iraqi government's decision to grant Yazidi Iraqis ownership of their houses in Sinjar, which they have been deprived of for more than 47 years due to the unjust exclusionary policies by

the former dictatorial regime, comes in the context of the Iraqi government's clear and explicit endeavour, to protect the rights of the Iraqi components, especially the beloved Yazidi community in Sinjar and the Ninewa," stressing that this decision "was one of the firm convictions of the Iraqi state, and it was reviewed and presented in partnership with UN-Habitat."

The Iraqi Prime Minister affirmed, "this determination was clear and was demonstrated in the government program and the ministerial agenda that we presented and which the Iraqi parliament approved." He stressed that "the decree, along with other decisions that will be taken later within the Prime Minister's agenda, all aim at protecting the rights of the sons of these honorable Iraqi components, embracing them, and ensuring their rights within the principle of full citizenship, justice and equality."

The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert welcomed "the critical step taken by the Council of Ministers, which finally brings the security of tenure to thousands of Yazidis in relation to their housing,

land, and property rights". She added: "The decree constitutes an official recognition of the ownership of their lands and houses, ends decades of discrimination, and will hopefully ease and encourage the return of Yazidis to Ninewa".

The Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Maimunah Mohd Sharif, commended the endorsement by the Council of Ministers of the long-awaited decree. "This step by the Government is promising and encouraging as it promotes access to land rights for vulnerable populations in Iraq and creates great momentum for residents in Sinjar townships to have land rights for the first time. UN-Habitat will continue to support the government of Iraq and different institutions to facilitate the registration of land rights and to formalize the occupancy certificates issued by UN-Habitat into full land ownership titles".

Since 2018, UN-Habitat has been addressing the land and property rights of Yazidi minorities in Sinjar by registering more than 14,500 claims and issuing land occupancy certificates to prove the occupancy rights of displaced persons.



Social Cohesion

UNDP: Sustainable peace in Iraq - an integrated approach to social cohesion

Baghdad, 2 January 2023 - Iraq's situation with respect to development is complex, as citizens have suffered for years from war and conflict, in addition to political, social, and economic crises. Recent changes, including those stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic alongside the visible effects of climate change, threaten an already fragile social fabric, leading to displacements and fueling potential clashes for resources. These issues leave vulnerable communities with no livelihood opportunities exposed to violent extremism.

UNDP conceptualizes social cohesion in two ways. Horizontal social cohesion relates to relations between citizens and groups found in society. Vertical social cohesion relates to relations between citizens and the government.

Post-conflict, alongside re-building vital infrastructure and housing, comes the strengthening of social cohesion. In Iraq, a comprehensive plan related to social cohesion complements all aspects of society.

Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE)

UNDP is supporting the national PVE strategy, through close work with the Office of the National Security Advisory to develop governorate-level plans, as well as capacity building for local authorities' staff and civil society organizations across Iraq. At the community level, vulnerable community members are supported through socio-economic and Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS) interventions to improve community resiliency against violent

extremism.

"Key issues affecting Iraq include corruption and pockets of extremist religious ideology. This training helped us to understand tools to diagnose causes of violent extremism and supported us to think of methods to prevent its spread, which we will take back to our governorates." – says Nawras, 40, Karbala.

Religious Leaders

The development of a strong religious leader network is the product of five large-scale interfaith religious leader forums for a total of over 300 religious leaders across the governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din. Capacity building has ensured the network is well versed on moderate religious discourse, PVE, and

UNDP: Sustainable peace in Iraq - an integrated approach to social cohesion



tools to promote cohesion within communities.

Women Peacebuilders

Women represent half of society, and female representation is vital at every table where decisions are made. Partnerships with Folke Bernadotte Academy and the International Civil Action Network have contributed to empowering women peacebuilders across Iraq on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE), social cohesion, and conflict resolution.

“It is necessary to consider gender in preventing violent extremism, because some factors affect females more than they affect males. We also need awareness sessions to curb the phenomenon of domestic abuse against women” – says Angham Ali Hussein, 33, Diyala, Vice President of Rita Organization for the Care of Children and Orphans.

Reintegration of ISIL-Affiliated Families

Under the Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration in Iraq Project, UNDP has reintegrated 4,000 families with a comprehensive multifaceted approach of housing rehabilitation, Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support and livelihoods capacity building and support. Reducing stigma surrounding those with perceived ISIL-affiliation and incorporating community benefits for both returnees and communities of return ensures a balanced approach, benefitting all involved. Encouraging returns and rehabilitation for those currently displaced from Al-Hol Camp has included partnership with national government, local community leaders, sister agencies, and civil society. Reintegration programming has significantly expanded to new geographic areas.

“We suffered the most in Al-Hol Camp, but upon our return we were admitted to the rehabilitation programme. My experience with the psychological support programme was useful, and I feel that

many families can benefit from these programmes” – says Fatima, 27, former wife of an ISIL member.

Local authorities & Community-Based Organizations

Over 450 Community-Based Organizations across Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al-Din have been capacitated on social cohesion, PVE, networking, and project management, with 91 organizations receiving small grants for peacebuilding initiatives. Work with local authorities has seen over 2,000 community police, police, local officials, and local community leaders capacitated across Kirkuk and Ninewa.

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

Local Peace and Dialogue Committees

Support to 28 Local Peace and Dialogue Committees across the five liberated governorates engages local authorities and community leaders in peacebuilding and community reintegration initiatives. These committees are vital in securing Local Peace Agreements to facilitate the return of Internally Displaced Persons

back into their communities.

“We have agreed that displaced citizens should not be left alone, and we are working to fully support reintegration,” – says Amjad Yassin, member of the Mosul Local Peace Committee.

Youth Peace Groups

An established network of 200 Youth and Women for Peace groups stretches across the liberated governorates. Each of the five governorates is home to one Youth for Peace Group and one Women for Peace Group, each composed of twenty members. Since 2020, the groups have led the design and implementation of over 75 community peacebuilding initiatives, tailored to the specific needs of community members, demonstrating the initiative and capability of youth in Iraq.

“By empowering young people, the roots of extremism and violence will be eradicated, and we will head towards recovery,” – says Kawthar, 30, Member of the Anbar Youth for Peace Group

Citizen Journalists & Media

A network of over 200 young media professionals has been established under the Citizen Journalism Project, including capacity building on the prevention of Hate Speech, and the use of citizen journalism tools to create and promote stories with positive peacebuilding narratives. An established online platform has featured over 500 products this year, along with the launch of the Peace and Coexistence Short Film Festival on 21 September 2022.

“I want to write about coexistence between Yazidis and Muslims also draw more attention to my region. By sharing and publishing news on peaceful coexistence, these stories will be reflected in other regions accordingly,” – says Layla, 25, Ninewa.

Support for Social Cohesion in Iraq is a five-year programme launched in January 2020 to promote stronger, peaceful and more cohesive communities in all areas of Iraq.



Peace agreements dedicated to peaceful co-existence signed in Ninewa, Kirkuk and Mosul



Ninewa, 29 January 2023 – At the beginning of January, 125 community members and local authorities came together in Al-Hamdaniya, a district of Ninewa with a wide variety of religious and ethnic groups, to reach a peace agreement dedicated to peaceful co-existence.

The meeting was attended by high-level representatives from the Prime Minister’s Office, the Governor of Ninewa’s Office, and the District Director’s (Qaymaqam) Office.

The peace agreement was signed by a cross-section of community members, including representatives of the government and security forces.

On 15 January, another peace agreement has been signed! 70 community members and local

authorities in Tal Kaif, Ninewa have agreed on a covenant for peaceful co-existence.

And on 29 January 2023, a charter to combat hate speech and promote social cohesion has been signed in Mosul.

These are three of ten local peace agreements or covenants that will be formed across Ninewa and Kirkuk, following various capacity building, mediation sessions, and focus group discussions for over 2,000 community police, police, local officials, and local community leaders.

This project is implemented in 12 areas of Ninewa and Kirkuk in partnership with Public Aid Organization (PAO), and generous support from the Government of the Netherlands.



Chance to flourish and contribution to the sustainable reintegration of returnees from displacement

Baghdad, 30 January 2023 - Providing synchronized access to safe and sustainable livelihood opportunities and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) provides post-conflict communities the chance to flourish and contributes to the sustainable reintegration of returnees from displacement, including families perceived as affiliated with ISIL.

UNDP, with implementing partner World Vision Iraq, and generous support from the Government of Japan, has kicked off the “Socio-Economic and Community Resilience for the Prevention of Violent Extremism – SERVE” project in Rummanah (Anbar Governorate), Tal Afar (Ninewa Governorate), and Baiji (Salah al-Din Governorate). The “Socio-Economic and Community Resilience for the Prevention of Violent Extremism” project will run until March 2023, as part of UNDP Iraq’s Social Cohesion Programme.

As part of the project, on 30 January 2023 a Bazaar for Peace in Tal Afar, Ninewa celebrated the power of bringing communities together through art.



UNDP marks World Interfaith Harmony Week!

Baghdad, 1 February 2023 - Dialogue among different religious sects enhances mutual understanding, harmony, and cooperation.

During World Interfaith Harmony Week, let's spotlight building bridges across boundaries.

Iraq is a diverse country, home to numerous religious sects and ethnic groups.

Reconciliation and forgiveness are key to peace and help us work towards harmony regardless of our differences.



UNDP launches a training on mediation and dialogue

Baghdad, 8 February 2023 - Mediation and dialogue skills are vital for peace practitioners in a post-conflict context such as Iraq.

Today UNDP launch a 3-day training on mediation and dialogue in partnership with swisspeace for local NGOs, academics, and peace practitioners.



UNDP supports community resilience and Prevention of Violent Extremism across 30 villages in Ninewa

Erbil, 9 February 2023 – The United Nations Development Programme Iraq (UNDP) in partnership with local organization Al-Tahreer Association for Development (TAD), has completed a project to support community resilience and Prevention of Violent Extremism across 30 villages in Ninewa. Many of the 30 villages, within the districts of Ba'aj and Hatra, were used as terrorist bases during conflict with ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and community members who fled the area have since returned.

The project aims to enhance the role of community leaders to contribute to building sustainable peace and strengthening the participation of

youth in advocating for community needs and the Prevention of Violent Extremism. Community Service Committee members were supported with capacity building and opportunities to network with local authorities to discuss challenges and needs, and 150 community peace initiatives were implemented. Through the project, over 60 schools were outfitted with school supplies and equipment, benefitting 25,000 students and 35 generators were delivered to the 30 villages, providing a source of electricity for 150,000 people.

UNDP Iraq Resident Representative, Auke Lootsma, states, “UNDP’s interventions in the districts of Ba’aj

and Hatra are intended to address the factors that undermine social cohesion. Poverty and lack of education can lead to marginalization and must be mitigated to prevent individuals from falling victim to violent extremism. We are grateful to the governments of Germany and the Netherlands for their support to bolster community resilience and Prevent Violent Extremism in these 30 villages.”

During a ceremony in Tal Abta to commemorate the project, the Governor of Ninewa, Mr. Najm al-Jubouri, expressed his gratitude to UNDP, national partner TAD, and the donor community for supporting the pathway to stabilization and peaceful coexistence in Ninewa, assuring his commitment to continue local government efforts in responding to community needs.

Across western Ninewa, UNDP has rehabilitated 41 schools, eight municipality buildings, two water treatment plants and created jobs for 3,862 people, to date. 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.



Iraq celebrates first International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism

Baghdad, 12 February 2023 – Today, the United Nations marks the first ever International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when conducive to terrorism. In December 2022, the General Assembly designated this international day to advocate the dangers of violent extremism and the international cooperation required to prevent it. The designation itself was introduced by the representative of Iraq, emphasizing how Iraq has suffered at the hands of terrorist groups.

Preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism is a priority for the UN family in Iraq, and an integrated approach is required to ensure sustainable community solutions. Ensuring factors that contribute to economic marginalization and inequality are addressed, and the provision of mental health support and livelihood opportunities, are key to mitigating the risks of violent extremism.

Violent extremism in Iraq has led to widespread devastation and mass displacement, with marginalized groups such as women, children, young people and persons with disabilities disproportionately affected. As part of efforts to build peace and mitigate factors that compel people to leave their area or country of origin, the UN in Iraq supports a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to address underlying factors, drivers, and motives that could contribute to increasing the risk of violent

extremism, including through support to national and subnational government actors and civil society to devise and implement plans of action and interventions to identify and address these risk factors.

The UN in Iraq, in partnership with the Government of Iraq, is committed to supporting women and children, religious leaders, youth, educators, local authorities, civil society, and all members of Iraqi communities to prevent violent extremism and promote peaceful coexistence.

“This international day represents an opportunity for us to acknowledge the dangers of violent extremism and raise awareness on activities and interventions to prevent it. We all have a part to play in preventing violent extremism, and the United Nations in Iraq is working together in partnership with the Government of Iraq to involve a cross-section of society in advocacy and preventative measures. Together, we must keep working to address the marginalization, lack of livelihood opportunities, and spread of discourse that is conducive to violent extremism

in Iraq,” said Resident Coordinator Ghulam Isacszai.

“This idea for this day was presented by the Iraqi representative to the United Nations, thus it is very important to us. The National Committee for the Prevention of Violent Extremism believes that this day will open horizons for international cooperation, agreements and memorandums of understanding, and coordination on capacity building. We hope to continue to work closely with the international community on this important topic,” said Ali Abdullah Al-Badiri, Chairman of the National Committee on the Implementation of the Strategy to Combat Violent Extremism in Iraq.

Violent extremism undermines the values that bind us together. It threatens our collective efforts to promote security and peace, protect human rights, provide humanitarian aid, and advance sustainable development. We must be more vigilant than ever, and continue to work together to prevent it, for a safer and brighter future for Iraq.



UN entities in Iraq commemorate the first International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism

Baghdad, 12 February 2023 - Today is the first International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism.

UNDP Iraq works with the Government of Iraq to support capacity building on Prevention of Violent Extremism within communities. UNDP work includes:

- ✓40+ community initiatives to promote PVE and social cohesion implemented across Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al-Din.

- ✓20+ workshops, trainings, and consultation meetings with government and local authorities, community leaders, youth, and NGOs.

- ✓Supporting regional PVE efforts and training of women peacebuilders across Iraq.

On the International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism, **IOM** highlights civil society partners working to address drivers of violent extremism in their communities.

IOM Iraq's WASL Civil Society Fund works to build resilience in crisis-affected communities by supporting civil society to identify and address drivers of violent extremism in the community. This is part of IOM's broader support – including policy development, capacity building, development of area-based Plans of

Action and exchange of expertise – to the Government of Iraq in its implementation of the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism.

On the first International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism, **UNITAD** stresses that justice for all victims and survivors of violent extremism is crucial for its prevention and for the healing of societies.

On this day, we remember all victims of violent extremism including victims of ISIL international crimes in Iraq.



During a visit to Karbala, the Ambassador of Japan to Iraq confirms support to government efforts for Preventing Violent Extremism in partnership with UNDP

Baghdad, 21 February 2023 – Today, during a visit to Karbala, His Excellency Mr. Futoshi Matsumoto, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, met with the Karbala Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) headed by the deputy governor, with the presence of the governor, and the head of the national committee for implementation of Iraq's prevention of violent extremism strategy from the National Security Advisory, with participation of local NGOs. The aim of the meeting was to discuss objectives and progress of the sub-committee's efforts implemented through support from the United Nations Development Programme in Iraq (UNDP) in partnership with the Government of Japan.

Supporting the Government of Iraq with strengthening capacities on PVE and ensuring community readiness for reintegration is a priority for the Government of Japan, as part of generous support provided through UNDP's Support to Social Stability in

Iraq through Preventing Violent Extremism Project. The project assists the Government of Iraq to implement its National Strategy to Combat Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism by building institutional capacity at the national and sub-national levels, enhancing community resilience, and promoting viable pathways to reduce violent extremism with focus on women and youth. The project also focuses on improving human security by providing socio-economic and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support to communities in need across several governorates.

UNDP Iraq Resident Representative, Auke Lootsma, states, "We are grateful to the Government of Japan for our continued work to support the people of Iraq. Through this project we are contributing to enhancing the Government of Iraq's efforts in expanding on stabilization gains with a preventative approach, ensuring support to a healthy environment and strong social fabric for various communities."

His Excellency, Mr. Futoshi Matsumoto, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, emphasizes, "In fighting extremism, it is critical to continue to promote a message of peace and moderation. All of us share the importance of the words in al-Hadith: the best thing is found in the middle 'خير الأمور أوسطها'. Japan will continue to support Iraqis to attain a peaceful and prosperous society in cooperation with UNDP."

Nasif Jassim al-Khattabi, the Governor of Karbala, states, "Today the attendance of His Excellency the Ambassador of Japan to Iraq was very important for our sub-committee meeting. Karbala Governorate works continuously to combat violence that may lead to terrorism in all its forms. Today we express our readiness to adopt any project that will contribute to PVE in Iraq."

Ali Abdullah Albedeiri, Chairman of the National Committee on the implementation of the National Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism, notes, "Today's activity is part of the national committee's support to the sub-committee in Karbala, including discussion on upcoming projects in 2023-2024. We believe these projects should be ratified and implemented at the governorate and national level."

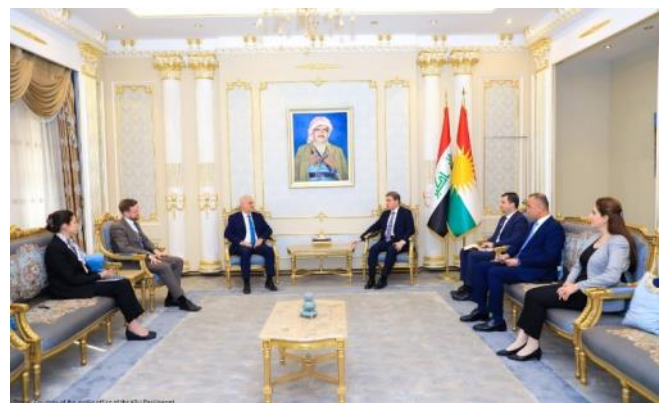
The Support to Social Stability in Iraq through Preventing Violent Extremism Project is part of UNDP Iraq's five-year Social Cohesion Programme launched in January 2020 to promote stronger, peaceful, and more cohesive communities in all areas of Iraq.



Political Consultations



Basra, 9 January 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Basra with the Governor of Basra, **Mr. Asaad Al Eidani**. They discussed the current political and security situation in the Governorate. Photo courtesy of the Governor's Office.



Erbil, 23 January 2023 - The Head of UNAMI's Regional Office in Kurdistan Region, **Mr. Ricardo Rodriguez**, met in Erbil with **Dr. Hemin Hawrami**, Deputy Speaker of the Kurdistan Parliament. Discussion focused on the political developments in the Kurdistan Region, in particular the next Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections. Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the KR-I Parliament.



Erbil, 25 January 2023 - President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Masoud Barzani, received today in Erbil the Special Representative of Secretary-General to Iraq, **Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**. They discussed the current political developments in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, relations between Baghdad and Erbil, including the Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections, as well as the implementation of Sinjar Agreement. Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the KDP.



Baghdad, 2 February 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met in Baghdad with Mr. Bafel Jalal Talabani, President of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Discussion focused on the political situation in Iraq and the region, with an emphasis on Baghdad-Erbil relations and the Kurdistan Region elections. Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the PUK.



Basra, 7 February 2023 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "Constructive meeting with First Deputy Governor Muhammad Taher Al-Tamimi today at beginning of Basra visit. Discussed situation in the governorate, elections, and cooperation with UNAMI".



Erbil, 12 February 2023 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "In Erbil today Listening to the concerns of the minorities with regard to the electoral system in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. United Nations in Iraq ready to facilitate further dialogue and assist in the overdue elections".

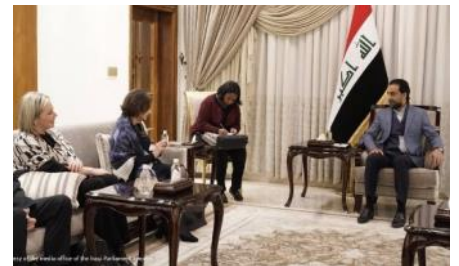
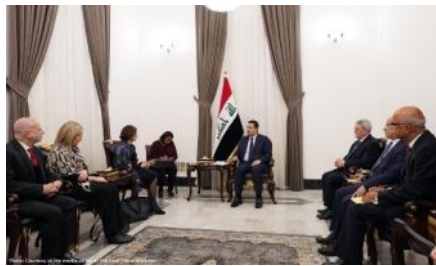


Erbil, 19 February 2023 - The Head of the UNAMI Regional office in Erbil, **Mr. Ricardo Rodriguez**, met with the PUK Politburo member, **Mr. Sadi Ahmed Pira**. They discussed political situation in the region.

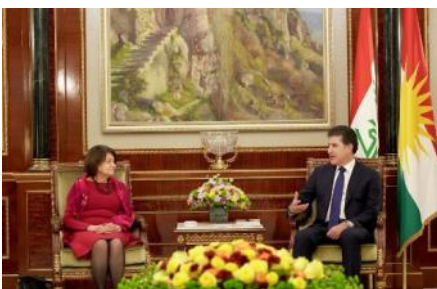


Baghdad, 22 February 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today with the Aas'ib Ahl al-Haq leader, **Qais al-Khazali**. They discussed current political situation in Iraq. Photo courtesy of Aas'ib Ahl al-Haq.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary A. DiCarlo, visits Iraq



Baghdad, 22 January 2023 - United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, **Ms. Rosemary A. DiCarlo**: "Started Iraq visit with productive meetings with federal government officials. Pledged UN support for reform efforts, commended Iraq's constructive regional engagement and stressed the importance of further advancing the role of women and youth for prosperity and stability".



Erbil, 24 January 2023 - United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, **Ms. Rosemary A. DiCarlo**: "In Erbil today, I had constructive discussions with the President, Deputy Prime Minister and Speaker of Parliament of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq on Baghdad-Erbil relations, upcoming parliamentary elections and regional issues. I reaffirmed the UN's support.



Baghdad, 23 January 2023 - United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, **Ms. Rosemary A. DiCarlo**: "Honored to meet a wide range of inspiring Iraqi civil society representatives, including women leaders and youth. Encouraged by recent elections that brought 29% women into Parliament. Women and youth strongly committed to social cohesion, reform. We stand firmly behind their efforts".

Erbil, 24 January 2023 - United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, **Ms. Rosemary A. DiCarlo**: "In Erbil, in our talks today, women, youth, and civil society representatives in Erbil stressed the importance of implementing the Yazidi Survivor Law, addressing all forms of violence against women, and greater inclusion of women in political and electoral positions".



Erbil, 25 January 2023 - United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, **Ms. Rosemary A. DiCarlo**: "A highlight of my just-concluded visit to Iraq was meeting, in Erbil, the Iraq National Football Team, recently crowned Gulf Cup champions!" Peacebuilding through sport!

Erbil, 25 January 2023 - UNESCO was pleased to welcome the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, **Ms. Rosemary A. DiCarlo**, at the World Heritage site of Erbil Citadel to witness firsthand the remarkable achievements that are taking place within the "Support to livelihoods through culture heritage development" project, funded by the European Union. Guided by the UNESCO Iraq Office Chief of Culture, Junaid Sorosh-Wali, Ms. DiCarlo appreciated the visit at the Interpretation Centre as well as other works UNESCO has been undertaking in partnership with the Kurdish authorities and ILO to rehabilitate some of the historical buildings in the Citadel.

The remarkable resilience of Iraqi women



Duhok, 9 January 2023 - Zeina, a 30-year-old divorcee who fled for safety when Mosul in Sinjar district was captured by the forces of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Zeina found herself in Kabarto One camp in Duhok governate.

"I have no children and was living with my husband - a man who was constantly abusing and hurting me," Zeina explained, "It was affecting my mental and physical health, so I left." Zeina also had difficulty within her own family when her mother died, and her

father remarried. "My situation at home was complicated. My father took another wife and I felt more psychological pressure. Then my father died and our financial situation worsened."

Zeina wanted to work to support herself and help the younger members of the family. One day by chance, she met the project lawyer from the Baghdad Women Association (BWA), who was on a field visit. The lawyer realized that Zeina was under great stress which was compounded by her

financial situation so referred her for psychosocial support with the BWA.

In the words of Zeina

"I had an interview with the project staff and was accepted into the cash-for-work activity," she explained. "Once I began working, I became more self-reliant and was able to support my family. Being able to provide the basic needs for my family and contribute to society has helped me greatly. My self-esteem improved and so did my mental health." As Zeina's confidence grew so did her ability to form relationships with female colleagues who were also taking part in the cash-for-work project supported by UNWomen. "We speak to each other, share our stories and support each other," she continued. "I realized I am not alone in this situation, and this has made me think about other women who were in a similar situation and are still struggling because they still didn't realize that they can get help. I am a better mother now and a passionate advocate to end violence against women in our society."

Zeina believes that the assistance from BWA and UN Women changed her path and provided her with the strength to be self-dependent.

Learning to deal with challenges through hard times

Baghdad, 9 January 2023 - In her short 33 years, Marwa Muhammad Elias has faced enormous challenges including poverty, hardship and ostracization by her community. Married at 21, she lived in Al-Hussainiya until conflict broke out in her village and the community accused her father of being a member of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Marwa was forced to flee to save her life and the lives of her family.

A young widow with six children, Marwa found herself in Khazer camp in 2016. With no family home to return to, she nonetheless has no desire to return to her village. "I prefer to stay where I am," Marwa said. "There is safety in the camp and the family would be in danger if we returned to Al-Hussainiya. Her father was arrested accused of ISIL membership, and Marwa finds herself like so many single female-head of households, was ostracized because of her perceived association with ISIL. She finds herself without the necessary education or skills to support her children, one of whom has special needs.

"Our lives were difficult when myself and my husband married, and we had limited income. He is deceased now and there is no option to return to our village - I am however, grateful to receive aid in the camp," she continued. "I was very angry

for a long time, and had difficulty in resolving conflict, taking out my anger on my children." Marwa's friends told her about the Empowering Women in Conflict Prevention and Response Strategies sessions, which she believes, has changed her life.

"The topics we covered in the course included communication skills which not

only allows me to express my feelings, but also helps me understand and cope with the psychological pressure I feel when I think we can never return to the village." Marwa believes that UN Women support for organizations such as Bring Hope is helping to change lives and empower women, and for this she is grateful.



Self-confidence is key to growth and development

Duhok, 9 January 2023 - Many educated women in Iraq are constrained by the social norms of a patriarchal society that consigns them to life inside the home and out of the public sphere. Rather than being able to provide for their family with educational qualifications, these young, qualified women, lack the confidence to seek work that allows their skills and talents to be appreciated and more importantly, to be paid a decent wage for that skill.

Rojan Khalid Ibrahim is a 24-year-old single woman living in Duhok and benefitted from a university education, graduating from the University of Dohuk, Oil Department. When her father passed away, her mother was left with eight daughters and two sons to care for. The family's financial wellbeing became the responsibility of Rojan, but her lack of confidence left her struggling to attain employment and support her family. "Being raised without a father in really difficult in our society," she explained. "I wanted to show the world that women are strong and resilient."

Jinda Organization is a local NGO and a partner of UNWomen Iraq, working on Empowering Women in Conflict Prevention and Response Strategies. "When I saw the title of the project, I just wanted to be part of it," Rojan said. "I saw this as an opportunity to



improve myself and for people to see my true value. People would tell me I was weak because I grew up without a father and I wanted to prove them wrong."

The patriarchal society means that men make the decisions, and it is not considered a female domain, this results in women not having the confidence to made decisions or problem solve when there are challenges in life. The workshop run by Jinda included sessions on problem solving. "I didn't know how to deal with problems as they occurred and always

tried to avoid being involved," said Rojan. "Now, I look at problems, break them down into little pieces and I will always try to solve them. This course has provided me with the confidence to move ahead in my life. I have no issues in public speaking and

Now, I look at problems in a very different way and I try to solve them" Rojan added.

"After taking this course I am much more confident about myself, so much so that I have no problems to speak in public and prefer to deal with and solve my own problems."

In partnership with UNFPA, UN-Habitat renovates Women Safe Space in Baghdad for women and girls' survivors of gender-based violence

Baghdad, 9 January 2023 - UN-Habitat Iraq is committed to support diversity and inclusion and actively promotes gender equality. At the moment, in partnership with UNFPA, and with funds from France, UN-Habitat is renovating Women Safe Space in Baghdad for women and girls' survivors of gender-based violence. We continue our effort to foster a supportive environment where inclusivity is expected and prioritized.

On 31 December, Eric Chevallier, the Ambassador of France in Iraq, visited the Women Safe Space in Baghdad to observe the renovation process. With the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ambassador celebrated the new year with the women and girls survivors of gender-based violence.

At the Safe Space UNFPA offers vocational training and life-skills education.



Engaging boys from a young age prepares them to own the fight against ending gender-based violence

Baghdad, 9 January 2023 - Engaging boys from a young age, along with girls, prepares them to own the fight against ending gender-based violence.

Through discussions and awareness sessions, UNFPA with the support of Royal Norwegian Embassy in Amman, Sida - Styrelsen för Internationellt Utvecklingssamarbete and United Nations CERF focuses on the dangers of GBV and achieving gender equality.



New skills help girls and increases their chance for getting better jobs in the future

Baghdad, 30 January 2023 - Learning computer helps young girls to have new skills and increases their chance for getting better jobs in the future. Technology in an engaging and fun way is empowering for women.

UNFPA with the support of Sida - Styrelsen för Internationellt Utvecklingssamarbete, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Amman and Canada in Iraq organises regular computer courses to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills to enter the frontier of science and technology. Let's empower them!

