

UNAMI Herald

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The 20th commemoration of the terrorist attack on the UN headquarters in Baghdad in 2003



Baghdad, 19 August 2023 - The Government of Iraq and the United Nations family in Iraq today paid tribute to the victims and families of the 19 August 2003 terrorist attack on the then-UN headquarters in Baghdad. The ceremony was held at the same location of the Canal Hotel, now the Al-Qanat Social Rehabilitation Centre, of the Ministry of Health. Speeches were delivered at the 20th commemoration of this tragic event; one by SRSG Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert on behalf of the United Nations, one on behalf of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, delivered by the Deputy of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs His Excellency Dr. Fouad Hussein, and one by a survivor on behalf of the survivors of the attack.

In her remarks, SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert said that "the past 20 years have brought about change in Iraq. Few would deny that it has been a very rough road. But throughout these years, the United Nations has not given up on its efforts to contribute to peace and stability throughout the country. Today, I wish to extend my deepest sympathy to those who are missing colleagues, friends and loved ones not only today, but every day". After the speeches, a memorial plaque inscribed with names of the fallen was unveiled by the survivor, a UNAMI staff member, followed by a wreath-laying ceremony. One wreath was laid by the SRSG on behalf of the United Nations; the second wreath was laid on behalf of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, by His Excellency the

Deputy of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs; and the third wreath was laid on behalf of the International Community by His Excellency the Ambassador of Canada, as he is the Ambassador who has been serving for the longest in Iraq among those invited to today's ceremony.

A minute of silence was observed in honour of the victims of the horrific bombing.

After the official ceremony, diplomats and UN staff filed to the memorial each to place a white rose.

The Ministry of Health and Director of the Al-Qanat Social Rehabilitation Centre provided a briefing of the work of the Centre and a tour on a voluntary basis.

The tragic event of 19 August 2003 profoundly changed the way in which humanitarians operate – from being respected, to being targeted – and led to the creation of World Humanitarian Day. SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert said, "We acknowledge the people across the world who are working – sometimes in the most challenging of circumstances, and at great personal risk – we acknowledge the people who are working to assist those in dire need".



In this edition ...

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The full text of SRSO Hennis-Plasschaert's statement starts on *page 27*.

SRSO Hennis-Plasschaert: "People must be placed before politics or partisan interests"

Baghdad, 03 August 2023 - The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, delivered a speech in Baghdad today at an event on the 9th Annual Commemoration of Victims of the Genocide Against Yazidis and other Iraqi Components. "People must be placed before politics or partisan interests", the SRSO said in her remarks.

More on page 21.

DSRSO Cordone: "We must also express our concerns regarding the lack of adoption of a law against domestic violence."

Baghdad, 19 August 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, participated today at the 15th Annual Conference to Address Violence Against Women and Girls organized by the Al-Hakim Foundation.

The text of his remarks at this event starts at *page 10*.

DSRSO/RC/HC Isaczai: "Together, we can turn the goals of anti-corruption and integrity into a sustainable reality."

Basra, 15 July 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, participated today at the "Strengthening Public-Private Dialogue on Anti-Corruption and Integrity Issues" conference held in Basra.

The text of his remarks on this event starts on *page 58*.

Empowering Iraqi youth: UNAMI's summer school in Sulaymaniyah focuses on SDG13 and political participation

Sulaymaniyah, 13 July 2023 - From 6 to 12 July, UNAMI hosted a "Summer School" in Sulaymaniyah, bringing together 40 young Iraqi men and women from diverse governorates.

More on page 5.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk concludes his official visit to Iraq

Baghdad, 9 August 2023 - Statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, at the press conference held today in Baghdad:

"Masa Elkheir. Thank you all for coming. I have just concluded the first-ever visit by a UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to Iraq. I thank the Government of Iraq very much for its invitation, and for the extensive discussions we have had at the highest levels during my time here. I feel a deep personal connection with the people of this country, and I come here as a friend.

More on page 17.

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

UNAMI is committed to work with various stakeholders to advance women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the upcoming elections, and beyond

Baghdad, 02 August 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Mr. Claudio Cordone, participated today at the Women Political Forum at the Al Nahrain Centre for Strategic Studies in Baghdad. In his speech he reaffirmed UNAMI's unwavering commitment to work with various stakeholders to advance women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the upcoming elections, and beyond.

Here is the text of his remarks:

"Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to be speaking at this event, which is coming during the preparations for the conduct of the Provincial Council elections planned for 18 December.

Let me start by stating what should be obvious, that is that women, like men, have equal rights and equal potential to contribute to social development and to political life. However, as we know, women face many challenges when it comes to their role in public life and politics, including participation in elections. It is important that we take the opportunity of the forthcoming elections to promote an environment in which women can achieve their potential and make their own specific contribution.

In this context, we commend the Government of Iraq for establishing the High Committee to Support Women's Political Participation in the forthcoming Provincial Council elections.

We welcome the recent launching of the Committee's workplan and look forward to working with the Committee in close coordination with the Independent High Electoral Commission, the institution tasked with overseeing elections which also undertakes initiatives to promote the role of women as candidates and voters.

We are pleased that the High Committee workplan is based on good practices and lessons learnt from the work of the previous committee set up for the October 2021 elections. Good practices include the establishment of hotlines by the Ministry of Interior to receive security-related complaints from women candidates, and the



appointment by the Supreme Judicial Council of judicial investigators to examine complaints of violence against women candidates, online and offline.

Dear participants,

UNAMI's work relating to the elections in Iraq is based on text of UN Security Council resolution 2682 (2023), adopted last May, which requires us to advise, support, and assist the Government of Iraq, the Independent High Electoral Commission and other Iraqi institutions with efforts to ensure free and fair elections and ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation, involvement and representation of women at all levels of decision making, including in the context of elections.

As examples of UNAMI's own work, I wish to highlight an audit recently conducted to gain a deeper understanding of political parties' support for enhancing women's leadership within party structures. This project built on previous initiatives by UNAMI, including conducting research on needs and challenges faced by Iraqi women entering politics, providing leadership training for women, and monitoring hate speech and violence against women candidates during the period leading to the 2021 elections.

Some of the recommendations arising

from this audit include the adoption of an equality and non-discrimination clause in the founding documents of political parties; assisting women in preparing themselves for leadership roles; and promoting a safe environment for women to run for political office, for example, by signing codes of conduct prohibiting discrimination and hate speech against women.

As we know, the 2021 Parliamentary elections resulted in the election of 97 women, or 29 percent of the legislature, way over the quota of a minimum of 25 percent. The achievements of 2021 can be replicated if women mobilize and political parties demonstrate their good will and commitment to supporting women candidates.

As for the government, I welcome the inclusion in the programme of the government of Prime Minister Muhammad Shia Al-Sudani of a commitment to "empower, support and protect women as guaranteed by the Iraqi constitution and law".

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm UNAMI's unwavering commitment to work with you and all relevant parties, in government and civil society, to advance women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the upcoming elections, and beyond.

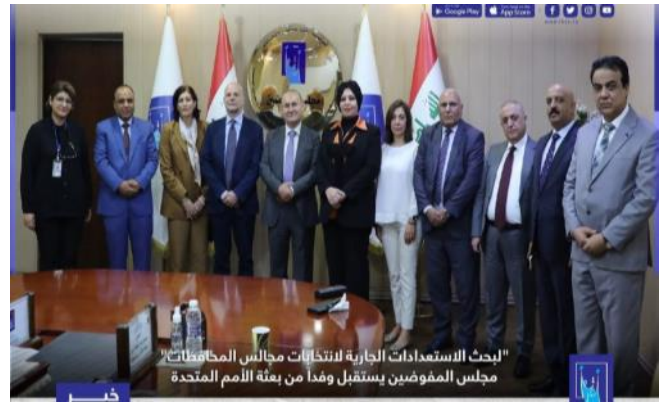
Thank you."





Baghdad, 04 July 2023 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Claudio Cordone**, accompanied by Chief of the Office of Electoral Assistance, **Aamir Arain**, met today with the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) Chair and Board of Commissioners. The discussion focused on the forthcoming Provincial Council and Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections.

Photo courtesy of IHEC.



Baghdad, 20 August 2023 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**, met today with the Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), **Judge Omar Ahmed Mohamed**, and members of the Board of Commissioners. They discussed the ongoing preparations for the provincial council elections scheduled for December 2023, as well as Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections scheduled for February 2024.

Photo courtesy of IHEC.

25% quota for women parliamentarians should be a floor and not a ceiling

Baghdad, 09 July 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Claudio Cordone**, met on 6 July 2023 with members of the Women Advisory Group and **Dr. Intisar Al-Jobouri**, Advisor on Women to the Speaker of the Iraqi Council of Representatives.

Participants stressed the importance of women’s participation in the Provincial Council elections and urged that the 25% quota for women parliamentarians should be a floor and not a ceiling. They also discussed providing training to women’s candidates and ensure that women could compete in the elections free from violence or harassment.

DSRSG Cordone noted that **UNAMI** will continue to engage with the Women Advisory Group as guided by UN Security Council resolutions,



aiming at strengthening women’s participation in public life.

The Women Advisory Group in Baghdad was established in 2019 to play an advisory role to UNAMI on women, peace and security concerns and to promote cooperation among Iraqi women from different political,

religious, and ethnic affiliations and interests.

Engaging women in such forums contributes towards the specific targets outlined under Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 17 which emphasise gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

Social Cohesion

Empowering Iraqi youth: UNAMI's summer school in Sulaymaniyah focuses on SDG13 and political participation

Sulaymaniyah, 13 July 2023 - From 6 to 12 July, UNAMI hosted a "Summer School" in Sulaymaniyah, bringing together 40 young Iraqi men and women from diverse governorates.

Given that Iraq is among the countries most affected by climate change, this unique Summer School focused on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13, and its program delved into the



Empowering Iraqi youth: UNAMI's summer school in Sulaymaniyah focuses on SDG13 and political participation *(continued)*



Participants collaborated to design activities like urban adventure games, puzzles, and festivals. These engaging and innovative initiatives will be rolled out in seven different cities across Iraq, all centered around the theme of climate change and environmental protection. They are strategically crafted to entice and inspire interested youth to submit their most innovative ideas and climate change initiatives for the upcoming Hackathon competition, scheduled for 8-10 September in Mosul.

Beyond climate action, the Summer School also focused on enhancing youth political awareness and engagement, especially with the upcoming Provincial Council elections. The attending youth received awareness sessions on political participation, electoral involvement, and the vital role they

can play in shaping their society through active engagement.

"I think the program gathered a lot of new and fresh ideas and I like how serious things are getting, because now we are investing time and resources to develop our ideas and projects. I am currently working with Youth from the summer school and outside the summer school to raise awareness on my governorate's agricultural and water resources by

gathering elders and religious figures and making a video to document it" - participant from Diyala

Aligned with UNSCR 2250 and Iraq's Youth Vision 2030, UNAMI's youth engagement strategy focuses on empowering young Iraqi men and women. The goal is to equip them with the tools and inspiration to become proactive change-makers in their communities. Using dynamic and interactive methods of engagement and mobilization, UNAMI aims to encourage these young leaders to create a positive impact in their society.

Since 2021, UNAMI has been exploring innovative methods to engage youth on the pressing issue of climate change and to foster political participation. One such initiative is the "Hackathon," a creative competition where interested youth come together for a weekend of intense problem-solving. They think outside the box to devise unconventional solutions to local challenges.



Political Consultations



Baghdad, 02 July 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met in Baghdad with the National Security Adviser (NSA), **Mr. Qassim Al-Araji**. They discussed Iraq's political and security situation, including the repercussions of the recent burning of a copy of the Holy Quran in Sweden, the NSA's visit to New York and the need to dismantle Al-Hol. Photo courtesy of NSA.



Baghdad, 02 July 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met in Baghdad with the Head of the Turkmen Front in Iraq, **Mr. Hasan Turan**. They discussed latest developments in Iraq and the upcoming Elections as well as the UN facilitated Kirkuk Dialogue.

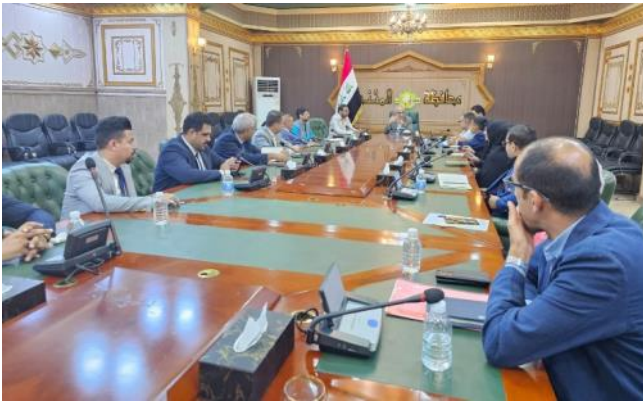


Ankara, Türkiye, 05 July 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met in Ankara with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, Ambassador **Burak Akçapar**. They discussed current developments in the region and cooperation between the United Nations and the Republic of Türkiye.

Photo courtesy of MOFA.



Baghdad, 06 July 2023 - Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai**: "Had a productive meeting with Minister of Trade, **Mr. Atheer Al-Ghurairy**, together with the World Food Programme Representative (WFP) for Iraq, **Mr. Ally Raza Qureshi**. Discussed the UN's support for technical assistance, capacity building, private sector development through small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) targeting women and youth, and Public Distribution System reform. Exciting next steps ahead!"



Muthanna, 16 July 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai**, led a team of UN Agencies; had an insightful meeting with the **Governor of Muthanna** and local authorities! They discussed the development challenges and Climate Change impact, affecting the livelihoods of people in the governorate.



Muthanna, 16 July 2023 - Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai**: "UN team and I just met with **farmers and community leaders** in Rumaitha, Muthana, Iraq's poorest governorate. 52% living in poverty, 75% dependent on agriculture face severe water shortages. Their farmland reduced from 50,000 to 10,000 dunams. Migration to nearby cities and displacement are imminent".



Muthanna, 16 July 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai**: "Had a fruitful discussion today with **representatives from NGOs/civil society organizations** in Muthanna. They are doing an incredible job under difficult circumstances with limited funding. NGOs are an indispensable bridge between citizens and Government to strengthen accountability and transparency".



Nasiriya, 17 July 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai**: "Had another insightful exchange today with local **NGOs/CSOs and UN project beneficiaries** in Nasiriya. Climate change and water scarcity took centre stage. The United Nations in Iraq will step up, but we need more support to avert mass displacement of people. Together, we can make a difference!"



New UNICEF Representative in Iraq, Sandra Lattouf, presents her credentials

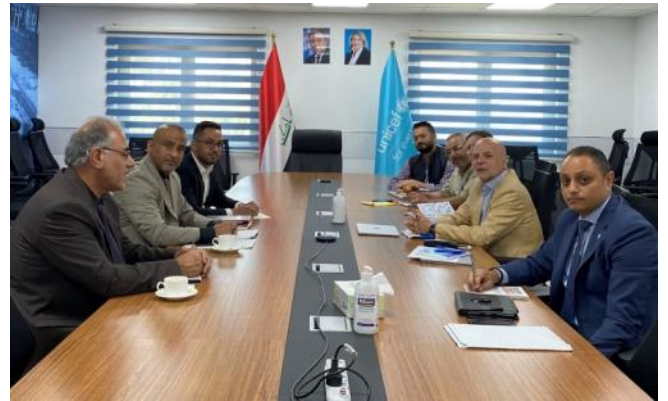
Baghdad, 17 July 2023 - Today, Sandra Lattouf presented her credentials as UNICEF's new Representative in Iraq to Counsellor Mr. Ammar Mohammed Dawood, Head of the Protocol Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq. "It is a great honour to join the team in Iraq to serve the most vulnerable children and lead the remarkable work for children as we transition from humanitarian into development work," said Ms. Lattouf. "I look forward to working closely with the Government of Iraq, partners, other UN agencies and civil society to uphold the rights of every child and young people and enable them to reach their full potential." From July 2020 to June 2023, Ms. Lattouf was the UNICEF Representative in Burkina Faso. Previously, she was the UNICEF Representative in Gambia (2017-2020) and the Deputy Representative in Sierra Leone (2015-2017). She also held

numerous positions in UNICEF, including at headquarters in New York, as well as in country and field offices, notably in Haiti, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Prior to joining UNICEF, Ms. Lattouf worked for the international NGO Solidarités (1999-2002) as a Nutrition Programme Coordinator and served in Bujumbura, Burundi; Goma, DRC; and Paris, France. Ms. Lattouf is a national of Lebanon. She holds an advanced university degree in Nutrition and Food Security from the University of Montpellier in France; a Master's Degree in Biochemistry and a License in Chemistry from the University of Sciences and Techniques in Tours in France. The new Representative will play a critical role in steering the UNICEF Country Office in Iraq in supporting the Government of Iraq in fulfilling their commitments on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in partnership with UN partners and other stakeholders, with a focus on most vulnerable children.

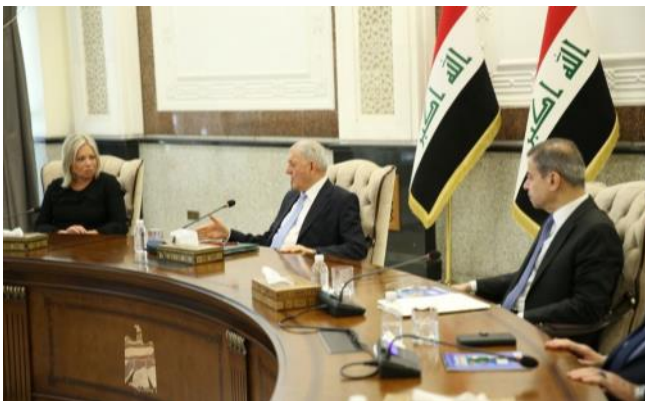


Baghdad, 24 July 2023 - President of the Republic of Iraq, His Excellency **Mr. Abdullatif J Rashid**, received today in Baghdad the Special Representative of Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**. They discussed the current political developments in Iraq, the UN role in Iraq and ways to boost collaboration in various fields.

Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Presidency.



Baghdad, 24 July 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Claudio Cordone**, met with **Ali Al-Talkani**, Director of Annabaa Organization for Media and Culture, and his colleagues. Discussion focused on elections, corruption, climate change as well as cooperation with civil society.



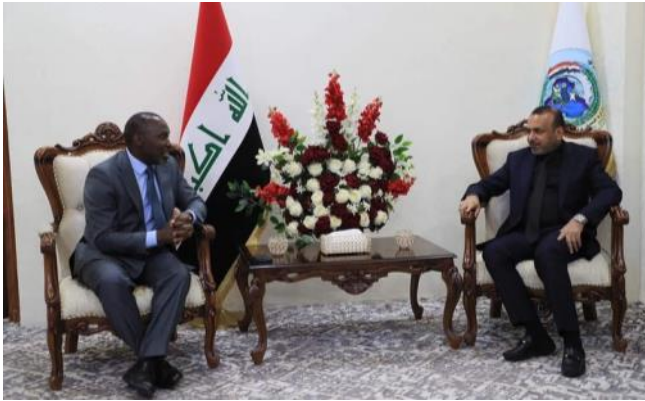
Baghdad, 25 July 2023 - The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, today participated in Baghdad in a meeting of diplomatic representatives hosted by President of the Republic of Iraq, His Excellency **Abdullatif J Rashid**.

Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Presidency.



Baghdad, 26 July 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Baghdad with the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, **Mr. Mohammed Al-Halbousi**. They discussed the latest political developments in the country.

Photo courtesy of the CoR Media Office.



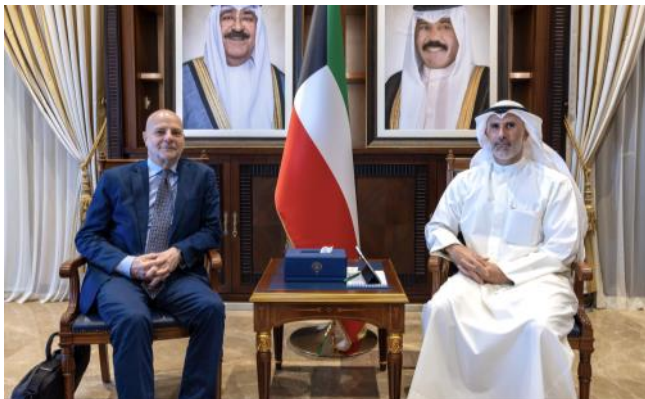
Baghdad, 28 July 2023 - UNFPA Representative in Iraq, **Mr. Nestor Owomuhangi** met with the Minister of Labor, **Mr Ahmed Al-Asadi**, to discuss expanding joint projects in Iraq.

UNFPA and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs continue to collaborate on joint projects concerning women, people with disabilities, and development centers.



Tehran, 30 July 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Tehran with the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, **Mr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian**. They discussed the latest developments in Iraq and the region.

Photo courtesy of the MOFA IRI.



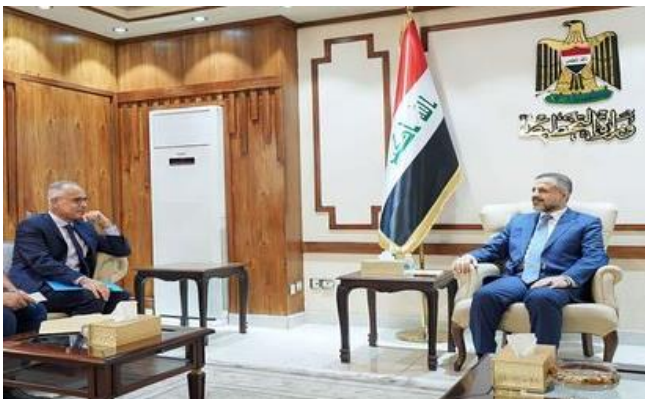
Kuwait, 7 August 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Claudio Cordone**, met today in Kuwait **Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Alahmad Alsabah**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. The discussion focused on the work of the mechanism dealing with the Kuwaiti missing persons and missing property, UNAMF's overall role and other related Iraqi-Kuwaiti issues.

Photo courtesy of MOFA.



Kuwait, 7 August 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Claudio Cordone**, met today in Kuwait with Ambassador **Rabea Al-Adsani**, Assistant Foreign Minister for Prisoners of Wars (PoWs) and Missing Affairs. Together they stressed the importance of close cooperation between Kuwait and Iraq on this important humanitarian file.

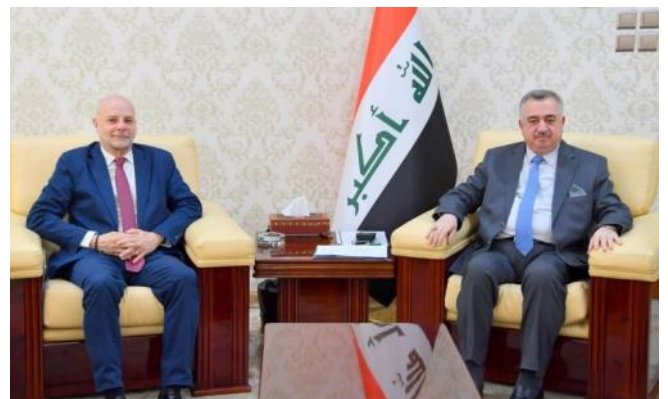
Photo courtesy of MOFA.



Baghdad, 13 August 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai**, met today with the Minister of Planning, **Mr. Muhammad Ali Tamim**.

They discussed the close cooperation between the UN and the Government of Iraq on numerous development and humanitarian issues, including Iraq's efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Planning.



Baghdad, 16 August 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**, met in Baghdad with the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Multilateral and Legal Affairs, **Dr. Omar Al-Barzanji**. They discussed issues relating to the search for the remains of missing Kuwaitis, and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, and UNAMF's facilitating role. The DSRSG welcomed the continuing cooperation between the Iraq Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence with Kuwait on this important humanitarian file.



Baghdad, 17 August 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai**: "Had a productive meeting today with Minister of Migration and Displacement, Ms. **Evan Gabro**. Discussed vital topics including joint coordination, planning for effective partnerships and drafting framework to accelerate the implementation of the National Plan for Durable Solutions".



Baghdad, 19 August 2023 - On the sidelines of the 20th commemoration of the bombing of UN headquarters in Baghdad, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met in Baghdad with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Dr. Fuad Hussein**. They discussed UN-Iraq cooperation, including preparations for the forthcoming provincial council elections, for the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September, as well as the issue of repatriation of residents of al-Hol camp in northern Syria. Photo courtesy of MOFA.



Erbil, 20 August 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, attended a meeting in Erbil of the Iraqi National Security Adviser, **Mr. Qassim Al Araj**, and the Kurdistan Regional Government's Minister of Interior, **Mr. Rêber Ahmed**. The humanitarian situation of IDPs and refugees and the challenges they face in returning home were discussed.

Photo courtesy of MoI KRG.



Baghdad, 22 August 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Baghdad with the Minister of Interior, **Mr. Abdul Amir Al-Shammari**. They discussed the security situation in the country.

Photo courtesy of MoI.



Baghdad, 23 August 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today with the Secretary-General of the Asaib Ahl al-Haq Movement, **Qais Al-Khazali**. They discussed the current political and security situation in the country.



Baghdad, 14 August 2023 - The Director of the UNESCO Office in Iraq, **Paolo Fontani**, welcomed the visit of **Jeffrey Ellis**, Cultural Attaché at the United States Embassy Baghdad, to discuss the Organization's current work in Iraq. We shared the view that culture, heritage and education are fundamental pillars for the development of inclusive and resilient societies.

UNDP is committed to leading the way in promoting gender equality and combatting gender-based violence (GBV)

Baghdad, 10 July 2023 - UNDP is committed to leading the way in promoting gender equality and combatting gender-based violence (GBV). With the Government of Iraq, UNDP engages government officials in intensive sessions to enhance their knowledge and skills to champion gender equality within their workplaces. UNDP also equips them with tools to develop strategies to address GBV and foster inclusivity and

gender-sensitive policies.

Health Directorate officials of Anbar, Salah Al Din, and Diyala recently participated in gender mainstreaming and GBV prevention training held by UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization. Building on this training, they will conduct gender awareness-raising activities in their directorates to encourage others to be gender champions too.



How to increase women's participation in political processes ?

Baghdad, 18 July 2023 - Roundtable discussions in Najaf and Karbala on 17 and 18 July 2023 respectively focused on women's participation in political processes, and in support of the implementation of the National Action Plan on UN Security Council resolution 1325, the National Strategy for Iraqi Women (2023 – 2030) and SDG 5 on

promoting women and girls' empowerment. The discussions, led by UNAMI and the Women Empowerment Directorate, General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, were also attended by local governorate officials, civil society activists and former provincial council members.



DSRSG Cordone: "We must also express our concerns regarding the lack of adoption of a law against domestic violence."



Baghdad, 19 August 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, participated today at the 15th Annual Conference to Address Violence Against Women and Girls organized by the Al-Hakim Foundation. Here is the text of his remarks at this event:

"Ladies and Gentlemen,
Honorable guests,

I am honored to be at the 15th Annual Conference to Address Violence Against Women and Girls, marking the Islamic Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, speaking on behalf of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq.

Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSR) Jeanine

Hennis-Plasschaert sends her greetings. She apologizes for not being able to participate, as she is presiding over a ceremony marking the 20th anniversary of the attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. Twenty-two lives were lost in the blast, including that of then SRSG Sérgio Vieira de Mello. Many others were injured, including Iraqi staff who are still serving with UNAMI, and we pay tribute to all of them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We applaud the efforts of the al-Hakim Foundation for convening this annual event. We commend the personal commitment and efforts of His Eminence Sayyid al-Hakim in defence of human rights in general and specifically on those of women and girls subject of this conference.

We wish to welcome the Government Programme and the Ministerial Programme Paper Agreed upon by Political Blocs, which include provisions on the empowerment, support, and protection of women, and the commitment to sending relevant draft laws to the Council of Representatives. We welcome in particular the commitment to address violence against women.

The Government Programme is in line with the 2016 Joint Communique of the Republic of Iraq and the United Nations on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, which included commitments to support survivors and ensure accountability.

Within this context, and as we commemorated on 3 August the Yazidi genocide, we wish to stress once again the importance of bringing to justice the members of Daesh responsible for abhorrent crimes of sexual violence. I am glad that the UN, through UNITAD and other UN entities, is assisting this endeavour.

In the same vein, we wish to highlight the importance of the 2021 Yazidi Survivors' Law, which recognizes the critical role of reparations in helping survivors to rebuild their lives. And I would like to take this opportunity to call for its implementation at greater speed, without unnecessary obstacles,

DSRSG Cordone: “We must also express our concerns regarding the lack of adoption of a law against domestic violence.” *(continued)*

and for its expansion to cover victims from all communities, including women forced into marriage by Daesh, as well as children born of rape.

Still in terms of laws, we must also express our concerns regarding the lack of adoption of a law against domestic violence. Not only women, but also children, the elderly and other family members at risk of such violence deserve to be fully protected by the law, and in accordance with the best Iraqi traditions, religious and cultural values.

We wonder, candidly, what person, regardless of affiliation, cultural identity or religion, would defend the use of violence against family members? In other words, why this continued reluctance to debate and adopt this important law? The responsibility of leadership cannot be overstated. We therefore call again upon politicians and legislators to address this issue by looking into existing drafts, including with respect

to the issue of shelters for persons at risk of such violence.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we move towards holding elections on 18 December, we would like to commend the Government for establishing the High Committee to Support Women’s Political Participation in the forthcoming Provincial Council elections. We look forward to working with the High Committee, in close coordination with the Independent High Electoral Commission. These institutions, together with other state institutions and all political parties, shoulder an important responsibility in addressing any form of hate speech, harassment, intimidation and violence against women candidates and voters. Transparent and credible elections require a conducive environment for the participation of all Iraqis.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before concluding, we must mention the current public debate on the use of

universally accepted terms. Regrettably, this debate has been characterized by wrong information and misconceptions, including about the role of the UN, which may impact negatively on activities within the context of women’s rights or even lead to intimidation, harassment and threats. As the SRSG explained on previous occasions, all of us value and appreciate religious beliefs, local contexts, cultures and traditions, as we promote the rights of everyone. We hope that rational, informed and respectful debate will prevail.

In closing, as many of you will know, this year we mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948 with the vote of Iraq. The Declaration is very much relevant today for any democracy, including Iraq. Let us honour the Declaration’s promise of human rights for all.

Thank you.”

Proposals to promote Iraqi women in decision-making positions discussed

Salah al-Din, 22 August 2023 - UNAMI held consultations today in Salah al-Din with local government officials, civil society activists and former provincial council members on women’s participation and representation in political process as part of a series of governorate-level consultations throughout Iraq. The consultations discussed proposals to promote Iraqi women in decision-making positions and highlighted the contributions of women in politics.



The Regional Action Plan to support the implementation of the second Iraq National Action Plan (INAPII) for UNSCR 1325 in Kurdistan was officially launched in Erbil

Erbil, 20 July 2023 - The Regional Action Plan to support the implementation of the second Iraq National Action Plan (INAPII) for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Kurdistan was officially launched in a board meeting held in Erbil on 20 July 2023.

The meeting was chaired by Rebar Ahmed—Minister of Interior with the presence of Dr. Khanzad Ahmed—Secretary general for the High Council of Women & Development, Dina Zorba—UN Women Representative, civil society representatives as well as

members from the international community. The achievements of the INAPII in 2022-2023 in the Kurdistan region were highlighted as well as the challenges faced, upcoming opportunities and steps forward. It was

concluded that a resource mobilization strategy for the regional action plan will be developed and the sectoral plan for Duhok will be initiated which will enhance implementation of the INAPII at the governorate level.



Türk calls on States to combat "the weaponization of religious differences for political purposes"



Geneva, 11 July 2023 – Here is the text of the statement delivered by Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at the 53rd session of the Human Rights Council:

“Mr President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Beyond words, human beings communicate through symbols. A ring marks our commitment to marry. A coloured light signals us to stop or go. Religious symbols go much deeper. A crescent, a star, a cross, a seated figure: for some, these might mean little, but for millions of people they have deep significance as the repository and incarnation of an immense history, a far-reaching system of values, a foundation of collective community and belonging, and the essence of their identity and core beliefs.

The abuse or destruction of the manifestations of our innermost beliefs can polarise societies and aggravate tensions.

This Urgent Debate is prompted by recent incidents of burning of the Quran, which is the core of faith for well over a billion people. These and other incidents appear to have been manufactured to express contempt and inflame anger; to drive wedges between people; and to provoke, transforming differences of perspective into hatred and, perhaps, violence.

So the first point I want to make here is this: setting aside for a moment the question of what the law states is permissible or not, and irrespective of one's own religious beliefs or lack of belief, people need to act with respect for others. All others.

Only in this way can sustained

dialogue become possible. Only in this way can we have conduct among human beings that enables us to address, together, the challenges we face.

Yet the vandalism of religious sites and the destructions of icons, texts that are sacred to their believers, and religious items, have been used to insult and provoke people for centuries. To me, it is clear that speech and inflammatory acts against Muslims; Islamophobia; anti-Semitism; and actions and speech that target Christians – or minority groups such as Ahmadis, Bahá'ís or Yazidis – are manifestations of utter disrespect. They are offensive, irresponsible and wrong.

It is important to recall the immense benefit of diversity for all societies. All people have an equal right to believe, or not to believe: this is fundamental to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that unites us. We need to promote interfaith harmony and mutual respect, in the interest of all communities.

Political and religious leaders have a particularly crucial role to play in speaking out clearly, firmly and immediately against disrespect and intolerance – not only of their own communities, but of any group subjected to attack. They should also make it clear that violence cannot be justified by prior provocation, whether real or perceived.

Mr President,

These are complex areas. The limitation of any kind of speech or expression must, as a fundamental principle, remain an exception – particularly since laws limiting speech are often misused by those in

power, including to stifle debate on critical issues.

But on the other hand, an act of speech, in the specific circumstances in which it occurs, can constitute incitement to action on the part of others – in some cases, very violent and discriminatory action. In recent years, numerous acts of violence, terror attacks and mass atrocities have targeted people on account of their religious beliefs, including inside their places of worship.

International law is clear on these kinds of incitement. Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states: States parties must, without exception, prohibit “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence”.

To understand better how this must be applied, in 2011, my Office organised a series of regional workshops that led to the Rabat Plan of Action. This provides a six-step threshold regarding context, speaker, intent, content, and extent and likelihood of harm, to help demarcate free speech from incitement to violence.

Ultimately, the application of Article 20 of the ICCPR is a matter for national law-makers and courts to determine in a particular case. They need to do so in a manner that is consistent with the guardrails that international human rights law provides. Any national restrictions to the overriding right to freedom of opinion and expression must be formulated so that their sole purpose and outcome is to protect individuals – rather than to shield religious doctrine from critical review.

My second point is this: advocacy of hatred that constitutes incitement to violence, discrimination and hostility should be prohibited in every State.

Mr President,

While they may not be deemed to incite violence, other forms of expression can amount to hate speech, if they use pejorative or bigoted language towards a person or group on the basis of their sex, belief, race, migration status, sexual orientation or any other factor inherent to their person or identity, seeking to diminish their dignity and demean their value in the eyes of others.

I'd like to elaborate: dehumanizing women and denying their equality

Türk calls on States to combat "the weaponization of religious differences for political purposes" *(continued)*

with men; verbally abusing Muslim women and girls who wear a headscarf; sneering at people with disabilities; making false claims that migrants or people of specific ethnicities are more likely to engage in crime; or smearing LGBTIQ+ people: all such hate speech is similar, in that it stems from the baseline notion that some people are less deserving of respect as human beings.

Powered by the tidal forces of social media, and in a context of increasing international and national discord and polarisation, hate speech of every kind is rising, everywhere. It is harmful to individuals, and it damages the social cohesion necessary to the sound functioning of all societies.

My third point, then: hate speech needs to be addressed, in all societies, through dialogue, education, awareness raising, inter-faith and inter-community engagement and other public policy tools. It needs to be actively countered by all responsible authorities, figures of influence, and the private sector.

The UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech is the UN response to address this phenomenon and to support States to counter it.

Effective prevention strategies by national authorities and others can identify and address the underlying

causes of hate speech. I encourage States to redouble their efforts to implement the action plan to combat intolerance based on religion or belief that was set out in Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 and via the Istanbul process. As I highlighted in my related report earlier this year, teaching materials, and peer-to-peer learning, should promote respect for pluralism and diversity in the field of religion or belief. Exchanges of lessons learned and promising practices should continue to be promoted, including with the support of our Faith for Rights Framework.