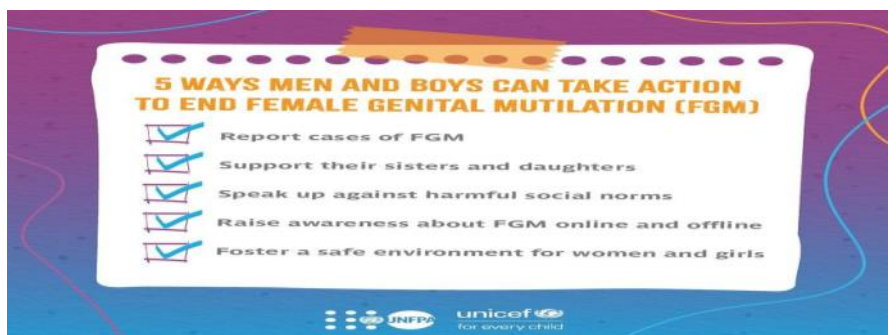


End female genital mutilation now!

Baghdad, 5 February 2023 – UNFPA notes that today, girls are one-thirds less likely to be subjected to female genital mutilation compared to three decades ago.

But, to meet the global target of eliminating FGM by 2030, progress needs to be at least 10 times faster.

Partnering with men and boys is vital in changing social norms and supporting women and girl's bodily autonomy.



UN Women continues capacity building in Iraq

Baghdad, 12 February 2023 – UN Women, in cooperation with its implementing partners, continues with its capacity building in Iraq.

On 15 January, Ajyal Association for the Development of Intelligence and Creativity strengthened the capacities of 25 male school students on women's rights and their role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Diyala governorate. The event was conducted in partnership with UN Women and

funded through the Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF).

On 17 January Information Center for Research & Development (ICRD) conducted an initiative with 100 participants representing official and non-official stakeholders and local communities in Salah Al-Din, where a theater show was presented to the participants tackling the types of domestic violence and a discussion session took a place afterwards on the

same subject. The initiative was conducted in partnership with UN Women and funded through the WPHF. On 20 January 2023 Ajyal Association for the Development of Intelligence and Creativity strengthened the capacities of 25 female school students on women's rights and their role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Diyala governorate. The event was conducted in partnership with UN Women and funded through the WPHF.

UN Women continues capacity building in Iraq ... *(continued)*

On 12 February Iraqi Women Journalists Forum (IWJF) developed the capacities of 22 media activists through a workshop on media advocacy campaigning for women in Basra. The workshop was conducted in partnership with UN Women and funded through the WPHF.

Civil Development Organization (CDO) in partnership with Pasewan Organization strengthened the awareness of 29 key persons in the community including, government officials, journalists, civil activists, university students and lawyers on UNSCR 1325, Iraq National Action Plan (INAP), and the role of women in conflict resolution in the Kirkuk. The event was conducted in partnership with UN Women and funded by the WPHF.



The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) signs MOU with SEED Foundation and UNFPA to establish a locally-led coordination group to combat gender-based violence in Kurdistan

Erbil, 21 February 2023 - The Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA), today signed a memorandum of understanding with SEED Foundation, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Iraq, formalizing their partnership for the establishment of a Gender-Based Violence Sector Coordination Group (GBV SCG) for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

This coordination mechanism replaces the former UN-led National GBV Sub-Cluster, and represents the end of the nation's transition from humanitarian to development designation, which officially concluded at the end of 2022. The GBV SCG also formally recognizes the need for local leadership and ownership over national and regional protection coordination efforts.

Together, MOLSA and SEED will co-chair the GBV SCG in the KRI. The co-chairs will be responsible for the operationalization of the GBV SCG at the KRI level and the reactivation of governorate level Working Groups (WGs). The co-chairs will jointly develop the necessary guidelines, standards, and tools required to support improved protections for survivors of violence and those at-risk, and lead on the prioritization of needs and gaps across the sector, in alignment with existing government



strategies.

Together with SEED, UNFPA will continue to provide technical and capacity building support to MOLSA, and assist in the logistics and convening of all national and international protection actors present in the KRI.

All parties to the MOU share a common goal, to effectively address the ongoing

humanitarian and protection challenges that men, women, girls, and boys, in the KRI continue to face; using coherent, sustainable, human rights-based, and survivor-centered approaches.

The co-chairs will take leadership of the GBV SCG effective immediately, and convene the first session of all sitting members in March.

Women in Science innovating to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals



Erbil, 11 February 2023 - Innovate, Demonstrate, Elevate, Advance, sustain; is the language to advance the Sustainable Development Goals by Women and Girls in Science in 2023. Meet Asma Mustafa, a young Iraqi software engineer working as a business analyst in Erbil, whose passion for science started in her formative years. She talks to UNAMI PIO about her

winning dissertation project on machine learning to detect diseases – an interest inspired by personal experience.

Celia Dadson: What inspired you into choosing your dissertation topic?

Asma Mustafa: I wanted to work on something that is related to Medical because of some personal things and I did some research and I found out that there is this interesting thing called

Machine learning and how AI which is Artificial Intelligence plays a big role in finding and classifying things with Medical Imaging.

In my case it was on coronavirus and CT scans. I worked with three models. Two models were already in the field and one model you can see it was customized by me. I took ideas from the first and second models and I put them together and made new model. The final accuracies for the models; two of them gave promising accuracies above 90%, and then there was this other model which gave 60%.

For displaying the models that I created. I designed a very simple app that can be used to show you whether the model works or not.

Asma hopes to continue working on her project to make an impact in the medical field.

Celia: What is the future for your project?

I want to improve the system and make very big research about it.

11 February is the International Day of Women and Girls in Science

Video produced by the Public Information Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI PIO) / Celia Dadson and Salar Brifkani.

International Day of Women and Girls in Science celebrated in Iraq

Baghdad, 12 February 2023 - "I have been interested in studying science since my childhood, and now we have the power to choose our field of studies," said Donia Khaled, 23 on International Day of Women and Girls in Science to UNICEF. Donia is a student at the College of Engineering, Computer Technologies and Communications – Mosul.

Many young people, especially girls, have the capacity and skills to develop themselves, but they also face many challenges, including limited opportunities.

"I had ambitions to study mechanical engineering, but being a girl, I was criticized since very few girls study this field," said Donia. "Instead, I decided to study information technology since it affects all aspects of our lives."

"I noticed the emergence of developments in science across the world and the availability of various tools and opportunities for us to develop our skills to benefit my community," said Nour Mowafaq, 23. Nour graduated from the Northern

Technical University in Mosul with an Engineering degree.

In marking International Day of Women and Girls in Science, Nour hopes to rebuild her city Mosul.

"In the past, my city was subjected to harsh conditions, and we almost lost

hope," said Nour. "I chose to study engineering to rebuild my city since engineering is one of the most important fields that help us in thinking and searching for technical solutions to all the problems and in all aspects of our lives."



WFP recognizes the crucial role women and girls play in advancing science and innovation

Baghdad, 11 February 2023 - On International Day of Women and Girls in Science, WFP recognizes the crucial role women and girls play in advancing science and innovation. WFP is committed to helping women and girls through its economic empowerment activities.

Zainab from Wassit dreams of having her own beekeeping business. With her Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Science and the vocational and entrepreneurship training from the World Food Programme, that dream is becoming a reality. We believe in women's ability to change the future.

Shayma from Sulaymaniyah is young graduate from WFP's EMPACT project.



Through it, she acquired the skills that enabled her to combine her academic background in Agriculture to launch

her own Mushroom growing business and becoming the family's breadwinner.

Human Rights

UNAMI HRO conducts a training aimed at enhancing the understanding of civil society organizations of United Nations Protection Mechanisms

Duhok, 28 December 2022 – UNAMI Human Rights Office in cooperation with the Youth Development Center and the Kurdistan Students Development Center implemented a two-day workshop for nineteen representatives of civil society organizations in Duhok. 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

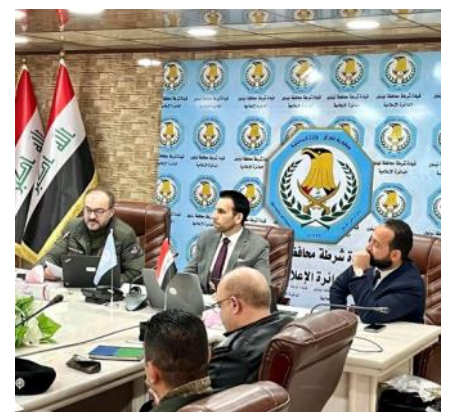
contribute to the implementation of human rights.



UNAMI HRO holds a roundtable with the Iraqi Ministry of Interior in Mosul on the due process rights of defendants under Iraqi and international law

Mosul, 16 January 2023 - UNAMI's Human Rights Office held a roundtable with the Iraqi Ministry of Interior in Mosul on the due process rights of defendants under Iraqi and international law. Twenty-two officers from the Ministry of Interior 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.



UN in Iraq condemns the killing of Tiba al-Ali and calls on all parties to protect women and girls from violence

Baghdad, 5 February 2023 - The United Nations in Iraq condemns the abhorrent killing of Tiba al-Ali, a 22-year-old woman. The avoidable death of Tiba is a regretful reminder of the violence and injustice that still exists against women and girls in Iraq today. So-called honour killing and other forms of gender-based violence violate human rights and cannot be tolerated. While some efforts have been taken by state institutions to combat these acts

of violence against women, more needs to be done towards prevention, protection and accountability. We urge the Council of Representatives to strengthen the institutional framework, including repealing Articles 41 and Article 409 of Iraq's penal code, and call 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 United Nations calls on the Government of Iraq to support laws and policies to prevent violence against women and girls, take all necessary measures to address impunity by ensuring that all perpetrators of such crimes are brought to justice and the rights of women and girls are protected, so that they can live a life free from violence and discrimination.

Nadia's Initiative and IOM Iraq break ground on cemetery and memorial for Yazidi Genocide victims

Solagh, Sinjar, 13 February 2023 - As the Yazidi community in Iraq continues to rebuild in the wake of genocide, construction of a cemetery and memorial in Solagh, Sinjar, has officially commenced. Launched by Nadia's Initiative (NI) in 2021 in response to requests from the Yazidi community, NI spent the last two years designing the cemetery and memorial in partnership with community members and a Yazidi architect. This week, construction is officially underway with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

In August 2014, the Yazidi ethno-religious minority community in Sinjar was attacked by Daesh in a systematic attempt to erase them from existence. Thousands of people were killed, hundreds of thousands were displaced, and more than 6,000 women and children were enslaved. Today, around 2,700 Yazidis are still considered missing, while dozens of mass graves remain unexhumed.

"Grief is part of the healing process," said Nadia Murad, founder and president of Nadia's Initiative. "Having a place to collectively mourn and remember our families, friends, and neighbors is vital for survivors, especially those who have returned to Sinjar. It also serves an educational purpose – reminding the world of what our community suffered, and how we must continue to focus on preventing such atrocities."

"When a community has experienced this degree of trauma and devastation, memorializing the past and paying tribute to lost loved ones become essential components of efforts to support survivors as they return home from displacement," said IOM Iraq

Chief of Mission, Giorgi Gigauri. "This is what we are endeavoring to do here – a memorial by and for the community, that is also consistent with the provisions enshrined in the Yazidi Survivors Law, which IOM and Nadia's Initiative have worked to support from its inception, and to which we remain committed as the reparations roll-out continues."

"This cemetery will be the first project of this scale documenting the Yazidi genocide. It will be a historical landmark for future generations and will visually demonstrate the magnitude of the genocide and its impact on our community. Establishing a symbolic mass grave will attract the attention of public figures and those who are interested in human rights and justice issues," says Khaled Talo Khedr, community member and relative of a Solagh victim.

Memorializing the victims of genocide is essential to the Yazidi community, many of whom remain displaced within Iraq more than eight years later. The final design for the cemetery and memorial was selected through

extensive consultations with survivors both displaced and returned and aims not only to honor those who were lost, but also to act as a catalyst for the collective healing of a people, community, and region that has withstood incredible trauma.

This is the first memorialization project of this size and scope to be implemented in Sinjar. The construction's design aims to preserve and honor the memories of Yazidis in Sinjar, and it will serve as a place of solace and remembrance for the greater Yazidi community.



UNAMI HRO organizes a briefing session in Erbil with a focus on human rights aspects of the Mission’s work

Erbil, 16 February 2023 - The UNAMI Human Rights Office, in coordination with Salahaddin University (SU) in Erbil, organized a briefing session with a particular focus on human rights aspects of the Mission’s work. Twenty-six students and three professors from the College of Political Sciences-Department of Political Systems and Public Policy 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 civic space, women rights 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.



UNAMI HRO meets with a group of women-led organizations in Duhok

Duhok, 16 February 2023 - Today, UNAMI’s Human Rights Office met with a group of women-led organizations, aiming to discuss cooperation and how to lead the views given by the survivors of the Yazidi women in the UNAMI. UNAMI stands with survivors.



Living with Disabilities

Disability inclusion Master Class held in Erbil

Erbil, 12 February 2023 - With IOM Iraq support, the Catholic University of Erbil and U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, & Labor hosted a Disability Inclusion Master Class with the attendance of the U.S. Special Advisor on Disability Rights, Ms. Sara Minkara.

IOM and its partners remain committed to promoting equal human rights for persons with disabilities, especially women and girls. A diverse crowd came together to learn and engage.

“It’s impressive to see this size of an audience of different types of people – persons with disabilities, educational staff, students – gathering to discuss

and engage on the rights of persons and specifically women with disabilities. What made it more inspiring was the presence of Sara Minkara, who showed us that achieving goals is all about

capitalizing on our own abilities and skills,” said Hajer Ismail, University professor at the Catholic University of Erbil and regional activist on the rights of persons and women with disabilities.



Adolescents with disability have the right to determine their own life and future

Mosul, 17 February 2023 - Adolescents with disability have the right to determine their own life and future. Outreach teams regularly visit hard to reach areas to promote the reproductive health services and the

recreational activities UNFPA provides in three Youth Centres in Mosul. Thank you, Finland, to ensure upholding Human Rights and Sustainable Development by promoting disability inclusion.



IOM report: "Barriers to Durable Solutions Experienced by People with Disabilities in Iraq: A Rapid Consultation"

Baghdad, 19 February 2023 – IOM has just published a new report: "Barriers to Durable Solutions Experienced by People with Disabilities in Iraq: A Rapid Consultation".

FOREWORD

"Information on barriers to durable solutions experienced by displaced persons and returnees with disabilities in Iraq is extremely scarce. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is working alongside the Government of Iraq and other partners to create conditions that will enable internally displaced persons to return, relocate or locally integrate in a voluntary, safe and dignified manner – through a comprehensive package of interventions aimed at addressing barriers to durable solutions.

With generous support from the Government of Australia, IOM Iraq continues to strengthen its approach to disability inclusion. In 2019, the IOM Iraq Disability Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2021 was launched, which laid solid foundations for disability inclusive practices and programming.

In 2022, the IOM Iraq Country Strategy 2022 – 2024 and IOM Iraq Disability Inclusion Strategy 2022 – 2024 will also be launched, with the latter focussing on increased accountability – among all programme and programme support divisions across IOM Iraq – for reducing barriers experienced by people with disabilities, including access to durable solutions.

This report identifies concrete ways for members of the Government of Iraq, Kurdistan Regional Government, and durable solutions actors including IOM to address barriers experienced by displaced persons and returnees with disabilities in Iraq. Ultimately, we hope that IOM's support will help to make the most of the skills, resources and solidarity already expressed by displaced persons and returnees with disabilities, with the aim of contributing to a more accessible and inclusive Iraq." - Giorgi Gigauri, Chief of Mission IOM Iraq.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Information on persons with disabilities in Iraq and the barriers they experience in areas of displacement and return is extremely scarce. Given that persons with



disabilities are best qualified to provide information about the challenges they face, IOM Iraq conducted a rapid consultation with internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees with disabilities to deepen understanding of the barriers to durable solutions that persons with disabilities experience, and to support these voices to be heard.

The rapid consultation took place between the months of December 2021 and January 2022 and was conducted with 39 persons with disabilities living in IDP camps, informal sites and areas of return, as well as through interviews with 15 key informants (representatives from organizations of persons with disabilities, camp management and local authorities).

Data collection occurred in Hassan Sham camp, Jeddah 5 camp, Mosul and Sinjar (Ninewa Governorate); Kabarto camp (Dohuk Governorate); and Kilo 7 informal site and Ramadi (Anbar Governorate).

The report outlines five main findings that cover categories of barriers to return¹ along with movement intentions:

Housing IDPs with disabilities experience difficulties accessing appropriate shelter, and returnees with disabilities have difficulties paying rent. In addition, many experience difficulties moving within and leaving their housing/shelter.

Livelihoods IDPs and returnees with disabilities lack access to sustainable livelihoods and income generating opportunities. They want to earn an income, and when they can't, they often feel they are a burden to their families.

Basic Services IDPs and returnees

with disabilities struggle to access basic services due to poor physical access, and limited income, service provision and access to information. Moreover, persons with disabilities feel that service providers are not aware of their needs and concerns, and they face difficulties accessing information about the services and assistance available.

Social Cohesion and Safety and Security IDPs and returnees with disabilities feel excluded from community life due to negative attitudes among community members and a lack of accessible ways to communicate. Family members are often the main source of support for persons with disabilities.

Movement Intentions IDPs with disabilities are willing to return to their areas of origin, but are prevented by housing destruction, poor social cohesion, security issues and a lack of support networks. As such, camp closures could force IDPs with disabilities to move out of displacement prematurely, resulting in additional risks.

These findings led to a set of recommendations and suggested actions that are explained in full in the report.

Here, we highlight the key recommendations by way of general guidance to the Government of Iraq, Kurdistan Regional Government and local and international humanitarian and development agencies in areas of displacement and return.

Recommendations across durable solutions

A. Facilitate active and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in areas of displacement

IOM report: "Barriers to Durable Solutions Experienced by People with Disabilities in Iraq: A Rapid Consultation" (*continued*)

and return.

B. Ensure information on assistance and services is accessible to persons with disabilities in areas of displacement and return.

C. Support persons with disabilities to make informed decisions regarding durable solutions pathways available to them.

D. Build a wider evidence base on experiences of persons with disabilities and engage technical advice to strengthen disability- inclusive durable solutions.

Recommendations per barrier to return
Housing

E. Address barriers to shelter interventions experienced by persons with disabilities. Livelihoods

F. Prioritize mainstream vocational training and livelihoods opportunities for persons with disabilities in areas in displacement and return.

Basic Services

G. Address barriers to accessing basic services experienced by persons with disabilities in areas of displacement and return.

Social Cohesion

H. Prioritize accessible and inclusive social cohesion and community engagement programming.

Safety and Security

I. Prioritize enablers that assist persons with disabilities to facilitate their own safety and security.

Read the full report "Barriers to Durable Solutions Experienced by People with Disabilities in Iraq: A Rapid Consultation" at: bit.ly/3S9WB1a

Freedom of Expression

The Ministry of Interior and UNESCO agree to implement programmes to regulate the Internet and Information sector and combat digital crimes



Baghdad, 26 January 2023 - The Ministry of Interior and UNESCO Iraq Office agreed to cooperate in implementing a number of activities and programmes that will contribute in regulating the Internet and Information sector and combating digital crimes. The Minister of Interior,

Abd al-Amir al-Shammari, discussed with the UNESCO Representative to Iraq, Paolo Fontani, and CI Officer, Dhea Subhee, a number of projects of common interest, which are being implemented by UNESCO Iraq Office in partnership with the Ministry of Interior and the Judicial Council,

highlighting the regulation of the Internet and Information sector. To ensure safe use, combat digital crimes and improve freedom of expression, digital and information literacy.

They agreed to hold a meeting with the Directorate of Training and the Directorate of Communications and Information Systems, as well as direct coordination with the Department of Relations and Information to implement a number of activities and programs in this regard. The minister called on UNESCO's continuous engagement and support in the protection and safety of journalists as well as promoting freedom of expression to improve mutual understanding between security forces and journalists.

The UNESCO Representative affirmed that UNESCO will continue to support the efforts of the Ministry of Interior to enhance its projects and programmes.

UNESCO Representative to Iraq meets Director of Relations and Media of the Ministry of Interior

Baghdad, 26 January 2023 - UNESCO Representative to Iraq, Paolo Fontani, met Major General Dr. Saad Maan, Director of Relations and Media, Ministry of Interior, and two members of the National Committee to Protect Iraqi Journalists. They discussed joint projects and the stages of their implementation during the new year.



UNESCO #RebootTheNet

Baghdad, 18 February 2023 - UNESCO launched a major global campaign #RebootTheNet linked to the Internet for Trust Conference that will take place on 21-23 February 2023. UNESCO launched this global campaign to raise awareness and encourage dialogue about hate speech, mis and disinformation on social media platforms. The internet is becoming a place where it is exceedingly difficult to separate fact from fiction, be shielded from graphic content, or remain unscathed after airing an opinion. Without guidelines that focuses on the protection of human rights, the internet becomes devoid of information for good. This is all being pushed on our social media channels via messages/photos/info/banners and other media related content.

On 20 February 2022 UNESCO Iraq only posted blanks, so did its partners. It wasn't a mistake, UNESCO Iraq did it to protest the situation. The annoying internet can be if we simply did ignore:

- Hate speech
- Misinformation
- Censorship
- Conspiracy theories
- Online violence

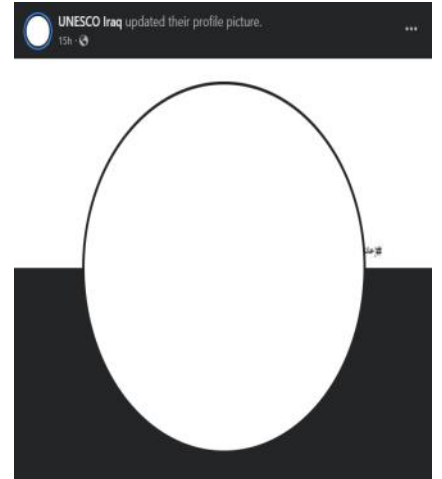
We have established organizational guidelines that can fight against anything

Cyber harmful practices, protection of rights

Human at the same time, we can build an internet that serves the public interest

We need an #InternetReset to clear space

An email is the address of trust. For more information visit: <https://www.unesco.org/en/internet-conference>



UNESCO Iraq Office celebrates World Radio Day

Baghdad, 13 February 2023 - UNESCO Iraq Office celebrated World Radio Day from the broadcasting room in Radio Al-Salam. The theme for the 12th edition of the World Radio Day is "Radio and Peace".



UNITAD

Special Adviser Christian Ritscher visited Al Alamain Institute for Postgraduate Studies

Baghdad, 21 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.



Erbil, 22 December 2022 - UNITAD continues its engagement with civil society organizations on investigation of ISIL crimes against the Christian community in Iraq, digitizing over 15,000 documents of witness testimonies and evidence, in partnership with Shlomo Organization and supported by U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, & Labor. This milestone achievement, marked by a ceremony in Erbil, is part of UNITAD's support to national actors, ensuring testimonial evidence preservation is done in accordance with international standards, rendering them admissible before competent courts.



faz.net

Iraks Regierungschef al-Sudani: Wirtschaft verhindert Migration
Deutschland ist ein wichtiger Partner des Irak. Wir wollen mehr

Baghdad, 13 January 2023 - In his first visit to Germany, H.E. Iraqi Prime Minister Muhammad Shia'a al-Sudani referenced the 2021 landmark conviction of ISIL perpetrator for genocide of Yazidi, after a 19-months trial in Frankfurt, during which UNITAD provided support to German prosecutors. UNITAD is thankful for the unwavering commitment of Iraq and Germany in pursuing accountability for ISIL international crimes before competent courts. We are committed to continue to support judicial proceedings, seeking justice for all victims and survivors, who await to see their day in court.



Kirkuk, 14 January 2023 - A delegation from UNITAD, headed by Director of Evidence Management, **Anees Ahmed**, visited Kirkuk and met with **Governor Rakan Saeed Al-Jubouri** and his team. UNITAD's delegation also visited the Kirkuk Federal Court of Appeals and met with its President Judge Qasem Suleiman, and Investigative Judge Omar Majeed. Discussions tackled UNITAD's proposed work to support the digitization of evidence at Kirkuk Court, and future activities, including mass graves' excavations. UNITAD is committed to investigate ISIL international crimes against all affected communities in Iraq, and in all affected governorates, including



Baghdad, 18 January 2023 - Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** welcomed today at the UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad H.E. **Hans Sandee**, Ambassador of the Netherlands in Iraq and expressed thanks to the continued support of the Netherlands to UNITAD's investigations into ISIL international crimes, especially the Team's work on witness protection and support. H.E. Sandee visited the Team's forensic labs and was briefed on the Team's work in this regard in line with the highest international standards, which is crucial to guarantee admissibility of evidence before competent courts.



Baghdad, 19 January 2023 - Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** met in Baghdad with H.E. Chief Justice **Faiq Zidan** to brief on progress in UNITAD's work. They discussed continued cooperation with the Iraqi judiciary and joint efforts in pursuing accountability for ISIL international crimes. Special Adviser Ritscher reiterated UNITAD's commitment to support Iraq on the path towards prosecuting ISIL members for international crimes, including providing capacity building and expertise. He also stressed the importance of adopting an appropriate legal framework in Iraq to pave the way for such prosecutions and trials, in line with international standards.



Baghdad, 19 January 2023 - Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** met in Baghdad with H.E. **Dr. Saleh Al Hasnawi**, Iraqi Minister of Health. Discussions involved support to the Medico-Legal Directorate with expertise and equipment to aid ISIL victim identification from mass graves. Also discussed was cooperation in continuing with the return of identified remains to their families, as well as potential collaboration that would enable the Investigative Team to refer victims and survivors of ISIL suffering trauma-related difficulties to MoH facilities.

UNITAD on Twitter

Baghdad, 20 January 2023 - UNITAD welcomes German parliament's recognition of ISIL crimes against the Yazidis in Iraq as genocide which acknowledges the suffering of the victims. This comes after the landmark conviction of ISIL perpetrator for genocide in Frankfurt in 2021, which paves the way for more legal proceedings against ISIL perpetrators for this heinous international crime.



Baghdad, 22 January 2023 - As a part of the continued engagement with civil society in Iraq, UNITAD's delegation including Chief of National Engagement and Support **Judge Qasim Al-Aboudi** concluded a visit to Duhok, during which they visited Free Yezidi Foundation's Enterprise and Training Center.

During his various meetings, Judge Al Aboudi stressed UNITAD's commitment to reach out to all victim and survivor communities, and collaborate with NGOs. He also highlighted the important role national NGOs play in supporting UNITAD's mandate.



Baghdad, 23 January 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, and Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** attended today the 6th celebration of Iraq Judicial Day, held under the auspices of the Supreme Judicial Council. The Iraqi judiciary remains UNITAD's key partner in pursuing accountability for ISIL international crimes in Iraq and achieving justice for victims and survivors from all affected communities.



Baghdad, 24 January 2023 - Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** met today with H.E. the Speaker of Iraqi Council of Representatives, **Mr. Mohammed al-Halboosi**, in Baghdad, and briefed him on UNITAD's investigations into ISIL international crimes against all affected communities. They discussed the importance of the adoption of an appropriate legal framework for the prosecution of ISIL perpetrators for international crimes before Iraqi national courts. Special Adviser Ritscher reiterated UNITAD's commitment to support the Parliament in this Iraq-led process. Special Adviser Ritscher stressed that there is no hierarchy of victims, and that UNITAD is aware of the magnitude of such heinous international crimes committed by ISIL members targeting the Sunni community in Iraq, which is an integral part of UNITAD's ongoing investigations.



Baghdad, 25 January 2023 - Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** welcomed today at UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad **Sheikh Dr. Abdul-Wahab Ahmed Hassan Al Taha**, and **Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Taha Alzaydi**, members of the Iraqi Jurisprudence Council. Special Adviser Ritscher and UNITAD investigators briefed on the Team's work, including investigating ISIL international crimes against the Sunni community, as part of UNITAD's comprehensive strategy investigating ISIL crimes against all affected communities in Iraq. Sheikh Dr. Al Taha and Sheikh Dr. Alzaydi reiterated the support of the Jurisprudence Council to UNITAD and its mandate, and discussed ideas for further cooperation in facilitating conversation with community leaders and impacted victims and survivors of ISIL crimes.

UNITAD provided specialist technical support for the excavation of 3 mass graves' sites of ISIL victims in the District of Heet, Anbar

Anbar, 8 February 2023 - To further investigations into ISIL international crimes against all affected Iraqi communities, UNITAD has provided specialist technical support for the excavation of 3 mass graves' sites of ISIL victims in the District of Heet, Anbar, which concluded last month.

This joint work led by Iraqi Mass Graves Directorate and Medico Legal Directorate is conducted in line with MGD's national strategy for excavation of mass graves, and the National Law on Protection of Mass Graves. This work is key for advancing accountability for ISIL international

crimes, and providing solace for the victims' families, who await to know the destiny of their loved ones. The excavated remains were transferred to the laboratory of the MLD in Baghdad for identification.



Baghdad, 26 January 2023 - Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** was pleased to welcome **Dr. Ali Fawzi Al Mosawi**, Senior Legal Adviser to the Prime Minister of Iraq and Chairman of the National Permanent Committee for International Humanitarian Law and a delegation of the Committee members at UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad. Discussions involved how to move forward with ongoing efforts towards the adoption of an appropriate legal framework that allows the prosecution of ISIL perpetrators for international crimes in Iraq, and ways through which UNITAD can support this Iraq-led process.



Baghdad, 31 January 2023 - Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** was delighted to welcome H.E. Netherlands Human Rights Ambassador **Bahia Tahzib-Lie** at UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad. Special Adviser Ritscher briefed Amb. Tahzib-Lie on UNITAD's work, including the broader work to engage interfaith leaders and civil society in accountability efforts. Special Adviser Ritscher also discussed UNITAD's ongoing cooperation with Iraqi counterparts towards the common goal of prosecuting ISIL members for international crimes in Iraq. Amb. Tahzib-Lie commended the work of the Team and stressed that accountability is a steady priority for the Netherlands.



Baghdad, 15 February 2023 - Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** was delighted to welcome at UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad H.E. EU CTC **Ilkka Salmi**, H.E. Ambassador CTC **Erika Ferrer**, H.E. EU Ambassador to Iraq **Ville Varjola** and official EU delegation. Special Adviser Ritscher briefed on UNITAD's work and cooperation with Iraqi partners in digitization and preserving evidence on ISIL international crimes in Iraq. Special Adviser Ritscher also reiterated the Team's appreciation of EU's continuous support to UNITAD, while H.E. Salmi explained the importance of UNITAD's work for global justice processes for ISIL international crimes, and that accountability is key to ensure such atrocities are not committed again. UNITAD recently reported to the United Nations Security Council supporting Iraqi judiciary in digitizing over 5.5 million paper-documents of ISIL remnants in Iraq through the generous funding of the EU Digitalization Project.