Mr President,

Many societies are struggling with this weaponization of religious differences for political purposes. We must not allow ourselves to be reeled in and become instrumentalised by these merchants of chaos for political gain – these provocateurs who deliberately seek ways to divide us.

I am immensely sympathetic to the millions of people who are offended and outraged by acts that target their deepest values and beliefs.

My overriding goal today is to acknowledge the profound enrichment of all of us that is brought about by our diversity, understandings of human existence, and our thoughts and beliefs. Our societies – all our societies,

whatever their religious and cultural backgrounds – must strive to become magnets for respect, dialogue and cooperation among different peoples, as has been achieved by multiple civilisations in the past.

To promote international peace and security; a rich, safe and respectful social fabric; as well as economies and societies that can benefit fully from the contributions of all their members, we must commit to advancing greater tolerance; greater respect; and greater recognition of the importance and value of our differences.

In the media. Online. In businesses. In schools. In government. In the police. And both outside and within places of worship. The best way to push back against hate speech is with more dialogue, more conversations, more building of common understanding and more acts that manifest our conviction that we are all equal.

That all of us have rights, including the right to hold different beliefs, to adopt different ways of living, and to have and share different opinions.

I trust this Council will be able to discuss these complex issues in the spirit of unity, constructive engagement, mutual respect and deep reflection that they deserve.

Thank you"

Moratinos: "The desecration of sacred religious books is not freedom of expression but rather an expression of contempt and religious hatred"



New York, 20 July 2023 – Here is the text of a press statement attributable to the Spokesperson of the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) on the desecration of the Holy Qur'an in Sweden and the violence in Iraq: "The High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

(UNAOC), Mr. Miguel Moratinos recalls his statement on 15 July, 2023, in which he reiterated that the desecration of sacred religious books is not freedom of expression but rather an expression of contempt and religious hatred.

The High Representative condemns the recurrent desecration the holy Qur'an,

including today's incident in Stockholm, Sweden.

The High Representative also condemns the acts of violence and the storming of the Swedish Embassy in Baghdad today. He reiterates that the desecration of sacred religious books and religious sites is a disrespectful and provocative act. Such acts often lead to agitation and incitement to violence. At the same time, he stresses that violence is never an appropriate response to provocation, adding that the freedom of assembly is a fundamental human right.

In this context, the High Representative recalls the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites led by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) which advocates promoting religious pluralism, mutual respect and human dignity."

Readout of the Secretary-General's meeting with the Ambassadorial Group of Islamic Cooperation

New York, 20 July 2023 - The Secretary-General met with the Ambassadorial Group of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. In the meeting, the Secretary-General expressed the determination of the

United Nations System to fully implement the Human Rights Council Resolution on "countering religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence". The Secretary-General expressed

solidarity with the Muslim community, condemning acts of intolerance, violence and Islamophobia which exacerbate tensions and contribute to discrimination and radicalization.

UNAMI on Twitter

Baghdad, 20 July 2023 - The attack on the Swedish Embassy in Baghdad is to be condemned. While the right of

peaceful assembly is fundamental, the safety of all and respect for the Vienna Convention must be prioritized.

Fighting hate speech with violence doesn't help anyone.

UNAMI, KR, Media, NGOs, Civil Society and Security Services participate in roundtable discussion on civic space



Erbil, 05 July 2023 - The UNAMI Human Rights Office (HRO), in cooperation with the Kurdistan Region's Office of the Coordinator for International Advocacy, organized a roundtable discussion in Erbil on civic space. The event held in Erbil brought together representatives from various security services with participants from civil society, including journalists, activists, and NGO representatives. This initiative stems from a series of discussions with law enforcement

officials that welcomed the opportunity to have a platform for dialogue between security forces and civil society to discuss matters of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. In his opening remarks, Dr. Dindar Zebari, Coordinator for International Advocacy, underlined that "to ensure accountability for violations, media and journalists play an essential role in monitoring human rights. However, more needs to be done, including practical education and training for all,

including law enforcement as well as media, to warrant the adherence to international human rights norms and standards".

"The protection of civic space remains a priority area for UNAMI HRO. We stand ready to provide further assistance under the umbrella of the Kurdistan Regional Action Plan for Human Rights, and to deepen our cooperation with all relevant stakeholders to advance the protection of human rights", said Florian Razesberger, Senior Human Rights Officer of UNAMI.

Participants discussed concrete measures and recommendations to strengthen the promotion and protection of civic space in the Kurdistan Region. As one participating journalist stated: "Events like these are opening a gateway between security forces and civil society. It is critical to understand each other's situation and I hope that this dialogue can continue in the future".

The event was in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

UNAMI Human Rights Office organizes roundtable discussion in Kirkuk on accountability for domestic violence

Kirkuk, 18 July 2023 - The UNAMI Human Rights Office (HRO) organized a roundtable discussion in Kirkuk on accountability for domestic violence. The event brought together different actors, including representatives of NGOs, Family Protection Units, IHCHR, journalists and clerics from Kirkuk, Diyala and Salah al-Din

governorates. The aim of the meeting was to take stock of the current challenges related to domestic violence and to exchange experiences, lessons learned and recommendations from different perspectives. UNAMI HRO provided participants with an overview of the international legal framework on violence against

women and girls. This was followed by a presentation delivered by representatives of Family Protection Units on their role and mandate. In groups, participants then discussed current practical and legal challenges to accountability for domestic violence in Iraq and developed a series of recommendations on possible steps to

UNAMI Human Rights Office organizes roundtable discussion in Kirkuk on accountability for domestic violence *(continued)*

address those.

All participants stressed the need for new legislation on domestic violence, to raise more awareness within society about the negative consequences of domestic violence and to eliminate the stigma and shame often associated with it.

The event contributed to the realization in Iraq of Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and Sustainable Development Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.



UNAMI workshop on diversity as a tool to promote human rights in Kurdistan Region of Iraq



Erbil, 25 July 2023 – The UNAMI Human Rights Office organized an event on diversity as a tool for the promotion and protection of human rights, having a particular focus on minority rights. The workshop in Erbil brought together 27 representatives from the Kurdistan Regional Government, diverse ethno-religious components, and civil society organizations.

The workshop and two others planned for later form part of the Human Rights 75 Initiative celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Participants discussed the historical background to the adoption of the UDHR, its key provisions relating to minority rights, and its importance for the promotion and protection of human rights in Iraq. Moreover, a panel discussion focused on the topic – “Diversity as a tool to promote universality and indivisibility of human

rights” where participants highlighted strategies for strengthening collaboration among all stakeholders on the promotion and protection of minority rights in the Kurdistan Region.

In his opening remarks, the representative of the KRI Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs, Mr. Mariwan Naqshbandi, underscored

“the importance of the UDHR to the realization of human rights in the world, and in particular, the human rights of all Iraqis and in ensuring accountability for violations”. The representative of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights in KRI, Mr. Faisal Mohammed, highlighted the many efforts undertaken thus far, and emphasized that more needs to be done, especially in the areas of implementation of laws and policy changes relating to Iraq’s components. As one participating civil activist stated: “I highly appreciate the efforts of UNAMI as it has provided the opportunity for us to discuss, on how to address the many problems minorities in Iraq are facing. I look forward to more such future engagements.”

The event was in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.



UNAMI’s HRO and partners hold a roundtable with Karbala Police Command on the due process rights of defendants under Iraqi and international law

Karbala, 15 August 2023 - UNAMI’s Human Rights Office, in coordination with the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) and Iraq Human Rights Watch Society (IHRWS), held a roundtable with Karbala Police Command on the due process rights of defendants under Iraqi and international law.

Fourteen police officers, four representatives of the IHCHR and two representatives of IHRWS 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.

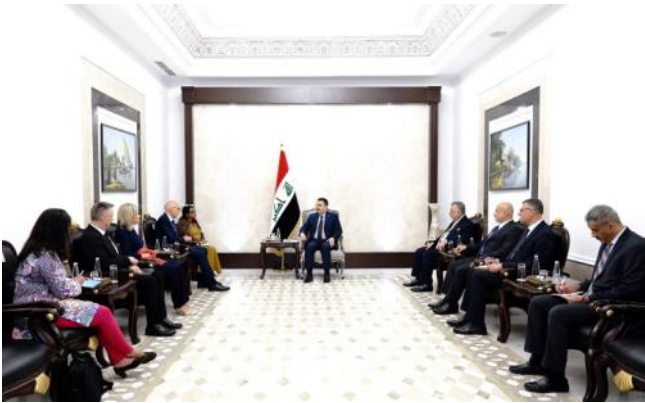
UNAMI Human Rights Officers

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.

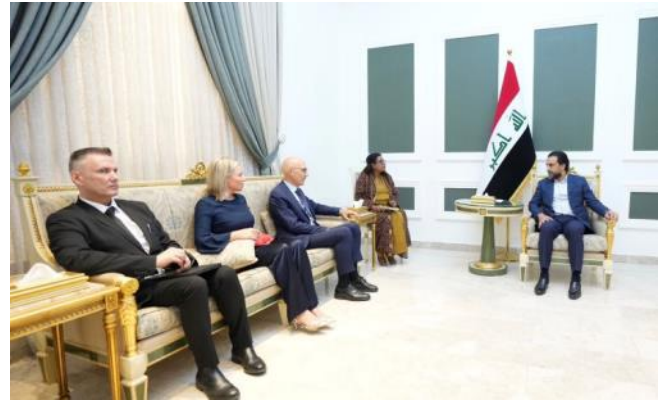


United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights visits Iraq



Baghdad, 6 August 2023 - Prime Minister **Mohammed S. Al-Sudani** received **Mr. Volker Türk**, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, accompanied by **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq. They discussed the human rights situation in Iraq, including the impact of climate change.

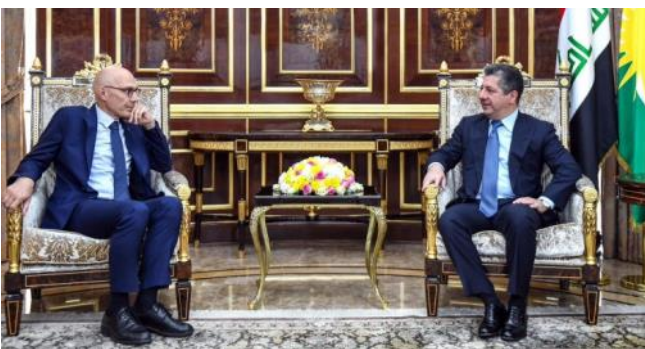
Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Prime Minister.



Baghdad, 6 August 2023 – The Speaker of the Council of Representatives, **Mr. Mohammed Al-Halbousi**, received **Mr. Volker Türk**, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, accompanied by **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq.

They discussed the human rights situation in Iraq and the key role the legislature can play in this file.

Photo courtesy of the Council of Representatives.

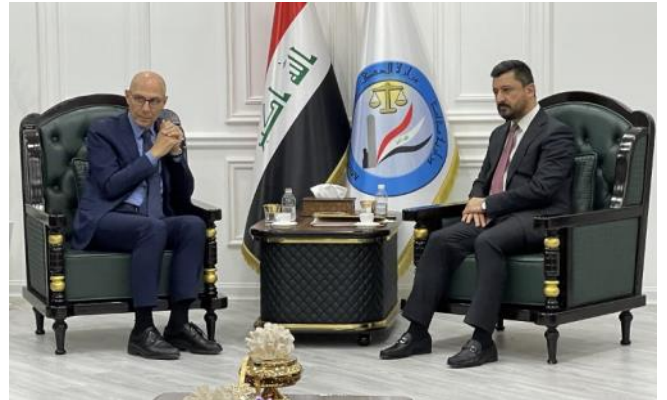


Erbil, 07 August 2023 - **Mr. Volker Türk**, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, met today with the Prime Minister of Kurdistan Region, **Mr. Masrour Barzani**. They discussed issues of civic space, climate change and women’s rights.

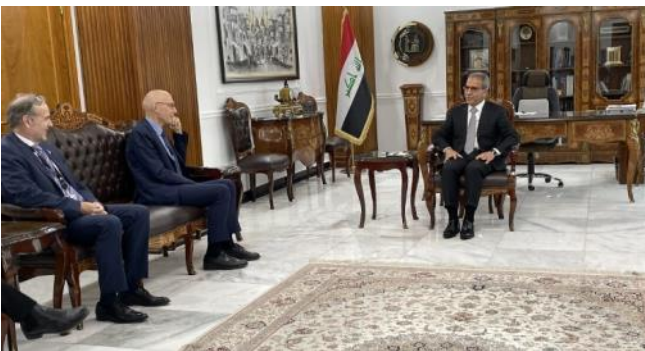
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights visits Iraq



Basra, 08 August 2023 - Mr. Volker Türk, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, met with the Chief Judge of the Basra Appels Court, Mr. Adel Abdul Razaq Abas Al-Mayahi. Among other topics they discussed issues of the administration of justice, conditions in custody and accountability.



Baghdad, 09 August 2023 - Mr. Volker Türk, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, met with the Minister of Justice of Iraq, Mr. Khalid Salam Saeed Shwani. They discussed the state of human rights, including administration of justice and detention matters.



Baghdad, 09 August 2023 - Mr. Volker Türk, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, met today with the Head of the Supreme Judicial Council, Judge Faiq Zaidan. They discussed, among other topics, administration of justice, gender based violence, civic space and prevention of torture.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk concludes his official visit to Iraq



Baghdad, 9 August 2023 – Statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, at the press conference held today in Baghdad:

“Masa Elkheir. Thank you all for coming. I have just concluded the first-ever visit by a UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to Iraq. I thank the Government of Iraq very much for its invitation, and for the extensive

discussions we have had at the highest levels during my time here. I feel a deep personal connection with the people of this country, and I come here as a friend.

I spent the past four days in Baghdad, Erbil and Basra, meeting the Prime Minister of Iraq, the President and Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and other high-level officials, including the Ministers of Foreign

Affairs and Justice, as well as the Speaker of Parliament, the Chief Judge of the High Judicial Council, and the Chief Judge of the Appeals Court in Basra.

I also had several meetings with civil society, including women human rights defenders, environmental activists, journalists, lawyers, artists, members of the Marsh Arab (Ma'dan) community, as well as representatives from the diverse and rich cultural and religious fabric of Iraq.

And I experienced first-hand the reality of climate change in the Al-Salhiyah area of Basra's Shatt Al-Arab district, in southern Iraq.

In 50-degree-Celsius heat, in the midst of drought-ridden and barren fields, local community leaders and representatives showed me pictures of the lush date palm trees that – just 30 years ago – lined parts of the now dried-up Shatt-al-Arab waterway.

Standing in searing heat in that scarred landscape, breathing air

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk concludes his official visit to Iraq *(continued)*

polluted by the many gas flares dotting the region, it was clear to me that the era of global boiling has indeed begun.

This is a climate emergency. And it is high time it is treated like one. Not just for Iraq but for the world. What is happening here is a window into a future that is now coming for other parts of the world – if we continue to fail in our responsibility to take preventive and mitigating action against climate change.

Iraq is among the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world. The serious environmental degradation here is the result of a toxic mix of violence, oil industry excesses, global warming, reduced rainfall, and lack of effective water management and regulation.

Just yesterday the Minister of Water Resources announced that water levels in Iraq are the lowest they have ever been. The water issue has wider regional implications, and all countries have to work to manage this precious resource as a public good. Water is a global public good.

Civil society actors spoke to me about the chronic pollution in Basra and the resulting health problems in the community, including high rates of cancer and other serious ailments. They also stressed the need for increased transparency. “People have the right to know what is going on, about the dangers to their health and environment, and to help with strategies to work together to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change,” as one rights defender said to me.

I welcome the Government’s public commitment to address, as a priority, the challenges of climate change and water scarcity. Much work lies ahead – in awareness raising, legislative and policy reform and capacity building of institutions. It is essential that this is done with the meaningful involvement of those most affected.

But I am concerned that a series of actions taken by people in positions of power – for example, bringing criminal defamation suits against journalists and civil society actors – have created a chilling effect on freedom of expression. There have also been reports of violence, intimidation and death threats against environmental activists, including by armed elements, stifling the open space for discussion that is so crucial to addressing these issues.

One activist pleaded for the protection



of rights defenders, saying: “It should not be dangerous to share data and raise awareness of the problem. We need to work together to mitigate the impact – lives are at risk.”

This is an issue we have been working closely on, and we are planning a report on freedom of expression in Iraq.

Iraq has historically contributed so much – cultural, literary, intellectual, civilizational – to shaping our world today. It is a mesmerizing history, breathtaking in its beauty and diversity.

But as we know all too well, Iraq also has a more recent history of repression, injustice, conflict, trauma and some of the worst violations of human rights and dignity to which the world has borne witness. I can only but admire the incredible resilience of the people of Iraq who have lived such realities within their lifetimes.

Estimates suggest that up to a million people disappeared under the regime of Saddam Hussein and hundreds of thousands more since then, including between 2014 and 2017 when Da’esh took control of vast swathes of Iraqi territory, and in subsequent security operations. Such staggering figures are difficult to fathom. Behind each of these individuals is a family – a spouse, a child, a parent, loved ones who deserve recognition, and whose rights to truth, justice and accountability are violated.

I welcome the Government’s invitation to the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, which visited Iraq last year. I urge implementation of the Committee’s recommendations. I understand that a law on enforced disappearances is due to come before the Council of Representatives – a welcome step in the right direction. It is high time a law is passed, in line with international human rights standards. My Office will follow closely the consideration and passage of this law

and is ready to advise and support, based on our experience in other countries grappling with this issue.

There is also a painful history of the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment – under Saddam Hussein, during the US-led occupation of Iraq, during the conflict with Da’esh, and continuing into present-day Iraq. I’m encouraged by what I heard both from the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice on tackling the issue of torture in the country, and to take preventive measures to ensure that torture has no place in the future of Iraq. I welcome their commitment to consider ratification of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture. The Optional Protocol mandates the creation of a national preventive mechanism, which conducts regular visits to places of detention and can play an important role in eradicating torture. I have offered our support in this regard.

Key to stopping such serious human rights violations is putting an end to the impunity that past perpetrators of human rights violations have enjoyed. This was a matter I discussed extensively with the Government and civil society, including in relation to the Tishreen protests of October 2019.

We have documented that at least 487 protesters were killed and 7,715 injured during demonstrations between 1 October 2019 and 30 April 2020, due to the use of force by Iraqi Security Forces and armed elements against protesters. The Government established a fact-finding committee and provided welcome support to victims through compensation programmes. Given the passage of time and lack of accountability, I have urged swift, transparent action to stem the impunity that has taken hold in relation to the Tishreen protests.