Baghdad, 16 February 2023 - Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** was pleased to welcome H.E. **Paula Ganly**, Australian Ambassador to Iraq, at UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad, and brief her on the Team's work and investigations into ISIL international crimes. They also discussed ongoing mutual cooperation and future opportunities for potential support.



Baghdad, 22 February 2023 - UNITAD Iraq conducted a **training workshop** in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) at the Mass Graves Directorate in Baghdad for its technical team responsible for recording 3-D data on crime scenes including mass graves of ISIL victims in Iraq.



Baghdad, 17 February 2023 - Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** welcomed today H.E. **Alina L. Romanowski**, United States Ambassador to Iraq, at UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad. He expressed gratitude for USA's generous support to important areas of the Team's work including mass grave excavations and investigations of ISIL crimes against Sunni and Christian communities. H.E. Ambassador Romanowski stressed the importance of the Team's investigative work, and reaffirmed continued support to UNITAD and its pursuit of justice and accountability for ISIL international crimes.

The 'EDF-Culture Bazaar: Creative Industries Show' held in Basra

Basra, 2 January 2023 - Cultural and creative development have been shown to have a positive impact on post-conflict recovery.

IOM Iraq collaborated with UNESCO to hold the EDF-Culture Bazaar Creative Industries Show in Basra as part of the 'Reviving Mosul and Basra Old Cities' project. The event provided an opportunity for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) awarded grants through IOM's EDF-C programme to network and sell their products.

"This cultural heritage event is impressive and joyful," said Ali Al-Qdury, one participant. "We are attempting to pass on these heritage

works to future generations by displaying them. Wherever we look in Iraq, we see art, heritage, culture and creativity."

The bazaar aimed to help recover urban cultural heritage by providing job and

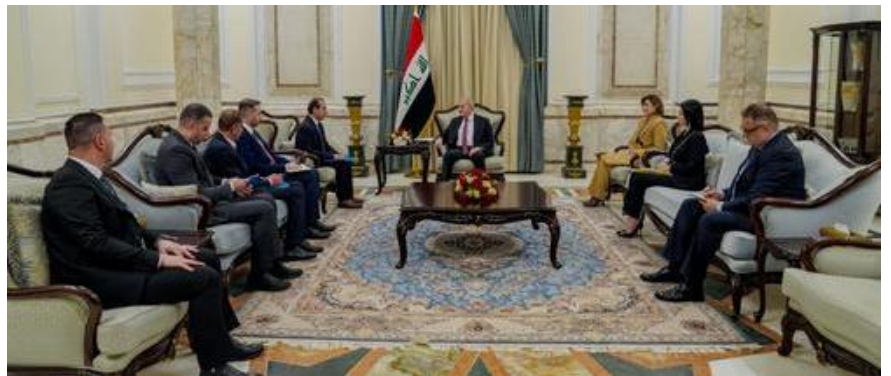
skills development opportunities to Basra's urban youth, improving community resilience and livelihoods.

The 'EDF-Culture Bazaar: Creative Industries Show' was supported by the European Union.



President Rashid receives the delegation of the United Nations Human Settlements Program

Baghdad, 8 January 2023 - The President of the Republic, Abdullatif Jamal Rashid, received the delegation of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat). During the meeting, which was attended by the Minister of Migration and Displacement, Evan Faiq Gabro, they discussed the conditions of the displaced throughout the country and the most important problems that impede their return to their cities and homes and the implementation of the Sinjar Agreement.



Iraqi artist puts her talent to use in IDP camp

Duhok, 9 January 2023 - When conflict broke out in Mosul, Sinjar district, Hakima Hajie Malko's family fled for safety and her education came to an abrupt halt. The family currently live in Kabarto One camp for the internally displaced in Duhok governorate. A star student, Hakima, now 21 years-old, said her greatest wish was to return to studies and develop her talent as an artist in order to support her family.

"Our living conditions were not appropriate for me to continue with my art,"

Hakima said. "But I persisted and continued to develop and exploit this talent to support myself and my family." She began working as a volunteer for one of the non-governmental agencies inside the camp and because of the family's poor financial situation Hakima was referred to the cash-for-work programme. She was interviewed by

the Baghdad Women Association and accepted for work within the camp.

"It was like a dream come true," continued Hakima. "I wanted my art to make me self-reliant and to be able to help out my family." The living conditions in camps are basic and utilitarian, so Hakima set about bringing some colour to the camp through her drawings. "I also wanted to create a more joyful place for the camp residents through my coloured drawings. It brings me happiness to see my handprint in several places

around the camp," she added.

The future looks a lot brighter for Hakima who has gained a new confidence as a result of this opportunity. "I see for myself a beautiful future doing the work that I love. I want to thank Baghdad Women Association and UN Women for their support and opportunity to develop my skills and help other women in the camp". Hakima has a message for all women. "It's never too late to start to do what you love, even if you are 50 years-old, there is no such thing as 'too late'."



UNHCR and Ministry of Interior hold conference in Baghdad to discuss the way forward to end statelessness in Iraq

Baghdad, 18 January 2023 - Thanks to its legal framework to reduce and prevent statelessness, thousands of stateless persons or those at risk of statelessness in Iraq have acquired Iraqi nationality over the years. However, some individuals are still suffering from the impact of not having the nationality of any country - which means they are stateless. While the number of stateless people in the country has been reduced due to efforts made by the Government of Iraq, those without a nationality continue to face significant challenges in accessing their most basic rights, including going to school, seeking professional medical care, getting a job, or registering their marriages or new-borns. Moreover, others remain at risk of being stateless across the country due to, for example, administrative and socio-economic barriers in accessing civil documentation.

To address these remaining barriers, the Ministry of Interior of Iraq and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, held a conference in Baghdad on 18 January to explore solutions for ending statelessness, and preventing future instances of statelessness, not least by scaling up nationwide efforts to facilitate access to civil documentation. In line with UNHCR's Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014-2024 and the #IBelong Campaign, UNHCR Iraq is accelerating efforts to support the Government in ensuring that all eligible individuals can acquire Iraqi nationality and to improve access to

civil documents across the country.

In an attempt to better understand the remaining barriers faced by some, including those related to securing Iraqi nationality and documents, UNHCR and its partner, Legal Clinics Network (LCN), conducted a detailed study in 2021 on Faily Kurds and Bidoons, two of the main population groups affected by statelessness, for which the Government has made considerable progress in resolving their stateless status. In fact, Iraq achieved the world's largest reduction of statelessness in a single year (over 100,000 persons) in 2010. The study provides an overview of the remaining obstacles for those eligible to acquire Iraqi nationality and secure relevant civil documents. Furthermore, it informs measures that will be taken to end statelessness amongst known stateless groups able to access Iraqi

nationality by the end of 2023. Another study is ongoing to look at other groups that may be stateless or at risk of statelessness, with further actions to be informed by the results of the study.

"Stateless people are often invisible to the communities in which they live. They have difficulties accessing basic public services, such as enrolling their children in schools or receiving medical care. The remaining barriers to their recognition as Iraqi citizens can be easily addressed," said Jean-Nicolas Beuze, Representative of UNHCR in Iraq. "Iraq is on the right track towards ending statelessness by the end of 2023 amongst known stateless populations able to access Iraqi nationality. We are fully committed to making it a reality by supporting the authorities' efforts to ensure that every Iraqi citizen is recognized as a member of the Iraqi community."



The legal team of UNHCR's partner, Legal Clinic Network (LCN), provides families with the needed support to receive civil documentation



Basra, 22 January 2023 - "My friends are in the third grade. I want to join them, but I can't," says Mohammad. Mohammad is nine years old. He has been living with his grandmother since he lost his parents. They both live in

Sayid Khudhair area of the Thi-Qar governorate. Neither of them had civil documentation. Thus, Mohammad couldn't go to school.

The legal team of UNHCR's partner, Legal Clinic Network (LCN), provided

the family with the needed support until Mohammad's grandmother received her unified ID card and based on it, Mohammad was issued a unified ID card as well. Mohammad's grandmother also received an official custodianship certificate for him. Today, Mohammad, for the first time, will be able to fulfil his dream and join his friends in school. His grandmother will also be able to apply for public social security benefits, such as the Public Distribution System, which would be a lifeline for the family. UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior discussed in a conference in Baghdad the remaining barriers and way forward to end statelessness in Iraq.

New paper trails: expanding access to civil documentation for children in Iraq

Ninewa, 24 January 2023 - During the conflict with Daesh, thousands of families were displaced from Iraq's Ninewa Governorate. Many of them lost important documents – such as birth, marriage and nationality certificates – and, as a result, still face difficulties accessing basic services. For children without birth certificates, this reality is particularly complex, as they are required to go through an age determination process prior to securing their documentation. Securing the birth certificate and in turn the national ID is a prerequisite for children to be enrolled in schools. In Ninewa, this is no easy feat.

“Without the official documents, there is no proof that they are Iraqi citizens. Children will not be able to enroll in schools, adults will not be able to work or cross checkpoints – they can't even [receive] the unified national card,” said Mr. Haitham Ahmed Yasin, Head of the Ninewa Directorate of Health's (DoH) International Health Unit in Mosul. “Helping people know their real age is their right.”

Until recently, there was only one medical committee in Ninewa that carried out age determination assessments to support the issuance of civil and identity documents for children. The committee is in Mosul, and families living elsewhere in the governorate face long commutes and incur high costs in their efforts to reach the facility. Some face movement restrictions that prevent them from accessing the committee entirely. As a result, their children remain without access to formal education and other public services.

“Without a birth certificate, my daughter faced many problems,” says Hadeel, an IDP in Sinjar, Ninewa Governorate. Without a birth certificate, Hadeel's daughter was unable to get an ID card and was therefore unable to enroll in school. “My daughter's lack of ID card also restricted her movement between regions – we faced a lot of questions at the checkpoints,” Hadeel continues. “I was very worried about her future.”

In a recent achievement gained through strong advocacy efforts, IOM obtained written approval from the Government of Iraq's Ministry of Health and the Ninewa DoH to set up three medical committees at hospitals in the governorate's Sinjar, Tel Afar



and Ba'aj districts to increase the efficiency and reach of the document-issuing process for children. This is a major breakthrough for those like Hadeel who live outside of Mosul and will now have better access to this essential procedural step. This will in turn open the doors for their children to access public schooling, health care and more.

“The presence of a medical committee in Sinjar instead of [only] Mosul has helped us a lot, as it's closer to where we live and has saved us transportation expenses,” Hadeel explains. She and her family live several hours from Mosul, in Sinjar's Sardashti camp for displaced persons. “[The staff on the Sinjar medical committee] speak our language. This made things easier for us since we don't know how to speak Arabic. This will help other families in the future in cases similar to my daughter's.”

With support from IOM's legal team, Hadeel was able to complete an age determination process and secure civil documentation for her daughter. “My child's age was determined through x-rays and other exercises carried out by the medical committee. They also asked us questions to make sure that she is ours,” she details. “After obtaining proof of parentage through the age determination process, it became possible for my daughter to obtain a civil ID and all other documents. She became eligible to enroll in school like the rest of the children and receive health and other services that require identification papers. The [new committee] saved us time, effort and transportation costs.”

“We've disrupted a Catch-22,” says

IOM Iraq Chief of Mission, Mr. Giorgi Gigauri. “These children and their families have long needed to cross checkpoints to reach the age determination committees that facilitate the issuance of birth certificates and in turn ID cards – but ID cards are required to cross the checkpoints. The opening of three new committees in Ninewa helps to address this barrier, expanding access to these processes and bringing Iraq one step closer to realizing its commitments under the Global Compact for Migration to protect and fulfill the human rights of mobile populations, and children in particular.”

IOM works not only to increase the number of civil documentation access points available to these families, but also to see that those operating these access points are technically equipped to do so. IOM also held a training for doctors from hospitals in Sinjar, Tel Afar and Ba'aj districts in age determination through X-Ray technology for individuals ranging from newborns to 60-year-olds, led by experts in the field of forensic medicine. The participants also engaged in debate around the medical and legal dimensions of the age determination process, touching on topics such as proof of parentage and the role of courts.

IOM's legal program continues to work in service of the right to civil documentation across the country.

These efforts were made possible by support from the Government of Australia.

Written by Sarah Gold, Daniah Al-Sadoon, IOM Iraq

ILO partners with Al-Thiqa micro-finance institution to provide financial services and loan disbursement for entrepreneurs

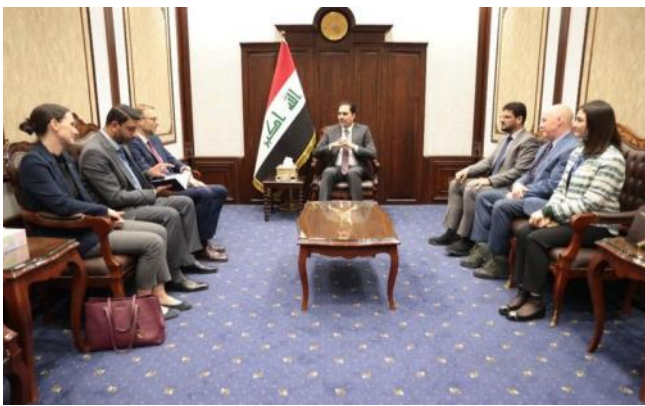
Baghdad, 24 January 2023 - Hishyar Bashir Sadoon is a Syrian refugee who owns a small construction business. He was recently able to expand his business under ILO's financial inclusion initiative, targeting refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and host community members.

Hishyar and hundreds of others are being supported by the ILO in Iraq, under the PROSPECTS Partnership, spearheaded by the Government of the Netherlands. The ILO has partnered with Al-Thiqa micro-finance institution to provide financial services and loan



disbursement for entrepreneurs, and trainings in ILO's Financial Education

programme and in Start and Improve Your Business training programme.



Baghdad, 24 January 2023 - IOM Iraq Chief of Mission, Mr. Giorgi Gigauri, met First Deputy Speaker of Iraq's Council of Representatives, Mr. Mohsen Al-Mandalawi. They discussed the issues of safe, dignified and voluntary returns of displaced to their areas of origin, livelihoods support and durable solutions to displacement.



Baghdad, 23 January 2023 - IOM Iraq Chief Giorgi Gigauri met the Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, Dr Farhad Nimatullah to discuss IOM support for Sinjar district, facilitation of return of displaced persons and continued collaboration with Government of Iraq.

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to begin assessing Iraqi internally displaced persons and returnees in need of social protection assistance with UN support

Baghdad, 1 February 2023 - The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs announced on Wednesday (February 1), it will begin a far-reaching verification process to assess the eligibility of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and IDP returnees to the Social Safety Net (SSN) programme - a poverty targeted social assistance programme implemented by the Ministry and measured by different criteria including income, assets, number of household members, age, and others. Starting in February, the Ministry will conduct household visits to IDPs living both inside and outside camps, including in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Those identified as eligible will be enrolled in the social assistance system that includes monthly cash payments for covering their basic needs.

"The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is collaborating with the

Ministry of Migration and Displaced and United Nations agencies working to provide support to internally displaced persons (...) To-date, the

Ministry has included 42,000 internally displaced families in the social protection cash assistance, with another 10,000 families who have

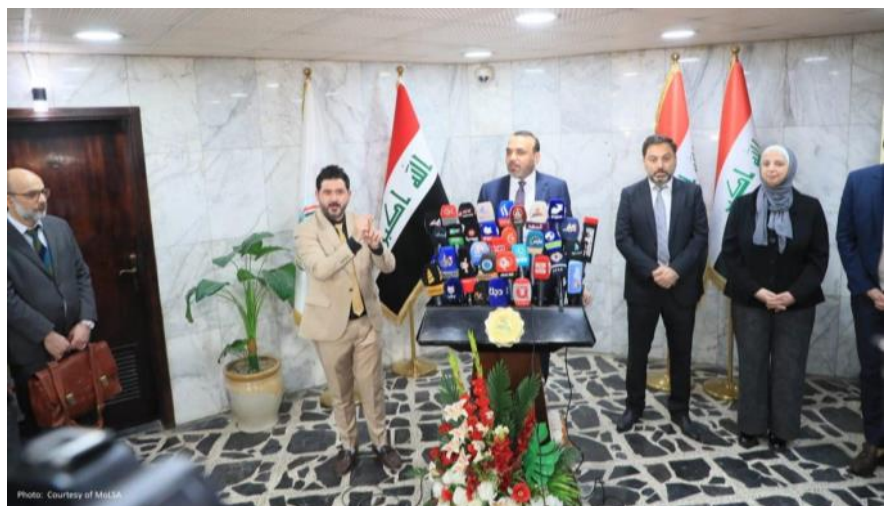


Photo: Courtesy of MSLA

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to begin assessing Iraqi internally displaced persons ... (continued)

registered through the digital platform. We will begin in the coming weeks to visit these camps to include them in the social safety nets," said Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Ahmad Al-Asadi.

Iraq currently hosts 1,173,812 IDPs, as well as 4,978,674 IDP returnees. Until recently, the majority of this population was unable to access the national social protection system given their displacement situation, relying instead on assistance from humanitarian agencies to meet their basic needs.

The new development will ensure that most vulnerable IDPs and returnees who fit the SSN criteria will be included into the national social assistance system at par with the rest of the Iraqi population.

It comes following months of collaboration between the Ministry - which implements several of the social assistance programmes in Iraq - and United Nations agencies, including UNHCR, ILO, UNICEF and WFP, to support Government efforts through advocacy, awareness and research to ensure the effective inclusion of such households in Government support.

UNHCR and the Ministry worked together to analyse data of the recipient households of their respective support

and identify gaps and overlaps. Through this process, they identified that 67,487 IDP and returnee households in the UNHCR database were already in the Ministry's own database, with 44,455 already receiving SSN, while 13,256 were considered ineligible and 9,776 were awaiting verification from the Ministry.

The verification process which will be launched in February will further support efforts to assess households for SSN inclusion.

The decision of the Minister to include IDPs and returnees is in line with the UN vision to transition its support to Iraq from humanitarian interventions to development in support to the national authorities. It allows extremely vulnerable IDPs to transition from cash assistance provided by humanitarian partners to sustainable support from the Iraqi authorities, thus helping them to find dignified solution to their displacement.

"The inclusion of IDPs and IDP returnees in the national social protection system at par with the rest of the Iraqi population is an essential move by the Government to take responsibility for its own citizens and is in line with the UN's objective of transitioning from humanitarian

interventions to durable solution. I commend the Minister for his leadership in making sure that all Iraqi citizens, including the most vulnerable who have been directly affected by Da'esh, are supported and eventually lifted out of poverty which will have an impact on promoting social cohesion in Iraq," said Ghulam Isaczai Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq.

A joint UN position paper was published last year on the adoption of a Social Protection Floor in Iraq. The paper outlines a framework and recommendations for the establishment of a coherent, impactful and inclusive social protection system. The vision puts forward includes shock-responsive social protection system that would support in facilitating access, inclusion and coverage of vulnerable persons, including forcibly displaced populations.

Moving forward, the Ministry will prioritise the integration of graduation strategies for SSN recipient households, to support those who are willing and able to work to lift themselves out of poverty through decent employment in collaboration with ILO.

Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, visited displaced families living in informal sites in Ninewa to discuss their needs and living conditions



Mosul, 13 February 2023 - His Excellency Mr. Futoshi Matsumoto, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, visited

displaced families living in informal sites to discuss their needs and living conditions. Ninewa Governorate hosts

the 2nd highest number of displaced persons in Iraq. Displaced persons living in informal sites are more vulnerable to illness, and exposed to food insecurity and eviction.

"Japan stands by all the displaced people in Ninewa, including those in Mosul," said Mr. Matsumoto.

During a visit to Mosul, Ambassador Matsumoto, had a delightful discussion with Khaleda in her new home about everything - from how her family suffered from migration, to the differences in the Malawian dialect and other Iraqi accents.

"Khaleda, who received shelter rehabilitation support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), amazed me with her story," said Mr. Matsumoto. "She lost two of her children and her house was completely destroyed. I'm glad she, her remaining family and seven grandchildren have found peace in their newly rebuilt home."

Where the heart is: five years of IOM shelter interventions in Iraq

Erbil, 21 February 2023 – Since 2017, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq has assisted over 15,000 families across the country through shelter interventions with the sustained support of the United States of America. Earlier today, IOM held a ceremony at the Catholic University in Erbil to mark this milestone, achieved through five years of housing repair, rehabilitation and reconstruction; debris removal and recycling; housing, land and property (HLP) support; and shelter assistance in informal sites.

Between 2014 and 2017, conflict with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) displaced millions of people from their homes and created devastating material, economic and social repercussions across the country. Private housing was particularly hard hit, with approximately 140,000 residential buildings damaged or destroyed. The conflict left behind an estimated 55 million tonnes of debris – for many families, this debris is all that remains of their original homes.

A significant number lost not only their homes but also their home ownership and occupancy documents, leaving them without the means to prove that their property and land are indeed theirs. Add to this the over 104,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in critical conditions in informal sites – locations typically unintegrated with surrounding communities and excluded from public services – and the urgency of shelter interventions in Iraq becomes especially salient.

“Although increasingly viewed as a commodity in many contexts, access to adequate housing is a fundamental right inscribed in international law,” said IOM Iraq Deputy Chief of Mission,

Caroline Henderson. “Lack of safe, dignified housing can make sustainable returns extremely difficult, put women and girls in particular at risk of gender-based violence and cause additional hardship for households including elderly relatives and persons with disabilities or limited mobility.”

Information coming directly from displacement-affected communities has consistently revealed that housing destruction remains not only one of the biggest obstacles to return faced by IDPs, but also one of the largest challenges to reintegrating and achieving durable solutions for those who have already returned.

“We are very proud of the work that we have achieved together with IOM. The rehabilitation of 15,000 shelter units represents a monumental effort,” said U.S. Consul General, Irvin Hicks Jr. “The United States has long been a committed partner to Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and remains committed to supporting efforts to build a more equitable society for all Iraqis. Together, we have made tangible improvements in the lives of those affected by conflict.”

Addressing all levels of housing damage – from partial to full – in synergy with other interventions allows IOM and its partners to

comprehensively respond to a wide range of needs, not only through shelter repair and reconstruction, but also through the establishment of environmentally-sustainable debris recycling plants operated by returnees from the local community, the provision of HLP-related legal services and more. The ceremony highlighted work implemented by IOM with support from Samaritan’s Purse, Kurdish Organization for Human Rights Watch and ACTED; resourced by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration; and made possible by strong partnerships with local counterparts: from the respective Governor’s offices to local mayors, registries and courts, to community leaders and civil society organizations, to the Government of Iraq’s Ministry of Migration and Displaced and Joint Coordination and Monitoring Center (JCMC).

IOM will continue to cooperate with the Government of Iraq, local communities and national and international partners to action innovative, comprehensive projects in areas of displacement, return and relocation to assist the sustainable reintegration of IDPs.



Earthquake in Syria and Türkiye

Baghdad, 9 February 2023 – **UNICEF:** “Our heart goes out to children, families, and everyone affected by the earthquake. We are deeply saddened by reports of casualties and heavy damage to homes in Syria and Turkey. Tips on how to prepare for and stay safe during an earthquake. Stay safe and warm.”

+++

Erbil, 20 February 2023 – **UNHCR:** There are more than 500 Refugee Housing Units on the way from Erbil to Gaziantep, Türkiye to help people

impacted by the earthquake. In times of devastation and hardship, UNHCR in Iraq and everywhere remains committed to helping those affected by this tragic event.”

+++

Baghdad, 23 February 2023 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. **Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, visited today the Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in Baghdad and signed the book of condolences opened for the victims of the recent earthquake in

Türkiye.

Proto courtesy of the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad.



IOM Iraq hosts a workshop on the reintegration barriers faced by people who were displaced during the ISIL crisis

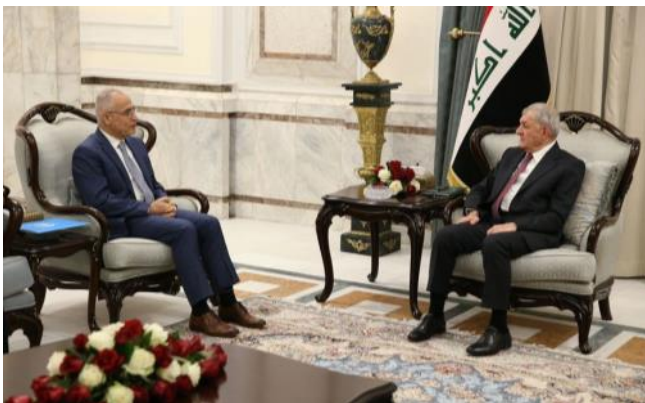
Baghdad, 27 December 2022 - To achieve Durable Solutions, IOM Iraq hosted a workshop on the reintegration barriers faced by people who were displaced during the ISIL crisis, including those who have returned to their place of origin or integrated elsewhere, on December 15th. The workshop was attended 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.

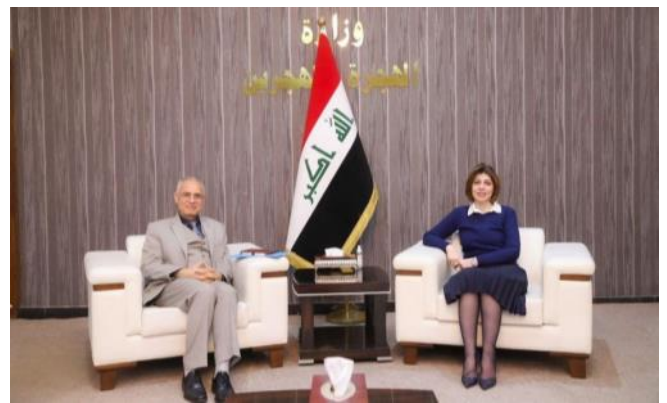
The workshop facilitated extensive discussions among various actors to analyze the situation of returnees and provide recommendations.

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



Baghdad, 23 January 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, received by the President of the Republic, Mr. Abdullatif Rashid. They discussed safe/voluntary conditions for IDP return. The United Nations supports the Government of Iraq's humanitarian/development responses, emphasises need for unified administrative/security structures in Sinjar, and calls on relevant authorities to swiftly implement Sinjar agreement.

Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Iraqi Presidency.



Baghdad, 2 February 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, met with Iraq Minister of Migration and Displacement, Ms. Evan Faiq Jabru. The DSRSG reiterated UN commitment to support the government's leadership and efforts in finding and implementing durable solutions for internally displaced persons and forging an ever-closer partnership with the Ministry.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Migration and Displacement.

UNDP and Government of Iraq hold strategic planning workshop on reintegration in Iraq

Baghdad, 5 February 2023 – Led by the Government of Iraq, the United Nations Development Programme Iraq (UNDP), and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, a three-day workshop has brought together experts and practitioners on reintegration in addition to representatives from government, academia, civil society, and UN agencies to discuss reintegration policy

components and approaches considering international frameworks and best practices.

The three-day workshop enabled sharing of international best practices and challenges within Iraq, including experiences with reintegration support in the current context, focusing on categories of caseloads requiring a specific approach for reintegration in Iraq, including Iraqi families returning

from Al-hol Camp in Syria.

UNDP Iraq Resident Representative, Auke Lootsma, states, “Reintegration is a priority in Iraq, and plays a vital role in strengthening the social fabric of communities. Bringing the key players focused on reintegration into one forum is central to ensuring the advancement of sustainable and effective community reintegration, backed by a national vision to ensure no one is left behind in Iraq.”

Mr. Zidan Khalaf Obaid, Advisor to the Prime Minister of Iraq on Human Rights, highlighted the importance of developing a national plan on reintegration and coexistence, which will strengthen coordination among different partners and ensure efficient implementation of programmes on the ground. He emphasizes, “It is vital that we focus on community acceptance for reintegration, as many families remain stigmatized outside of their



UNDP and Government of Iraq hold strategic planning workshop on reintegration in Iraq *(continued)*

communities.”

Dr. Mohammed Tahir Al Tamimi, Director General on Governmental Follow-up and Coordination, Office of the National Security Advisor, states, “This was an important opportunity to bring together reintegration actors and confirm commitment to the return process, psychological rehabilitation, and sustainable reintegration, as well as to discuss priorities for coordination between partners.”

Mr. Ali Abbas Jahankir, Director

General of the Branches Department, Ministry of Migration and Displaced, says, “We have discussed solutions and mechanisms toward their implementation, and the importance of involving government and society in solving problems in areas of return, including assistance with psychological and social rehabilitation.”

UNDP’s approach to stability in Iraq includes support to stabilization in liberated areas through rehabilitation of infrastructure and serves, 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 ISIL, who are often women and children.

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.

DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai visits Mosul, meets returned families

Sinjar, 13 February 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, visited UN-Habitat Iraq project site in Sinjar titled Emergency Support to Returnees after the Outbreak of COVID, included reconstruction and rehabilitation of 167 houses, rehabilitation of WASH facilities, vocational training, Cash for Work, and COVID awareness-raising

campaign. This project helped over 28,000 returnees to become less dependent on humanitarian assistance through stronger social cohesion and improved livelihoods.

DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai: “I met two returned families in Mosul and heard their extraordinary journey. Providing timely livelihoods assistance is integral to achieving durable solutions. The United Nations in Iraq will continue to support returnees and their families, leaving no one behind”.



Stabilization and Development

Our partnership with Iraq continues to grow as we shift from humanitarian assistance towards development solutions, with durable solutions as a platform to advance the shift



OpEd by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai

Baghdad, 12 February 2023 - Iraq is emerging from years of instability and conflict, and there is every reason to celebrate that with pride. My tenure in

this country has only begun recently, but I have already witnessed significant progress, thanks to the resilience of the people who have made great strides towards paving the way to a more peaceful and stable nation after years of untold hardships.