Equally important is the strengthening

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk concludes his official visit to Iraq *(continued)*

of judicial and national human rights institutions so that they can work independently and effectively – which I raised in my conversations with senior officials. I welcome all efforts of ongoing law reform in line with international human rights standards.

I have also called on the authorities to declare an official moratorium on the use of the death penalty in Iraq – where more than 11,000 people remain on death row.

Issues of concern that arose in almost every interaction I had were access to basic services, the need for good governance and transparency – and corruption. It is crucial that robust anti-corruption measures are taking hold, and that a culture of transparency, open to public scrutiny, is fostered. I also offered our Office's expertise on human rights in national budgeting, to ensure that national budgets can deliver on basic services and are inclusive, building upon the Government's important social safety net for the most vulnerable.

I am also in Iraq at a time when the terms “gender” and “women's empowerment” are – astonishingly – under attack, distorted and confused. This makes no sense in the face of the massive challenges that the country has. The use of these terms is not in contradiction with any culture, religion or tradition.

All evidence tells us that we need more women in decision-making positions, and more protections in

law, policy and society against violence against women. The 25 per cent quota for women in the Council of Representatives, Iraq's legislature, is commendable – and needs to be increased. Attempts to ban the use of universally accepted terms that are crucial for achieving equality and non-discrimination are harmful, as are threats and intimidation against women working on these issues.

I urge leaders across society to cease the politics of distraction. Human rights must not be instrumentalized to divide us – human rights are what unites us, what brings us together as humanity, in dignity. Do not allow populist rhetoric to create more fractures in a society that has already experienced fragmentation. Disinformation campaigns, hate speech and incitement to violence must not be given free rein.

As we mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year, its principles are powerfully relevant for a State as richly diverse as Iraq, particularly its guarantee of human rights without distinction of nationality, gender, national or ethnic origin, religion, language, sexual orientation or any other status.

Twenty years ago this month, 22 of my UN colleagues, including my predecessor Sergio Vieira de Mello, were killed in a suicide bombing at the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, and 150 others were injured. These were colleagues who were in Iraq with a

sincere desire to support and assist the Iraqi people in their aspirations for a better, more just future. I witnessed how these aspirations live on today.

There is a yearning for a common vision for a future that is grounded in human rights to be able to deal with the many difficult, long-standing issues it faces, so that the wounds can heal, and the gains that have been so painstakingly achieved can be preserved.

I leave Iraq with a clear appreciation of the progress, efforts and achievements of the people of this beautiful, diverse country – but also with the concern that the gains remain fragile.

I call on all those in positions of authority and influence to be guided by the interests and the human rights of the Iraqi people above all else and to tackle the corruption, discrimination, impunity, climate change and the remaining obstacles to lasting stability and peace.

To be able to address the big challenges of our times, we need to draw on the creativity and innovation that thrives when people are able to discuss the issues and propose solutions together. This means enlarging these freedoms as much as possible.

Our UN human rights team in Iraq is ready, as always, to assist, advise and support the promotion and protection of human rights for all Iraqis.

Thank you, Shukran Jazeelan.”

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights meets diverse civil society representatives in Baghdad, Erbil and Basra

Baghdad, 10 August 2023 - During his four-day visit to Iraq from 6 to 9 of August 2023, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Volker Türk, met with a broad range of civil society representatives, human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, environmental activists, and representatives of diverse ethno-religious communities, throughout the country.

Mr. Türk met with dozens of women and men, including youth, in nine meetings in Baghdad, Erbil and Basra, to take stock of ongoing human rights challenges and identify ways his Office can further support the promotion and protection of human rights in Iraq. He discussed with participants multiple issues including shrinking civic space,



minority rights, women's rights, challenges faced in prisons and other places of detention and the situation of missing persons and those subjected to enforced disappearance.

Moreover, Mr. Türk heard concerns about endemic issues of inequality, discrimination, continued impunity for human rights violations and crimes against activists, journalists, and

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights meets diverse civil society representatives in Baghdad, Erbil and Basra *(continued)*

demonstrators, as well as human rights in the digital space.

“To be able to address the big challenges of our times, we need to draw on the creativity and innovation that thrives when people are able to discuss the issues and propose solutions together. This means enlarging these freedoms as much as possible”, said Mr. Türk.

Environmental defenders also highlighted to Mr. Türk the effects of climate change, water scarcity, deforestation, and environmental degradation in the country and ensuing impact on human rights. They noted that the marshlands in

southern Iraq have been further depleted during the ongoing drought, devastating agriculture, traditional ways of life, cultural heritage and leading to displacement. Women’s groups also shared how the effects of climate change disproportionately affect them.

As one participating human rights defender stated, “We are grateful for the visit of the High Commissioner at such a critical time for Iraq. Engagement of the United Nations on this level provides a crucial bridge for us to convey our concerns and recommendations to the highest authorities.”

The High Commissioner’s visit takes place during a year-long campaign to promote and recognize the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The High Commissioner expressed a renewed commitment to cooperation with both the Iraqi and Kurdish Regional governments, the judiciary, and the country’s vibrant and diverse civil society, with an aim to progressing towards achievement of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Yazidi Genocide

DSRSG Cordone: “It is incumbent upon us today to recommit ourselves to healing the wounds of what happened since August 2014, and support the Yazidis in rebuilding their lives”



Baghdad, 01 August 2023 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Mr. Claudio Cordone, participated today at the Nine-Year Commemoration of the Yazidi Genocide held in Baghdad.

In his speech he stated: “It is incumbent upon us today to recommit ourselves to healing the wounds of what happened since August 2014, and support the Yazidis in rebuilding their lives ... What is at stake is the future of the Yazidis in Iraq, their peaceful coexistence with all other communities, as Iraq grows as a democratic and pluralistic country in which the human rights of everyone are respected.”

Here is the full text of his remarks at this event:

“Distinguished participants, I am grateful for the invitation to speak

at this event. Nine years since the beginning of the genocide of the Yazidi community in Iraq perpetrated by Daesh/ISIL. I want to express at the outset my strong solidarity with all the victims of that sick and dangerous ideology. The effects of those atrocities continue to affect the lives of the survivors, those still missing and their families, Iraq as a whole, and the conscience of everyone in the world.

It is incumbent therefore upon us today to recommit ourselves to healing the wounds of what happened since August 2014, and support the Yazidis in rebuilding their lives.

So let me take this opportunity to highlight a few key points as follows:

On the political side, we have the Sinjar Agreement of 2020 awaiting implementation. I hope that a mayor will be appointed without further delay, to serve in that position until the

forthcoming provincial council elections.

On the topic of reconstruction, I am aware of the appeal by the NGOs gathered here for a significant increase in government funding. The UN is committed to support fund-raising and coordinating reconstruction projects with the government and the Sinjar community.

With regard to security, according to the Sinjar Agreement, a new security force of 2,500 members recruited from among the Sinjaris should be established. I understand that the training of the first 500 members of this force is to start soon.

I hope that as administrative stability and security are re-established in Sinjar, more people will return so that displaced camps can be finally closed. And we should not rest until the fate of the Yazidis who are still missing is established.

Let me mention two other important issues, reparations and accountability, which need to be pursued in parallel with the elements of the Sinjar Agreement.

Reparations are key to recognizing the harm done to survivors and assisting them in rebuilding their lives. In this context, the adoption of the 2021 Yazidi Survivors’ Law was an important initiative, but the law should be implemented at greater speed, without unnecessary obstacles, and expanded to all victims, including children born of

DSRSG Cordone: “It is incumbent upon us today to recommit ourselves to healing the wounds ... (continued)”

rape.

With regards to accountability, efforts must continue to bring to justice those responsible for the crimes committed by Daesh. Trials are important to dispense justice and also to avoid blaming a whole community for the action of individuals from that community. I have heard from some Yazidis a strong distrust of anyone who is Sunni. But while there were Sunnis who joined

Daesh and many who kept silent, others took serious risks and helped Yazidis to hide and escape. In this context, the work of UNITAD is critical. In conclusion, let me stress that UNAMI, in line with its mandate, will continue to support the governments in Baghdad and Erbil in their efforts to advance the implementation of the Sinjar agreement and undertake the other important initiatives that I

mentioned, in cooperation with NGOs and in coordination with the Yazidi community and the other communities. In the end what is at stake is the future of the Yazidis in Iraq, their peaceful coexistence with all other communities, as Iraq grows as a democratic and pluralistic country in which the human rights of everyone are respected.

Thank you.”

UNITAD participates in the 9th commemoration of the Yazidi Genocide

Baghdad, 02 August 2023 - On behalf of Special Adviser Christian Ritscher, UNITAD Chief of Office of Field Investigations, Ms. Defne Akça, participated in the 9th commemoration of the Yazidi Genocide, held in Baghdad by 27 Yazidi NGOs and joined a panel on "International Stakeholders and Allies".

Ms. Akça stressed that maintaining collective commitment to accountability in Iraq and globally, and confidence in the steadfast process of justice are key to advance prosecutions of ISIL perpetrators for their international crimes including the Yazidi Genocide.



SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert: “People must be placed before politics or partisan interests”

Baghdad, 03 August 2023 – The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, delivered a speech in Baghdad today at an event on the 9th Annual Commemoration of Victims of the Genocide Against Yazidis and other Iraqi Components. “People must be placed before politics or partisan interests”, the SRSG said in her remarks.

Here is the full text of her remarks at this event:

“Prime Minister,
Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

When remembering the untold suffering of the Yazidi community in the district of Sinjar, words come up short.

Too many lives were lost; too many families were ripped apart; and too many traumas were inflicted on people

who did not deserve them.

Today, we are listening, and we will hear directly from brave voices and listen to their tragic accounts of what happened. Importantly, we will also listen to their perspectives on what must happen next.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have not forgotten – nor will we forget. To

prevent such atrocities from reoccurring, undying memory is a collective duty.

But as I have said many times: this memory must not be static. The most powerful form of remembrance is the one that compels action.

In August 2019, I publicly shared my shock after one of my early visits to



SRSB Hennis-Plasschaert: “People must be placed before politics or partisan interests” (continued)

Sinjar. Five years after the horrific violence, which culminated in heinous crimes against the Yazidis, and many others, the need for action was still so clearly visible and so painfully palpable.

In other words: while the people of Sinjar urgently needed to rebuild their lives, they were facing immense obstacles. Obstacles due to discord on stable security structures and a unified administration.

In October 2020, so almost three years ago, agreement was reached between Baghdad and Erbil. At last. The Sinjar Agreement, which focused on governance and security arrangements, as well as the much-needed reconstruction of the district, was a first but important step in the right direction.

And, the UN was hopeful. Hopeful that the Agreement would be the start of a new chapter for Sinjar. One in which the interests of the Sinjari people would come first. One in which all actors, no matter their background or affiliation, would stand up and not only help normalize the situation but also work towards swift and decisive implementation of the agreement.

Now, let me spare you the details of what happened next. But those who are familiar with my most recent briefing to the Security Council, last May, will not have missed our disappointment. Disappointment about the fact that little to no progress had been made - with the Sinjari people paying the price.

Where do things stand today?

I mean, we all know that, to date, too many Sinjaris have not been able to return home. And those who have managed to do so, find themselves too often without adequate housing or the services they so critically need. Poverty is widespread, physical and mental health needs are vast, and

women survivors in particular face a confluence of hurdles.

Having said this, there are some positive developments to report.

Since September 2022, over 600 survivors have started to receive their monthly compensation under the Yazidi Survivors Law.

And, the Prime Minister knows how relieved we were when he decided to move ahead with the land and property decree.

The approval of the federal budget has unlocked resources.

And the Provincial Council elections on 18 December will hopefully generate important momentum with regards to the longer-term governance of Sinjar.

Now, talking about the governance of Sinjar, I sincerely hope the outlook of elections will not stop the process of appointing a temporary mayor for Sinjar. Such appointment is critical if we talk about stepping up public services and reconstruction activities.

Ladies and gentlemen, we just listened to Prime Minister Sudani, and we know how committed he is and that there is no easy path, but I sincerely hope that recent efforts will be harnessed, and scaled up. And, please, allow me to highlight some priorities in that regard:

First, the implementation of the Yazidi Survivors Law. Quite simply, it must be accelerated. And this can only happen if the Directorate for Survivors Affairs has sufficient capacity for the caseload ahead. Equally important are efforts to dismantle barriers that prevent survivors from demonstrating their eligibility.

Secondly, I already mentioned it: the Sinjar Agreement. As positive as recent repeated declarations of commitment have been, we must see concrete steps – and at a faster pace. Be it the appointment of a mayor, the

establishment of a local security force or the delivery of services and the scale up of reconstruction.

Thirdly, and this is a message I have heard from all survivors I have met in past years: justice and accountability remain key. While collective stigmatization should be avoided, it goes without saying: yes, indeed, the individuals responsible must be brought to justice. And the United Nations, including through the work of UNITAD, continues to support Iraqi-led efforts to enact relevant legislation and pursue justice. Let me also say that every effort should be made to determine the fate of Yazidis who remain missing, and to bring them home to their families.

And, finally, allow me to reiterate that people must be placed before politics or partisan interests, particularly when talking about those who have suffered some of the worst atrocities in recent human history. Only in this way can the needs of survivors be fully met.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we navigate this crucial juncture, I can only hope that all leaders, in this room or somewhere else, regardless of their background or affiliation, recognize the magnitude of the responsibility resting on their shoulders.

It is now time, high time, to contribute to constructive dynamics on the ground. For everyone. And, within the context of Iraq's state structure. And by identifying what Sinjaris have in common rather than emphasizing their differences.

Let us therefore reaffirm our collective commitment to turn the page and work towards a future that the people of Sinjar can believe in.

Thank you.”



Baghdad, 03 August 2023 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Mr. Claudio Cordone: "Talking with a group of Yazidi survivors today in Baghdad. Daesh sick perpetrators should not be let off no matter where they are hiding and how long it takes."



Baghdad, 4 August 2023 - On behalf of Special Adviser Christian Ritscher, UNITAD Head of the Office of Field Investigations, Ms. Defne Akca attended the event held in Baghdad under auspices of H.E. PM Mohamed Shia in Baghdad on the 9th commemoration of the Yazidi Genocide.

Ms. Akca also met with the Prince of Yazidis, Mr. Hazim Tahseen who commended UNITAD for the Team's support to the Yazidi community through promoting accountability for ISIL international crimes and the Yazidi Genocide in Iraq and abroad.

Towards a sustainable future for the Yazidis



Erbil, 03 August 2023 – The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, delivered a speech in Erbil today at an event on the 9th Annual Commemoration of the Yazidi Genocide – Towards a Sustainable Future for the Yazidis. “Today’s ceremony is a stark reminder of the monstrous inhumanity that can emerge from conflict, of just how critical the need to avoid its reoccurrence is. While we honour the past, we must also look to the future – and thus take action with resolve so as to prevent further suffering among the people from Sinjar. They deserve a future they can believe in”, the SRSR said in her remarks.

Here is the full text of her remarks:

“Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Of course, we are here, on this solemn occasion, to remember what happened to the Yazidi community at the hands of the so-called Islamic State.

And, there are no phrases or platitudes capable of doing justice to the suffering endured. And, each year, we meet to ensure we never forget the horror that unfolded in 2014.

Now, as I said this morning in Baghdad: undying memory is a collective duty. But this memory must not be static. The most powerful form of remembrance is the one that compels action.

Unfortunately, over the past nine years, a sense of urgency to act has been lacking. Throughout the years the people of Sinjar have faced tremendous challenges and obstacles; obstacles due to discord on stable security structures and a unified administration.

And, in memory of all victims, and out of respect for their loved ones, I can only repeat what I have asked so many times from relevant actors: please, set aside your differences or partisan interests. And please, with immediate effect, place the needs of the Sinjari people first.

Now, true, there are some positive developments to report:

Over 600 survivors have started to receive their monthly compensation under the Yazidi Survivors Law;
The land and property decree, of course;

The approval of the federal budget has unlocked resources;

And, the Provincial Council elections at the end of this year will hopefully contribute to much-needed stability in the governance of Sinjar.

However, in saying all of this, let me be clear: sugar-coating the situation

will not help anyone – least of all survivors.

Plainly speaking, the truth is that, while very recently things started to move in the right direction, they are simply not moving fast enough.

As discussed today, many people are still missing – their families left in the dark, cruelly denied the chance to lay loved ones who have lost their lives to rest.

Too many are still displaced, and they - as well as people who have returned to their homes - face a plethora of challenges. These include health and mental health issues, with those in need often unable to get support – whether due to a lack of services or paperwork.

Women survivors in particular face a confluence of hurdles.

Meanwhile, poverty is widespread, with many people left without employment or a social net to fall back on.

Now, these challenges are not helped by ongoing stalls in the implementation of the Sinjar Agreement.

So, to cut a very long story short, nine years after the peak of Da’esh violence, and three years after Erbil and Bagdad signed up to the Sinjar Agreement: the prospect of “stability and security” is still too hazy – too far off in the distance – for too many Sinjari people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Recent developments and declarations of commitments will hopefully create momentum. And, yes, these developments need to be harnessed and scaled up.

As I did in Baghdad, this morning, let me highlight some priorities in that regard:

First, I will refer to the implementation of the Yazidi Survivors Law. Quite simply, it must be accelerated. And this can only happen if the Directorate for Survivors Affairs has capacity for the

Towards a sustainable future for the Yazidis *(continued)*

caseload ahead. Equally important are efforts to dismantle barriers that prevent survivors from demonstrating their eligibility.

Secondly, I already referred to it: the Sinjar Agreement. As positive as recent repeated declarations of commitment have been, we must see concrete steps – and at a faster pace. Be it the appointment of a mayor, the establishment of a local security force, the delivery of services or the scale up of reconstruction. And, to be clear, the outlook of the December elections should not hinder the process of appointing a temporary mayor for Sinjar. Such appointment, any time soon, is critical if we talk about stepping up public services and reconstruction activities.

Thirdly, and this is a message I have heard from all survivors I have met in past years: justice and accountability remain key. While

collective stigmatization should be avoided, at all times, it goes without saying: yes, indeed, the individuals responsible must be brought to justice. And the UN, including through the work of UNITAD, continues to support Iraqi-led efforts to enact relevant legislation and pursue justice.

Now, finally, allow me to reiterate that people must be placed before politics or partisan interests, particularly when talking about those who have suffered some of the worst atrocities in recent human history. Only in this way can the needs of survivors be fully met.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Within this context, I cannot overstate the responsibility of leadership. Regardless of background or affiliation, everyone in this room or beyond is expected to understand the magnitude of the responsibility

resting on their shoulders. It is now time – and I would say, high time – to contribute to constructive dynamics on the ground, for everyone. And, within the context of Iraq's state structure. And by identifying what Sinjaris have in common rather than emphasizing their differences.

Today's ceremony is a stark reminder of the monstrous inhumanity that can emerge from conflict, of just how critical the need to avoid its reoccurrence is. And as I said in different words before: the truest form of remembrance is the one that inspires us to act.

In other words: while we honour the past, we must also look to the future – and thus take action with resolve so as to prevent further suffering among the people from Sinjar. They deserve a future they can believe in. Starting today.

Thank you very much.”

Relentless pursuit of justice and accountability continues: 9 years since the Yazidi Genocide

Baghdad, 03 August 2023 – On this fateful day, nine years ago, Iraq's Yazidi community suffered one of the most horrid atrocities in modern history, in what UNITAD has found clear and convincing evidence to legally qualify it as a crime of genocide. Coming upon the 9th commemoration of the Yazidi genocide today, we reiterate our commitment to the pursuit of justice for victims and survivors, ensuring that perpetrators of such heinous crimes are held accountable, no matter where they go, or how long it takes.

“An important step in any accountability processes is the recognition of the crimes committed by ISIL for what they truly are, international crimes. What we want to see in Iraq, as well as throughout the world, is for justice systems to deal with ISIL crimes against the Yazidi community and hold the perpetrators of the genocide accountable before competent courts,” stressed Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Christian Ritscher.

Along these lines, UNITAD welcomed the most recent conviction of an ISIL member for aiding and abetting genocide against Yazidis by a German Court. UNITAD has supported German prosecution authorities by identifying and interviewing the key witness, a Yazidi woman who was held as a slave

for 3 years by the ISIL couple, Nadine K. and her husband. Special Adviser Ritscher mentioned that: “this conviction and other similar ones constitute tangible progress towards justice and bringing some comfort to the families and victims. The pieces of the puzzle are coming together, as we continue to work tirelessly to support more prosecutions for ISIL perpetrators. This is the justice we all want to see, in Iraq and throughout the world.”

Special Adviser Ritscher commended Iraqi authorities which have shown high level of commitment in advancing the Iraq-led process to enact a national legislation that allows for the prosecution of ISIL members for their international crimes in Iraq. “UNITAD has provided technical expert support for this process through the joint working group that was launched in March 2023 with representatives of the judiciary, alongside legal experts from the Prime Minister's office, the National Permanent Committee for International Humanitarian Law, as well as the Iraqi State Council, hosted by the Supreme Judicial Council, and will continue to do so in the coming weeks and months. This is the process that will pave the way to see trials for ISIL perpetrators of the Yazidi genocide here in Iraq” he indicated.

To support these accountability efforts



inside and outside of Iraq, UNITAD's investigations into ISIL crimes against the Yazidi community continue to be one of the Team's top priorities. Further evidence and witness testimonies are being gathered to supplement case-building efforts. Additionally, to date, 37 mass graves of Yazidi ISIL victims have been excavated with UNITAD's support and the Team has identified over 100 Yazidi heritage sites destroyed by ISIL.

These tireless efforts can only continue thanks to the bravery and resilience of the Yazidi community as a whole, and the survivors in particular. “In light of the remarkable determination of the Yazidi survivors and community, we find ourselves deeply humbled. UNITAD is fully committed to dedicating all of its resources and efforts towards the accomplishment of this paramount common goal of accountability for ISIL crimes in Iraq

Relentless pursuit of justice and accountability continues: 9 years since the Yazidi Genocide *(continued)*

as well as around the world, in close cooperation with the Yazidi community itself and the Iraqi authorities”, said Special Adviser Ritscher.

The Team will continue to advocate

for and support the continued Iraqi efforts towards a national legislation that would allow for the prosecution of ISIL international crimes, including the crime of genocide against the Yazidis, in Iraq; for

victims to see their day in court in a way that ensures their meaningful participation in accountability processes.

Nine years in remembrance: the road ahead for Yazidi Genocide survivors in Iraq

By Giorgi Gigauri, IOM Iraq Chief of Mission

Baghdad, 03 August 2023 - On this ninth anniversary of the Sinjar massacre – nine years since Daesh initiated its genocidal campaign against Iraq’s Yazidi ethnoreligious minority – we reflect on the strides made in support of survivors and acknowledge their persistent, pressing needs.

This year, between August 1st and 3rd, survivors and community groups across Iraq came together to organize commemorative events ranging from silent vigils to afforestation campaigns to panel discussions on the way forward for survivors. In Baghdad, the Office of the Prime Minister held a commemoration event attended by the highest levels of Government and UN representation. In Erbil, the Kurdistan Regional Government organized a commemoration together with the Yazidi civil society organization, Yazda. This breadth and richness of engagement underscores our collective commitment to honour victims, stand in solidarity with survivors and work together towards a future where such atrocities never happen again.

An integral part of Iraq’s rich history and diversity, these communities have displayed remarkable resilience in the face of unimaginable horrors. As we reflect on the past nine years, we celebrate the progress achieved, while acknowledging the needs that continue to burden those affected.

Significant strides have been made in supporting survivors to rebuild their lives. The adoption of the Yazidi Survivors Law (YSL) in 2021 – which aims to advance transitional justice and provides for monetary reparations, a plot of land, education and employment assistance and access to health and mental health services for survivors – and the subsequent establishment of the Directorate of Survivors’ Affairs remain a testament to the commitment of the Government of Iraq to recognize and address the suffering endured by Yazidis and other

minority groups under Daesh. As of this year, the Directorate has verified 900 survivors through its application process, distributed salary payments promised under the Law to 650 verified survivors and activated a formal referral system through which YSL beneficiaries can connect to mental health and psychosocial support services in their areas of residence.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been working alongside the Directorate, Yazidi civil society, community-based groups and international partners to provide assistance and create conditions conducive to the return of displaced survivors. Last month, IOM supported the voluntary return of 89 Yazidi families from camps in Duhok back to Sinjar, where they were welcomed with tears, laughter and song by family, friends and neighbours long awaiting their return.

Still, significant challenges persist. Over 200,000 Yazidis still live in displacement, both within and outside camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Last month’s joyous homecoming notwithstanding, rates of return to Sinjar remain low. The destruction of infrastructure and homes in Sinjar City and surrounding areas has diminished the availability of basic services and limited access to running water, electricity, healthcare and education.

IOM continues to work to make durable solutions possible for survivors, including through basic service restoration, health care provision, economic assistance and small business support, memorialization efforts, peacebuilding activities and more.

The restoration of housing, land and property documentation is a critical aspect of supporting durable solutions to displacement – especially for the Yazidi population. Without these documents, returnees struggle to access government shelter support and compensation for their destroyed property. The lack of documentation also hampers livelihood prospects, particularly for the majority of the population who relied on agriculture-



based livelihoods before 2014 and, without documentation to prove land ownership, are denied access to their own property on which to farm. Since 2021, IOM Iraq’s legal team has assisted 1490 Yazidis to acquire housing, land and property documents, alongside providing support to secure civil documentation and representation to apply for survivor status under the YSL.

Progress on these fronts has been made possible thanks to the relentless advocacy of the affected communities, the efforts of political and government leaders and the support of international partners. Still, it is essential to maintain momentum and address outstanding needs. The international community must continue to support survivor-led transitional justice efforts, promote accountability and advocate for increased access to quality public services for all community members.

Investment in capacity-building at the national and local levels – especially at the Directorate, which stands ready with the budget to provide substantive benefits to survivors, pending the institutional capacity – is crucial to meet the material, physical and psychological needs of survivors.

As we mark the ninth anniversary of the Sinjar massacre, we remember the lives lost and honour the resilience of the Yazidis targeted by ISIL’s genocide. The path ahead may be challenging, but with continued commitment and collaboration, we can work towards a future where the horrors of the past are never repeated – a future where survivors can heal and thrive in dignity and peace.

Stronger together: Yezidi survivors groups mark genocide, 9 years later



Sinjar, 3 August 2023— Nine years since the Yazidi genocide perpetrated by Daesh, survivor groups in Sinjar came together to mark the anniversary by holding their first ever public activities: a candle-lit vigil honouring the thousands who lost their lives, and a community afforestation campaign – a watershed moment towards the amplification of youth voices and leadership in Iraq. Survivors' Voices Network – initially launched in 2021 for Yazidi survivors residing in Iraqi Kurdistan and now expanded to include all Iraqi survivors who were held captive by Daesh – held a silent vigil in Sinjar, where participants lit candles to pay tribute to those who perished in the aftermath of the attacks. This event served as a powerful reminder of the resilience and strength of the survivors.

“It is challenging for us to participate in these activities, but we must make the effort and try. All the pain and wounds converged upon us on this day,” said Delal*, a member of the Network. “We want justice, the prosecution of Daesh members, the

reconstruction of our regions, the unveiling of mass graves and the relentless search for missing individuals.”

In parallel, Hope Givers – a group of young male Yazidi survivors once held captive by Daesh and who now work together to bring attention to the plight of boys and young men who survived Daesh indoctrination attempts and enslavement – carried out an afforestation campaign in a village in Sinjar district. The initiative aimed to transform the village's landscape by planting trees along public streets and homes, creating a greener environment and providing shade in the midst of a climate change-induced heat wave – thereby encouraging residents to be stewards of the environment and showing those still displaced that there is hope in return.

“Let this day serve as a reminder for people to plant hope and overcome the painful memories that the community endured. Let's transform it into a day of fields filled with hope for the future,” said Olan*, a member of the Hope Givers.

Both initiatives highlight the importance of survivors' leadership in healing and rebuilding their communities.

“IOM is proud to support the Survivors' Voices Network and Hope Givers in their meaningful initiatives to honour and enshrine their community's experiences in public memory, while also bringing people together to build a brighter future,” said Mr. Giorgi Gigauri, Chief of Mission for IOM Iraq. “We will continue to support these communities through every point of access we can – from direct assistance to those displaced and returned alike, to capacity building and advocacy at the highest levels of Government.”

Also on 3 August, the Office of the Prime Minister held a commemoration event in Baghdad attended by the highest levels of Government and UN representation. In Erbil, the Kurdistan Regional Government organized a commemoration together with the Yazidi civil society organization, Yazda.

Though the challenges, devastation and trauma are immense, through a survivor-led whole-of-society partnership and dedicated government action, our collective efforts can facilitate healing and create a future defined by dignity, security and peace for the Yazidi community.

*Names have been changed to protect privacy of individuals

International Humanitarian Day

Staff voices: Dhafer Al-Hussini - remembering the Canal Hotel bombing in Iraq

New York, 19 August 2023 - Today, just like every 19th of August since 2003, we remember our colleagues who lost their lives while carrying out their work at the United Nations in Baghdad. This terrorist attack against humanitarian and human rights workers at the Canal Hotel shocked the international community and continues to stir the same empathy year after year. National staff bore the brunt of the attack. All except for a few had to leave the Organization – some, for fear for their lives; others, because their contracts were terminated. Sectarian war crawled in, and Iraqis needed help more than ever. I was one of the few national officers who remained, but I kept recalling in my mind

the saying of a wise man: “Never be lonely on the path of truth due to its lack of paths.”

Against all odds, this made me more determined to serve the humanitarian cause with courage, and indeed this is the path that I chose. One's honor and merits in life will always remain dependent on one's ability to make a noble and solemn sacrifice for the sake of humanitarian work.

This year we are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As we celebrate, we honor the memory of those who are no longer with us. The ideals of the Declaration still light the world, and we will not give them

up.

I am reminded of the words of former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon: “We must work for a world where people of all cultures and beliefs live together in mutual respect and full equality. Non-violence does not mean non-action. It takes courage to stand up to those who use violence to enforce their will or beliefs. It requires resolve to face down injustice, discrimination, and brutality.”

About the author: Dhafer Al-Hussini is an Iraqi lawyer with a PhD in international criminal law. He worked with the UN in Iraq from 2001 to 2009.

By UN News.

The 20th commemoration of the terrorist attack on the UN headquarters in Baghdad in 2003

Baghdad, 19 August 2023 - The Government of Iraq and the United Nations family in Iraq today paid tribute to the victims and families of the 19 August 2003 terrorist attack on the then-UN headquarters in Baghdad. The ceremony was held at the same location of the Canal Hotel, now the Al-Qanat Social Rehabilitation Centre, of the Ministry of Health.

Here is the full text of SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert's statement:

"Excellencies,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning, Sabah-al-Kher.

We are here to commemorate, with great sadness, the 20th anniversary of the attack on the then-United Nations headquarters in Baghdad: the Canal Hotel.

Twenty-two lives were lost in the blast, including that of then-Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Sérgio Vieira de Mello. And, let us not forget, many more were injured or impacted in other ways, including by the loss of dear colleagues and friends.

Now, while this attack targeted the United Nations, the horror it represented was not contained within the parameters of the Canal Hotel.

Instead, the incident was an early swell of a tidal wave of violence, which went on to tear through the country, bringing unimaginable pain and suffering to too many Iraqis.

And, so, as we gather for this sombre occasion, we must remember all those who lost their lives to conflict in Iraq.

Now, as I said on many occasions, many of a memory must not be static. Rather, it should compel us to act; to recommit to doing all we can in pursuit of peace and stability.

This is all the more fitting given that, today, we are also marking what has come to be known as World



Humanitarian Day. And, in doing so, we acknowledge the people across the world who are working – sometimes in the most challenging of circumstances, and at great personal risk – we acknowledge the people who are working to assist those in dire need.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As flagged in my recent briefings to the Security Council, the past 20 years have brought about change in Iraq. Few would deny that it has been a very rough road. But throughout these years, the United Nations has not given up on its efforts to contribute to peace and stability in Iraq.

Meanwhile, from this site, which was once covered by the rubble of the Canal Hotel, the Al-Qanat Social Rehabilitation Centre has been born. The Centre provides, as explained already in advance of this gathering, both in- and out-patient treatment for substance abuse.

And, yes, it is a very good example of a public service tailored to communities in need. And, with plans from the Ministry of Health to further expand the Centre, more patients stand to benefit from specialized, rehabilitative treatment.

In the meantime, the Iraqi Government has expressed its determination to step up service provision across the country,

and to bring solutions to major challenges – whether related to water security, electricity, governance, or financial, economic and social reforms. And, we are hopeful that more and more rays of light will break through the darkness still clouding the lives of too many Iraqis.

Now, the wounds created by the 2003 attack – and the violence that came after it – run deep. And, the truth is: they may never fully heal.

But, while remembering the pain is difficult, we have a duty to never forget our colleagues who lost their lives. And, this commemoration may also act as a reminder to us all of our role in nurturing the conditions for the safety, security and prosperity of all Iraqis.

Today, I wish to extend my deepest sympathy to those who are missing colleagues, friends and loved ones not only today, but every day.

Let us all do our part to embody the values of peace and tolerance for which those who lost their lives in the Canal Hotel attack stood. As my colleague Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, recently said: We cannot bring back those taken from us. But we can honour their memories by doing everything possible to support those continuing their work. Thank you."



UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, pays tribute to those fallen in service

Geneva, 19 August 2023 - 20 years ago on 19 August, we lost 22 colleagues in a devastating suicide bomb attack at the UN compound in Baghdad, Iraq. On #WorldHumanitarianDay we deeply honour the memory of those fallen in service. Our heart goes out to their loved ones. #NoMatterWhat

On his recent visit to Iraq, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, **Volker Turk**, recorded the following statement: "I'm here in Baghdad, and 20 years ago on the 19th of August, 22 of our colleagues, our friends got killed in a devastating bomb attack. This is also the day where we remember and pay tribute to all our colleagues who in the line of duty working for a better world, working for peace, for dignity, for human rights, got killed in action and some got injured while they were working for a better cause".

International Humanitarian Day commemorated in Iraq



Baghdad, 17 August 2023



Baghdad, 17 August 2023



Erbil, 17 August 2023



Kirkuk, 17 August 2023



Basra, 17 August 2023



Mosul, 17 August 2023

Freedom of Expression

How to interact critically with media content and avoid falling into the trap of misinformation and false content

Mosul, 09 July 2023 - UNESCO, in cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Northern Technical University in Ninewa, held a training workshop on "Critical Thinking, Media and Information Literacy", in the framework of promoting peace discourse, from 3 to 6 July 2023.

The workshop was attended by two groups of 50 participants from the staff of the Northern Technical University and the lecturers of the Technical Institute in Mosul.

The two training days focused on the importance of enhancing critical thinking skills, media and information literacy among students and the wider community, particularly among young people, to enable them to interact critically with media content and avoid falling into the trap of misinformation and false content, which often contribute to feeding societal divides, hate speech and negative stereotypes of others and instead strengthen their defenses for peace and make them active actors in the dissemination of peaceful discourse and the promotion of peaceful coexistence inside and outside

the campus, especially online. Additionally, considering the significance of culture, heritage and art, in addition to education in the promotion of peace defenses, the training workshop was held in the Mosul Heritage to show the participants the city's artistic and heritage legacy. At the end of the workshop, the participants enjoyed music and beautiful Moslawi traditional folk songs. This training workshop was organized

within the framework of the "Enhancing Youth Employability and Resilience for Peace in Ninewa" project, funded by the Government of Japan. UNESCO will continue to work with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Northern Technical University, and participants for wider circulation of the key messages and takeaways from the workshop to students and the wider community and ensure the sustainability of the activity.



Exploring effective mechanisms to enhance freedom of expression and ensure the safety of journalists



Erbil, 11 July 2023 - UNESCO Iraq Office recently organized a workshop in Erbil to discuss measures aimed at ensuring the safety of journalists and promoting freedom of expression in the Kurdistan region. The workshop,

conducted as part of the Breaking the Silence Project's second phase, was made possible through funding from the Dutch Embassy in Iraq.

Government representatives from various bodies, including the Ministry of Interior, the Peshmerga, the Ministry of Human Rights, the Kurdistan Journalists Syndicate, and the judiciary, attended the workshop. The primary objective was to explore effective mechanisms to enhance freedom of expression and ensure the safety of journalists.