In 2014, the international community mobilized, at the request of Iraq, to deliver much needed assistance to this country in its difficult hour as it struggled to withstand a devastating security and humanitarian crisis. Five years after the territorial defeat of ISIL/Da’esh, followed by incessant and determined recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation efforts, the shockingly high number of people who needed humanitarian assistance which stood back then at 11 million has dropped recently to 2.5 million. International donors provided an estimated 8 billion USD in humanitarian assistance while billions

more were invested in development, reconstruction and stabilization restoring electricity and public water systems, rebuilding roads, and reconstructing schools, health facilities and housing.

The drop in the number of people in need as well as the Government’s enhanced ability to generate more revenue and provide for its citizens have naturally created favorable conditions for a smooth transition from humanitarian to development solutions for Iraq’s internally displaced population (IDP). This is evident in particular by the adoption of the National Plan on Internal Displacement and the request to include a pillar on ending internal displacement in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNDSCEF).

As we scale down the humanitarian effort in the country, the humanitarian

Our partnership with Iraq continues to grow ... (continued)

community, which has been a close partner of Iraq for many years, reiterates its commitment to continue supporting the people and the authorities in Iraq towards a development solutions phase. As we stood with the people of Iraq in their hour of need, we will continue to work with them now and in the future.

Together with the Government of Iraq, including the Kurdistan Regional Government, we are working on a humanitarian transition strategy to address residual humanitarian needs in 2023 while taking concrete steps to find durable solution for the internally displaced and refugees under the UN Cooperation Framework, to which both the Government of Iraq and the UN Country Team are signatories. For example, our partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs which led to inclusion of IDPs and returnees in the national social safety net is solid demonstration by the Government of Iraq to take responsibility for its own citizen and find long terms solutions for them. We will continue to collaborate with other line ministries to ensure that IDPs and returnees receive the same social services as other Iraqis.

As we move towards these long-term paths, many challenges lie ahead including security, local governance, lack of shelters and livelihood opportunities that hinder the voluntary and safe return of many IDPs to their areas of origin. Creating the right conditions for the people of Iraq to lead in shaping their own future and building a stable, prosperous, and inclusive Iraq is a process that requires everyone to be on board – the Government, the civil society, the private sector, the United Nations and all of its partners, including the donor community.

Last year we helped more than 4.2 million Iraqis, including displaced populations, increasing access to services in priority sectors as well as implementing 629 infrastructure projects that rehabilitated thousands of private and public buildings, including schools and medical centers. More than 5 million m2 of contaminated land were cleared of mines and explosive ordnance in Mosul, Fallujah and Ramadi. These are just some of the examples of the impact.

As in the past, we will continue to support the Government as it leads on many other important issues, including

creating the right political and security environment for sustainable peace and stability, tackling corruption, addressing climate change and water crisis as well as developing durable solutions for the internally displaced that are resilient and long-lasting.

To make it unequivocally clear: the partnership between the UN and Iraq continues to be strong and is thriving, through ongoing projects focusing on advocacy, capacity building and technical assistance. Where required, humanitarian partners continue to provide interventions to vulnerable people and communities, including women, children, young people, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. We also remain engaged in supporting the reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDP) returnees through area-based programming for protection, social cohesion and solutions that address any unresolved vulnerabilities and leave no one behind, as well as identifying durable and dignified solutions for the remaining IDPs.

The people of Iraq alone can determine their future, and the United Nations stands ready to support them every step of the way towards achieving the prosperity they truly deserve.

Iraq: Online portal opens doors for women in business



Baghdad, 23 December 2022 - The country's online system is making it easier for women entrepreneurs to access the benefits of registering their company with the government.

Saja al-Bayati has been fascinated by information technology and news since she can remember.

While pursuing a master's degree in computer engineering, she merged her tech and cyber-security interests with a budding freelance journalism career to

start digital awareness campaigns – beginning a journey that would combine her two passions into a business endeavour.

“The field of information technology in Iraq is quite important. We have high rates of digital illiteracy – and that can put people at risk,” Ms. al-Bayati says.

The 29-year-old from Baghdad now runs a company of security experts that keeps people and organizations safe from cyberattacks.

“I help protect individuals and institutions from hacking, and drive awareness on how to protect private, confidential information,” she says.

When Ms. al-Bayati registered her company, Al-Baydaq (Pawn) Information Technology, with the government in October 2022, she found the process much easier than expected thanks to a new online registration portal.

From 35 steps to a few clicks

On 8 November 2021, the Iraqi government set up business.mot.gov.iq – an online “single window” for business registration – with support from UNCTAD, the United States government and the Global Entrepreneurship Network, a non-profit organization.

The portal simplifies a process that used to entail 35 steps and long hours waiting in line at different government offices. Ms. al-Bayati was able to register her company in just a few clicks and in a matter of minutes.

“I submitted all my papers and paid the

Iraq: Online portal opens doors for women in business ... (continued)

registration fees online without needing a lawyer," she says. "It was the first government e-service I ever experienced, and it was great."

Unlocking important benefits

According to a recent joint UNDP report, Iraq's private sector, which accounts for 40% to 50% of employment, is mainly informal. And women in the country generally face more hurdles than men to own a formal business because of social and cultural norms.

By not registering their business with the government, women entrepreneurs miss out on important benefits, like limited personal liability, tax incentives, access to loans and the ability to build a company brand.

This could also put employees at a disadvantage, as workers in the informal sector often have less job security and social protection.

Fast-tracking women's entrepreneurial ambitions

The Iraqi government invested in the portal to make it easier for everyone in the country to do business – so far almost 3,000 entrepreneurs have used it to register their company.

"It is a moment to be proud and demonstrates that e-registration is a critical empowerment tool," says Frank Grozel, head of UNCTAD's business facilitation programme.

The portal has shown that a good one-stop shop for business registration can help women accelerate their entrepreneurial ambitions. More than 150 women entrepreneurs have had similar experiences to Ms. al-Bayati.

These include Asmaa Hussain Mohammed, who registered Twilight Brightness (سطوع الشفق) a printing, marketing, events and logistics company; Sanaa Abdel Rahim Shakeel, who used the portal to formalize her

clothes importing business, Qobat Al Iraq (قبة العراق) General Trading Limited Liability; and Baida Imran Musa, who registered Al Hayat (الحياة) an airfield and ground services company.

"As women in society, we need the government's support to operate at optimum," Ms. Musa says.

So far, women have accounted for 7% of those registering their business through the portal since its launch. Jonathan Ortman, president of the Global Entrepreneurship Network, expects the share to grow as awareness of the single window increases.

"The data, especially over the past two months, proves that digital government is removing a fundamental barrier to entrepreneurship, especially among those traditionally left out of economic activity," Mr. Ortman says.



SDGs promoted with an arts exhibition

Baghdad, 7 January 2023 - "Art's vast positive power and passion will continue to bring people together, promoting a more inclusive and peaceful world," UN RC a.i. Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan said today at the ZeeArts Organization SDG event to promote SDGs through Arts exhibition, adding "We will continue to make every effort to support the government, civil society, and all stakeholders to achieve the SDGs."

#ZeeArts #SDGsthroughArts @FAOIraq



The construction of Beautiful Basra Park has finished

Basra, 9 January 2023 - The construction of Beautiful Basra Park has finished. As the first environmentally-friendly recreation area along the Shatt al-Arab River in Basra, the project aims to beautify the city and create employment opportunities. It also includes elements of the architectural and cultural heritage of Basra, such as the old-style "shanasheel". The Beautiful Basra Park Project was implemented by UNDP Iraq and supported by the European Union, through the Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development Programme.



Dutch Ambassador and UNICEF visit a water project and a school in Basra

Basra, 11 January 2023 - Mr. Hans Sandee, Ambassador of Netherlands in Iraq, Basra Director General of Water and his technical team, and UNICEF visited a water project and a school in Basra yesterday.

The team visited the newly rehabilitated R-Zero project, which is the main functioning source of freshwater serving 1 million people in Basra city. The visit included a school in southern Basra where UNICEF installed a small-scale water desalination, disinfection units, and

new water tanks with funding from the Netherlands. A total of 100 schools

benefitted from this project reaching 100,000 most vulnerable students.



With EU support UN Habitat constructed 47 core-housing units

Sinjar, 12 January 2023 - Together with ten family members, Farman Omer escaped his hometown of Tel Qasab when ISIL attacked and destroyed their house like the homes of many others. After eight days of fear and hunger hiding in the Sinjar mountains, they moved to Sharya Camp in Dohuk. In 2017 they left the camp for Sinjar Center; however, they could not afford to reconstruct their destroyed house and lived in an abandoned, damaged house with the owner's permission for free.

With generous EU funding through the EU Madad programme, UN-Habitat constructed a core housing unit for Farman Omer and his family, providing them with their own home again.

"We are grateful to your organization

for building this house for us. We are very happy with this house. Without this house, we would be unable to return to our place. This project is very important for people like us whose houses were destroyed. People like us

cannot build a room for themselves without help." Farman Omer Said Farman Omer's core-housing unit is one of 47 core-housing units constructed by UN-Habitat in the Tel Qasab complex, Sinjar District.



UN-Habitat and UNICEF jointly inaugurate the newly installed Water Treatment Plant in the Bab Sinjar Housing complex in Mosul

Mosul, 18 January 2023 - UN-Habitat and UNICEF jointly inaugurate the newly installed Water Treatment Plant in the Bab Sinjar Housing complex in Mosul. The ceremony was attended by the head of Mosul Sewage Directorate. Fully operational since a couple of months, the Plant serves of the nine medium-rise housing blocks of the Bab Sinjar Complex, whose 324 apartments host 2,300 vulnerable returnees from the Old City of Mosul. The Plant is powered by a large photovoltaic system installed on the roofs of an adjacent building, ensuring its environmental sustainability and efficiency. This innovative WASH initiative aims not only to reduce the quantity of

wastewater to be disposed of but also produces clean water for the irrigation of the surrounding public green spaces. Through such projects UN-Habitat aims to assist the local authorities in

addressing the housing challenges related to the country's rapid urbanization and to help build the resilience of Iraqi cities against the effects of climate change.



FAO hosts a training of trainers workshop on data collection and production of Land Cover Maps through use of the ODK collect application

Baghdad, 22 January 2023 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with Iraq Ministry of Water Resources recently hosted a five-day Training of Trainers (ToTs) workshop to the Ministry of Water Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture Team on Data Collection and Producing Land Cover Maps through use of the ODK Collect Application as part of a project funded by the Government of the Netherlands. Training of Trainers workshops provided by FAO aims at increasing the capability of the team of trainers on collecting field data through use of the ODK Collect Application and produce land cover maps.

Country Representative for Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Iraq, Dr. Salah ElHajjHassan, and the Director General of Iraq MoWR Planning and Follow-Up Department, Eng. Zaid

Hamoody, emphasized the contribution of project to monitoring water productivity, better management and usage of water resources and sustainable increase in agricultural production.



Germany renews commitment to stabilization with new EUR 10 million contribution



Baghdad, 25 January 2023 – The Federal Republic of Germany has renewed its commitment to stabilizing Iraq with an additional EUR 10 million (approximately US\$10.5 million) contribution. The critical support will be channeled through UNDP's flagship programme, the Funding Facility for Stabilization. The generous contribution was formalized at a signing ceremony today during the Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office Tobias Lindner's visit to Iraq.

The German Federal Foreign Office has generously provided over US\$130 million since the Facility was established in 2015, bringing the total of German contributions to UNDP's stabilization efforts to US\$575.4 million. The funding will allow for UNDP to continue with its integrated stabilization support through

rehabilitating public infrastructure and services damaged during the ISIL conflict, providing municipalities capacity support to deliver effective public services and strengthening social cohesion and community-based reintegration.

"Working alongside the Government of Iraq, UNDP has completed over 3,400 critical stabilization projects including restoring essential services, supporting livelihoods building municipal capacity and strengthened community-based reintegration. Our efforts in 2023 will further focus on addressing the critical needs, priority locations and sectors, to safeguard the hard-won stabilization gains made since 2015 to ensure a sustainable transition," says Auke Lootsma, Resident Representative, UNDP Iraq.

"We are grateful to our long-standing partner Germany for their timely

contribution towards stabilization in Iraq. Through this support, Germany has prioritized the wellbeing and prosperity of Iraqi communities and I applaud them for their continued leadership," adds Auke Lootsma.

Germany's Minister of State, Dr. Tobias Lindner, comments, "When it was set up, few had foreseen what success the Funding Facility for Stabilization would become. Over the past seven years, the Facility has proven instrumental in safeguarding the gains made against ISIL through civilian means. It was such a success that its model has been emulated in other conflict settings across the Middle East and Africa. With this contribution, Germany underscores its commitment to the stability of Iraq, who will now need take over responsibility for much of the work which has so far been conducted through UNDP's Facility."

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.

The new sidewalks offer a better quality of life to over 700 residents

Baiji, 31 January 2023 - Physical barriers can impact people with disabilities to such an extent that some will not want or be able to leave their homes. For wheelchair users – as well as parents pushing baby strollers – common problems include poorly designed or degraded sidewalks (or lack of), steps in front of public facilities, badly parked cars, or more infrastructural and permanent urban equipment such as telephone poles, traffic signs, fire hydrants, and electrical boxes obstructing their way. As part of its local area development project in Baiji, funded by the European Union, UN-Habitat is currently investing in the realization of 3 km of sidewalks in the neighborhood of Al Asry. The project connects the main road to the commercial and residential area, including the newly realized Baiji Park visited by hundreds of children daily. The new sidewalks offer a better quality of life to over 700 residents and provide improved

pedestrian safety to dozens of shopkeepers and their customers. The design of the sidewalks specifically addresses the needs of people with disabilities and wheelchair-bound individuals, whose movements have been challenged by nearly a decade of very poor road conditions, and contributes to the sustainable return of IDPs to their respective homes and activities.

Ali Habib supports financially a family

of four and needs a wheelchair to reach the government office where he works. During the works, the team also spoke to Ms Hamda Akhras Mohamed, a widow who had a leg amputated due to diabetes. Constrained to a wheelchair, she is grateful for the new sidewalks that will allow her to reach her sister's house. The project is being implemented in partnership with Baiji Municipality who has planned to pave the roads by mid-2023.



IOM assisted 91 families to rehabilitate their damaged homes in Diyala, and restored the village's water station and electricity

Diyala, 31 January 2023 - Once lively agricultural villages, Arab Fares and Al-Agedat in Muqdadaya, Diyala Governorate, saw immense displacement during the Daesh conflict. Homes were severely damaged, infrastructure was destroyed and the community was forced to flee. Despite these challenges, community members are determined to rebuild and create a sustainable future for themselves and their children.

With support from IOM through the Durable Solutions Programme, the villages are getting back on their feet:

43 households returned to their homes and have started rebuilding their lives, and more families are expected to do so in the near future.

To facilitate their return, IOM assisted 91 families to rehabilitate their damaged homes, and restored the village's water station and electricity network. Families were also provided with Individual Livelihood Assistance packages.

This programme is supported by U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.



The first strategic dialogue and coordination meeting between the United Nations in Iraq and The World Bank in Iraq held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 1 February 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, held, in Baghdad, the first strategic dialogue and coordination meeting between the United Nations in Iraq and The World Bank in Iraq and agreed on joint advocacy and action to address climate change impact including water shortages, unemployment, social protection, durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.



Since 2015, UNDP have been providing employment opportunities to help families rebuild their lives

Baghdad, 27 January 2023 - During the ISIL conflict, many Iraqis were left jobless. Since 2015, UNDP have provided employment opportunities to help families rebuild their lives. To date, through cash-for-work, UNDP have employed around 90,000 people. This has helped stabilize people's incomes.

Over 5,000 were employed under UNDP's Building Resilience through Employment Promotion project, funded by Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ), provided through KfW Development Bank.

In Kirkuk's Hawija district, 240 people



recently took part in the cleaning of irrigation canals for 45 days. They

earned around US\$ 900, which helped boost their household income.

More than 150,000 people in Duhok now have access to safe drinking water through a new UNICEF project funded by Germany

Duhok, 1 February 2023 – UNICEF handed over a water project funded by Germany, to the Governorate of Duhok today. The handover was attended by Dr. Ali Tatar, Governor of Duhok; Mr. Sasan Awani, Minister of Municipalities and Tourism; Mr. Klaus Streicher, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany; Dr. Anna Janke, Country Director of the KfW Development Bank and Mr. Mads Oyen, Chief Field Operations, UNICEF in Iraq. This project will secure safe and clean drinking water for more than 150,000 people in the Amedi area, on north of Dohuk, serving communities, households, schools and healthcare facilities.

This project, financed by the German Government through the KfW Development Bank, was implemented as a result of high turbidity in the river. High rates of turbidity in the river and lack of treatment of the unclean water resulted in limited availability of, and accessibility to safe drinking water, putting the lives of children and their families at great risk of water-borne diseases.

The project built a control valve chamber, extended the main water line and upgraded the intake structure of the treatment plant. As a result, up to 2,400 m³ of clean and safe drinking water is pumped on an hourly basis - equaling the amount of water in an Olympic size swimming pool.

"It is impressive to see the achievement of this project. Water is life! We are relieved that so many people can now benefit from access to clean water," said Mr. Klaus Streicher, Consul General of

Germany, adding "If partners stand together, we can face the impact of climate change."

"Ensuring access to safe and clean water is one of our priorities to mitigate the impact of climate change," said Dr. Anna Janke, Country Director, KfW Development Bank. "KfW Development Bank is proud to see that this project has materialized where children and their families are benefitting from clean and safe drinking water."

Vulnerable children and 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.

"Mitigating the impact of climate change is one of our priorities. With thanks to the support of Germany,

through the KfW Development Bank, this water project ensures that water infrastructure and services are safe, sustainable and resilient to climate-related risks securing safe and clean drinking for children and their families," said Mr. Mads Oyen, Chief Field Operations, UNICEF in Iraq. "This rehabilitated water system not only reaps a myriad of health benefits for children and their families, but also helps build community resilience to the impacts of climate change."

UNICEF is committed to support the Government of Iraq and its people to address the challenges of environmental sustainability and will continue the work with youth advocates and other young people to enable them to be agents of change, on the value of water and water conservation.



UNDP Resident Representative, Auke Lootsma, visits key sites across Tal Abta in Ninewa

Ninewa, 9 February 2023 - UNDP Resident Representative, Auke Lootsma, visited key sites across Tal Abta in Ninewa today. These facilities were recently rehabilitated through the Funding Facility for Stabilization: Agricultural compound, including a veterinary directorate and two warehouses for storing produce. 200-tree olive farm that was re-planted. A neighborhood playground that will now enable children to play safely. The facilities were left severely damaged by ISIL. However, with important agricultural facilities and community recreational centres active, it will allow its 2,000 returnees to restart their lives safely and with

dignity. This has been possible thanks to

generous support from Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq.



Securing clean and safe drinking water for people in Basra

Basra, 9 February 2023 - The EU International Partnerships and UNICEF, in collaboration with Eni, jointly visited Basra this week and took part in the Steering Committee of a project to provide clean drinking water to the population of Basra City. Through this project, UNICEF, funded by the European Union, and in collaboration with Eni, around 850,000 people will secure clean and safe drinking water, in partnership with Basra Water Directorate and private consultancy firms, private contractors and local NGOs. Quality of life in Basra City will also be improved thanks to this initiative, by strengthening the capacity of water sector for equitable and sustainable



drinking water. It will also secure employability opportunities for young people through innovative and

environmentally sustainable water supply solutions by supporting green jobs opportunities.



Erbil, 6 February 2023 – Auke Lootsma, UNDP Resident Representative, met today with **Dr Rewaz Faek**, Speaker of the Kurdistan Region Parliament. They discussed ways how UNDP can expand its support in enhancing the efficiency of parliamentary work and eliminate corruption.



Mosul, 10 February 2023 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, accompanied by the Governor of Ninewa and the Director-General of Dams and Reservoirs of Iraq, visited the **Mosul Dam**.

H.E. Mr. Futoshi Matsumoto, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, visited Bab Sinjar Housing Complex in Mosul constructed by UN-Habitat

Sinjar, 13 February 2023 - The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is honored to have received His Excellency Mr. Futoshi Matsumoto, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, to Bab Sinjar Housing in west Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, social housing complex constructed by UN-Habitat Iraq under the project titled "Support to Reconstruction and Peacebuilding of Liberated Cities in Iraq" funded by the Government of Japan.

On this special occasion a soft inauguration ceremony was held on 12th February 2023 with the presence of Ms. Evan Jabro, Minister of Migration and Displaced, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad ISACZAI, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations, Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Najim Abdullah Al-Jubouri, Governor of Ninewa along with the representative of UNICEF, relevant government officials, and construction partners.

UN-Habitat successfully completed the project of Bab Sinjar Housing Complex in Mosul and the official handover process to the municipality of Mosul has been completed in January 2023. UN-Habitat did not just implement the project, but also provided the technical assistance to the Government of Iraq, including providing the guideline of beneficiary selection based on the socio-economic vulnerability. Approximately 2, 300 returnees currently reside in nine buildings of 324 units. The great collaboration between the Government of Iraq and UN-Habitat was made and the project is seen as one of the best practices for durable solutions towards the returnees.

His Excellency Mr. Futoshi Matsumoto, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, congratulated the completion of the Bab Sinjar Housing Complex project implemented by UN-Habitat with the support of Japan. He expressed that the project would help the returnees rebuild their lives and support their smooth reintegration. The Government of Japan remains committed to standing by the people of Iraq.

Ms. Evan Jabro, Minister of Migration and Displaced, stated that "UN-Habitat's effort to support displaced at the area and their return to dignified housing is much appreciated by Government and all the local counterparts. Displaced



persons are a priority for the government, which is keen to assist and facilitate all the requirements for a safe return of the citizens to their areas of residence. The Ministry, UN and the Government of Japan shall continue working together to archive greater goals for the people and for development of the area" in her remark.

Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations, Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, stated that "Bab Sinjar Housing Complex project is a sensible move towards finding durable solutions for the returnees. It is a solid demonstration of partnership among the governments of Iraq and Japan and the UN, and strengthens ongoing cooperation towards building inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and communities in Iraq, particularly in Ninewa governorate," in his remark.

Mr. Wael Al-Ashhab, Head of Country Programme of UN-Habitat Iraq 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. 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.



Recently rehabilitated marketplace in Tel Qasab, Sinjar District improves and rejuvenates the community's livelihood activities

Sinjar, 13 February 2023 - UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/RC/HC, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai and the UN-Habitat Head of Programme in Iraq visited the recently rehabilitated marketplace and talked to some shop owners in Tel Qasab, Sinjar District. This project is a part of EU MADAD fund programme to improve and rejuvenate the community's livelihood activities. This programme also contributes to improving the living condition of 235,000 people by

providing core-housing construction, vocational training, HLP rights and

rehabilitation of public places and WASH facilities in Western Ninewa.



DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Isaczai visits the project sites in Sinjar, attends the ceremony for the distribution of the occupancy certificates to the households in Tal Banat township



Sinjar, 13 February 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations, Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad ISACZAI, accompanied by the Special Advisor to the President of Iraq, Mr. Mohammed Amin and the Head of UN-Habitat Iraq Programme, visited the project sites in Sinjar. They

attended the ceremony for the distribution of the occupancy certificates to the households in Tal Banat township, Sinjar district. Mr. Ghulam highlighted the close collaboration between the government of Iraq and the UN on the recently approved legal decree, and also emphasized that the compensation scheme is an important mechanism for

the IDPs which will contribute to sustainable returns and achieve durable solutions.

They also visited the houses reconstructed and rehabilitated by UN-Habitat Iraq with generous contributions by donors such as the Government of Japan, the Government of France and KOICA. The rehabilitation works also include WASH facilities, vocational training, Cash for Work, and COVID awareness-raising campaigns.

Overall, UN-Habitat supported over 28,000 internally displaced persons, refugees, and host community members to become less dependent on humanitarian assistance through stronger social cohesion and improved livelihoods. UN-Habitat extends appreciation to partners and donors who have supported our common vision and action toward sustainable urban development in Iraq.

DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai visits Al Yarmouk Park recently rehabilitated by UN-Habitat Iraq

Mosul, 12 February 2023 - During his visit to Mosul, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, had the chance to visit Al Yarmouk Park recently rehabilitated by UN-Habitat Iraq, in partnership with Mosul Municipality.

The recovery of this iconic public space, funded by the European Union, offers a range of activities that promote social integration, cohesion, and peacebuilding among people of all ages

and backgrounds.

The park has been redesigned to integrate wide walkways with new multi-purpose sports areas, thousands of newly planted trees and bushes, a large dancing fountain, multiple playgrounds, and leisure facilities for families.

DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai also visited UN Habitat project "Support for Urban Recovery and Peacebuilding in Western Ninewa" which targets 235,000 people and contributes to voluntary and sustainable returns in Western Ninewa via a comprehensive approach to

address critical challenges such as housing, livelihoods and Housing, Land and Property rights in the Districts of Sinjar, Tel Afar, and Ba'aj in Western Ninewa.



The Tal Qasab police station in Ninewa is now open



Ninewa, 13 February 2023 - The Tal Qasab police station in Ninewa is now open! During the conflict, this facility was

burnt and heavily damaged by ISIL. Today, it has 10 rooms, toilets, a kitchen, and a storage room. Trees were also planted to make the station more appealing and inviting to Tal Qasab's 15,000 residents.

The opening was led by the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai.

The Tal Qasab police station was rehabilitated by UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization with support from Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq.

Local Revenue Generation workshop held in Erbil

Erbil, 13 February 2023 - How to strengthen revenue systems at the sub-national level in Iraq was the main topic of discussion at UN-Habitat's 2nd Local Revenue Generation workshop held in Erbil and attended by governorates' representatives, senior staff from the Municipalities, Water, Sewage, Tourism, and Antiquities Directorates from Erbil, Duhok, Mosul, Baiji, and Fallujah.

One of the most debated sessions focused on the legislative framework for local revenues, and most specifically the perceived shortcomings of the laws determining Municipal Revenue (Law 130 of 1963) and Municipalities Administration (Law 165 of 1964). Adequate mobilization of Own-Source



Revenue (OSR) – income generated by subnational governments from local sources in the form of taxes, utilities fees and charges – is key to improved provision of public services and potentially the fostering of stronger administrative accountability towards

citizens. This initiative is funded by the European Union under its programme "Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development", also known as LADP III, implemented by UNDP in partnership with UN-Habitat.

Essam: protector, provider, and entrepreneur

Baghdad, 16 February 2023 - A police officer for 19 years, Essam ventured into fruit and vegetable business nine years ago to spend more time with his son. With their business flourishing, they set up a second shop in Al-Shoura's newly built commercial complex.

Essam Saleh Khedr, 48, starts his day at 3:00 am. From his home he heads straight to his fruit and vegetable stall in Al-Shoura town market. There he spends the next three hours checking bags of tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers, aubergines, and oranges, arranging them on the rack, and coordinating deliveries.

In a few minutes, his day gets busier as early risers start to show up to pick up their fresh produce. As the clock strikes 6:30 am, he heads back home to prepare for his day job while his son takes over the shop. From business owner, he turns into a police officer. For

eight to nine hours, he writes and files reports, responds to people's calls and concerns, and patrols his assigned

areas.

He comes back to his shop at 7:00 pm and spends an hour dealing with night



Essam: protector, provider, and entrepreneur (Continued)

shoppers, doing inventories, calling suppliers, and scheduling deliveries for the following day. Then he closes the shop, goes home, and ends his day with a hearty meal with his wife and nine children.

Essam's day has been this way for nine years since he opened his shop in 2013. When he is off duty, he spends his entire day in the shop. Although his son manages the shop well, Essam remains hands on, making sure every vegetable and fruit is delivered on time and each customer is satisfied with their purchase.

The vegetable/fruit shop was his son's idea. For months, Essam took out some portions of his salary and saved it for the shop's starting capital. The first six months were rough and bumpy. From finding suppliers to setting up the shop – it was challenging, but it was a challenge Essam and his son were ecstatic to conquer together.

Today Essam has two vegetable/fruit shops. He also has three shop helpers whom he pays with free fresh produce every day and 100,000 Iraqi dinars (US\$69) every month. But Essam remains simple and humble. He keeps

the same routine, as well as the quiet but charming demeanor.

"I always tell my children and the young people in my village, 'Pursue your dreams and work hard. Do everything you can to get a job or start a business. There is something for everybody, but you must put in the effort to make it happen'."

Essam's shop provides additional income for his family. It also helps boost Al-Shoura's economy and bring some life back to the town centre.

Al-Shoura market was left in ruins after the conflict, with about 30 shops completely destroyed.

Through UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS), these shops have been rebuilt and strategically relocated to the district's main entry point, serving communities living in Al-Shoura's 67 villages and even nearby towns.

Mayor Mohammed Al-Jobouri says the recently opened commercial complex is one of Al-Shoura's important assets. Its clean and modern aesthetic entices people to shop, bringing in money to the district and providing livelihoods and jobs to its citizens.

"The stores in the commercial complex offer a variety of goods. There are also restaurants. People love shopping in Al-Shoura because the prices are lower, and they can pay in installments. In return, we try to keep the business owners happy through reasonable contracts and rents," he adds.

"Economic activity in Al-Shoura has increased nearly 50% because of these shops. It also created new jobs. It is integral to the town's rehabilitation and development," says Mayor Mohammed Al-Jobouri

As of January 2023, UNDP FFS has rehabilitated 1,028 shops in Iraq's four liberated governorates, benefitting 290,000 people. These projects were supported by the Governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Iraq, Italy, New Zealand, Sweden, and United States Agency for International Development.

In Ninewa alone where Al-Shoura and Essam's shops are located, 819 shops have reopened. The construction of Al-Shoura's commercial complex which has 30 shops was funded by the Government of Canada.

Al Mujahed al-Arabi Primary School in Anbar Province has been fully rehabilitated

Anbar, 19 February 2023 - Al Mujahed al-Arabi Primary School in Anbar Province has been fully rehabilitated and is now ready to welcome students. The school was severely damaged during the ISIS conflict and remained closed for several years, forcing students to attend classes in substandard, overcrowded, makeshift facilities, resulting in a decline in educational standards.