During the workshop, UNESCO and the Kurdistan Journalists Syndicate delivered presentations. Additionally,

representatives from the Ministry of Interior, the Police Command, and the Office of the Ministry of Human Rights in Erbil also gave presentations. The discussions and presentations centered around identifying the best approaches to address international reports on freedom of expression and journalist safety, as well as combatting impunity for those responsible.

UNESCO Iraq Office aims to implement a program that will expedite the regional government's alignment with the central government in terms of responding to international decisions regarding journalist safety and the promotion of freedom of expression.

UNESCO hosted by the Independent Commission for Human Rights in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Erbil, 12 July 2023 - UNESCO Iraq's Breaking the Silence Project team to promote freedom of expression met with the head of the Independent Commission for Human Rights in the Kurdistan Region, on the sidelines of the workshops that were held during the period 9-11 July in Erbil.

During the meeting held at the headquarters of the Human Rights Commission, discussions were focused on the topics of freedom of expression and the safety of journalists. The participants emphasized the importance of establishing collaborative efforts to address these issues. It was highlighted that the Human Rights Commission, being a key partner for this stage of the project, plays a crucial role in monitoring the rights of journalists and ensuring freedom of expression.

The head of the Independent Commission for Human Rights, Dr. Mona Yako, affirmed her support for



the project and its activities in the region, and demanded that UNESCO have a role in involving and training the Commission's cadres, with a desire to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Director of UNESCO Iraq Office to cover all areas of future cooperation in human rights that overlap with the goals and tasks of International Organizations.

The meeting was attended by a group

of journalists from Baghdad and the region and a representative of the Board of Trustees of the Media and Communications Authority, where they discussed the results of the workshops that were held with government authorities and the judiciary in the region and with journalists, hoping that the Kurdistan region would launch its own committee to protect journalists and combat impunity.

UNESCO and the Babylon Foundation meet to discuss hosting a digital reporting platform for women journalists

Baghdad, 13 July 2023 - UNESCO Iraq Office and the Babylon Foundation held a meeting at the Media Palace in Baghdad to discuss hosting a digital reporting platform for women journalists. This platform was founded by UNESCO in 2021 and is connected to the publishing courts and the Special Investigation Unit on Crimes against Journalists of the Ministry of Interior. During the meeting, the Babylon Foundation expressed its interest in hosting the platform's team, which

consists of twenty journalists and civil activists. They will be responsible for receiving digital reports and following up with the competent authorities in the government. UNESCO highly appreciated this generous offer and expressed its gratitude to the management of Babylon and the Media Palace in Baghdad.

The platform has been co-sponsored by the Multi-Donor Program and the Breaking the Silence Project, funded by the Dutch Embassy in Baghdad, since

its inception.



UNESCO, the judiciary, and journalists are engaging in discussions in Iraqi Kurdistan



Erbil, 15 July 2023 - UNESCO Iraq Office's Freedom of Expression Project team, organized a constructive dialogue between journalists and the judiciary in Erbil. This initiative is part of the Breaking the Silence Project, which aims to enhance governmental and judicial procedures for safeguarding journalists and combating impunity.

The project's second phase is generously funded by the Dutch Embassy in Iraq.

During the event, a group of Kurdish journalists presented their demands to a panel of judges at the Erbil courts. UNESCO diligently documented these demands in collaboration with the project team. On their part, the judiciary representatives elaborated on the legal procedures outlined in the Press Law (35 of 2007) and the Right to Information Law in Iraqi Kurdistan. They emphasized their commitment to upholding freedom of expression and supporting international programs that promote this fundamental right. Notably, they acknowledged the UNESCO program's significant efforts in advancing global and local freedom of expression.

The participating journalists called

upon the authorities of the Kurdistan Regional Government to adopt a mechanism that protects journalists and upholds freedom of expression. The judges expressed their admiration for the central judiciary in Iraq, which has successfully implemented a protection mechanism and established specialized publishing and media courts, along with an investigative unit within the Ministry of Interior. Additionally, the UNESCO representative shared insights into the mechanisms and procedures implemented by UNESCO in Baghdad, contributing to the modernization of the Iraqi judiciary's approach to addressing freedom of expression-related matters.

The meeting concluded with the approval of Kurdistan's action plan to protect journalists and combat impunity.

UNAMI's Human Rights Office and Iraqi Women's Journalist Forum deliver a two-day training to Iraqi journalists in Najaf

Najaf, 16 July 2023 - On 14 and 15 July, the Human Rights Office of UNAMI, in collaboration with Iraqi Female Journalist Forum, delivered a two-day capacity-building training in Najaf for 20 Iraqi journalists (16 women and 4 men) from Najaf governorate. This two-day program is part of a series of five similar trainings planned in five governorates under the UN Human Rights Office's Global Drive for Media Freedom, Access to Information and the Safety of

Journalists.

The training aimed at equipping Iraqi journalists with necessary strategies and tools to integrate human rights and gender perspectives into their journalistic reporting and media content, which involves developing an understanding of diverse perspectives, challenges and experiences of women, to ensure accurate and inclusive representation in news and reports.

More broadly, the training contributed to the realization in Iraq of Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 5: Gender Equality and Goal 10: Reduce Inequalities, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert: "Disinformation or attempts to ban universally accepted terms are not helping Iraq to achieve stability and prosperity."

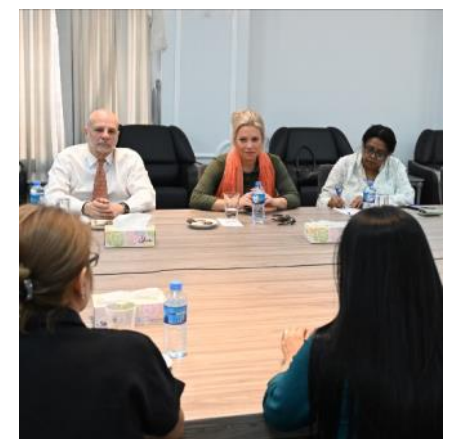
Baghdad, 13 August 2023 - The UN Special Representative for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, accompanied by her Deputy for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Mr. Claudio Cordone, met, on their request, with Iraqi civil society representatives to discuss the ongoing debate on terms such as "gender", "equality" and "women's empowerment".

During his visit to Iraq last week, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk stated that these terms are universally accepted and crucial for, inter alia, combatting discrimination. He stressed: "The use of

these terms is not in contradiction with any culture, religion or tradition".

At today's meeting, Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert said: "Much of the prevailing rhetoric is harmful, leading to serious threats and intimidation. It also distracts from the many challenges central to Iraq's future. Disinformation or attempts to ban universally accepted terms are not helping Iraq to achieve stability and prosperity. Quite the opposite. The rights and freedoms enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for which Iraq voted in the UN General Assembly 75 years ago, apply to all

Iraqis".



Empowering bonds and creativity intertwine

Mosul, 01 August 2023 - Empowering bonds and creativity intertwine as these girls with disabilities and their mothers come together in a heartwarming session of sewing and knitting. UNFPA thanks to the Government of Finland for providing the opportunity for women and girls in Mosul to explore the joy of learning and crafting to nurture their relationship and skills.



Marvelling at the skill and creativity of young girls with disability as they proudly present their intricate handicrafts

Baghdad, 25 August 2023 - UNFPA continues to celebrate Youth Day with enthusiasm! Iraqi youth are brimming with potential. Don't miss the exhibition by persons with disabilities addressing Climate Change challenges in Mosul. Marvelled at the skill and creativity of young girls with disability as they proudly present their intricate handicrafts. These talents, combined with essential life skills, are shaping a brighter future. With thanks to the Government of Finland.



UNITAD



Baghdad, 05 July 2023 – Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** and UNITAD experts participated in the Joint Working Group towards a domestic legislation to incorporate international crimes' charges for ISIL perpetrators in Iraq.

H.E. Judge Faiq Zaidan, President of the Supreme Judiciary Council stressed the importance of this legislation and thanked the Team for its ongoing support for this process, and in promoting accountability for ISIL's international crimes in Iraq.



Baghdad, 12 July 2023 – Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** met **H.E. Prashant Pise**, Ambassador of India to Iraq, to update on UNITAD's work, the Team's 10th report to the UN Security Council and the special event co-hosted with Permanent Missions of India and Iraq to the UN in NY, on ISIL's development and use of Chemical Weapons. SA Ritscher thanked Ambassador Pise for India's support to UNITAD's investigations into ISIL's Chemical Weapons Program and destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq.

Baghdad, 06 July 2023 – Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** was delighted to welcome **H.E. Judge Ali Hussein Jaffat**, First Judge of Al-Karkh Investigation Court, at UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad where they discussed ongoing cooperation between UNITAD and Iraqi judiciary. Discussions also included the recent initiative to launch a central archive of ISIL records at the Supreme Judicial Council. SA Ritscher stressed UNITAD's commitment to support the capacities of Iraqi courts and judges through various initiatives. SA Ritscher further thanked Judge Jaffat for the excellent cooperation in facilitating the Team's work towards the common goal of promoting accountability for ISIL international crimes in Iraq.

UNITAD-NGO Dialogue Forum's Fifth Biannual plenary roundtable discusses victim participation in meaningful justice processes



Baghdad, 18 July 2023 – The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) held on Monday its Fifth Biannual Plenary Roundtable meeting of the UNITAD-NGO Dialogue Forum.

In this biannual roundtable meeting, the Forum brings together representatives of Iraqi civil society and international NGOs with UNITAD's leadership and experts, to engage in discussions about issues of common interest, including new opportunities for cooperation. For this roundtable, a spotlight speaker presented about victim participation in justice processes. Participants shared valuable insights, fostering a dynamic discussion on matters related to the work of UNITAD and its cooperation with the NGO community.

In his opening remarks, Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD welcomed the participating NGOs, including those traveling from other provinces to attend this meeting: "which is convening for the first time, post COVID-19, in person in Baghdad." "Needless to say, the Forum goes hand in hand with the great cooperation at the operational level that is happening daily between various units of UNITAD and many NGO partners," said Special Adviser Ritscher. He also highlighted key elements of progress in UNITAD's work over the past few months, which were presented in UNITAD's tenth report to the UN Security Council in June.

Special Adviser Ritscher indicated that: "Meaningful justice rests on the centrality of victims and survivors. They get to feel seen, heard and recognized. They get to witness their day in court, and through evidence-based trials which establish the truth, and deal with the heinous crimes committed by ISIL perpetrators for what they truly were; crimes against

humanity, war crimes and in some cases genocide."

The guest speaker for this roundtable, Ms. Natia Navrouzov presented on participation of survivors in justice processes, before, during and after trials. She also emphasised the role of cooperation and partnerships between all stakeholders for the benefit of victims, survivors, and the community at large, providing examples on cases in which Yazidi survivors were able to participate in court proceedings against ISIL perpetrators in Third States with competent jurisdictions. One example was the most recent conviction in Germany of Nadine K., a German national who was found guilty of a range of crimes including aiding and abetting genocide against Yazidis in Iraq.

Many participants stressed the importance of enacting a national legislation in Iraq that allows for the prosecution of ISIL perpetrators for international crimes before competent courts in Iraq, in a way that ensures effective participation of survivor communities. At his end, Special Adviser Ritscher reiterated UNITAD's commitment to support this Iraq-led process through the Joint Working Group with representatives of the judiciary, alongside legal experts from the Prime Minister's office and the National Permanent Committee for

International Humanitarian Law, as well as the Iraqi State Council, hosted by the Supreme Judicial Council.

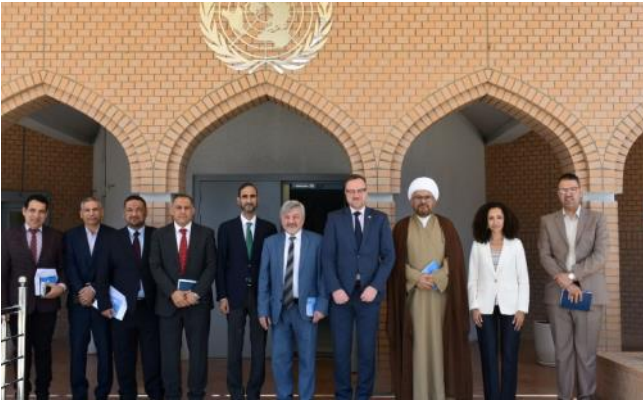
Moreover, NGO representatives gave insights about their work with victims of ISIL, and the importance of the justice process to the Iraqi community. They also discussed the importance of combating challenges facing victim participation in the justice processes and ways forward in joint endeavours, offering suggestions and perceptions for UNITAD's work and potential cooperation with the NGO community in this regard.

Participating NGOs also had the chance to discuss with UNITAD team leads and experts, ideas to develop additional links of cooperation especially in supporting documentation of survivor accounts and digitization.

The UNITAD-NGO Dialogue Forum has been convening two types of events; the first is a series of thematic roundtable discussions in a panel-format, addressing specific thematic areas relating to UNITAD's investigative activities. The events bring together international and local experts with UNITAD team member for an in-depth discussion on one theme for each roundtable. The second type of events is the biannual plenary roundtable which aim to provide a broader update on the work of UNITAD, and to serve as an open platform for suggestions on how to better engage with NGOs. The plenary biannual meeting also introduces a space where survivors and community leaders can have their voices heard by both UNITAD and the NGO community.

This event is in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) #16: Peace, justice and strong institutions: promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.





Baghdad, 13 July 2023 – Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** was delighted to receive **Dr. Bahr Alolomib**, General Supervisor of Al Alamain Institute for Postgraduate Studies, and a delegation of senior staff and academics, to discuss steps for increased cooperation with the Iraqi academics, and mutual exchange of expertise. Also discussed was UNITAD’s cooperation with Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Dr. Bahr Alolomib expressed his gratitude to UNITAD for its efforts in promoting accountability for ISIL international crimes in Iraq and its support to Iraqi Government’s capacities in pursuit of justice for ISIL victims and survivors.



Baghdad, 14 July 2023 – Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** was pleased to welcome to UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad a delegation from the **Coalition for Just Reparations**. The meeting discussed ongoing efforts to enact a domestic legislation for the prosecution of ISIL international crimes in Iraq. SA Ritscher stressed that UNITAD works through a victim-centred approach in its investigations and its support to justice efforts that ensure victims’ rights and participation in the accountability processes, in Iraq and throughout the world.



Baghdad, 16 August 2023 – Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** met for the first time **H.E. Stephen Hitchen** FCDO, Ambassador of the United Kingdom in Iraq. SA Ritscher congratulated Ambassador Hitchen on assuming his position and briefed him on UNITAD’s work and cooperation with Iraqi counterparts to advance investigations and accountability for ISIL international crimes in Iraq.

SA Ritscher also thanked Ambassador Hitchen for UK’s continued support to UNITAD and its mandate.



Baghdad, 22 August 2023 - Today in Baghdad, Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** was pleased to meet with **H.E. Chief Justice Faiq Zidan**, President of the Supreme Judicial Council, to update him on the progress of UNITAD’s investigations, and ongoing mutual cooperation. They discussed ongoing efforts to launch a central archive of ISIL records at the Council, and joint work with Iraqi judges to build case files to support prosecutions of ISIL perpetrators. SA Ritscher thanked Chief Justice Zidan for his continued support to UNITAD’s mandate implementation in partnership with Iraq.



Baghdad, 23 August 2023 – Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** met with the **Council of Representatives Security and Defense Committee** where he briefed on UNITAD’s investigations and the ongoing close cooperation with Iraq.

They discussed the importance of enacting a legislation that allows for prosecuting ISIL international crimes in Iraq.



Baghdad, 24 August 2023 – Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** was pleased to welcome at UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad **H.E. Judge Yasser Khozaa’i**, Head of the Investigative Committee for Camp Speicher Crime at the Central Investigative Court. They discussed UNITAD’s support to the #Iraqi judiciary, including in forensic analysis of crime scenes and mass grave excavations, as well as ongoing mutual cooperation in investigations of Camp Speicher Massacre.

UNITAD commemorates International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to Victims of Terrorism

Baghdad, 21 August 2023 - Commemorating International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to Victims of Terrorism, today, we honor the memory of the victims of ISIL international crimes in Iraq.

In the face of such terror acts, human solidarity, and compassion shine stronger. We remember the innocent lives lost, as they remain in our hearts and minds along the path of justice.

On this day, UNITAD reiterates that only through continuous cooperation, we can work together in pursuit of justice and accountability, providing no safe haven for ISIL perpetrators, in Iraq and throughout the world.



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Humanitarian

UN-Habitat and Ministry of Migration and Displacement join forces to secure sustainable return of displaced people in Iraq

Baghdad, 05 July 2023 - After 5 years of fruitful collaboration between UN-Habitat Iraq and the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MOMD) of Iraq, a cooperation framework was signed under the patronage of HE Mrs. Evan Faeq Gabro.

The cooperation framework aims to strengthen the cooperation between UN-Habitat and MOMD through joint efforts to provide a framework for cooperation and facilitate partnership between UN-Habitat and MOMD to find and implement durable solutions to issues related to the return of displaced people, as well as to provide appropriate support and approaches for return and reintegration in Sinjar in line with the new vision and the working mechanism, as well as to provide technical advice on returns and adequate housing, through the rehabilitation and reconstruction of damaged houses, basic services and related infrastructure and upgrade of water, hygiene and sanitation facilities to ensure safe and dignified return.

Given the severe consequences of displacement and the subsequent occupation of a number of Iraqi cities by ISIS, many individuals lost their homes and assets. To ensure a secure and dignified return, the Ministry considers UN-Habitat as their primary external technical advisor in all matters related to the cooperation's implementation.

HE Mrs. Evan Faeq Gabro, Minister of Migration and Displacement, emphasized the necessity of signing the

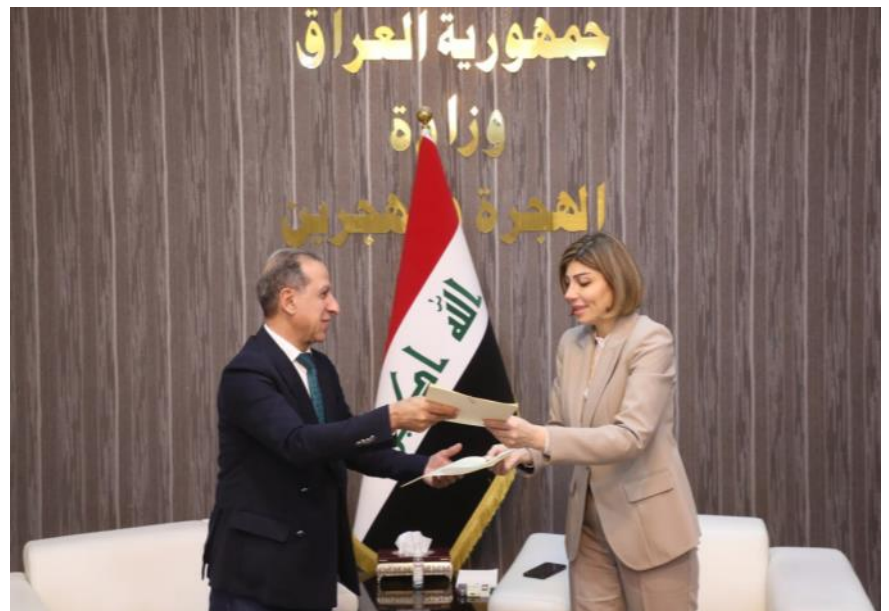
cooperation framework to ensure the sustainable return of displaced people and achieve durable solutions in the current context.

“What we are signing today is a result of a great collaboration with the Ministry of Displacement and Migration which is one of our main counterparts to promote the dignified and sustainable return of IDPs in Iraq. UN-Habitat will continue to support the MOMD in this matter to facilitate the sustainable return of IDPs”, emphasized Mr. Wael Al-Ashhab, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq, during the signing ceremony.

The framework of cooperation encompasses key objectives, such as

implementing the legal decree addressing ownership issues for Yazidi citizens in Sinjar's settlements area. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for the reconstruction and development of these areas, complementing the government's ongoing efforts. The focus remains on supporting safe and sustainable returns through adequate housing, through the rehabilitation, reconstruction of houses, and essential services, as well as upgrading water, hygiene, and sanitation facilities.

UN-Habitat and MOMD stand united in their determination to create lasting change, providing a solid foundation for the safe and dignified return of those affected by displacement.



WFP Iraq delivers dates to more than 3,000 Syrian families in four refugee camps

Baghdad, 13 July 2023 - During this month, WFP Iraq is delivering dates to more than 3,000 Syrian families distributed in four refugee camps. WFP thanks the King Salman Humanitarian Aid & Relief Centre for its valuable support.



With the World Food Programme in Iraq, UNHCR farmers gets trained to farm using 90% less water

Baghdad, 13 July 2023 - "Nothing is like harvesting what you grow", said Ahmed, Syrian refugee living in Domiz-2 camp, while presenting his newly-harvested Italian Lollo Rosso lettuce he grew at the hydroponic project. With the World Food Programme (WFP) in Iraq, UNHCR farmers gets trained to farm using 90% less water.



Home sweet home... the tale of two families in Western Nineveh



Ninewa, 19 July 2023 – After a decade of living in displacement, which included ten days enduring the harsh conditions of the Shingal mountains with no access to water, food, or a safe place to stay, Barakat Murad Khalaf and his family of fourteen now finally have a place to call their own.

We refer to this place as their newfound home, marking the end of their displacement situation. They now have a house to live in, land to cultivate and establish roots, access to potable water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, as well as schools and opportunities.

"Here on my land, hope has returned to me. I have planted trees and created a small garden, and I can witness their growth. I am incredibly satisfied with my new house and grateful to UN-Habitat and all those who participated in this charitable endeavor."

In his garden, Barakat cultivates fresh herbs, olives, eggplants, and various vegetables for daily use and consumption by his family. He takes great care of each plant, watering them every day using the water provided by the borehole rehabilitated by UN-Habitat.

Returning to their land had always been a part of Barakat's family plans, despite the unrecognizable situation they encountered upon their arrival and the extensive destruction that had taken place.

"I spent two years at Essian Internally Displaced People (IDP) camp, followed by three years at Mam Rashaan camp, and then I made the decision to return to my land. I couldn't even find my old house. Everything seemed hopeless and destroyed," he reminisced.

In 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and

the Levant (ISIL) invasion, caused widespread destruction and triggering a massive wave of displacement. Nearly ten years after the conflicts, the cities and their inhabitants continue to struggle to rebuild their lives and communities.

UN-Habitat Iraq works alongside the locals to develop the cities with them and for them in various ways.

In West Ninewa, the UN-Habitat team was fortunate to have Murad Yilmaz as a Civil Engineer who made significant contributions. Like many beneficiaries Yilmaz also experienced the displacement situation with his family during ISIL's occupation. He hails from Tel Afar and had to move to Sulaymaniyah for safety.

With UN-Habitat Iraq, he had the opportunity to contribute to the construction of core housing units in the Tel Afar district, specifically in the villages of Qazal Qew and Kasir Mehrab. He was also involved in the rehabilitation of a football park in Ayadhiya and the upgrade of a school in Qazal Qiow and Kaser Mehrab.

"From the very beginning, I was thrilled to be part of this project in Tel Afar, through the construction of their houses and providing shelter for them, I have witnessed a profound change in their lives, dispelling the feeling of hopelessness," shared Yilmaz. Although

Home sweet home... the tale of two families in Western Nineveh (continued)

he did not personally benefit from receiving a house, he takes pride in his contribution to his hometown and its people. He also enjoys the city's improvements, restored infrastructure, and new facilities that have resulted from his efforts.

In the 'Support for Urban Recovery and Peacebuilding in Western Ninewa'

project, under MADADFUND, UN-Habitat successfully provided 323 core-housing units, accommodating 2897 returnees. Additionally, the project upgraded four primary schools, drilled, and rehabilitated three water boreholes, rehabilitated a marketplace and football park, and provided vocational training for 1200 youth,

including women, with job placement. Moreover, occupancy certificates for 4000 plots were issued as well as the execution of legal awareness sessions on housing, land, and property (HLP) rights for returnees and local authorities.

The Ministry of Planning, in collaboration with the European Union and UN-Habitat, came together to tackle the crucial issue of Informal Settlements



Baghdad, 25 July 2023 - Today witnessed a remarkable milestone in Iraq's journey towards a brighter future! The Ministry of Planning, in collaboration with the European Union and UN-Habitat, came together to tackle the crucial issue of Informal

Settlements and celebrate the progress made since 2017.

Dr. Johan, Deputy of the Ministry of Planning, took the stage to highlight the relentless efforts to identify and map informal settlements and housing units across all governorates within

Iraq. This collaborative initiative is a testament to the dedication of everyone involved in building a more sustainable and inclusive future for the nation. Ms. Barbara Egger, the EU Head of Cooperation, and Mr. Wa'el Al Ashhab, UN-Habitat Iraq Head of Programme, emphasized the significance of formulating a comprehensive Informal Settlement Law. This achievement is a vital step towards ensuring prosperity and sustainability for generations to come in Iraq.

This conference brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to foster a multi-level discussion to pave the way for an all-encompassing informal settlement approach. Together, we are determined to create a better future for Iraq and its citizens."

The EU and WFP provide cash assistance to internally displaced and crisis affected Iraqis missing civil documentation

Baghdad, 24 July 2023 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in Iraq welcomed a generous €5 million contribution from the European Union (EU) to provide cash assistance to internally displaced and crisis-affected Iraqis missing one or more essential civil documents until they are integrated within the national social safety net.

Thanks to the contribution from the EU, made through the EU's Humanitarian Aid Operations department, WFP will be able to provide cash assistance for a total duration of 12 months to vulnerable families in Ninewa, Kirkuk, Anbar, Baghdad, Babylon, and Diyala Governorates.

Having valid civil documents is crucial for accessing national social safety nets and social protection

mechanisms. These documents ensure that people in dire need receive the necessary assistance to address their immediate food requirements and livelihood challenges.

"Over the past 8 years the EU has supported conflict-affected and displaced Iraqis who are among the most vulnerable," says Christophe Reltien, Head of Office for European Humanitarian Aid Operations in Iraq. "The cash assistance will help beneficiaries to obtain documents facilitating their reintegration in the national social protection scheme.

This cash assistance aligns with the Iraq Cash Forum's standards and approach as well as with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs' distributions aiming to provide temporary support for households involved in programs assisting their

access to civil documentation.

"We are grateful for the generous contribution from the EU," said Ally-Raza Qureshi, WFP Representative and Country Director in Iraq. "Cash provides the power of choice and allows families exposed to vulnerabilities – including lack of key documents – to pick what they need most to get by."

Additionally, WFP will advocate for the prioritization and inclusion of crisis-affected populations in national protection mechanisms and support the coordination of cash assistance within the humanitarian response to these targeted populations. This intervention is expected to promote social cohesion, reintegration, and address the livelihoods needs of vulnerable communities.

UNHCR and partners have significantly scaled up collaboration with the Government of Iraq to facilitate access to core civil documents for internally displaced Iraqis

Baghdad, 10 August 2023 - Civil documentation such as birth certificates, Civil IDs, Iraqi nationality certificates, housing cards and the National Unified ID play a crucial role for internally displaced Iraqis as these documents serve as legal proof of identity, facilitating access to vital services like education, healthcare, employment, and social benefits. Over the last several years, UNHCR and partners have significantly scaled up collaboration with the Government of Iraq to facilitate access to core civil documents for internally displaced Iraqis.

"I was not able to attend school like my peers, but now with the

nationality certificate, I will be able to join them in the classroom" says Amar Abed, a 14 year old displaced Iraqi.

Obtaining a national certificate is

lifelong for Amar and many like him because it provides a path to accessing one of the most basic rights such as going to school and receiving an education.



Stabilization and Development

Towards a stronger innovation ecosystem: co-creation and informal partnerships are leading the way in Iraq

Baghdad, 27 June 2023 - Iraqi youth celebrate university graduation with a lot of joy, music, and parties; it is one of the biggest achievements for Iraqis, yet this joy is short-lived, due to the frustration of matching with job opportunities post-graduation. The World Bank estimates the youth unemployment rate in Iraq to be 36%, more than double the national employment rate of 16%. Many factors are leading to this challenge including demographic, political and economic factors. One factor includes lack of innovative and creative knowledge and skills depriving youth from private sector job opportunities available in the market.

Innovation and the youth unemployment challenge

UNDP Iraq's Accelerator Lab (AccLab) has acknowledged the role of innovation in enhancing employability opportunities of youth through enriching their knowledge and skills, creating expertise in new areas, supporting the birth of new startups, and generally diversifying the economy of Iraq. The UNDP Iraq AccLab started with Exploring Innovation in Iraq in 2020 and began Discovering Beyond the Known in 2021 and connecting the dots between innovation and youth unemployment challenges in Iraq.

Specifically, these endeavors aimed at assessing the innovation ecosystem in Iraq and finding the critical points of intervention where innovation can support tackling youth unemployment in Iraq.

One of the valuable insights generated is the weakness of the innovation ecosystem in Iraq, which is limited in supporting the private sector and related employment opportunities. More specifically, the insight revealed that there is a lack of utilization of innovation in diversifying the economy of Iraq, supporting the movement to entrepreneurship, as well as a limited number of partnerships (both formal and informal) to enhance the innovation ecosystem.

How can we strengthen the innovation ecosystem in Iraq?

Our starting point should be strengthening the innovation ecosystem in Iraq with the aim of enhancing employment opportunities for youth. After scanning the innovation ecosystem, one of the major insights generated is related to methodology; some of the current approaches to enhancing innovation is mainly focused on structuring specific interventions and projects that target one of the causes of the weak innovation ecosystem. Moreover, the

specific interventions are usually implemented by solo entities or with partners via complicated lengthy formal partnerships.

Considering this, the UNDP-AccLab in Iraq started formulating interventions. i.e., projects, to tackle these challenges with the intent of enhancing the ecosystem to empower youth and support in decreasing the high unemployment rate in Iraq. The UNDP-AccLab portfolio focused on:

Institutional interventions to support in enabling public institutions to adapt to innovation and digitalization through Blended Learning Teaching Methods Curriculum

Economic interventions aimed at expanding the economy and supporting the movement to entrepreneurship, enhancing innovative thinking among aspiring youth CS50x-Iraq Fair 2020-2021 and Innovation Mission

Digitalization interventions to enhance the digital landscape in Iraq to support youth and entrepreneurship in Iraq through the INpoint platform and Startup Bus Platform

Capacity building interventions to tackle the "Market-Skills Gap" through the Youth Leadership Programme and Karbala Volunteer Network.

Moreover, the UNDP embarked on the journey of Deep Demonstrations to support the movement from projects to

Towards a stronger innovation ecosystem ... (continued)

portfolios; specifically move away from single point solutions and embracing portfolio logics to tackle complex systemic challenges. Within this approach, the UNDP-AccLab-in Iraq recognized the need to enhance the innovation ecosystem, mainly through various interventions within a unified portfolio. Also, UNDP started emphasizing more on building partnerships and emphasizing on the importance of uniting efforts and expertise available in the ecosystem to collaboratively act and truly add value and strengthen the innovation ecosystem in Iraq. The AccLab in Iraq initiated various interventions with the ecosystem supporters to achieve these goals.

The power of partnerships

The UNDP-Accelerator Lab is an agile entity; we see opportunities and we grab them fast. The UNDP-Accelerator Lab in Iraq identified the opportunity to establish informal partnerships with ecosystem enablers by co-creating a “Business Development Manual.” This local solution aims to support the upskilling of Iraqi youth inside public universities and support innovative thinking and business knowledge development.

The opportunity of co-creating this local solution is with one of the Accelerator Lab network believers and drivers, GIZ, and a key stakeholder in the education sector, MoHESR, and with various influential partners from the innovation ecosystem in Iraq. The collaboration includes authors from institutions with focus and expertise in laying the ground for a coherent innovation ecosystem in Iraq and driving youth towards self-employment including UNDP AccLab in Iraq, The Station for Entrepreneurship, Prosperity Catalyst, INSM, IQ Peace, GroFin, Zain Iraq, and Careem.

The Business Development Manual is intended to strengthen the innovation ecosystem not only as a solo intervention, but through the collaborative effort of co-designing a local solution and for the ensuing informal partnerships to accelerate development and create opportunities for Iraqi youth.

Effectiveness of informal partnerships

Partnerships, more precisely interconnections between various stakeholders, are an integral part of



enhancing the innovation ecosystem worldwide. Formal and informal partnerships among ecosystem stakeholders in Iraq provide access to under the radar knowledge and generate contextualized insights, enhance the collective sensing and exploring of challenges and opportunities, sharing of resources - human and financial- and enable reaching a wider audience. In Iraq, partnerships usually take a formal form through partnership agreements with the aim of formalizing the intent of the partnership. Typically, this process is lengthy and requires a considerable amount of paperwork, especially if partnerships are between various partners, and not bilateral in nature. For the co-creation of this solution, GIZ and the MoHESR opted to establish informal partnerships with various influential partners from the innovation ecosystem in Iraq with the aim of smoothing the process of co-designing “The Business Development Manual.” The Business Development Manual is used to teach within Career Development Centers of 35 public universities across Iraq. The process of informal partnership was directed towards the intent of collaborative designing, writing, testing and finalization of a localized business development manual for Iraqi youth.

The informal partnership enabled a quick and timely intervention to fill the “Market-Skill Gap.” Moreover, it led to establishing a sense of responsibility to collaborate and strengthen the innovation ecosystem and resulted in ownership of the local solution leaving behind organizational restriction and any potential conflict of interest.

Co-creating solutions

Endless dedication, research, writing, and editing combined with the use of Zoom, Slack, and Google Shared Drive supported the creation of the Business Development Manual over the course of one year during the COVID-19 pandemic. Twelve writers from eight different partners with expertise ranging from business knowledge to project management, finance, marketing, SMEs support, and innovation gathered to produce the 10-chapter manual. The manual was revised in two steps; first, an internal round by the authors that included peer-revision and cross-team revision. Second, external auditing took place with one international editor and five local editors to provide a second review to ensure overall coherence and lucidity of the manual. Due to the crucial role of visualization, a specialized creative agency designed the final copy of the manual, with a focus to appeal to Iraqi youth. Next, the manual was tested through two testing workshops with trainers and several testing endeavors with students to validate the written material, the flow of content, and the relevance of the manual to Iraq’s business landscape. The co-design and co-creation process revealed valuable insights. First it allowed partners to play-off of each other’s subject matter specialties and allowed for sharing of expertise, since the authors have knowledge, insights, and real-life experience on their specific subject-matter. Moreover, the collaboration led to building a local solution that speaks to the needs of Iraqi youth and will support in providing them with tangible tools to enhance their creativity and innovation outlook.

Towards a stronger innovation ecosystem... (continued)



Business Development Manual Content

The Business Development Manual is a self-explanatory guide for entrepreneurs' journeys "from idea to startup." The manual includes a step-by-step guide on how to start a business in Iraq, including an introduction to human-centered design, collection of information with a business development canvas, lean startup methodology, cost and revenue, financial planning and record keeping, project management and team building, marketing and sales, legal considerations, and financing available in Iraq. The Manual is now adopted by the MoHESR and is being used inside the Career Development Centers (CDCs) and as the main learning content for GIZ's project Intilaq.

Insights:

The design process and content of the Business Development Manual holds valuable insights related to:

The innovation ecosystem: The inclusive approach to enhancing the innovation ecosystem, through co-creation and informal partnership, proved to be a powerful tool to shape local solutions that strengthen the overall ecosystem as well as contribute to creating tangible and sustainable change.

Innovation: This experience has provided insights on how to embed innovation in Iraqi public institutions, working in close partnership with the Government of Iraq. Specifically, it provides a valuable insight into the adaptability of Iraqi public institutions and their readiness to embed new

methodologies and tools within their curriculums to support Iraqi students.

Employability: Iraqi public institutions, specifically universities and Career Development Centers, have recognized that the job market requires more than formal education and that business and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills are essential to enable youth to be market fit.

Capacity building: Iraqi higher education professionals are willing to learn new and innovative methodologies and utilize all the available tools to enhance their knowledge in entrepreneurship, innovation, and the overall ecosystem. This commitment was demonstrated, in terms of effort and time, by Career Development Centers trainers' willingness to fully grasp the manual's main aspects and participate in testing.

This opportunity opened new doors to utilize informal partnerships across the active stakeholders in the ecosystem, and specifically for the UNDP-AccLab it enabled us to sense and explore the needs of Iraqi society using a bottom-up approach and support in developing local solutions and scaling them to strengthen the innovation ecosystem. Next, the UNDP-AccLab will build a multi-level intervention portfolio to tackle youth employment challenges innovatively!

By Safa Fadhil Al-Qoch, Head of Exploration, UNDP

Japanese diplomats visit Samawah City in Al Muthanna Governorate

Baghdad, 03 July 2023 - When we refer to the Japan - The Government of Japan (GoJ) as our partner and supporter, the GoJ goes beyond being only one of our major donors. The GoJ actively engages, follows up, and shares our commitment to Iraq's urban and human development.