With the support of USAID, and through the Funding Facility for Stabilization program implemented by UNDP Iraq, the school has been

restored to its preconflict state. Now with more than 400 students attending, the school is brimming with vitality. "Students and teachers feel better and more motivated to go to school," says

principal Rasheed Ubaid Zedan. "Everyone is happy and proud of their school. Even parents have noticed this remarkable shift in their children's behavior."



Over 7,000 people in Kutela and Al-Hawejah villages in Al-Rummana now have access to clean water

Baghdad, 19 February 2023 - Over 7,000 people in Kutela and Al-Hawejah villages in Al-Rummana now have access to clean water after UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization rehabilitated their water complexes which were damaged during the conflict.

These projects were implemented with Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Utenriksdepartementet (Norge).



UN Habitat supports the digitization and digitalization of the public administration

Baghdad, 19 February 2023 - Conscious of the need to move towards the digitization and digitalization of the public administration, Mosul and Baiji Municipalities have requested UN-Habitat's support to conduct a street-by-street pilot registration supported by GPS coordinates of unrecorded businesses and enterprises, while Falluja Water Directorate has prioritized the conversion of users records on paper to digital databases. Both pilot activities were launched last week through UN-Habitat's implementing partner AGO, who deployed 110 young enumerators and 10 data clerks. The first few days were spent familiarizing with the task and tweaking the survey forms, but by the end of this week the enumerators had recorded over 10,000 businesses and

the data entry clerks digitized over 11,100 water users' records. Strengthening revenue systems at sub-national level can not only improve fiscal autonomy through more predictable access to revenue but would

give provincial authorities greater ownership and control over their development agendas. This initiative is being conducted with the generous support of the European Union.



Iraq's transition from humanitarian to development discussed in Geneva

Geneva, Switzerland, 20 February 2023 - Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai: "I had the pleasure of meeting His Excellency Ambassador Abdul Karim Hashim Mostafa, Iraq's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva. We exchanged views on Iraq's transition from humanitarian to development including solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs), climate change and development finance".



UNDP held a job fair in Hawija to link construction companies with over 200 people UNDP had trained

Hawija, 20 February 2023 - UNDP held a job fair in Hawija to link construction companies with over 200 people UNDP have trained. They spent one month learning skills such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical and interior design at the Technical Institute of Hawija. Following this, they received two months of hands-on experience working for construction companies. Today, they are ready to enter the job market! At the fair, trainees learned about job opportunities and submitted resumes. Some secured job interviews. Some were offered jobs. Congratulations!

This was implemented by UNDP's Building Resilience through Employment Promotion (BREP) project with Human Relief Foundation and

supported by Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ), provided through KfW Development Bank.



A solar-powered closed irrigation system project in Al-Duwaib, Basra Governorate has been completed

Basra, 20 February 2023 - A solar-powered closed irrigation system project in Al-Duwaib, Basra Governorate:

- reduces local shortage in water for farming
- supports 50 people with livelihood assistance
- expected to benefit 1300 people

Opening ceremony was attended by Ministry of Water Resources, including Deputy Minister and General Directors, IOM representatives and local authorities.

Iraq is the 5th most vulnerable country in the world to climate change. More support is needed to increase the resilience of its communities and support national efforts to adapt.



Agriculture

FAO Iraq continuous monitoring the dramatic impact of climate changes and water shortage on agriculture in Southern Iraq's famed Marshlands



Basra, 8 January 2023 - Finally, New Year 2023 brings hope and happiness to Buffalo producers in Iraqi Southern Marshes, after nightmarish drought and thirst in 2022. Happily, rains recently watered Central and Southern Iraq improving water levels of Marsh areas in Al-Chibayish district, as the levels reached 100-110 cm in the Euphrates basin, and in the marshes. Also salinity levels decreased to 1500 ppm, which made it possible for people to drink this water, in addition to their animals, (according to the recent

records of the Water Resources Department in the district).

This has had a great positive impact, especially on buffalo producers. It represents an important shift in their lives after they despaired of water shortage and the drying out of marshes, reaching alarming levels of decline. According to Water Resources Department in Al-Chibayish, last year by end January 2022 water levels reached 22 to 55 cm, while most of marshes have dried up completely.

Today (beginning January 2023), the

water levels in the Euphrates marshes have risen to a good level around 100 cm, due to the generous rainfall during the last weeks and the role of the Ministry of Water Resources in increasing the flow of water.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Representative for Iraq, Dr Salah el hajj Hassan, said: we wish a better year 2023 for our buffalo farmers in the Marshes hoping that the sky continues its generosity with more rains during these days and coming weeks addressing appreciation to the European Union, Swedish Government and the Government of Iraq, noting that FAO called for supporting buffalo farmers in early spring last year while with EU support and in coordination with Ministry of Agriculture and local partners feed and seed support reached more than 5000 buffalo farmers with continues efforts in introducing climate smart and sustainable agricultural practices.

FAO hosts a training on quarantine and border inspection procedures

Baghdad, 8 January 2023 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Agriculture and Water

Resources (MoAWR)-KRG hosted the Quarantine and Border Inspection Procedures Workshop, as part of the United States Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) funded

project, Improving Delivery of Animal Health Services and Disease Surveillance in Iraq. The workshop aimed at strengthening the knowledge and skills of quarantine and border

FAO hosts a training on quarantine and border inspection procedures *(continued)*

inspection staff to implement the quarantine procedures.

Thirty specialists from the veterinary services in Baghdad, Erbil, Duhok, Nineveh, Anbar, Wasit, Muthanna and Basra and two from the Ministry of Health (MoH) participated to the training. The opening session was attended by the FAO Representative in Iraq and officials from relevant ministries.

Maintaining the health and safety of animal wealth; developing the livestock sector and upgrading its production, also as a food security tool; preserving the safety of products of animal origin and preventing the incoming and outgoing of animal diseases through strong border inspection is important to protect human health and safety of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, fishery and environment said the FAO Representative, Dr Salah ElHajj Hassan.

During the workshop, the national and international experts discussed the legal framework in Iraq on quarantine

inspection and borders control of live animals and animals' products; the international standards including the World Organisation for Animal Health (founded OIE), the FAO-WHO Codex Alimentarius for food safety, and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) for plant health; Animal Health Hazards Identification for the Trade of Animals and Animal Products.

The training focused on qualitative, semi-quantitative and quantitative risk assessments, the key tools for countries

quarantine protection measures identifications and risk mitigations of introduction of pathogenic agents from other countries.

The workshop also covered the principles and process of veterinary certifications and border inspection systems. Overall, the five days training should contribute to strengthen the Quarantine Departments capacities to monitor importations' requirements for live animals and animal's products through improved, risk evaluation and mitigation.



FAO supplied veterinary centers in Erbil, Duhok, and Nineveh Governorates with IT equipment



Erbil-Duhok-Nineveh, 16 January 2023 – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Iraq (FAO) on 12 January handed over IT equipment to veterinary services in Erbil, Dohuk and Ninewa governorates. This support package is an integral part of national capacity building project on improving the delivery of animal health services and disease surveillance in Iraq.

The FAO Representative in Iraq Dr Salah ElHajjHassan handed over PCs, Map Printer, and mobile phones, to be used for EMA-i application and disease

reporting, to the General Directorate of Animal Wealth and Veterinary in Erbil, Veterinary Directorate in Duhok and Veterinary Hospital in Ninewa.

These equipment are intended to support Iraq's ability to detect, diagnose, and report high-threat veterinary and/or zoonotic diseases in the targeted provinces.

During the visit to Dohuk, Dr Salah ElHajjHassan met the Deputy Governor, Dr Sham'un Tilaya, and the Deputy Head of Duhok Veterinary Directorate, Dr Suleiman Tamer and discussed FAO Iraq activities in the

region, the implementations of DTRA funded project and potential future collaboration.

Dr Salah ElHajjHassan also had a brief meeting in Duhok with the newly graduated vets and shared insights about FAO and orientation to the importance of enhancing their skills through trainings to increase their employment opportunities.

In Ninewa, the FAO Representative met the Director of the Veterinary Hospital, Dr Oday Shihab Ahmed who expressed his appreciate for FAO support and together visited the newly established facilities.

The four-year project is financially supported by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency of the United States (DTRA) aimed at reducing the risk of the international movement of animal diseases, which introduction and spread could threaten livestock production, food security and nutrition, food safety and public health and the environment of Iraq. To achieve the above, the project implements activities to strengthen the capacity of veterinary services to detect, diagnose and report highly pathogenic animal diseases and improve communication between central/local levels and herding communities.

FAO in collaboration with Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) conducts a training on the collection of reference data for crop mapping for the West Gharraf Irrigation Project area

Baghdad, 20 January 2023 - In Baghdad, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Iraq (FAO) in collaboration with Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) conducted a 5-day training on the collection of reference data for crop mapping for the West Gharraf Irrigation Project area (Wasit & Thi_Qa Governorates), one of the subnational areas in Iraq with 30 m resolution data. This activity is part of the technical support provided by the FAO to the Ministry of Water Resources according to a letter of

agreement between the two entities. The MoWR will subsequently collect data for the winter season crops of the year 2023.



Farmers receive wheat seeds and fertilizer from FAO to mitigate the impact of forecast drought

Baghdad, 27 January 2023 - Vulnerable food insecure farmers recently received wheat seeds and fertilizer from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq, with the support of the Government of Belgium, to mitigate the impact of forecast drought on agricultural livelihoods through inputs and capacity development on climate-smart irrigation management. UN FAO Priority Area on Agriculture and Food Emergencies, will improve food access by boosting agriculture production, thus increasing agriculture-based income and adoption of good agriculture practices.



UNDP: 59 male and female farmers from Missan have won a competition for innovative methods for sustainable agriculture!

Missan, 26 January 2023 - "This was a great opportunity for economic empowerment while changing the perception of women in Missan," said Hadia Jabur, 32.

59 male and female farmers from Missan Governorate have won a competition for innovative methods for sustainable agriculture! Their submission supports long-term food security by focusing on wheat production.

In cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, and funded by the European Union through a peer-to-peer programme between the Association of Albanian Municipalities and Missan Governorate, 100 farmers compete in the competition.

As part of the programme, new methods of irrigation and new seeds were provided from Albania. An

additional 19 fishermen received new fishing boats to work in the Missan marshlands.



FAO training on conservation agriculture and land management practices



Basra, 1 February 2023 – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in coordination with the Ministry of Environment (MoE), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), launched on 30 January 2023 the training on Conservation Agriculture and Land Management Practices through Farmer Field Schools approach, a milestone of the “Sustainable Land Management for Improved Livelihoods in Degraded areas of Iraq” project funded by Global

Environment Facility (GEF).

Thirty-one government extension officers from Thi Qar Governorate attended the training and will cascade the gained knowledge to Lead Farmers who will spearhead a farmer-to-farmer extension service delivery on Conservation Agriculture for Sustainable Land Management across the project locations.

The training sessions include but not limited the following thematic subjects: roles and responsibilities of farmers field school trainers, criteria for

selection and management of farming demonstration sites, principles of conservation agriculture, diagnosis and combating land degradation, climate smart agriculture, design and implementation of an action plan on rural participatory farmer-to-farmer extension service delivery.

During the workshop, Dr Salah ElHajjHassan, FAO Representative underlined the importance of the FFS model developed by FAO in building extension officers and farmers skills to improve sustainable production while adapting to climate change impacts. He said, “the project will build upon and expand this model for the purposes of building local community capacity to engage in and support agro-ecological and conservation practices at the landscape level”.

FAO Technical team composed of national and international experts will continue delivering during the next 7 days theoretical and field sessions for capacity building of the extension officers on conservation agriculture pillars, mechanisms, techniques, as well as planning and management skills.

FAO conducts awareness workshop for veterinarians on FMD in Ninawa Governorate

Ninewa, 2 February 2023 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), conducted a workshop in Ninawa Governorate to support and renew the capacity of veterinarians to identify, early diagnose, timely report the disease events to the veterinary hospital, manage the risks of this disease and monitor it, as well as the prevention and control strategy for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in this province.

The opening session was attended by the FAO Representative in Iraq, the Technical Deputy of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and the Director of the Veterinary Hospital in Nineveh. Fifty specialists from veterinary dispensaries affiliated to the Nineveh Governorate veterinary hospital attended the workshop.

Dr. Salah El-Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative, said “this workshop is timely needed. It will scale up capacities to control diseases outbreaks, including FMD, affecting the national economy and breeders’ income .



The Technical Deputy of the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. Mithaq Abdul-Hussein, highlighted the importance to enhance the scientific and technical capacities of veterinarians and farmers/breeders to control epidemic diseases affecting livestock and preventing their spread.

The Director of the Nineveh Veterinary Hospital confirmed ongoing control

measures taken by the veterinary hospital and its affiliated veterinary clinics.

During the workshop, FAO technical team discussed with the participants the FMD transmission, epidemiology and pathogenesis, clinical signs and differential diagnosis, laboratory diagnosis, symptomatic treatment and control measures.

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

Al Ahwar, 8 February 2023 - A high-level delegation of European Union ambassadors including the ambassador of Romania H.E. Mr. Radu Octavian Dobre, Greece H.E. Mr. Georgios Alamanos and the general consul of Poland led by EU Ambassador H.E. Mr. Ville Varjola, visited - on 6th February 2023- FAO activities in the Southern Marshes of Iraq to assess the progress of the "Restoration and Strengthening the Resilience of Agri-Food Systems in Southern Iraq" project, implemented by FAO in coordination with ministry of agriculture and local governments in Basra, Thi-Qar and Missan. The mission, which was accompanied by FAO Representative in Iraq, Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan and a team of FAO experts, met with project partners and observed the impact of the project on local communities. "Ancient Mesopotamia, cradle of human civilization, is not only an Iraqi heritage but a world treasure. The improvement of traditional agriculture practices and livelihood interventions offer sustainable and dignifying solutions to the challenges faced by the Marshes," said EU Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Ville Varjola. "We are proud to be a part of this important initiative, which not only restores and strengthens the resilience of agri-food systems in Southern Iraq, but also empowers women and ensures the preservation of traditional livelihoods in the region," said Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq.



"This mission and its successful outcomes are a testament to the close cooperation between the European Union, the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture, and FAO in promoting sustainable development in Iraq." The project, which is funded by the European Union and implemented by FAO in close cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture, aims to restore and strengthen the resilience of agri-food systems in Southern Iraq. It focuses on supporting women's groups and introducing climate-smart fodder practices in the region through the distribution of high-quality, drought and saline-tolerant seeds. "The project is giving priority to support women's groups due to their contribution to the development of their livelihoods," said the Senior FAO Livestock Expert, Dr Chedly Kayouli. "2500 rural women have already started enhancing their skills in dairy handling, processing, and

hygiene with the support of hygienic stainless steel and food-grade equipment." During the visit, the delegation observed the positive impact of the project on the livelihoods of buffalo breeders in the marshes, who expressed their gratitude for the support from FAO and the European Union. The delegation also visited two women's groups in the Al-Chabayish marshes, where they saw the traditional method of dairy processing and the positive change brought about by FAO's support with the rehabilitation of a dairy centre equipped with hygienic equipment. "The marshes of southern Iraq are a vital sector, and the interventions by FAO with the support of the European Union will contribute to safeguarding the livelihoods of buffalo breeders in the region," said a buffalo farmer from the Al-Chibayish marshes.



FAO and Ministry of Water Resources held a Steering Committee for the project "Land and Water Monitoring by Remote Sensing"

Baghdad, 8 February 2023 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), represented by Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Country Representative, held with the Ministry of Water Resources the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the project funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs "Land and Water Monitoring by Remote Sensing, the second phase of the WaPOR project"

The meeting was chaired by Mr Zaid Hamoudi Habib, Director General of the Planning and Follow-up Department at the Ministry. During the meeting, a summary of the foundation phase of the project in Iraq and the selected study areas for activities in the West Al-Gharraf irrigation project area in Wasit and Thi Qar provinces and the Shamamuk irrigation project in the Erbil Basin area were discussed.

The meeting was attended by Ms. Livia Peiser, Land and Water expert at FAO Rome office, steering committee member from the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources in the Kurdistan Region, and the project

coordinators. The work plan and the importance of coordination with project stakeholders were highlighted. During the meeting, the proposed activities for the two study areas were confirmed, and the potential of linking project data with other related projects, in addition to recommendations and concluding

observations, including the consultative meeting that was held on the 9th Feb at the MoWR HQ between the national interdisciplinary team and project partners -IWMI and IHE Delft- to outline the capacity building plan associated with the proposed activities for both study areas.



Nineveh FAO-EU funded project launches innovative training program for women-headed households for sustainable development of small and medium rural dairy businesses



Nineveh, 16 February 2023 - The Nineveh FAO-EU Funded Project has launched a Farmer Field Day (FFD) program aimed at training women-headed households in the sustainable development of small and medium rural dairy businesses. The program was implemented in Al-Hamdaniya

and Bartella for thirty dairy women supported by the project from seven villages in the Tel Kaif district. The FFD program links dairy women producers from different regions in the governorate and encourages them to share experiences in improving and developing practices of

processing and marketing their cheese and dairy products. The program includes training on dairy handling, processing, and marketing of improved traditional home-processed dairy products, as well as on fodder crops.

The Nineveh FAO-EU Funded Project is replicating this innovative learning method to all targeted districts to support the sustainable development of small and medium rural dairy businesses. The project has already supported 4000 women with training sessions as well as with dairy equipment for milk handling and processing. The FAO Representative in Iraq, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan highlighted that the priorities of the FAO are to seek a real partnership with these groups and empower them to support their families independently, emphasizing the need to activate their role.

FAO's International Livestock Expert, Dr. Chedly Kayouli said that

Nineveh FAO-EU funded project launches innovative training program for women-headed households ... *(continued)*



during the farmers' field day, the visiting women had the opportunity to meet with three groups of women who have excelled in the production

and marketing of high-quality dairy products and in the cultivation of fodder crops. He added, women working in the same field and from

rural villages interacted with each other, sharing their experiences, knowledge, skills, and even their challenges.

Finally, the visiting women led by Om Chaker from Tal-Kif villages concluded that the enthusiasm and the family atmosphere that prevailed during the farmers' field day was remarkably interesting, as we are working in the same field, we interacted with each other sharing our experiences, knowledge and skills. Mouna from Al-Hukul village (Tal-Kif district) expressed the women's interest and satisfaction in learning new techniques and practices in milk processing and animal feeding from their peers which was evident.

Labour Issues

Study tour on issues related to occupational safety and health and labour inspection

Baghdad, 26 December 2022 - A delegation bringing together ILO's tripartite constituents from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, employer and worker organisations 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.



ILO holds a workshop aimed to discuss practical and regulatory aspects related to harmonizing the age of compulsory education and the minimum age of employment



Baghdad, 8 January 2023 - In December, representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Planning, workers' organizations, NGOs, UN partners and representative from the education cluster attended an ILO workshop to

discuss practical and regulatory aspects related to harmonising the age of compulsory education and the minimum age of employment. The workshop focused on the age of compulsory school education for children and some of the main

challenges that authorities – including government staff, inspectors and teachers – face to ensure compliance with the national law and International Labour Standards.

Iraq is a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has also ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), which are vital in the fight against child labour.

The ILO has been working with partners, under an RDPP (II) supported project to address gaps between the minimum age of admission to any type of labour and the compulsory age of education through advocacy, technical support, as well as capacity building and awareness raising.

These efforts are part of boarder activities to tackle the worst forms of child labour in Iraq.

On-going efforts in the development of a digitalized employment platform to streamline access to employment services for unemployed worker

Erbil, 10 January 2023 - A meeting took place between representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of KRI, the department of information and technology run by the Prime Minister's Office and the ILO to discuss on-going efforts in the development of a digitalised employment platform to streamline access to employment services for unemployed workers - including youth who face barriers to entering the labour market, displaced and marginalized populations, as well as enterprises.

The ILO is supporting the government

with the development of the digital employment platform to link job-seekers and unemployed workers registered in existing social protection and employment databases to employment services delivered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs- including career guidance, counselling, and job matching services.

The platform is part of broader efforts under a European Union funded programme to reform social protection, jointly implemented with UNICEF and WFP.



The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the ILO met to discuss next steps in the implementation of a two-year pilot public works programme

Baghdad, 23 January 2023 - The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the ILO met to discuss next steps in the implementation of a two-year pilot public works programme, with the aim to create 100,000 job opportunities, through the development and rehabilitation of infrastructure across different governorates – in collaboration with concerned ministries and partners. 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. In Iraq, the creation of a public works programmes is considered a key priority for both economic reform and sustainable development.

In December 2022, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the ILO launched a

paper, which 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 paper is available at:
EN: <https://bit.ly/3ZU1lvk>

ILO under PROSPECTS aims to equip young women and men with market-relevant technical and professional competencies and core skills for work and life

Mosul, 26 January 2023 - Around 100 young returnees, host community members and forcibly displaced persons took part in a 44-day vocational training programme, which focused on air conditioning installation and repair. The training, implemented by AVSI Iraq with the technical support of the International Labour Organization in Iraq, and in partnership with the Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs in the Vocational Training Centre of Mosul, is part of broader

efforts by the ILO under PROSPECTS - funded by Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq- to equip young women and men with market-relevant technical and professional competencies and core skills for work and life, to improve their employability and transition to decent jobs.

The trainees put their newly acquired skills to practice, by equipping the rooms and workshops of the Vocational Training Centre with AC units.



The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the ILO, explores opportunities to revise and modernize the Iraqi Labour Law No. 37 of 2015



Baghdad, 28 January 2023 - The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the ILO, held a two-day technical meeting which focused on opportunities to revise and modernise the Iraqi Labour Law No. 37 of 2015. The event, which took place on 27-28 of January, brought together social partners, including representatives from workers' organizations, the Iraqi Federation of Industries, members of the State Council, and the Iraqi Bar Association. Participants, including ILO technical specialists, reviewed the draft proposal to amend the law, as prepared by the Ministry and provided input to the

development of the law, in accordance with the International Labour Standards.

The proposed amendments focus on several issues, including those related to labour relations, employment and vocational training, Occupational Safety and Health, labour inspection, and the protection of women and youth at work, in addition to the challenges and gaps in the implementation of the law.

"Through the process of social dialogue, the Ministry is working closely with employer and worker representatives, representatives of the government and the United Nations, to revise the labour

law in light of the changing needs and developments of the labour market," said Raed Jabbar Bahedh, Director General of the Department of Labour and Vocational Training at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

"The revision of labour law is of extreme importance as it will further regulate the labour market in Iraq, including that of the informal sector. The revision of law can contribute to encouraging more women into the labour market, through strengthening their protection at work. We will continue to provide the necessary technical support and advice to our constituents to develop labour legislation based on International Labour Standards with the objective to promote decent work in Iraq," added Maha Kattaa, ILO Country Coordinator in Iraq.

With the support of the European Union in Iraq under the framework of ILO projects "Enhancing labour governance, inspection and working conditions in response to COVID-19" and "Social Protection Programme for Iraq: Leveraging Effective Response and Accelerating Reform".

How to increase the employability of the community members in Basra city

Basra, 8 February 2023 - UN-Habitat, in cooperation with the European Union, brought together in Basra the Governor Advisor of Technical Affairs, the Directors of the Basra Municipality Directorate, Sewerage Directorate, Health Directorate, Labour and Social Affairs Environment Directorate, and representatives of

Electricity Distribution Directorate, Planning directorate, water directorate and also International labour Organization representatives to discuss the progress of the EU-funded project "Increasing Access to Employment Opportunities for Vulnerable Urban Population in Basra City in Response to

the COVID-19 Crisis."

This was the second steering committee for upgrading three under-served neighbourhoods and increasing the employability of the community members in Basra city, within which some of the poorest families in Basra City.

Hundreds of parents and caregivers of working children in Ninewa have completed vocational trainings in sewing and electrical installation



Ninewa, 13 February 2023 - Hundreds of parents and caregivers of working children in Ninewa have completed vocational trainings in sewing and electrical installation, that will help them build their skills, improve their employability and establish their own sources of income, so their children no longer have to work.

The participants included women and men from refugee, internally displaced and host communities, who were identified as parents of working children through an ILO-supported Child Labour Monitoring System, designed to ensure that thousands of working children are referred to appropriate support. Following the completion of the

training, participants received materials and equipment that would enable them to generate an income. They also received certificates recognized by Ninewa's Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs and registered in an employment database, in efforts to facilitate their access to the formal labour market.

The training in Ninewa, which were implemented by the ILO and Tahreer Association for Development, falls under the framework of a broader 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).

Similar trainings have been implemented in Duhok. Since late 2022, over 580 parents and caregivers have been trained under the programme in Ninewa and Duhok Province.

Social Protection

Capacity building training for ILO constituents boosts efforts to reform social protection in Iraq

Erbil, 19 January 2023 - (ILO News) Government, employer, and worker representatives from Iraq, including the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI), took part in a four-day training programme aimed at supporting on-going efforts to design, manage and oversee the social protection reform process in the country and the implementation of new contributory programmes.

The training, which took place between 16-19 January in Erbil, brought together experts from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Prime Minister's Office in KRI, members of the Iraqi Federation of Industries, as well as trade unions.

The training, which was organised by the ILO in Iraq and its training arm ITCILO, focused on building the technical capacities of practitioners on fundamental principles and key components of social security policy, design and delivery, as well as enhance their knowledge and competencies to improve the governance, design, reforms and administration of social security institutions in Iraq.

Under a European Union funded programme to reform social protection, jointly implemented with UNICEF and



WFP, the ILO is providing technical assistance to its constituents to strengthen the adequacy, coverage and sustainability of the social protection system. This is being done through both policy development and capacity building interventions.

Part of the capacity building interventions includes a series of workshops to address the needs of authorities to implement the new draft social security laws, which are in the process of enactment. If passed, the draft laws will extend social security coverage to workers in the informal sector, the self-employed, and business owners and introduce new benefits to

all workers in the private sector.

Efforts are also being made to upgrade institutional capacities to ensure more efficient delivery of services related to social security, social protection and employment.

The training covered a series of topics: from the foundations of rights-based social protection systems; to a range of instruments that make up a social protection system; as well as financing. It also shed light on extending social protection coverage, improving service quality, overcoming barriers to social coverage, and the digitalisation of social protection delivery.

A roundtable discussion was held in Erbil focusing on the expansion of social security in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq



Erbil, 10 February 2023 - A roundtable discussion was held in Erbil focusing on the expansion of social security in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Attended by Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Kwestan Mohammed, the one-

day event brought together representatives from the government, employer and workers organizations, who are working closely with the ILO and partners to expand the scope of social security coverage, mainly to workers in the informal economy, in line with International Labour

Standards.

The discussion highlighted Jordan's experience and approach in extending social security coverage to its workers and ensuring the sustainability of its schemes. This included an overview of the recent developments and programmes adopted by Jordan's Social Security Corporation (SSC) to enhance coverage and inclusion under the social security umbrella and range of programmes that were introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic to reach more than 1.2 beneficiaries and 35,000 firms.

With the support of the European Union in Iraq, the ILO in Iraq has been working with its tripartite constituents, as well as parliamentarians, to review the draft retirement and social security law.

Multi-stakeholder meeting focuses on the extension of social security to Iraq's farm workers

Basra, 8 February 2023 - Farm owners, representatives of the farmers' association union, government officials, local Civil Society Organizations, academics and others joined a debate on the extension of social security in Iraq's agricultural sector, organised by the ILO with the support of the European Union.

With a focus on agricultural areas in Iraq's southern governorate of Basra, the event centred around the challenges faced by farm owners in the inclusion of their workers in social security coverage. It included discussions with the various stakeholders, such as those from government, employers' and workers' organizations and local implementing partners, on ways to address these obstacles.

Assistant Governor of Basra, Hassan Al Najjar reaffirmed that "the continued cooperation between the Basra Governorate, the ILO and the European Union to advance the agricultural sector, in all its sub-sectors, will allow us to identify and further promote the positive elements, and address the negative ones." Mr. Al Najjar also commended the sessions organised by the ILO on rights at work and social security in the agricultural sector of Al-Zubair District of the Basra Governorate, conducted with farm owners and workers in the area, and reiterated the importance of expanding coverage of social security to the rest of Basra.



According to a recently published ILO study, on National Regulatory Frameworks and Structures in the Agriculture Sector, Iraq's agricultural sector suffers from lack of regulatory frameworks and support structures to govern agriculture activities, protect its workforce, and address concerns collectively. There are persistent decent work deficits at the farm level including insufficient occupational safety and health measures and lack of social protection coverage.

Findings from the Labour Force Survey 2021 indicate that 98.1 percent of those engaged in agriculture hold informal jobs. Currently, coverage of social security for workers in the informal sectors is very limited, which puts farmers and their family at higher risk of poverty related to economic shocks and lifecycle risks.

The event also reviewed current activities being implemented by the ILO and its partners, under different projects funded by the European Union, to extend social protection and improve working condition in Iraq's agricultural sector, in line with International Labour Standards.

"Social security for the Iraqi citizens is a very important topic for the EU. The EU is keen to ensure that Iraq develops a sustainable and inclusive social protection systems, and we work closely with the Government of Iraq to achieve a fair system, also in the agricultural sector that employs roughly 20 percent of the country's workforce," said Barbara Egger, Head of Cooperation at the European Union Delegation to Iraq. "Extending legal coverage of social security to workers, particularly those in informal employment, is a key

Multi-stakeholder meeting focuses on the extension of social security to Iraq's farm workers *(continued)*

priority for the ILO and its tripartite constituents in Iraq, as we continue to work collectively on different fronts to strengthen the adequacy, coverage and sustainability of the social protection system," explained ILO Country Coordinator Maha Kattaa. "These efforts go hand-in-hand with efforts to enhance labour governance and working conditions for workers particularly those in the agriculture sector – a sector which provides a critical source of employment and income but which suffers from a number of decent work deficits including lack of social protection coverage."

Under a social protection reform programme, the ILO has been providing technical support to the government in the review of the draft retirement and social security law. The draft law will bring in several changes that would make the Iraqi social

security legislation closer to meeting the minimum requirements of International Labour Standards, including extending coverage to informal economy workers including those in the agriculture sector.

Parallel to this work, the ILO is supporting the production of various pieces of research to inform decision-making processes, including those on challenges and opportunities with regards to social security, bringing together a portfolio of research from a wide range of academics.

A key element under the framework of "Enhancing labour governance, inspection and working conditions in response to COVID-19" is building the capacities of inspectors on modern labour inspection procedures, and ways to strengthen and enforce labour regulations and procedures in Iraq.

In addition, the ILO has been working with workers, farm owners, cooperative

members, union members and community leaders on the farm level to improve working condition on farms, through improved Occupational Safety and Health, gender equality, business skills, and International Labour Standards. More recently, a Code of Conduct for Fair Recruitment was developed in consultation between the ILO and its constituents, to promote the principles of fair recruitment in accordance with Iraqi legislation, International Labour Standards, human rights principles and conventions.

Discussions also focused on the role of tripartite partners and key stakeholders in working collectively to promote decent work in the agricultural sector in Iraq, through the development of consolidated programmes and work plans to assess and address the social protection needs and gaps of the sector's workers.

The Ministry of Planning, in cooperation with the ILO, holds a dialogue workshop on elderly security in Iraq

Baghdad, 14 February 2022 - A dialogue workshop organized by the Ministry of Planning in collaboration with the International Labor Organization was held in Baghdad and brought together relevant policy makers, researchers, development thought leaders and practitioners to discuss best ways and innovate policies to achieve synergy between social assistance and social security for the public sector and the private sector to close the income coverage gap. For Aging by laying the ground for the Social Pensions for Aging in a way that coordinates and directs the disparate systems to contradict the foundations of a coherent and effective social protection system that contributes to the vision of Iraq as a socially coherent and economically productive society.

Despite Iraq's leadership as one of the oldest social security systems in the Arab world, the effectiveness of inclusive coverage is limited to public sector employees. Unlike public sector employees, coverage of other workers and their families, including people in the private sector, especially those working with unstable wages and self-employed, remains weak and does not compare to Iraq's commitment to improving the security and social protection system and not excluding anyone, in accordance with the Iraqi government's commitment to not One

has fallen behind in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The government of Iraq has recognized the need for flexibility in the labor market and allow for greater movement of manpower between the public and private sectors, which requires fairness and narrowing the preferential advantage gap between public and private guarantee systems while making both systems more sustainable, efficient and comprehensive coverage to achieve justice and equity for generations to come. In this endeavor, the draft revised social security bill for the private sector was approved by the General Secretariat of the Shura Council, and it has been moved to the

House of Representatives for discussion. It aims to replace the current Social Security Act 39 of 1971. If approved, the bill is expected to make several changes that would bring Iraqi social security legislation closer to meeting the minimum requirements of international working standards. Key features of the new law include expanding coverage to include self-employed as well as adding new short-term benefits like unemployment and maternity.

Despite efforts to expand social security coverage to private workers, including those working in the unorganized sector, there is no integration and contradiction between many non-



The Ministry of Planning, in cooperation with the ILO, holds a dialogue workshop on elderly security in Iraq *(continued)*

subscription-based social assistance programs and subscription-based social security systems. Another side is an obstacle and challenge to returning the identity of coverage and accessing an efficient and sustainable system that

ensures a decent life for Iraq's elderly. In this regard, the urgent need for contrasting and integration between social security and security systems and programs is highlighted in order to fill the coverage gap in a way that

coordinates the diverse systems and directs it to co-operate in establishing a coherent and effective social protection system that contributes to the vision of Iraq as a socially coherent and economically productive society.

Security Sector Reform

Germany supports UNDP in strengthening criminal justice services in Iraq



Baghdad, 16 January 2023 – Germany and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a EUR 826,250 donor agreement on strengthening Iraq's criminal justice services and improving their capacities to conduct effective interviews in line with international human rights commitments.

The project promotes the application of the new regulations on unified Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Criminal Investigations, and the Local Police Service Road Map. Seeking

to enhance criminal justice services in Iraq, the project offers capacity building for criminal investigation police officers, investigative judges, and relevant directorates, and extends the implementation of the Model Police Station Pilot Initiative from Baghdad and Basra to all over Iraq.

"We are grateful to our longstanding partner, the Government of Germany. We, together, put public safety and security at the heart of Iraq's transition to long-term stability and development. This project enables the Iraqi police to

continuously strengthen its investigative capacities and human rights compliance in criminal proceedings", says Auke Lootsma, UNDP Iraq Resident Representative.

"Strengthening law enforcement and criminal justice capacities must go hand in hand with human rights protection in order contribute to, and build public trust in, a sovereign, stable, and democratic Iraqi State. This is why Germany continues to support these efforts, implemented by UNDP, enabling Iraqi Police investigators to conduct interrogations more effectively and without recourse to coercive methods." says Chargé d'Affaires a. i. Philip Holzappel.

UNDP Iraq's Security Sector Reform (SSR) Programme provides advice and technical assistance to the Government of Iraq's security sector through partnerships with the Office of the National Security Advisor, the Ministry of Interior's Police Affairs Agency and local police, the Supreme Judicial Council, and Iraqi civil society organizations. This contribution brings Germany's total support for the SSR Programme to EUR 1,836,250.

According to a new report, the Ministry of Justice of the KRI takes important steps towards establishing a child-friendly court system

Baghdad, 2 February 2023 – The Ministry of Justice in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and UNICEF launched today a new report, mapping and assessment of the child justice system in the KRI. Financed by the German Government through the KfW Development Bank, the report identified policy, legislation, and institutional and capacity gaps in delivering child-friendly services for children who are in contact with the law.

This report, which was technically

supported and generated by Child Frontiers International, covered the entire Kurdistan Region of Iraq. While the report highlights key KRG achievements in protecting and promoting child rights, yet some gaps remain: the minimum age of criminal responsibility is low at 11 years of age; the juvenile justice system relies on deprivation of liberty rather than the use of diversion/alternative to detentions and limited social reintegration services.

"UNICEF is committed to supporting

the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to protect and promote the rights of every child, including children who are in contact with the law," said Ms. Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq. "This mapping and assessment is the first step to realizing the rights of the most vulnerable children."

The Child Justice System study aims to identify ways to meet the rights and needs of children who are in contact with the law and to create opportunities for their reintegration. It ensures that every child is treated in

According to a new report, the Ministry of Justice of the KRI takes important steps ... (continued)

accordance with the principles of juvenile justice, and in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which Iraq ratified in 1994.

“There is no justice without judicial justice. By making sure that children know about their rights, and ensuring access to the judicial system, we protect the most vulnerable in society. This strengthens every democratic society,” said Mr. Klaus Streicher, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany.

“We consider it a very relevant task that we were able to finance this important study on behalf of the German Government,” said Dr. Anna Janke, Country Director, KfW Office Iraq. “This study reveals that there are several challenges and that the Juvenile Justice System for Children requires improvements concerning adequate prevention, response and social reintegration as well as



diversionary justice.”

Deprivation of liberty is one of the most harmful violations of children’s fundamental human rights. We need to reimagine the justice system where every child knows and can claim her rights; can access free legal aid and representation in the courts; and is protected from detention. We also need to ensure the use of diversion and easy access to alternative dispute resolution

mechanisms and child-friendly courts.

The study proposes a set of recommendations for children who come in contact with the justice system. These recommendations aim to ensure that every child who is in contact with the law will face a well-functioning Juvenile Justice System that integrates customary and formal actions, where children’s rights are protected at all stages, and their needs are adequately met.

Female Iraqi police are watchful eyes for rule of law



Amman, Jordan, 22 January 2023 - Gender equality in law enforcement is an essential element in protecting citizens, promoting the principles of equality, and the rule of law.

Domestic and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is a world-wide problem, including a widespread issue in Iraq. Enforcing the rule of law is a cornerstone of peacebuilding at the local level in Iraq and achieving a gender balance to address and prevent these cases helps to protect women and families from violence. Achieving this balance will also raise awareness on the importance of women’s roles in public services and leadership positions.

UNDP Iraq supported a visit of 24 female police officers from across the

Ministry of Interior in Iraq to learn about the role of female police within the Public Services Directorate of the Kingdom of Jordan, as well as participate in a knowledge exchange on Jordan’s policies in response to domestic violence cases. The visit was made possible thanks to generous support from the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The visit lasted from 22 to 28 October 2022, and included commissioned, non – commissioned and civilian staff of the MOI. The first three days of the visit was focused on learning from the family protection and Juvenile Department and the Princess Basma Training Institute of Jordan.

The delegation received extensive information on Jordan’s policies and

practices in responding to SGBV, including domestic violence against women and children and the integrated model of ensuring protection and prevention measures are simultaneously applied. The Family Protection and Juvenile Department of Jordan includes medical / para-medical staff, social workers, psychologists and first responders. Additionally, the department supports an extensive research division that conducts regular research on the root causes of domestic violence in families and leads awareness sessions among communities to tackle existing conditions that often lead to domestic violence.

“This was an excellent knowledge visit to Jordan. We have learned a lot from our sisters in Jordan on how they were able to build such an excellent Women Police Affairs Department that is involved in all policing activities. We can now review what aspects of family protection and SGBV responses can be strengthened in Iraq,” says Lt. Col. Nisreen Abdul-A’ima Shamkhi , Director of the Women’s Affairs Section, Baghdad Police Directorate.

The Iraqi delegation also visited the Princess Basma Training Institute and learned about how Jordan was able to recruit female officers and how the role of women in the police force has been normalized among communities across

Female Iraqi police are watchful eyes for rule of law *(continued)*

Jordan. The Princess Basma Female Training Institute was established in 1978, and now houses the Women Police Affairs Department, and supports a large number of female police officers involved in criminal investigations, public prosecutors, women reform and rehabilitation centers, functioning as a leadership center for female officers to encourage uptake in senior positions within the Public Services Directorate.

“I think we have learned a lot from Jordan’s experience. We already have a Female Training Institute, and we can look at the creation of a Women’s Affairs Department for the entire police force in Iraq,” says Fatimah Kadhim Dakhil, Head of the Women’s Committee, Federal Intelligence and Investigation Agency (FIIA).

During the last two days of the visit,

delegation members reviewed existing policies of the Ministry of Interior to understand the gaps and challenges to implement comprehensive gender responsive reforms.

Capt. Aseel Abdul-Wahab Saleem, Assistant Director of the Women’s Division at the Minister’s Office Community Policing Section, notes, “This workshop was very helpful to learn about how the role of women in police can be increased. The MOI is doing a lot to increase the role of women and this visit was good to give us more ideas on how to help our ministry achieve success, like in Jordan.”

Major Noor, Federal Investigations and Intelligence Agency (FIIA), says, “I came from a family of military officers and I was determined to join the police force in Iraq. One of my most

memorable achievements was when I arrested a network of corrupt officials who were exploiting their positions and taking bribes from people. On our way out, I saw the public gathering and cheering. They blessed us and thanked us for our service to the nation. It was a proud moment for me. I always tell young women to join the police force as there is no better way that we can serve our country and our people. I am committed to working with the MOI to increase the role of women in the ministry so that we can serve the women and girls of Iraq.”

UNDP supports the Iraqi security sector as a critical element to establish long-term stability in Iraq and prevent the resurgence of conflict, through the Support to Security and Justice Sector Governance Programme.

Mine Action

Gender mainstreaming has been one of the core activities and considerations of the UNMAS Iraq programme

Baghdad, 8 January 2023 - In line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women Peace and Security,” gender mainstreaming has been one of the core activities and considerations of the UNMAS Iraq programme since inception and a cross-cutting priority in all programme activities.

UNMAS Iraq has encouraged and supported women to fill technical mine clearance positions, despite social barriers and mine action historically being a male-dominated sector. As a result of training courses, motivational activities, conferences and advocacy efforts, UNMAS Iraq has succeeded to increase the level of female participation with the government as



well as with implementing partners.

The Directorate for Mine Action, the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency and the Ministry of Interior, has included more female officers in their structures and in training. UNMAS Iraq implementing partners now have approximately 25% female team

members, including technical roles, which not only challenges traditional roles but also significantly impacts social and psychological changes as well as overall socio-economic well-being.

In 2018, at the International Women’s Day observance, UN Secretary-General António Guterres remarked, “Our aspirations for a world of peace, prosperity, dignity and opportunity for all depend on it. So, on this International Women’s Day, let us demand gender equality and women’s empowerment together. Let us declare loud and clear, the time is now.”

UNMAS Iraq will continue to support and enhance gender mainstreaming in mine action in 2023.

The humanitarian cluster system in Iraq concludes its role, as the country transitions from emergency to development phase

Baghdad, 10 January 2023 - On 31 December 2022, the humanitarian cluster system in Iraq concluded its role, as the country transitioned from emergency to development phase. Since its arrival in Iraq, UNMAS has led the Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) to address explosive ordnance as one of the main barriers to safe, sustainable, dignified and voluntary returns of displaced people after the end of military operations in 2017.

For six years the MA AoR served as a

coordination platform for humanitarian mine action actors in Iraq within the humanitarian cluster system to achieve common objectives, avoid duplication and to prioritize work. The platform played a critical role in information sharing, advocacy of the needs of affected communities, ensuring inclusion of mine action in humanitarian response plans and raising operational challenges with the government.

The platform has now been deactivated, and functions will be integrated and led by the

national mine action authorities (NMAAs), who will ensure continued coordination and collaboration between stakeholders.

UNMAS Iraq would like to extend its gratitude to all humanitarian partners for their commitment to the joint efforts in coordinating humanitarian assistance. UNMAS Iraq would also like to express gratitude to all donors for their generous contributions supporting the role of the NMAAs and their role in coordinating the Iraqi mine action sector.

In 2020, UNMAS Iraq started the ‘partnership model’ to create sustainable local mine action capacity

Baghdad, 11 January 2023 - In 2020, UNMAS Iraq started the ‘partnership model’ where international mine action NGOs work in close collaboration and partnership with Iraqi national NGOs to create sustainable local mine action capacity.

Since then, three partnership grants have been implemented; in Anbar governorate, between the national NGO Al Ghad partnering with The HALO Trust and in Ninewa governorate, IHSCO IRAQ partnering with DanChurchAid and SHO-Shareteah Humanitarian Org partnering with Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD). Two national NGOs have since been accredited by the Iraqi Directorate for Mine Action and are fully eligible to conduct operations.



The partnership model aims to create Iraqi national operators able to generate and sustain capacity required to operate as a humanitarian mine action actor in Iraq. This has been achieved through transfer of knowledge, skills and experience from

the international NGOs to the national NGOs.

In 2023, UNMAS Iraq will continue to provide the necessary support to national mine action operators thanks to the generous contributions provided by our international donors.

UNMAS Iraq continues to support the Government of Iraq to enable the safe use of arable land

Basra, 13 January 2023 - Outside Basra, in the Shatt Al-Arab area, where the historical great rivers of Tigris and Euphrates rivers join together, UNMAS Iraq has been clearing explosive ordnance (EO) since mid-2021. Prior to the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, the area was used for agriculture and for date production in particular. Tons of Iraqi produced dates were exported to European countries and markets, bringing income to the region.

Today, the area is heavily contaminated with explosive ordnance (EO), and in particular landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW), left from the conflict. Basra is also home for major oil fields causing pollution. The environment in Basra and southern Iraq is a critical issue. Mine action is one of many steps to



improve the environment.

Demining the area will allow Iraqis to once again productively, use the land for plantation, irrigation and housing development. Mine action might seem to have few connections with environmental issues. Yet, UNMAS Iraq has recognized that mine action can, and will, play a critical role to

improve the environment and slow down climate change.

In 2023 and onwards, UNMAS Iraq will continue to support the Government of Iraq to enable the safe use of arable land and resume planting of trees and crops, which will contribute to combating the mounting climate change in the region.

The Government of Denmark continues its support to explosive hazards management activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 18 January 2023 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of DKK 14,000,000 (over USD 2,000,000) from the Government of Denmark, which will assist the Government of Iraq in reducing the threat of explosive ordnance impacting civilians and support the development of a sustainable, well-coordinated national mine action sector.

Following decades of war and conflict, Iraq is one of the world’s most explosive ordnance-contaminated countries. As of December 2022, there were approximately 2,236 square kilometers of contaminated areas across Iraq. Since 2014, millions of Iraqis have been displaced, and nearly 1.2 million of them remain internally displaced. The generous contribution from the Government of Denmark will advance UNMAS efforts to facilitate the safe,

dignified, and voluntary return of displaced communities and enable rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts to proceed through the ongoing clearance of explosive ordnance in contaminated areas.

Furthermore, this contribution will be used to enhance a nationally led and implemented mine action response. UNMAS delivers and initiates capacity enhancement, such as training and technical advice, as well as gender

The Government of Denmark continues its support to explosive hazards management activities in Iraq *(continued)*



mainstreaming initiatives, for national authorities to further increase the Iraqi national clearance capacity in line with national and international mine action standards. This contribution also supports the strengthening of governmental mine action coordination

mechanisms and improved decision-making.

The national capacity enhancement is supported through a partnership model that brings together international mine action NGOs with local NGOs, which work to build the sustainable mine action response in Iraq.

On the occasion of Danish's contribution, Mr. Christian Thorning, the Danish Ambassador to Iraq, explained: "I am very pleased that Denmark once again has contributed to the important work of UNMAS. Mine action is vital for protection of civilians, as well as being critical in releasing land for productive use and enable returnees to gain a livelihood. For

Denmark, contributing to peace and stability in Iraq remains a high priority."

"Denmark has been an indispensable contributor to the UNMAS Iraq programme since it was first deployed. This new contribution will assist the Government of Iraq in protecting vulnerable communities from the menace posed by explosive ordnance and will support safe and dignified returns of IDPs. In furtherance, it will allow UNMAS to continue its capacity enhancement efforts in support of national actors and aimed at developing the national capacity," said Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Chief Mine Action Programme.

Wahida, a brave Yazidi woman, building a future for Iraq



Sinjar, 21 January 2023 - In 2014, on a calamitous night in Ayn Taliai village in Sinjar district, a 12-year-old Wahida and her family were forced to flee the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), as they arrived in Sinjar. "We waited for the night to flee from

our lovely home, and the darkness surrounded us. We could also see hundreds of other families, children and women running into the unknown future," Wahida recalls.

There is no fundamental obstacle preventing women from developing and having a role in achieving security and peace for her community.

Wahida and her family reached Sinjar mountain together with thousands of other Yazidis who cried over their loss of loved ones. After five long days full of hunger and thirst, they decided to go to one of the camps in Dohuk to settle there. It was a difficult decision for the family, but they were aware of the difficulties and dangers they would face if they stayed on the mountain. "Fleeing was the correct decision at that moment because hunger and thirst began to claim lives there on the mountain," she explained.

Wahida and her family spent a long

time in the camp where humanitarian assistance was the only source for survival. One day she heard about a job advertisement with one of UNMAS Iraq's implementing partners, Global Clearance Solutions (GCS); and as a twenty-year-old proud Yazidi woman she applied and was accepted for a searcher position.

Since October 2022, UNMAS Iraq and its implementing partner, GCS, have been working in Wahida's village to reduce the threat of explosive ordnance to people's lives.

Wahida is very proud to work in her village, as the clearance will allow people to return in the future. Now, Wahida, a brave young woman, represents the ideal example of a woman who has overcome psychological and social barriers. She continues to motivate her other team members to do their best to enable the displaced to return safely to their homes.

The generous contribution from Sweden enables UNMAS Iraq to deliver essential activities to protect civilians

Baghdad, 1 February 2023 - Recently, the UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, Pehr Lodhammar, met with Ms. Margareta Davidsson-Abdelli, Councilor, from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Embassy of Sweden in Baghdad.

The meeting covered an update on UNMAS Iraq operations and various joint advocacy initiatives. The Government of Sweden is a long standing supporter of mine action in Iraq and has supported the UNMAS

Programme since 2018 and has contributed over USD 14 million through the years.

The generous contribution from Sweden enables UNMAS Iraq to deliver essential activities to protect civilians from the threat of explosive ordnance and support humanitarian, socio-economic and reconstruction efforts to go forward in Iraq.

UNMAS Iraq would like to express its appreciation to the Government of Sweden for its long-standing generous contributions to the people of Iraq

through the UNMAS Iraq programme.



Iraq launches the National Mine Action Standard on victim assistance

Baghdad, 4 February 2023 - UNMAS Iraq congratulates the Government of Iraq, Directorate for Mine Action, the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency of the Kurdistan Regional Government, relevant Ministries, Handicap International (HI) and other mine action NGOs for their efforts to launch the National Mine Action Standard on Victim Assistance.

It is worth mentioning that Iraq is the first country to have a national standard that is aligned with the international mine action standard on

victim assistance (IMAS 13.10).

Handicap International Iraq celebrates this great success for the humanitarian mine action community in Iraq and will continue to work together with the DMA, IKMAA and the mine action sector in the country to identify the needs of explosive ordnance victims and facilitate access to available services.

UNMAS Iraq 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 Iraq organized a four-day field visit for Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining – GICHD to Iraqi clearing sites



Baghdad, 8 February 2023 - UNMAS Iraq organized a four-day field visit for Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining - GICHD in support of the Beyond Square Meters project, which includes a study of how mine action impacts the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and what positive impact mine action has on

Iraqi communities. The field visit consisted of three days of visits to the UNMAS Iraq implementing partners and a day visiting the sites previously cleared in Mosul.

UNMAS accompanied the GICHD to Mosul University to show the role of clearance as an enabler for any construction, rehabilitation and

development. Mosul University was used as the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant's (ISIL) headquarters and a base for producing improvised explosive ordnance. The visit started in the few buildings still requiring redevelopment following clearance and progressed to a discussion with faculty members on the situation at the university during and after ISIL.

The university was extensively contaminated with explosive ordnance and was fully closed, until clearance operations could be completed. Lecturers could then slowly return to work, and students could return to their classes. Today, 65,000 students are enjoying their studies at Mosul University, within its 24 faculties, and are continuing to build their futures, as a symbol of the reconstruction and healing of Mosul.

Ambassador of Japan visits UNMAS clearing site

Mosul, 13 February 2023 - UNMAS Iraq organized today a field visit for the Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, His Excellency, Futoshi Matsumoto, to the Al Shifa Hospital Complex in Mosul, Ninewa Governorate. The UNMAS Iraq team delivered a briefing on the challenging clearance work at the hospital, which took nearly two years to complete. During the operation, over 2,000 items of explosive ordnance were removed ranging from improvised hand grenades to missiles.

During the visit, discussions covered the current UNMAS Iraq operations covering the work at Al Shifa also the ongoing clearance of residential areas in Sinjar and the farmlands of Tal Kaif, which are extensively contaminated



with IED belts.

The Government of Japan has always been a staunch supporter of UNMAS globally, and has generously supported UNMAS programme activities in Iraq with a cumulative financial assistance of over USD 14 million since 2016. Contributions, which enabled UNMAS

Iraq to expand clearance operations during the initial stages of the programme.

UNMAS would like to thank the Government of Japan for its generous support towards mine action activities in Iraq and looks forward to further collaboration.

Estonia and Slovakia bring further support to humanitarian Mine Action in Iraq



Baghdad, 9 February 2023 - The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) welcomes two additional generous contributions from Estonia and Slovakia. As part of UNMAS Iraq efforts to support the mine action sector, this funding will enhance clearance operations and support life-saving mine action activities in Iraq.

As a result of four decades of war and conflict, Iraq has many layers of explosive ordnance contamination which threatens the lives and safety of Iraqi communities. UNMAS continues to clear explosives and will be able to do more with support from donors. The

contribution from Estonia and Slovakia will make it possible for UNMAS to facilitate the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of nearly 1.2 m displaced communities and will allow for the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts to progress.

This support will also enable UNMAS to assist a nationally led mine action response. UNMAS can provide technical support to national authorities to further enhance Iraqi national clearance capacity in line with national and international mine action standards. UNMAS is supporting national capacity enhancement through a partnership model which pairs international mine action NGOs with local NGOs, to build a sustainable mine action response in Iraq, and expand the national mine action capacity.

Remarking on the contribution, the representative of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated, "Estonia is proud to continue with our contribution to UNMAS to support the Mine Action programmes in Iraq. Mitigating the

threats posed by explosive ordnance and managing operations to clear landmines and explosive remnants of war is of great importance."

"The UN's collective commitment to sustaining peace is not only about conflict prevention but also about reduction and removal of consequences of conflicts. Therefore, alongside deploying troops to UN peacekeeping operations, we also repeatedly financially support UNMAS Iraq, which has been tasked with managing operations to clear explosive remnants of war. We are really delighted that our contribution will enable displaced Iraqi civilians to return to safe and mine-cleared areas," stated a representative of the Government of Slovakia.

"The additional funding from Slovakia and Estonia will allow UNMAS to continue the current partnership model until such time that the national partners can operate fully autonomously and independently", said Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, Chief Mine Action Programme, UNMAS Iraq.

The Government of the Netherlands has been a long-standing supporter of the UNMAS programme in Iraq

Baghdad, 15 February 2023 - Since 2016, the Government of the Netherlands has been a long standing supporter of the UNMAS programme in Iraq and mine action globally.

The Netherlands has contributed over USD 7.2 million to the UNMAS mine action programme in Iraq and continues to support Iraq mine action sector's work to enable humanitarian activities assisting and facilitating voluntary and dignified returns for displaced communities.

Recently, Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme met with Mr. Hans Sandee, the Dutch Ambassador to Iraq, and discussed UNMAS operations including gender mainstreaming in mine action and the UNMAS partnership model.

UNMAS Iraq would like to express its utmost appreciation and gratitude to the Government of the Netherlands for its continuous support to the mine action sector in Iraq.



Healthcare

UNICEF-supported health workers travel long distances to vaccinate children

Baghdad, 6 January 2023 - UNICEF-supported health workers travel long distances to vaccinate children in remote mountainous areas of Iraq.

Their work has become more important than ever, due to recent events and the impact of COVID-19.

To save lives and prevent outbreaks of serious diseases like polio and measles, governments must step up efforts to make vaccines available to every child.



WHO and Ministry of Health initiate implementation of GBV referral guideline in Iraq

Baghdad, 17 January 2023 – The World Health Organization (WHO), together with the Ministry of Health, initiated implementation of a technical referral guideline for gender-based violence (GBV) survivors in Iraq. The guideline was developed earlier in collaboration with relevant line-ministries, organizations and other partners.

"This guide is vital to ensure timely and comprehensive support is provided to survivors of violence in a dignified manner and with adequate respect for human rights," said Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq. "WHO reaffirms its full commitment to supporting all health-related aspects related to GBV."

Gender-based violence is a grave violation of human rights and a major public health concern, impacting mostly women and girls. In Iraq and across the Region, GBV manifests itself in several ways, including domestic and spousal violence, rape, psychological violence, harmful traditional practices and societal norms, and neglect of women's basic needs.

The referral guideline was developed as part of the "Strategic Plan for Gender-Based Violence 2022–2026" to integrate

comprehensive and well-coordinated health services provided to survivors of GBV in health institutions and raise community awareness to prevent GBV and combat the stigma associated with it.

WHO has held various GBV awareness sessions on the importance of guideline implementation, including 150 medical students from the University of Baghdad's College of Medicine

WHO has trained the Ministry of Health's GBV focal points on the adequate use of the guideline for ensuring the safe referral of GBV survivors. WHO has also held various

GBV awareness sessions on the importance of guideline implementation, including 150 medical students from the University of Baghdad's College of Medicine.

"This guideline offers referral pathways for survivors to establish a clear structure for coordination during referral and monitoring and evaluation of interventions in all response stages," said Dr Rana Mohammad, gender-based violence officer for WHO Iraq. "The guideline defines the different types of violence and explains how to respond to each and where to refer within or outside health facilities."



UNICEF supports a digital health transformation workshop

Baghdad, 17 January 2023 - "The UNICEF-supported digital health transformation workshop is a first step to ensure that every birth in Iraq is registered online where no child is left behind when accessing services, especially immunization," said Tawfik Waleed, Deputy Minister of Health.

Multiple government ministries, UN agencies and health professionals participated in the workshop, which run for three days and supported the development of a National Digital Health Strategy and Blueprint.



WHO delivers essential laboratory equipment and diagnostic kits to the Central Public Health Laboratory in Baghdad

Baghdad, 18 January 2023 - The World Health Organization (WHO) has delivered essential laboratory equipment and diagnostic kits to the Central Public Health Laboratory in Baghdad to support efforts to control the ongoing Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever outbreak and detect other viral haemorrhagic fevers. The equipment and kits, valued at approximately US\$ 93 000, came as part of the WHO strategy to build the diagnostic capacity of the central laboratory in Iraq and ensure timely and reliable testing to curb and manage

the eventual resurgence of a Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever outbreak. It also aimed to enhance the early detection of other infectious hazards that might cause haemorrhagic fevers, such as Rift Valley fever and dengue.

"The recent Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever outbreak in Iraq demonstrated the importance of laboratory services for early detection and confirmation of suspect cases, paving the way for an effective response," said Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq.

"Upgrading the central laboratory

capacities will not only allow for prompt preparation and response to outbreaks but will also enable the health sector in Iraq to play a crucial role in scientific research on viral haemorrhagic fevers."



Dr Nagham Hasan: serving the most vulnerable during crisis in Iraq



Ninawa, 23 January 2023 – Driven by her passion for humanity and her medical expertise, Dr Nagham Hasan, a gynaecologist and Yazidi woman, adopted the responsibility of protecting the Yazidi people in Iraq.

Hailing from Bashiqa Town in northwest Iraq, which saw its share of conflict during the ISIS invasion of Mosul and the surrounding region, Dr Nagham and a team of dedicated nurses and doctors worked tirelessly to provide healthcare services in spite of difficult circumstances.

"The invasion of Mosul had a significant impact on thousands of women and men who were forced out of their homes and sought refuge in Kurdistan. I found myself in the middle of a huge displacement crisis and had

to heal both the physical and the emotional wounds of victims and survivors of this horrible war," recalled Dr Nagham.

Kurds, Arabs, Yazidis and Christians were among those who received medical and psychosocial support from Dr Nagham.

"I was among the most fortunate. I was healthy, I had a family, I had technical skills, and I had a job, and above all, my efforts to provide relief to my people were backed by health partners," she said.

Shaikhan Hospital, where Dr Nagham works as a physician and a director, was not far from the heavy clashes during the ISIS crisis. At this critical time, WHO provided technical and logistical support.

"We received medical kits that helped save the victims' lives. We also received extensive training on the best medical practices that helped some of my colleagues, who had not worked in a war environment before," said Dr Nagham.

"Seeing WHO trucks loaded with medical supplies entering the front yard of the hospital brought me a joy that I still cannot describe. As a doctor, I felt relieved and empowered to have the needed support to save the lives of my people."

Over the past years, WHO helped strengthen the package of services provided to populations, including internally displaced persons, who are still affected by the consequences of the conflict. Recently, WHO supported the establishment of an intensive care unit and a cardiac resuscitation unit in Dhaikhan hospital which has already saved the lives of hundreds of patients so far.

"This support has enabled us to provide timely and adequate access to specialized health services such as emergency and cardiac care that are now offered by qualified doctors trained by WHO," Dr Nagham said.

"Without the support of committed organizations like WHO, Shaikhan Hospital would not have been able to offer its patients the same quality of care."

UNICEF and WHO supported the national multi-antigen campaign for more than 400,000 children

Baghdad, 26 January 2023 – UNICEF and WHO supported the Ministry of Health of Iraq (MoH) in conducting a nationwide multi-antigen vaccination campaign. The campaign reached more than 400,000 of the most vulnerable children with over one million doses of different vaccines, to protect them against vaccine-preventable diseases.

The locations covered by the ten-day campaign, which concluded at the end of 2022 were based on a risk assessment carried out by the MoH, also supported by UNICEF and WHO. The campaign aimed at reaching the hardest-to-reach children previously missed by routine immunization services.

To ensure the success of the campaign, more than 3,000 vaccinators were trained across 124 districts within 19 health directorates and national awareness-raising campaigns were conducted on the importance of



vaccines. These reached millions of parents and children in most Iraqi governorates. Campaign logistics and field implementation were also supported through transport of vaccination teams and a digital dashboard, established to compile the results of the campaign and evaluate its progress on daily basis.

"As the largest vaccine buyer in the world, UNICEF remains committed to supporting the national immunization programme in Iraq, so that no child is

left behind," said Ms. Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq. "Immunization is proven to be one of the most effective public health interventions, both preventing community outbreaks and giving every child the opportunity to survive and thrive."

Prior to the campaign, intensified integrated immunization outreach services in Iraq have reached 90% of children aged under 5 with the third dose of diphtheria, pertussis and

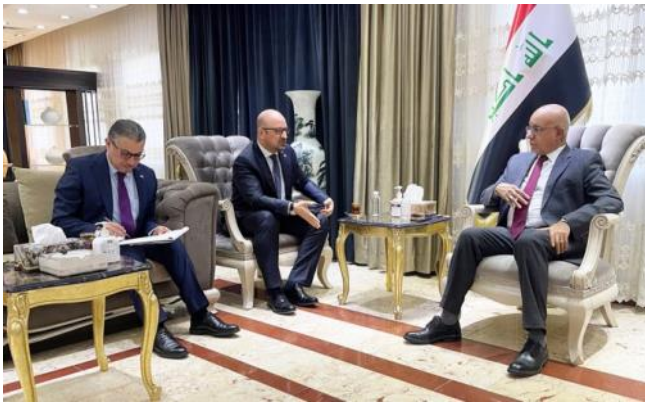
UNICEF and WHO supported the national multi-antigen campaign for more than 400,000 children *(continued)*

tetanus (DTP) and the first dose of measles vaccines, the highest coverage in two decades. This multi-antigen campaign aimed at reaching those children who had still missed out on these and other vaccines, with the hope of minimizing the resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases and advancing coverage to 95%.

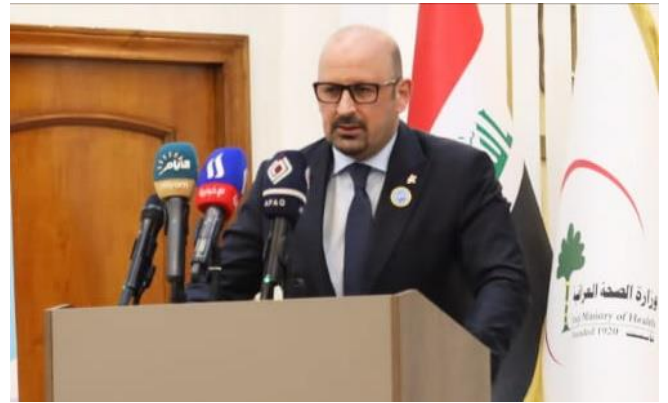
"Having a healthy start in life is a human right for all newborns. However, during COVID-19, some

children missed their immunization, which increased their vulnerability to childhood diseases. This campaign is another safety net that ensures that all children in Iraq are immunized, protected and healthy," said Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq. "The campaign was a great success in ensuring that no child is left behind." The campaign, mostly funded by a US donor, is a critical step towards protecting children from deadly and

disabling diseases. For over two centuries, vaccines have safely reduced the scourge of diseases like polio, measles and smallpox, helping children grow healthy and happy. UNICEF and WHO remain committed to supporting the MoH of Iraq to ensure that every child in this country has access to the care and vaccines they need to attain their full potential.

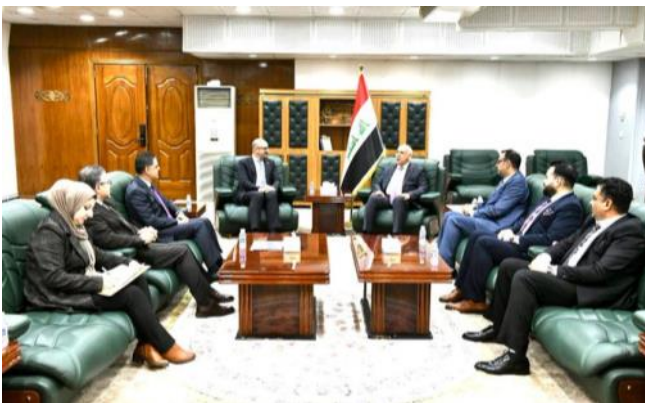


Baghdad, 23 January 2023 – Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, met today H.E. **Dr Salih Al-Hasnawi**, the Iraqi Minister of Health. They discussed ways to further strengthen the collaboration between the Ministry and WHO in Iraq, improve health security and move towards digitizing the healthcare system in Iraq.



Baghdad, 26 January 2023 - Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, joined the Ministry of Health and UNICEF Iraq in marking the **Iraqi National Immunization Day**.

It's a chance to raise awareness about the benefits of vaccines in ensuring the next generation in Iraq is immune against fatal diseases and enjoys the best attainable health status possible.



Baghdad, 29 January 2023 - Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO representative in Iraq, met today the Iraqi Minister of Culture, **Dr Ahmed Fakak Al-Badrani**, to explore ways of building an effective partnership to boost health promotion among Iraqis.

They agreed that innovative collaboration between health and culture can improve the public's health and well-being.



Ninawa, 29 January 2023 - WHO, supported by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, continues to provide over 7700 IDPs living in Mamrashan camp in Ninawa with primary healthcare services.

These vital services include medical consultations, emergency referrals for lifesaving treatments, lab tests and psychosocial support.

Health promotion, awareness, early detection, and adequate treatment: ingredients for lowering the burden of cancers

Baghdad, 7 February 2023 – Iraq celebrated the World Cancer Day and renewed its commitment to bridging the gap in cancer awareness, prevention, and early detection and treatment to save lives and lower the

suffering from cancers across the country.

Cancers represent the second cause of death in Iraq, the Region, and the world. They have severely impacted the Iraqi society at large and the

vulnerable communities in particular, especially in areas where access to equitable and sufficient health care services remains limited amid increasing social and economic risk factors.

Health promotion, awareness, early detection, and adequate treatment: ingredients for lowering the burden of cancers *(continued)*

Reflecting on the national roles and lead needs to advance cancer treatment, the World Health Organization (WHO) attended a celebration organized in Duhok by the Ministry of Health in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. The Ministry and WHO renewed commitment to effective cooperation in the fight against cancer and projected mapping urgent responses to critical issues like raising awareness, early detection, registry, and affordability of adequate treatment for different types of cancer.

WHO and the Ministry of Health of the Kurdistan region further agreed to capitalize on awareness raising and educating women on self-examination of breast cancer in addition to studying joint prospects for boosting cancer management projects that could provide the population, including the vulnerable groups of the refugees and internally displaced populations, with equal opportunities to get the earliest diagnosis and treatment possible.

Barween, a 35-year-old wife and mother of 3 children from a village in the northern Erbil governorate of the Kurdistan region, has recently lost a sister after a long fight with breast cancer. Barween's sister Naveed aged 32 lost the battle due to late diagnosis,

rudimentary access to treatment, and metastases to other organs. Barween's realization of the severity of the consequences of the disease led her to reach out to the Cancer Hospital in Erbil to learn about self-examination and enquire about early detection programmes to help herself and her other 34-years-old sister. She wished it would be simple and effortless for all women in her community to seek early diagnoses and benefit from the best possible care.

"We are working with the Government to change cancers from being serial killers to diseases that can be

prevented effectively, diagnosed early, and treated adequately," said Dr Ahmed Zouiten WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq. "Our commitment towards the national health authorities and the civil society institutions working in this area can create and coordinate a conducive environment for the prevention and treatment of cancer. Let us promote the Day and appeal to our partners and donors to join the call for action to bridge the gap on cancer awareness, detection, and treatment for higher impact in our communities," Dr Zouiten added.



The World Health Organization launches the initiative to digitize the health system in Iraq

Baghdad, 9 February 2023 - WHO, in collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Health, today launched the Health System Digitization Program to strengthen the health information system and produce data and information to enable evidence-based decision-making in the health sector.

The initiative aims to achieve better health outcomes in Iraq by ensuring appropriate allocation of healthcare resources, assessing the impact of several interventions and promoting accountability and transparency.

This launch is the culmination of several months of preparation and advocacy for advanced digital health solutions in Iraq. WHO worked in partnership with the Ministry of Health, UNICEF and many partners to ensure a successful implementation plan for the project and conducted several training workshops and evaluations in preparation for this launch.

The representative of the World Health

Organization in Iraq, Dr. Ahmed Zueiten, said: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a step, and today it is not just a step forward, but rather an initiation to reform the health information system to achieve the best health status for the population."

He added, "Effective health information systems can provide us with the necessary indicators to improve the health of the population, strengthen the health system, and achieve universal health coverage."

The National Immunization Program was chosen as the first program to adopt the District Health Information System (DHIS2) as a digital solution for data collection, analysis and dissemination, and other programs will gradually follow this year.

According to the recommendations of the Health Systems Review and Emergency Preparedness (UHPR) conducted in Iraq, strengthening the health information system is one of the

most urgent health needs, where evidence-based data and information can contribute to scientific decision-making in the health sector reform process.

The District Health Information System combines the essential tools needed for health information systems into a single, highly configurable, open source software platform. It can be used to produce both aggregated area-based data in time for various purposes such as health, logistics or education data, and can also be used to combine data from different sources and software into an integrated system.



WHO, in partnership with Iraq Ministry of Health, UNICEF and UNFPA, initiates the review of the “Reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health strategy (2023-2030)”

Baghdad, 12 February 2023 - The World Health Organization (WHO), in partnership with Iraq Ministry of Health, UNICEF and UNFPA, initiated the review of the “Reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health strategy (2023-2030)” to ensure a better quality of healthcare interventions for mothers and children of Iraq. Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Iraq

Representative: "This joint strategy will create a roadmap that will allow us to reach the highest levels of health for mothers and children of Iraq. Today, I joined colleagues from the Ministry of Health, UNICEF Iraq, and UNFPA Iraq, in reaffirming our commitment to improving women and children's health".



WHO expands the implementation of infection prevention and control in Iraq



Baghdad, 16 February 2023 - WHO is working with the Ministry of Health in Iraq to strengthen infection prevention and control measures in public hospitals as part of WHO's strategy to reduce the spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, in hospitals.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) supported the World Health Organization to provide essential medical supplies and equipment to enhance infection prevention and control measures in hospitals and to hold training workshops focusing on infection prevention practices and oxygen safety. The project, valued at approximately US\$700,000, aims to increase the

capacity of hospitals to enhance infection prevention and control and deliver high-quality healthcare services and specialized interventions, including anesthesia and intensive care services. "It is essential to follow evidence-based guidelines and protocols to limit the spread of communicable diseases, especially during the COVID-19 and other infectious diseases pandemic," said Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq. He added, "The World Health Organization is committed to providing technical assistance and resources to help Iraq implement infection prevention and control practices and improve the quality of healthcare."

The project started in ten hospitals in

four governorates and will be expanded to more hospitals this year. Since March 2022, WHO has conducted several workshops to provide more than 400 health workers in targeted hospitals with the knowledge and skills to implement infection prevention and control guidelines and follow necessary measures including waste management, hand washing, proper use of personal protective equipment, patient safety and reduction of infection. Infection acquired in the hospital.

A regional team from the World Health Organization visited Iraq to provide technical support, conduct practical training and evaluate the implementation of the infection prevention and control project. The World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health have developed and distributed national guidelines in this regard.

WHO provides evidence-based infection prevention and control recommendations and guidance to ensure measures are based on the latest scientific evidence and reduce the risk of infection and spread of infectious diseases, which is particularly important in Iraq, which is experiencing challenges in accessing health care and medical resources.

Adequate emergency care systems save lives during emergencies

Baghdad, 14 February 2023 - Adequate emergency care systems enabling a timely response are prerequisites for saving lives during emergencies. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Iraq Ministry of Health have initiated a community first aid responders training of trainers program designed to cascade trainings to all first responders across Iraq.



Healthcare providers with up-to-date knowledge of the different types of family planning methods, empower women and couples to make informed decisions on whether and when to have children

Baghdad, 14 January 2023 - Healthcare providers with up-to-date knowledge of the different types of family planning methods, empower women and couples to make informed decisions on whether and when to have children. With the support of the British Embassy Iraq, UNFPA organised five consecutive training sessions for over 60 doctors and nurses in Diwaniyah. The aim was to provide them with practical information on family planning services and birth spacing. In return, they can provide quality services and counseling to women and girls.



Youth empowerment and education are the key elements of future development

Baghdad, 18 January 2023 - "Despite the difficulties I faced, nothing stopped me from moving forward in my life" 26-year-old Sura from Al-Diwaniyah Governorate began telling her story of overcoming obstacles to bring about positive change in her life.

In 2019, when Sura was in the third stage of her Engineering Studies, her father passed away. That is when sorrow took over her life, "I felt like life was meaningless at that moment," she said. As such, her mother is the only family member she has left.

Her mother was her biggest supporter and encouraged her to focus on her studies. Sura's dream came true, and she graduated from college. But, only after two months of cherishing this achievement, she experienced another breakdown when her mother was infected with the Coronavirus and passed away. Sura got COVID-19 as well, and although she recovered physically after a while, the psychological effects were noticeable. Sura suffered from memory loss and stopped talking and mixing with her peers.

She was unable to accept the trauma, and she further felt neglected and discriminated against by society. She became lonely and introverted, estranged from her friends, and avoided members of her community. She lost her passion for life and thought that she couldn't live her everyday life again.

Fortunately, Sura found a new path to a better life when her sister spotted a post on social media about a life-skills



education course at a youth centre in her town. Sura's sister was able to convince her to join. This was a fresh start for positive changes in her life. Sura participated in a training of trainers on Adolescent Health. During this training, she met new people and was able to reintegrate into society again.

This was a new beginning for her. The people who she met encouraged and supported her, which helped her learn new skills such as communication and building confidence. Today Sura is stronger, more confident, and communicates well with people. She also started volunteering in community activities as part of a team as she acquired new skills. Sura is now actively looking for a job to utilise her skills and benefit from the experiences she gained through her training and voluntary work.

Youth programs offered by UNFPA in four youth centres in Diwaniyah have

positively changed the lives of Sura and more than 3,000 adolescents and young people. In collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Diwaniyah Governorate and generous donations from the People of Japan, UNFPA provides life-skills education and reproductive health and rights information in those centers.

Notably, in 2022, the four youth centres in Diwaniyah reached 17,000 young people with a wide range of skills and knowledge through awareness sessions, life skills training, psychosocial support and counseling services, and numerous training.

"Will makes the impossible possible", Sura said at the end. What Sura thought was unattainable has become her reality now. Her tenacity and investment in opportunity and integration with her peers within the youth centre, only strengthened her belief that she can achieve all goals that she is aspiring for.

Transitioning from humanitarian to development: UNFPA rebrands Women Community Centres

Baghdad, 25 January 2023 - UNFPA unveiled a new logo and branding for 37 Women Community Centres and mobile teams established with support from Canada, Norway and Sweden. The Women Community Centres have served vulnerable women and girls, including Internally Displaced Persons and refugees since 2014, providing them with a survivor-centered approach medical, counseling and psychosocial support, security, legal and life skills training related to women's empowerment, gender equality along with recreational activities. Today, women's community centres are well-known among women, official and community leaders, social workers and young people. To reflect a new phase for women's community centres that are transitioning from the humanitarian to development context, UNFPA supported a design of a common logo

that would be recognisable across the country and reflective of the services. The unifying brand of Women Community Centres (WCC) will contribute to raising awareness about the Centres and the services provided there. It will also encourage women and girls to come to these safe spaces and use the available services.

UNFPA engaged women and girls in the rebranding of the Centres from the beginning. Their experiences and memories of the Centres were vital to reflect the purpose of the centres and women's hopes for the future. Women and girls believed that the Centres build hope, and provide safety and room for growth.



CENTRE FOR WOMEN & GIRLS

When adolescent girls have the essential knowledge about their reproductive health and rights, they can make informed choices in their lives

Baghdad, 29 January 2023 - When adolescent girls have the essential knowledge about their reproductive health and rights, they can make informed choices in their lives. UNFPA with the support of British Embassy Iraq reached around 900

adolescent girls last month with information on reproductive health and rights, family planning and early marriage. UNFPA-supported outreach teams visit schools, youth centres and public places to support girls to have safe and healthy lives.



Mental Health

UNDP and FUAD are training psychologists on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support to provide care for 200 members of the Shirqaat community

Baghdad, 17 January 2023 - Al Shirqaat, Salah al-Din is considered one of the oldest cities in Iraq. Before liberation from ISIL, 160,000 people from Al Shirqaat fled their homes, becoming internally displaced. The Government of Iraq, with support from the UN, is working toward the safe and sustainable return and reintegration of families to their communities. To ensure sustainable solutions, UNDP and local partner FUAD (Foundation of United for Relief and Sustainable Development) are training

psychologists on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support to provide care for 200 members of the Shirqaat

community. The project will also provide vocational training and small business grants.



UNFPA provides mental health and psychosocial support services in Al-Ruttba

Baghdad, 18 February 2023 - "I had doubts that there was someone who wants to listen to me and help me." Fatima was suffering from severe mental health problems due to domestic violence. She learned about mental health and psychosocial support services that UNFPA provides in Al-Ruttba through mobile teams. Fatima received several sessions of MHPSS at her own home and now feels

much stronger to support her three children alone. With support of Canada in Iraq, over 5,000 women and girls in Anbar received gender-based violence services in January. Through two centers and 6 mobile teams, UNFPA provides case management, awareness sessions, legal referrals, livelihoods and recreational activities.



Environment

UNDP installs a solar park in Dohuk Governorate with capacity of up to two mega-watts

Duhok, 17 January 2023 - Solar energy contributes to a cleaner, greener planet by reducing our carbon footprint. UNDP, in partnership with the Governor of Dohuk Mr. Ali Tatar, the University of Dohuk, local authorities and community members, has installed a solar park in Dohuk Governorate with capacity of up to two mega-watts. The park will contribute to climate protection by offsetting over 1.5 kg of carbon dioxide emissions per year. This

project was funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP in

partnership with the Governorate of Dohuk.



Baghdad, 16 January 2023 - The Minister of Agriculture, **Eng. Abbas Jabr Al-Aliawi**, received a delegation of the UN Development Program headed by the Resident Representative in Iraq, **Auki Lotsema**. They discussed issues of mutual interest including climate change, combating desertification, and the expansion of the use of modern irrigation techniques to ensure optimal water utilization.



Baghdad, 30 January 2023 - Today, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, together with **Mr. Auke Lootsma**, UNDP Iraq Resident Representative, and **Dr. Salah ElHajjHassan**, UN FAO Representative in Iraq, met with **H.E. Mr. Aoun Diab**, Minister of Water Resource, discussing how to address Iraq's water challenges jointly and holistically. Iraq joining #UNWaterConvention

Advance training on solar energy use held in Mosul

Mosul, 8 February 2023 - As part of UN-Habitat's effort to contribute to the upskilling of public sector employees' know-how in the growing sector of renewable energy, UN-Habitat recently delivered an advanced course on 'Design, Operations and Maintenance of Photovoltaic Systems (PVs)' through

Silevany company. This initiative follows the success of a training course delivered in late 2022 and was again attended by technical staff of Ninewa Governorate, Mosul Municipality, Ninewa Water Directorate and Ninewa Sewage Directorate. The advanced course mostly focused on operating PV systems,

monitoring and troubleshooting. The practical training sessions were delivered in Al-Yarmouk Park where UN-Habitat has installed a solar system and the Sharya farm in Dohuk where Silevany company is implementing a solar-powered irrigation system. This initiative is funded by the European Union.

Iraq moves into the implementation phase of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), UNDP supports this move



Baghdad, 18 January 2023 - Iraq is now moving into the implementation phase of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) through an NDC Roadmap document with plans for institutional restructuring and mega projects in sectors like water and energy to meet NDC commitments. The NDC Roadmap will serve as a blueprint for what Iraq intends to implement on the climate change front until the year 2030 focusing on a green economy and renewable energy,

aligning with the Paris Climate Agreement and sustainable development goals. The document will be published later this year. The development of the NDC Roadmap was a collaborative effort, with representatives from the Ministries of Environment, Oil, Electricity, Transport, Industry, Agriculture, Water Resources, Health, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq all participating in a series of workshops facilitated by UNDP and funded by its

#ClimatePromise initiative.

UNDP recently facilitated workshops on environmental loss assessment methodologies and tools, as part of its #ClimatePromise.

The event aimed to tackle the pressing issues of environmental degradation in Iraq, including land and water degradation, biodiversity loss, and the impacts of industrial waste and mining. Through collaboration with key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Planning, the workshops provided state-of-the-art tools and methods for assessing environmental degradation, including techniques like Life Cycle Analysis, Environmental Risk Assessment, and Economic Evaluation. These assessments will be critical in understanding the current and future impact of environmental degradation in Iraq, and in developing effective mitigation strategies.

Stay tuned for more updates on the progress made through these workshops, and the positive impact they will have on the environment in Iraq.

Combating transboundary sand and dust storms in Southern Iraq and Kuwait

Basra, 28 January 2023 - UN-Habitat with partners has embarked on a new project on improving cities' resilience against the impact of sand and dust storms. The project kick-off was celebrated in form of a workshop with over 50 participants, co-hosted by the Governorate of Basra and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. Iraq is counted among the 10 countries most vulnerable to climate change in the World today, and the climate crisis has become a reality, already. Severe heat, droughts and the proliferation of sand and dust storms have a significant impact not only on agriculture and food production, or on Iraq's economy, but also impacts cities and urban residents directly. Sand and dust storms have become a public health issue in Kuwait and Iraq with increases in respiratory illnesses and even people dying because of these extreme weather events. The economic burden is equally high: Estimates say that the impact on Kuwait's economy, alone, exceeds 190 million USD per year, with impacts across the board, including aviation, the oil industry and all types of commercial activities that must be put on hold, while the dust cloud literally



takes hostage of the entire country. The project on Improved Resilience against Transboundary Sand and Dust Storms in Kuwait and Southern Iraq follows a three-pronged approach: It improves the knowledge base and the understanding of the conditions that create sand and dust storms, as well as their impact on human health, and the needed prevention and mitigation measures. Secondly, it makes a substantial effort to restoring ecosystems in the source areas of sand and dust storms. Thirdly and most

importantly, it helps to enhance the resilience and capacity of local authorities, and of the most vulnerable communities in Southern Iraq, to adapt to the impact of desertification and to contribute to mitigating the root causes of sand and dust storms.

Dr. Rawia Mahmoud, Director General of the Department of Forestry and Desertification from the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture welcomed this timely project kick-off as "a very successful and important meeting for finding appropriate solutions and diagnosing

Combatting transboundary sand and dust storms in Southern Iraq and Kuwait *(continued)*

the causes, including climate change, that is affecting Iraq and Kuwait.” She further added “We are fully prepared to cooperate in the implementation for the purpose of achieving the objectives of this pioneering and developmental project, which will reduce the risk of sand and dust storms and improve environmental conditions in both countries, Iraq and Kuwait.”

Dr. Mohammed Sadeqi from the Kuwait Fund underlined the importance of this project as the first of its kind and added: “The state of Kuwait is the main beneficiary of the projects in terms of health and economic implications caused by sand and dust storms. As this natural occurrence causes multiple health issues as well as takes a significant toll on the Kuwaiti economy due to its effect on the migration of sand dunes on roads, power plants and the oil refineries. The project is expected to significantly improve the living conditions in Kuwait and the region.”

Eng. Wa’El Ashhab, Head of UN-Habitat’s Country Programme in Iraq highlighted “the severe impact of climate change on Iraq and other countries in the region, where drought and water scarcity became a huge challenge to the Government and local authority, this important initiative came as a result of the generous contribution by the Kuwait Fund.” He added “UN-Habitat aims at brining on board other Gulf countries that are affected by sandstorms to expand on the coverage of this regional initiative to combat desertification and reduce the impact of this environmental phenomenon.”

Dr. Ameera Al-Hasan, Head of UN-Habitat’s Country Programme in Kuwait, and UN-Habitat’s representative with the Gulf Cooperation Council emphasized: “The workshop aimed to introduce the project stakeholders and partners to the scope of work and introduce its objectives, as well as to define the role

of each entity within the project. This comes as a results of UN Habitat’s prioritization of the harmonization and alignment of efforts to ensure the synergy in implementation, as this project is considered the first of its kind in the Middle East. The project’s collaboration between multiple partners, all who believe in the importance of its proper implementation, ensures to optimize its results in the future, with regards to combatting the effects of climate change globally, as it impacts the inhabitants of urban and coastal cities alike with regards to economic and health implications.”

The project on Improved Resilience against Transboundary Sand and Dust Storms in Kuwait and Southern Iraq will be implemented over the next four years, and is fully funded by the Kuwait Fund with a total budget of 4 million Kuwaiti Dinar.

UNDP and Ministry of Environment consult on climate change

Baghdad, 6 February 2023 - Auke Lootsma, UNDP Resident Representative met H.E. Minister Nazar Amedi, Iraqi Minister of Environment. They discussed key areas where UNDP and MoEn collaborate to tackle climate change challenges in Iraq as well as preparations for the 28th Party Climate Change Conference in Dubai.



UNDP holds a technical workshop to prepare KRG's Local Adaptation Plan (LAP) and determine the status of the environmental adaptation of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Sulaymaniyah, 7 February 2023 - Exciting beginning of the week from Al-Sulaymaniyah!

UNDP held a 2-day technical workshop to prepare KRG's Local Adaptation Plan (LAP) and determine the status of the environmental adaptation of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The workshop was inaugurated by H.E. Minister Nazar Amedi, the Minister of Environment, and Auke Lootsma, the Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq, and was attended by key entities such as the Kurdistan Environmental Protection and Improvement Board and

Joint Crisis Centre (JCC) from all three governorates of KRI.

This workshop will lay the foundation for the document, expected to be finalized later this year, along with the Locally Appropriate Mitigation Action

(LAMA), and together will be the framework to climate action in KRI which will include projects on adaptation and mitigation and will open opportunities for climate investment.



Iraqi President witnesses firsthand the remarkable progress that is taking place within the #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul Initiative

Mosul, 28 December 2022 - UNESCO welcomed the visit of Iraqi President, Abdul Latif Rashid, to Al-Nouri Mosque and Al-Tahera Church to witness firsthand the remarkable progress that is taking place within the #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul Initiative, implemented by UNESCO in partnership with the Government of Iraq and UAE.



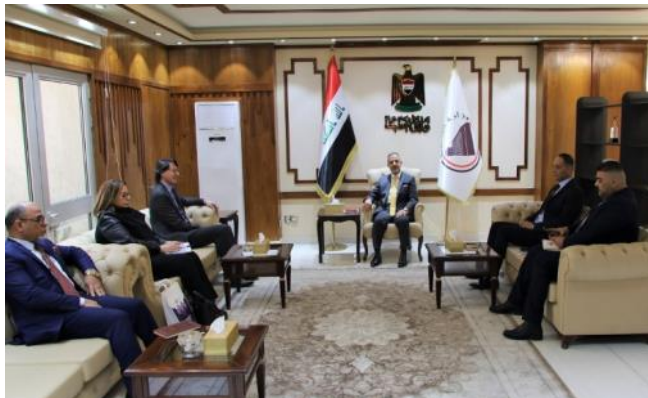
A moment to remember!

Mosul, 11 January 2023 - The cross at the top of The Church of The Dominican Convent (Our Lady of the Hour) in Mosul is being installed. UNESCO, in partnership with the United Arab Emirates is progressing with the rehabilitation of this religious landmark.



The ILO is applying Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) approaches to create decent jobs for around 1,000 workers

Erbil, 18 January 2023 - A joint ILO/EU/UNESCO project is supporting the conservation and rehabilitation of cultural heritage at the World Heritage Site of the Erbil Citadel. The ILO is applying Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) approaches to create decent jobs for around 1,000 workers. In addition, the ILO through EIIP approaches will facilitate the recognition of skills for 40 workers in three different occupations related to the conservation of historical sites.



Baghdad, 22 January 2023 - Mr. Paolo Fontani, Director of UNESCO Iraq, met with the Minister of Planning, Dr. Muhammed Ali Tamim, to discuss the ongoing UNESCO projects in Iraq. The minister called on UNESCO's continuous engagement and support in the field of education and culture.



Mosul, 4 February 2023 - UNESCO was pleased to welcome H. E. the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities, Dr. Ahmed Fakak al-Badrani, at the historic Palatial House of Suliman Al-Sayegh in the Old City of Mosul, to witness firsthand the remarkable achievements that are taking place with the rehabilitation of this unique heritage palace in close collaboration with SBAH, thanks to the EU funded project "Reviving Mosul and Basra Old Cities". Guided by the UNESCO team, he highly appreciated the visit and achievements.

Iraqi Prime Minister meets UNESCO Director-General in Paris

Paris, France, 28 January 2023 – “Excellent discussion on UNESCO actions for heritage & education in Iraq. Our flagship initiative to Revive the Spirit of Mosul has entered its final phase and reconstruction is progressing rapidly. I thank the Prime Minister for his invitation to the country - I'm coming soon,” said Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO after the meeting with the Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Mohamed Shia, at his residence in the capital, Paris. His Excellency appreciated the UNESCO initiative to revive the spirit of Mosul and the reconstruction of Al-Nouri

Mosque, and looked forward to cooperating with the organization to include more Iraqi sites on the World Heritage List.



President of the Republic receives UNESCO Representative to Iraq

Baghdad, 30 January 2023 - His Excellency the President of the Republic, Dr. Abdul Latif Rashid, received today, at the Baghdad Palace, UNESCO Representative to Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani.

During the meeting, the President stressed the importance of strengthening means of cooperation to develop the sectors of education and culture, and to preserve heritage and cultural diversity, pointing to the need for concerted efforts and support for international organizations to preserve archaeological sites, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The President highlighted the role of UNESCO in providing support to the education sector.

Mr. Fontani congratulated the President on his appointment and underlined the plans and programmes that UNESCO is implementing in Iraq, particularly the rehabilitation of archaeological and historic sites, and

the work on education access and quality, pointing out the strong relationship and continuous cooperation between UNESCO and the Iraqi Government.

Mr Fontani highlighted that UNESCO is currently carrying out several projects in Basra, the Erbil Citadel and Mosul, which have a strong impact on livelihood and employment. Only in

Mosul, UNESCO has employed more than 4.000 people in the last three years, 30% of which women. UNESCO employs about 70% of the people it trained with ministries of education, higher education and labour.

Iraqi architects, engineers and archeologists are working hand in hand with international experts to revive Iraq old city centres.



Mosul, 29 January 2023 - The UNESCO Community Information center for the #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul Initiative organized an event for Mulla Othman Al-Mawsili to commemorate the 100th year of his anniversary.



Basra, 5 February 2023 - UNESCO Iraq's Chief of Culture, **Mr. Junaid Sorosh-Wali**, met with the First Deputy Governor of Basra, **Eng. Muhammad Al-Tamimi**, to discuss UNESCO's projects in Basra, in partnership with the EU. They agreed to intensify the collaboration of the two institutions. Eng. Al-Tamimi expressed his gratitude for the efforts deployed by the UNESCO team and is looking forward to cooperate further on the rehabilitation of heritage houses and the Al-Ashar Canal.

UNESCO hosts the high-level delegation of the European Union to the Old City of Basra work sites



Basra, 10 February 2023 - UNESCO was pleased to welcome the high-level delegation of the European Union, led by H.E. Ambassador of the EU to Iraq, Mr. Ville Varjola, with representatives from the European Commission's Directorate General for International Partnerships, to the Old City of Basra work sites to witness firsthand the remarkable achievements that are taking place within the framework of the project "Reviving Mosul and Basra

Old Cities" funded by the EU. Accompanied by H.E. Deputy Governor of Basra, Mr. Al Tamimi, the Head of SBAAH Basra and beneficiaries' representative, the delegation was guided by the UNESCO Iraq Office Chief of Culture and the UNESCO team along the main project sites. The delegation expressed appreciation to the works that UNESCO is undertaking with the generous fund from the European Union and ensured

of its continuous cooperation on the rehabilitation of heritage houses and the Al-Ashar Canal, in partnership UNESCO and Governorate of Basra.

UNESCO is rehabilitating historic Shanasheel houses and Al Ashar Canal, with Basrawi trained youth and workers, to preserve the cultural heritage in Basra Old City for future generations, while providing hundreds of jobs at local level.

Scores of trained young men and women are directly involved in the reconstruction of heritage houses in historic Basra.

The UNESCO Iraq Office Education team visited the Old City of Basra to monitor the work and celebrated the graduation of 231 Basrawi youth who took part in TVET activities and have successfully completed the apprenticeship on the job training programmes which were carried out at the heritage sites where UNESCO is leading the rehabilitation of three houses with support of the EU.

In Brussels UNESCO organized a cultural event to celebrate the achievements of the initiative #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul

Brussels, Belgium, 18 February 2023 - In Bozar Brussels, UNESCO organized a cultural event to celebrate the initiative #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul achievements with EU's contribution, together with the Embassy of Iraq in Belgium as well as EU and UAE partners.

UNESCO's #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul and Basra initiatives' achievements:

- 4,100+ jobs created
- 1,500+ vulnerable youth trained in restoration
- 47+ historic houses rehabilitated.

Thanks to partners like European Union in Iraq, culture is rebuilding communities, livelihoods, cohesion.

Mr. Ernesto Ottone-Ramirez, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture, opened the event followed by remarks by Ms. Chiara Adamo, Acting Director for Human Development, Migration, Governance and Peace, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, European Commission, H.E. Mr. Ahmad Berwari, Ambassador of Iraq to Belgium, and Mr. Salem Ali Al Haj, Head of the European Union Section, Embassy of the United Arab Emirates to the Kingdom of Belgium and the Mission to the European Union in Brussels, who highlighted the achievements of the initiative on heritage rehabilitation and livelihoods.



UNESCO Representative to Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani, showcased powerful before/after images of heritage sites rehabilitated as part of the UNESCO initiative #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul.

Guests had the opportunity to hear 3 young Iraqi architects and engineers who shared their experience of taking part in the rebuilding of Mosul as part of the #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul initiative and who expressed their gratitude towards the donors including the EU and UAE. Their vision embodies a blueprint of Mosul's tomorrow.

Short movies produced by young Iraqi filmmakers with the support of the EU

were shown.

Thousands of Iraqis participate in the reconstruction of Mosul after it was severely destroyed. UNESCO initiative #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul provided more than 4,100 job opportunities.

A traditional musical performance played by talented Iraqi artists led by Layth Sidiq concluded the evening and immersed the audience in the Iraqi rich and diverse musical culture.

In a related activity, to present some key results of the UNESCO initiative #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul, a photo exhibition in Brussels Park, in front of the Royal Palace, displayed impressive images of the project implementation.

Minister of Education meets a UNESCO Representative to Iraq; discussed priorities for the education sector

Baghdad, 15 December 2022 - His Excellency the Minister of Education, Dr Ibrahim Nams Al-Jabouri, meets a UNESCO delegation headed by the UNESCO Representative to Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani, to discuss priorities for the education sector in Iraq and areas for mutual cooperation in the coming years.



UN-Habitat concludes on-the-job vocational training for 26 unemployed male and female youth in Mosul on civil works

Mosul, 18 January 2023 - Aside from improving living conditions and helping to mitigate the extreme temperatures of Iraqi summers, the physical rehabilitation and maintenance of public spaces in war-affected cities offer labor-intensive job opportunities and the upskilling of youth.

Conscious of this, UN-Habitat has recently concluded the final round of on-the-job vocational training for 26 unemployed male and female youth in Mosul on civil works that included plastering, painting, electrical and steel works. The theoretical and practical training courses were conducted in Al-

Yarmouk park by specialized trainers from Nineveh Vocational Training Centre (VTC) in partnership with the Engineering Association for Development and Environment (EADE) and Mosul Municipality. This project was designed to improve the youth's employment prospects in civil works and further expand the local community's ownership of the newly inaugurated park. This important initiative is delivered under the European Union-funded programme "Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development".



Investing in education, investing in Iraq's future

Baghdad, 23 January 2023 - Mujahid al-Arabi Primary School is slowly regaining life less than a year after its reopening. Once empty, dilapidated, and abandoned because of the war, its rooms are now full of children who are all eager to learn. With over 400 students, its corridors and playgrounds often get busy. Groups of children flock to read, play football, or just hang out together.

The school's facilities have improved too. Its rooms are now air-conditioned and well-ventilated; boards covered in colorful, educational posters; desks and chairs brand new; hallways, staircases, and toilets clean and shiny; library filled with books; safe drinking water available everywhere.

Mujahid Al-Arabi Primary School has become a safe haven for budding poets, scientists, engineers, doctors, as well as for its hardworking teachers and staff.

"It feels nice to be back in school," says 12-year-old Saif Saad Fadhel, whose primary interest is solving math

problems. "Every day I am learning something and building a stronger bond with my friends through school."

Enjoying their new classroom, desks, and chairs, Saif and his friends are thrilled to start every day's lesson.

The atmosphere at the faculty room and administrative building also changed a lot. Teachers' and staff's spirits are high. The pleasant school environment and new facilities clearly made a big difference.

"Students and teachers feel better and more motivated to go to school. Everyone is happy and proud of their school. Even parents have noticed this remarkable shift in their children's behaviours," said Rasheed Ubaid Zedan, Mujahid al-Arabi Primary School's principal.

During the ISIL conflict, schools were heavily damaged. Many young Iraqis were forced to either drop out of school or continue studying at home or in overcrowded make-shift classrooms.

Mohammad Qusay Mohammad, 13,

remembers how Mujahid al-Arabi Primary School looked after the conflict. "The school was falling apart. Most of it was destroyed. We could not use it for classes."

Determined to finish his studies and be a teacher, Mohammad, like most children in al-Karma district within Anbar, attended classes in makeshift classrooms called caravans. "There were no desks. There were too many of us in one caravan. Studying was difficult."

To make their students feel a little more comfortable, Islamic Studies teacher Ali Jabbar Mohammad and his co-teachers converted their homes into classrooms. But the space was still not conducive for learning. The crowded space and strong background noise distracted kids and made it difficult for lessons to sink in.

Mohammad and Ali's hopes were renewed when the school's rehabilitation commenced. Every week Mohammad made sure to pass by and

Investing in education, investing in Iraq's future *(continued)*

spend time admiring his school as engineers, carpenters, and masons worked to upgrade it. "I watched it while being rebuilt. I am amazed at how it turned out."

With facilities and equipment modernized, Ali sees a bright future for his school and expects children to do their best and teachers to perform well. "The coming years are going to be good. Everyone loves their new school. I am excited to see how this upgrade would create ripples of positive effect on children's learning and their future."

Every week, Ali delivers at least 12 lectures to the 50 students he handles.

For Hifdhi Hameed Rashid, manager of the Department of Education in al-Karma, rebuilding schools is critical, but it is just the beginning. With more than 300 schools in Anbar (60 in al-Karma) damaged by the conflict, the work is far from over.

"The government keeps quality education as a priority. We will continue rehabilitating schools and building more classrooms, annexes, and examination halls to keep pace with the growing population. We will also equip schools with necessary supplies and work with educators to enhance the current system, curricula, and modules," he says.

As of January, 207 schools in Anbar have been rehabilitated, 53 of which are in al-Karma. Across Iraq's five

liberated governorates, UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization has rehabilitated 617 schools, 162 are in Anbar, including Mujahid al-Arabi Primary School.

"Education is the beacon that guides Iraq towards peace and development. Our children will define the future of Iraq. Through education, we can stir them into the right path and mold them into noble and uplifting leaders who value diversity and democracy," said Hifdhi Hameed Rashid, manager of the Department of Education in al-Karma.

About:

January 24 marks the International Day of Education. With this year's theme, "to invest in people, prioritize education," UNDP rallies behind teachers and champions who work to

transform education towards peace and sustainable development.

Iraq used to have one of the best education systems in the Middle East. Primary education is compulsory and public education is free at all levels. However, decades of conflict caused the education system to deteriorate.

UNDP Iraq is working with the Government of Iraq to rehabilitate schools. To date, UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization has rehabilitated 396 primary schools, 199 secondary schools, 22 kindergartens, seven universities, and nine technical colleges.

The rehabilitation of Mujahid al-Arabi Primary School for Girls and Boys in al-Karma was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



Youth of Iraq completes its on-the-job trainings, changing lives

Mosul, 30 January 2023 - In Mosul, on 25 January 2023, UNDP was so proud of the 60 boys and girls who just completed their on-the-job training. Their hard work paid off.

Two months ago, these 60 people entered eight plastic and metal factories in Mosul as trainees. Tomorrow some of them will become full-time workers. Others will open their plastic and metal manufacturing shops.

Aside from hands-on experience, they received a US\$ 400 allowance each for working for 40 days. 13 of them got inspired, created their groups, developed business proposals, and were awarded grants.

This was implemented through UNDP Iraq's Funding Facility for Stabilization, in partnership with Oxfam in Iraq, thanks to Canada in Iraq's support.

On 30 January 2023, we witnessed wonderful enthusiasm and

collaboration at the Wassit Vocational Training Directorate. The World Food Programme (WFP) supports 650 young women and men with skills training

that enable them to create sustainable livelihoods. Thanks to the Government of Germany, the local government and centre management for changing lives.



UNESCO with the Government of Iraq celebrates the fifth International Day of Education in Baghdad

Baghdad, 26 January 2023 - UNESCO Iraq organized the celebration of the 5th International Day of Education 2023 together with the Government of Iraq and Education Partners under the auspices of the Minister of Education His Excellency Dr. Ibrahim Namis Al-Jubouri.

In 2018, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared January 24th as the International Day of Education, to celebrate education and its centrality to human wellbeing and sustainable development. The theme of this year's International Day of Education is "to invest in people, prioritise education", drawing on a key message from the UN Transforming Education Summit held in 2022.

The event in Baghdad was attended by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Minister of Education (MoE), Advisor of the Ministry Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR), Chairperson of the Higher Committee for Educational Development, and high-level representatives of the Ministry of Planning (MoP), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), the Prime Minister's Office Advisory Commission (PMAC) and Communications and Media Commission (CMC) together with UN Agencies, INGOs and local NGOs, and other key education actors. It served as an opportunity to re-affirm Iraq's education commitments, and to step-up public engagement in favour of education as a path to peace and sustainable development.

The ceremony opened with reflections on the theme of this year's event, that of the importance of prioritizing education.

"Our presence today at the celebration of the International Day of Education is nothing but an affirmation of the importance of quality education as the priority to ensure quality education for all and achieve wellbeing and sustainable development," Mr. Adel Al-Busaisi, Deputy of Minister of Education for Scientific Affairs, on behalf of His Excellency the Minister of Education, Dr. Ibrahim Names Al-Jubouri

"We have the right in the Republic of Iraq, the country of civilization, history and science, to rise further and to give education the necessary attention, as it is the main key to every process of development and



growth," Mr. Omar Al-Barzanji, Senior Deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Legal Affairs and Multiple Affairs on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

"This day presents an opportunity to show that our ministry has started a comprehensive reform project in cooperation with our international partners through the development of an integrated plan for the advancement of academic work," Dr. Alaa Attia, Advisor to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, on behalf of the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

"This occasion emphasizes the great responsibility we have to support this vital sector, and even more importantly, address current actions and future directions needed," Dr. Maha Abdul Karim Al-Rawi, Director General of the Department of Human Development at the Ministry of Planning on behalf of the Minister of Planning.

"Our ministry, as one of the technical and vocational education and training institutions, works side by side with UNESCO through many programs in reforming technical and vocational education and training in Iraq," Mr. Raed Jabbar Bahedh, Director General of the Labor and Vocational Training Department at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, on behalf of the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs.

"The International Day of Education is an opportunity to reiterate our commitment to support the overall improvement of education for all in Iraq," Mr. Paolo Fontani, UNESCO Representative to Iraq

During the celebrations, the participants received an update on the new Iraq National Education Strategy 2022-2031, in recognition of its relevance as the strategic vision for Iraq's education transformation over the next decade. The update was followed by a lively discussion among the Representatives of the MoE, MoHESR, the World Bank, UNICEF and UNESCO on the topics including "inclusive, safe and healthy schools for all children; skills and lifelong learning; teachers; digital learning; financing mechanisms to secure adequate resources, and future directions of higher education in Iraq". Panelists reflected on the status of Iraq's education and highlighted the critical next steps to achieve real transformation and meet the objectives of SDG 4 by 2030. The event concluded with a discussion on education sector coordination mechanisms for better support to Iraq in reaching the goal of inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.



OCHA on Twitter

Baghdad, 24 January 2023 - OCHA Iraq: Education is a fundamental human right and key for achieving better future for all. On #EducationDay and every day, let's ensure that everyone has access to quality education.

WHO on Twitter

Baghdad, 24 January 2023 - World Health Organization Representative in Iraq, Dr Ahmed Zouiten: "Children are not only the future but also the present, and every child has the right to health, education and happiness. On #EducationDay, we reiterate commitment for the health/well-being of children in Iraq around the world so they can invest in their education and secure their future".

UNESCO and Government of Japan sign agreement to support Technical, Vocational Education and Training, and Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education for youth in Mosul, Ninewa

Baghdad, 28 January 2023 - UNESCO and Government of Japan signed an agreement in support of the project "Enhancing youth Employability and Resilience for Peace in Ninewa".

Futoshi Matsumoto, Japan's Ambassador to Iraq and Paolo Fontani, UNESCO Representative to Iraq, signed the document in the presence of Dr. Alaa Atiyah, the Advisor of Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR).

The project lays the ground for participatory and innovative design principles in the assistance for social stabilization (education for preventing extremism, employment promotion through vocational training mainly for the youth recovery of infrastructures and return of IDPs and refugees). Overall, it will build on the foundation of the ongoing UNESCO supported projects to expand provision of inclusive quality Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and train the technical and construction workers on Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education (PVE-E), thereby improving their employability opportunities, promote peace and strengthen resilience.

The project is part of the UNESCO's ongoing 'Revive the Spirit of Mosul' initiative, launched in February 2018 to coordinate international effort to rebuild the heritage and revitalize the educational and cultural institutions of Mosul, in close cooperation with the Government and people of Iraq. This project will build on the achievements of UNESCO's multi-year programmes focused on youth investment through technical and vocational skills development and prevention of violent extremism through education.

"The future of the youth in Iraq, and mainly in Mosul depends on what we do today, their access to quality and

inclusive education is the milestone for the reconstruction and promoting sustainable peace of Iraq" said Paolo Fontani, UNESCO Representative to Iraq.

On behalf of the Minister of MoHESR, Dr. Alaa Atiyah, the Advisor of MoHESR expressed his gratitude towards the Government of Japan and UNESCO for their intervention and continuous support to the Education sector in Iraq.

Mr. Futoshi Matsumoto, Japan's Ambassador to Iraq, emphasized in his speech the great success of all previous projects between UNESCO and the Government of Japan and said "We would like to commend the tireless efforts made by the Iraqi professionals and leaders in education sector that led to the reconstruction of Mosul. We look forward to the brighter future for the youth of Mosul so that they can build their own future. We continue to stand by them."

In February 2018, UNESCO Director-

General Audrey Azoulay launched the flagship initiative "Revive the Spirit of Mosul" as the Organization's response to the recovery of one of Iraq's iconic cities. Reviving Mosul is not only about rebuilding heritage sites, but also about empowering the population as agents of change involved in the process of rebuilding their city through culture and education.

Japan has long been a valued partner of UNESCO globally and in Iraq. In 2021 the Government of Japan supported the project "Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on Education through distance learning in Iraq". Similarly in 2020 the project "Job creation for youth in Mosul - a centre of vocational excellence in construction skills supporting labour market outcomes", and in 2019, the project "Voices of the children of Old Mosul: the rehabilitation and management of primary schools in historic urban context emerging from conflict" were supported by the Government of Japan.



Almost 12,000 children participate in the first-ever Grade 4 National Mathematics and Science Assessment Report



Baghdad, 1 February 2023 – Today, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education (MoE) of the Federal Government of Iraq launched the first-ever Grade 4 National Mathematics and Science Assessment Report. Financed by the German Government through the KfW Development Bank, the report aimed at assessing the quality of education in Grade 4, providing disaggregated data for improved evidence-based planning and budgeting for the education sector. This assessment was conducted by MoE with technical support from UNICEF and Cambridge Education – Mott MacDonald.

The sample covered 11,966 Grade 4 students, including 6,138 girls in 320 schools, across the 15 governorates of

Federal Iraq. To better understand the effects of learning and teaching, the assessment also included a set of questionnaires provided to Grade 4 mathematics and science teachers, their supervisors and school principals of the 320 targeted schools. The assessment report highlighted key achievements in education, yet some gaps still remain.

“UNICEF commends the Ministry of Education for prioritizing this assessment to better inform the education sector decision-making and planning,” said Ms. Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq. “This assessment is the first step to ensuring quality education for every child in Iraq, which UNICEF is committed to

supporting the Government to achieve.” In Iraq, an estimated 2 million children are out of school. Decades of conflict, poverty, and under-investment have undermined what used to be one of the most robust education systems in the Middle East.

Key findings of the assessment showed that out of the 5,959 students who participated in the mathematics assessment, only 39.5 per cent of students passed, with girls scoring slightly higher than boys, 17.5 per cent and 17 per cent respectively, while 5 per cent did not state their gender. As for the science test, a total of 6,007 students participated, and only 34.1 per cent of students passed. Boys scored higher than girls, 17.4 and 16.7 per cent respectively. Students in both subjects who were taught by teachers aged 50 years and above, scored highest. Findings also showed that students’ reading skills and application of math and science concepts need strengthening.

The math and science tests consisted of two models each, where one-quarter of the questions were based on an international assessment tool - The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The ministry has committed to participating in the Grade 4 – TIMSS 2023 global assessment.

UNESCO, in cooperation with the EU and the Ministry of Education, is working to increase the employability of graduates from the Vocational Schools

Baghdad, 7 February 2023 - UNESCO, in cooperation with the EU and the Ministry of Education, is working to increase the employability of graduates from the Vocational Schools. New Competence Based curricula for Agriculture, Construction and Hospitality and Tourism have been developed and are being piloted in the schools. These curricula will better prepare the graduates for work in the private sector.

UNESCO experts visit the schools regularly to meet with students and teachers for their feedback and to help teachers with the new methods of teaching required by the new curricula. The Erbil Agriculture school is piloting new materials in Animal Husbandry. UNESCO is also supplying the school with the practical training equipment needed to develop useful competences in the students to enhance their employability.



2 new curricula for the ITC Industry are under finalization at a 5 day workshop in Erbil. Members of the Curriculum Development working group from Baghdad and Basra Vocational school and officials from the MoE have been working for 3 months to

write the new teaching and learning materials for the new courses. This workshop will finalize these materials for implementation in the schools from academic year 2023/24. UNESCO congratulates the working Group on their outstanding achievement.

New school is opened Kawergosk

Erbil, 7 February 2023 - New school in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq means more students from the refugees and local community students attending their classes.

Today, UNHCR's Deputy High Commissioner, Kelly Clements and the Minister of Education, H.E. Alan Hama-Saeed Salih opened a new 12-classroom school in Kawergosk town which will improve the quality of #EducationForAll!



New schools are opened in Qazal Qiew and Kasr-e Mehrab Villages

Baghdad, 20 February 2022 - Providing an appropriate school environment contributes to the quality of the educational process and is considered one of the most important reasons for the stability of return in the affected areas. We thank UN-Habitat for striving to improve our school environment by constructing new classrooms and WASH facilities that also provide equal opportunities for students with impaired movement," said Mahdi, Kasr-e Mehrab Mixed Primary School Principal. Lack of education infrastructure is one of the main concerns for families who

want to return to their origin. As a part of the EU Madad programme to facilitate voluntary returns in Western Ninewa, UN-Habitat completed the rehabilitation and expansion of two mixed primary schools serving around 300 students in Qazal Qiew and Kasr-e Mehrab Villages in Tel Afar District. The work included painting, constructing additional WASH facilities and three classrooms, repairing and constructing the boundary walls, improving the barrier-free access and courtyard, and drilling two wells to be used for WASH facilities.



Youth

UNICEF Representative in Iraq visits Dhi Qar

Basra, 7 February 2023 - "Climate change is forcing displacement for many children in Dhi Qar and those that stay, struggle to keep their traditional way of life. UNICEF is supporting the provision of basic services to these children - children like Sharif, that got his first vaccination yesterday," said Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq, during her visit to the Marshlands this week.

As part of the visit, she met the first Deputy Governor of Dhi Qar, Muhammad Hadi, and discussed key

issues affecting vulnerable children, and how UNICEF is supporting

programmes in the Governorate to cover their fundamental needs.



UNDP aims to support the Iraqi youth everywhere

Basra, 12 February 2023 - UNDP aims to support the Iraqi youth everywhere. The Basra Youth Panel is a youth group consisting of 20 young volunteers working together to shape the future of Basra through sustainable initiatives such as participation in an advanced training on innovative mechanisms for advocacy campaigns on decentralization from the youth's point

of view.

The youth group received training on innovative advocacy through UNDP with the funding of EU, and recently shared their aspirations with the EU delegation's Director of International Cooperation during her visit to the south, who encouraged them to work together and make a difference.



"Are You with Us? Working Together for an Iraq #ForEveryChild"



Baghdad, 16 February 2023 - "Today, we have a unique opportunity to work together on key issues affecting children, young people, and women in Iraq to make a difference in their lives," said Sheema Sen Gupta, UNICEF Iraq Representative during the opening of an event with UNICEF partners today in Baghdad.

Today's event, entitled "Are You with Us? Working Together for an Iraq #ForEveryChild", included representatives of various embassies, young people, private partners as well as UN agencies.

"I recently visited Jedda Camp and saw the smiles of children and young people. We need to support their transition from these camps and find durable solutions. To do that, we must engage with the most vulnerable young girls, boys and women," said Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General during a UNICEF event with partners.

"We need to continue building the capacity of the Government to better meet the needs & #rights of every child and young person in Iraq," said Jeffrey Izzo Director, Office of Refugee and IDP Affairs, US Embassy Baghdad.

"The Netherlands has a youth agenda at heart. We focus on children and young people because in 20 years from now, it is them who will be present. Therefore, it is our collective responsibility to ensure a greener world for every child & young person in Iraq," said Ms. Laetitia van Asch-Pieters, Deputy Head of Mission, the Netherlands Embassy in Baghdad.

"We are here to support the Government of Iraq and our partners to advance its most important asset - the children and young people of Iraq, especially the most vulnerable," said Ville Varjola, Ambassador, Head of the

European Union Delegation.

"During an official meeting with the Government of Iraq, it was incredible to see how Tuqa AlBakri, UNICEF Youth Advocate and her peers held the government accountable. By partnering with young people, we can ensure sustainable development in Iraq," said Canadian Ambassador Gregory Galligan.

"Climate Change impacts the entire world, and here in Iraq it undermines social stability and prospects of economic growth #ForEveryChild," said Sheema Sen Gupta, UNICEF Iraq Representative during her discussion with H.E. Ms. Paula Ganly, Australian Ambassador in Iraq at the UNICEF event with partners.

"We are proud of our partnership with UNICEF," said Australian Ambassador Paula Ganly. "The lessons learned from Australia on climate change can be used here in Iraq because the time is now to build back and restore a greener Iraq for future generations."

20-year-old Tuqa AlBakri, UNICEF Youth Advocate, co-facilitate this UNICEF event with partners. Her message was clear, young people of Iraq will never give up, and we at UNICEF will never let you down.



The Ureport program (Voices of Youth Platform) is used by 100,000 users!

Baghdad, 11 January 2023 - With the start of the new year, UNICEF is pleased to announce that the number of users of the Ureport program (Voices of Youth Platform) has reached 100,000 users! Congratulations to all young people in Iraq.



UNAMI DSRSG attends commemoration of the Iraqi Army Day

Baghdad, 6 January 2023 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Claudio Cordone, attended this morning in Baghdad a wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, on the occasion of the (102nd) anniversary of the founding of the Iraqi army.

Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Presidency.



#GulfCup 2023 on Twitter

UNAMI: Baghdad, 6 January 2023 - We join Iraq in its joy and excitement to host the #Gulf25! By hosting the cup, Iraq showcases the unifying power of sports and its ability to harbour peaceful and respectful competition. We wish Iraq and its people a successful tournament.

UNAMI: Basra, 9 January 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert: Great match, amazing organization, outstanding atmosphere! #Gulf25 #GulfCup2023



UNAMI: Baghdad, 13 January 2023 - Congratulations to Iraq's national football team on their continued winning streak!

UNAMI: Basra, 19 January 2023 - Congratulations Iraq!! | Winners of the 25th Gulf Cup!!

UNFPA: Baghdad, 20 January 2023 - We congratulate the Iraqi people for winning the championship Gulf25 UN Population Fund wishes the Iraqi people prosperity and peace. Sports are a powerful means to promote peace and development for all walks of society.

WHO: Baghdad, 19 January 2023 – Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq: “Congratulations Iraq on the historic win in the #GulfCup!

The boys made us proud and once again demonstrated that "the impossible" is not Iraqi.

Hope this resounding victory will pave the way for a better, more prosperous future for all Iraqis.

Go #LionsofMesopotamia.

UNICEF: Baghdad, 20 January 2023 - Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq: “Congratulations to all Iraqis on Iraq’s 4th win of the Arabian Gulf Cup and on hosting it for the 1st time since 1979! So much joy and celebration throughout the country! Our deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives earlier today.

UNDP: Baghdad, 20 January 2023 - Congratulations to Iraq for winning the #ArabGulfCup 2023! It is truly beautiful how sports can bring Iraq together and unite us all.

Celebrating International Mother Language Day in Iraq

Baghdad, 21 February 2023 - 21 February is observed as International Mother Language Day. Proclaimed by UNESCO in 1999, it recognizes that multilingualism can advance inclusion, and the Sustainable Development Goals’ focus on “leaving no one behind”. Languages featured in UNAMI PIO video showcase a sample of the cultural

diversity of UN staff in Iraq. Together, we promote, preserve and protect our mother languages.

Video produced by the Public Information Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) is available at <https://bit.ly/3YNmy9u>