A recent example of this commitment was the visit of Charge d'Affaires ad interim, Mr. Masamoto Kenichi, to Samawah City in Al Muthanna Governorate. During the visit, Mr. Kenichi explored the facilities that the GoJ helped rebuild and construct since 2003. Notable among these are Al-Worood Kindergarten, Al-Mostakbal Intermediate School, and Al-Tahereer



Secondary Institute, all rehabilitated by UN-Habitat. These grants were part of Japan's reconstruction grant assistance package pledged in 2003. The Japanese delegation received a warm welcome from local authorities,

including the Governor of Muthanna, Mr. Ahmed Manhi Juda Al-Ziyadi, community members, and UN-Habitat's local representative. They witnessed firsthand how these facilities have been well-utilized by the

Japanese diplomats visit Samawah City in Al Muthanna Governorate *(continued)*

municipality and the population over the past two decades.

The longstanding partnership between UN-Habitat Iraq and the Government of Japan has made significant contributions to local recovery and development, particularly in projects addressing internally displaced people, returnees, urban infrastructure, service facilities, and food security.

The assistance from the People of Japan has remained consistent, as demonstrated by our most recent project, "Recovery Support to Returnees in Iraq to Strengthen Socio-Economic Stabilization, including Improved Food Security." We are proud to announce that we are on the verge of delivering 50 rehabilitated houses and the Al-Til school to the Solagh Area community in

Sinjar District.

It is an honor to establish this remarkable partnership with both parties fully committed. Together, we bear witness to Iraq's transition from a humanitarian emergency situation to a phase of recovery and development, and we are confident that we are contributing to Iraq's recovery and resilience.

Sulaymaniyah Governor recognizes the partnership and collaborative work

Sulaymaniyah, 03 July 2023 - Today, Sulaymaniyah Governor recognized the partnership and collaborative work carried out in the governorate by WFP Iraq, UNHCR Iraq, WHO Iraq, IOM Iraq, and three local NGOs.



The eleventh round of data collection was conducted using computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) in all 18 governorates of Iraq

Baghdad, 18 July 2023 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) established Data in Emergencies (DIEM) in June 2020 to provide a regularly updated and highly accessible picture of food insecurity in fragile environments, and to inform FAO's evidence-based programming. In Iraq, eleven rounds of data collection have been carried out. The eleventh round of data collection was conducted using computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) in all 18 governorates of Iraq from 8 to 21 June 2023. Learn more: bit.ly/3NJa7ao



Over 209,000 people have access to clean water in Al Buaiji

Salah al-Din, 14 July 2023 - Over 209,000 people have access to clean water in Al Buaiji after UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization and the Government of Australia rehabilitated the water complex. So far, UNDP has rebuilt 45 water treatment projects in Salah-al-Din, providing safe water to 1,104,000 residents.



A delegation from UN-Habitat Iraq recently visited Japan to strengthen collaboration with the Government of Japan



Baghdad, 27 July 2023 - A delegation from UN-Habitat Iraq recently visited Japan to strengthen collaboration with the Government of Japan.

Our partnership dates to 2004 and has been highly productive, contributing to Iraq's transition from a humanitarian to a development context.

During the visit, Mr. Wael Al-Ashhab, UN-Habitat Head of Country Programme in Iraq, Mr. Ryosuke TERAOKA, Head of Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and Mr. Twana Kamal, Programme Associate, held significant meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA),

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Sumitomo Corporation, the shareholder of TOYOTA Iraq.

The discussions focused on humanitarian assistance to Iraq, future directions, and potential partnerships.

His Excellency, Mr. Kansuke NAGAOKA, Director-General of the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau (Second Middle East Division), commended UN-Habitat's long-standing support, especially in Samawa where the Japanese military force intervened. The Government of Japan aided UN-Habitat in rebuilding schools that remain fully

functional today.

Despite past achievements, much work lies ahead, particularly in accommodating Internally Displaced People (IDP) and Returnees. Housing remains a critical provision to end displacement, and our partnership is well-experienced in this area.

During the visit, the Bab-Sinjar Housing complex, funded by Japan and constructed by UN-Habitat, received praise for successfully addressing housing needs. It has been seen as one of the best practices from durable solutions perspective. A request from Mosul municipality has been filed, and we are committed to making it a reality.

Looking to the future with a partner with whom we have achieved so much in the past is truly fulfilling. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Japan and its people for their unwavering support and commitment to Iraq and its people. Together, we will continue to seek and deliver sustainable solutions to overcome pressing challenges.

Hopefully we shall proceed on this path for a long time ahead!

UNIDO and Government of Japan collaborate on sustainable development of the food industry by building Iraqi Government staff capacity

Erbil, 30 July 2023 - The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry and Minerals, conducted the second training workshop on food safety and quality. This workshop was a significant component of the project "Emergency Livelihood Support to Mitigate the Food Insecurity Crisis among Vulnerable People in Iraq", funded by the Japanese government. Held from 15 to 20 July 2023 in Erbil, the workshop counted with participation from government representatives from the Ministries of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Industry and Minerals in Iraq.

The active involvement of multiple ministries in this training workshop underscores the focus to promote and advance the SME sector and recognizes the importance of economic growth and development.

The training program's primary objective was to build capacity in government staff responsible for



ensuring the quality and safety of locally produced food items. Participants were nominated from related departments from their ministries that play a pivotal role in ensuring the safety and compliance of medium and small enterprises, as well as producing families.

The workshop emphasis on compliance and empowerment through engagement with small and medium enterprises, aims to fortifying the

sector by promoting compliance with quality and safety standards. By building the capacity of skilled trainers and fostering a culture of excellence, the workshop creates conditions for the growth and sustainability of local producers, making a significant contribution to the national economy.

Mrs. Ramina Athanael Youssef, representing the Ministry of Industry and Minerals / Department of Industrial Development and

UNIDO and Government of Japan collaborate on sustainable development of the food industry ... (continued)

Organization / Department of Small Projects, highlighted the importance of this workshop and its contribution to the department's mission to enhance professional and administrative capacities through their own training programs. These programs aim to qualify employees across various categories while empowering and supporting working women. The transfer of experiences and skills also contributes to preserve the cultural heritage of traditional knowledge.

Mr. Raad Hadi Mahdi, the legal advisor in health control over food safety and security at the Ministry of Health, emphasized the ministry's proactive role in supporting small enterprise owners. Recognizing the importance of fostering a conducive environment for local businesses, the ministry actively looks into assisting entrepreneurs in navigating and

streamlining approval procedures for marketing their products. This support assists SMEs to navigate regulatory processes, encouraging their growth and success.

Dr. Ziad Al-Lami, a specialist in food safety at the Ministry of Health, stressed the importance of regular courses for workers in these projects. These courses aim to develop and enhance the capabilities of the workers, particularly concerning health aspects and personal hygiene. Ensuring that the workers are aware of contamination sources that could jeopardize the product's quality.

Mr. Taif Ahmed Abdullah, representative from the Ministry of Agriculture, highlighted the profound commitment demonstrated by the participants. Having undergone the training, are not merely content with personal growth but are determined to promote it within their respective

organizations and the broader SME sector.

The UNIDO project will also provide comprehensive technical support to SME producers. This support is designed to empower them to improve productivity, operational efficiency, and compliance with food safety and quality. By exposing them to new technologies, and expertise, the project aims to equip SMEs with the necessary resources to grow, ultimately contributing to the success of the entire SME sector.

UNIDO and the Government of Japan remains committed to empowering the food processing industry in Iraq through its partnership with the Ministry of Industry and Minerals, working together to drive positive change and economic prosperity.



Poland reaffirms commitment to Iraq's stabilization with additional US\$270,000 contribution

Baghdad, 31 July 2023 – Iraq's post-ISIL stabilization efforts will continue to make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable, as the Government of Poland reaffirmed its commitment with an additional inject of funding in the amount of 1.1 million Polish zloty (approximately US\$ 270,000) towards UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS).

This is Poland's second contribution to the Facility, bringing its total contribution to 2.1 million Polish zloty (over US\$500,000). With this additional funding, UNDP will support the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure in communities affected by the conflict, further bolstering Iraq's efforts towards long-term development.

"UNDP's work in Iraq is upheld by the principles of resilience, inclusivity, and sustainable development. We work alongside our partners, to ensure no one is left behind, as Iraq moves towards a brighter future. But our work is not yet over, the road to stabilization is only the beginning. This collective effort and investment must continue, as we rebuild communities, revive the local economy through livelihoods' support and empower Iraqis, especially women and young people, to become catalysts of positive change," says UNDP Iraq Resident Representative Auke Lootsma.

"To see lives transformed through this

project has been extraordinary. It is our hope that this contribution is seen as a reflection of our support and partnership in the rebuilding of Iraq's future," says Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland to the Republic of Iraq, His Excellency, Mr. Marcin Kubiak.

"Together with UNDP and the Government of Iraq, we will continue to advocate and support this life-changing project for the benefit of the country and the people of Iraq," Ambassador Kubiak added.

Poland and the international community's support to Iraq's stabilization

At the request of the Government of Iraq, UNDP, in partnership with the international community, established the Funding Facility for Stabilization in 2015 to facilitate the return of Iraqis displaced by the conflict. The project continues to lay the groundwork for rehabilitation, provide capacity support and ensures safeguards are in place to prevent the resurgence of violence and extremism. Since its inception, the Facility has completed more than 3,600 projects across the five liberated governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah Al-Din.

The lives of over 8.3 million Iraqis were

improved, and the return of 4.9 million people displaced by the ISIL conflict were facilitated, through the implementation of these essential projects, through the Facility, which includes the rehabilitation of schools, hospitals, water systems, electricity networks, roads, and homes, and the creation of short-term employment.

Poland's contribution has funded 61 projects, the majority of which are in the health sector. These life-saving projects have served over 250,000 people in need of some form of humanitarian health support or assistance.

"Since 2015, we have witnessed the life-changing impact of our joint efforts, as we restored homes, schools, and delivered other essential services, creating opportunities to help vulnerable communities rebuild their lives. The generous contribution from the Government of Poland reinforces this joint commitment to support the people of Iraq, in their journey toward peace and stability," says UNDP Iraq Resident Representative Auke Lootsma.



Fawatim's story of engineering and women empowerment in Iraq



Basra, 19 June 2023 - As you drive south in Iraq towards the coastal areas of Basra, you might not think that the region suffers from a serious water availability crisis. That same crisis renders the network of water plants that surround the districts of Khor Al-Zubair, Safwan, and Um Al-Qasr a symbol for mitigation and resilience.

These vital facilities provide clean water to nearly 250,000 residents of Iraq's second largest city. At the heart of their operation is Fawatim, a determined 34-year-old female engineer from Al-Qibla.

Against the backdrop of a predominantly male profession in this part of Iraq, Fawatim has been a pioneer in more ways than one. For a decade, she has been at the center, diligently supervising daily operations and maintenance of these water plants. But this journey hasn't been an easy one; for many years, Fawatim was the sole female figure in a landscape of hard hats-wearing male coworkers.

It is, perhaps, Fawatim's determination and resilience that unknowingly helped shape a new way for female engineers in Basra. The path she carved out was eventually followed by more women, an evolution facilitated by the recent policies of the new Iraqi government. As part of an overarching goal to improve gender equality, these policies ensure a higher representation of women in various public sectors.

Fawatim's determination goes beyond the societal barriers. Her commitment to her faith and traditions has seen her performing the hard tasks of her profession while

wearing an "abaya", a traditional outfit worn by many Muslim women in the region. Far from being an obstacle, she sees it as part of who she is, an expression of her identity that she carries proudly even amidst the challenges of her job.

distance from Basra's city center where she resides, making her daily commute an added hurdle to her already demanding role. However, Fawatim faces these challenges head-on, with a resolution shaped by her belief in the strength and capabilities of women.

When asked about her experience, Fawatim states, "It wasn't easy being the only woman on the project, but I had no choice but to persevere until things got better." Her conviction is rooted in a firm belief that women are as capable as their male counterparts in taking on any position, no matter how physically demanding or challenging it may be.

She adds, "Only women can pave the way for other women." Through her own example, Fawatim is living proof of this statement. Her journey isn't just about breaking barriers in her profession; it's about inspiring other women to break their own.

Khor Al-Zubair water plant was



Her journey is not without its logistical challenges. The project in Khor Al-Zubair is a significant

rehabilitated, and inaugurated recently by UNDP with the support of the Kingdom of Netherlands.



Meet Zaina Kheirou!



Baghdad, 01 August 2023 - Zaina, 19-year-old from Solagh, has triumphed over challenges and transformed her life with the support of UN-Habitat Iraq's "Recovery Support to Returnees" project, funded by the Government of

Japan.

After facing hardship and displacement due to the devastating effects of ISIS, Zaina's dreams of education were shattered. But with unwavering determination, she seized the

opportunity to participate in vocational training provided by UN-Habitat and Peace Winds Japan, gaining essential skills in whitewash painting.

Her newfound expertise opened doors, and she joined the Cash for Work program, contributing to the rehabilitation of houses in her village under UN-Habitat's initiative.

Zaina's story is a testament to the power of hope, hard work, and collective support.

Today, Zaina stands as a symbol of resilience and determination, proving that with support and opportunities, individuals like her can rise above adversity and shape a prosperous future.

UNDP Iraq and USAID seek to revitalize tourism in the Kurdistan Region



Erbil, 30 July 2023 - In a milestone event aimed at reviving tourism in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) partnered with the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Tourism to unveil the "Reform Roadmap", a groundbreaking plan to revitalize tourism in the region. "The path to economic resilience lies in diversification, and boosting tourism support to the most frequented region in Iraq is a great opportunity for the whole country to do just that." Says Auke Lootsma, UNDP Iraq's Resident Representative.

Economic resilience through diversification

KRI is the most popular travel destination within Iraq, as it is nestled in a part of the country that features lush greenery and picturesque mountains. In this area of the country, the tourism and hospitality sectors have emerged as one of the key drivers of economic growth and job creation in the region.

"The Kurdistan region with its rich cultural heritage and stunning backdrops is the perfect place for diversification to unfold. UNDP, along with our partners, USAID and the KRI government, will continue to encourage and support this important initiative that will lead to sustainable tourism, economic growth and job creation," said Auke Lootsma, UNDP Iraq Resident Representative.

The Reform Roadmap, developed with financial support from USAID, solidifies the two agencies' unwavering commitment to improve tourism in the KRI, an area with immense untapped potential for tourism-led economic growth.

"Tourism has a special place in any society. It simultaneously helps communities preserve their cultural heritage and share this wealth and beauty with the outside world. The Iraqi Kurdistan Region receives millions of tourists every year. Through this USAID-funded roadmap, the U.S. government is supporting the Kurdistan Regional Government in its efforts to take a serious step toward developing this vital sector," said Elise

Jensen, USAID Mission Director in Iraq. "With the launch of this comprehensive roadmap for tourism sector development, the path laid that celebrates the region's heritage and embraces sustainable practices. We are proud of our partnership with the UNDP and the Ministry of Tourism on this important initiative."

A roadmap to success

The "Reform Roadmap" identifies areas that are most important for a sustainable and successful tourism development in KRI. It focuses on recommendations with the biggest impact on the tourism industry, including tourism legislation, laws, and regulations; marketing; and developing tourism sites and products.

The Roadmap provides guidance on how to stimulate private sector investment through different financing modalities such as public-private partnerships for the development of tourism sites and products. It underscores the necessity of tourism law, regulations, institutional structure and tourism business quality assessment criteria for the Kurdistan Region, taking into account the local legal context and authorities.

The Roadmap also includes a comparative study of the tourism sector legal framework to examine the institutional structure and quality assessment criteria from countries with well-established tourism industries, in this region and the European region, taking these best practices and applying it to this context.

"The Kurdistan Region enjoys a rich culture, heritage and beautiful nature,

UNDP Iraq and USAID seek to revitalize tourism in the Kurdistan Region *(continued)*

and has the potential to become a prime tourist destination in the Middle east. A vibrant tourism economy generates livelihood opportunities, particularly for the youth and women

in the region. This Roadmap plays a vital role in that.” said Ms. Amal Jalal – Head of KRG Board of Tourism. The launch of this pivotal roadmap marks a significant stride towards a

more sustainable, professionalized, and profitable tourism industry in the Kurdistan Region and for the country as a whole.

Iraq’s National Human Development Report: strengthening the social contract in Iraq

Baghdad, 06 August 2023 – Over 120 of the Iraq’s primary stakeholders and thought leaders came together during the country’s 1st consultation session on the development of the National Human Development Report (NHDR). During the event, ways to strengthen the social contract between the country’s leadership and its citizens were addressed in engaging, facilitated discussions. UNDP welcomed participants and encouraged critical dialogue on shaping Iraq’s sustainable development path towards a brighter future.

“The launch of the first consultative session to prepare the independent Human Development Report reflects the Government’s commitment towards sustainability for Iraq. We see this as a vital tool to help us track key indicators like education, health, and income, to see where we are at, and where we need to be, in terms of the conditions of development for the country. The Ministry of Planning will work to coordinate and unify these efforts, and our partnership with the UNDP is crucial, as we work together to prepare this important report.” - said Maher Hammad Johan, Technical Undersecretary of the Ministry of Planning.

A powerful tool for human development advocacy

The NHDR is a powerful tool for promoting human development concepts that enhance the lives of



countries’ respective populations. For Iraq, the report carries a clear focus on national priorities and will represent the collaborative effort of national teams. UNDP will provide support to this important process, ensuring the coordination and facilitation of this flagship report.

“In this collaborative journey, we envision the NHDR as a catalyst for strengthening partnerships between government, civil society organizations, and the private sector. By leveraging our strengths and resources, we can address critical development challenges and promote sustainable human development, creating the brighter future that Iraq truly deserves”, said Auke Lootsma, UNDP Iraq Resident Representative

“The Human Development Reports aligns with national priorities, and is an essential tool that supports the

broadening of opportunities and choice, as well as fostering innovation in the country. This report will help chart Iraq’s path towards sustainable, economic development and diversification, offering comprehensive analysis and recommendations on key areas that need to be strengthened for this vision to be realized. This session marks the initial step towards knowledge exchange and collaborative efforts for Iraq’s advancement,” he concludes.

UNDP and the Ministry of Planning have come together to construct a new social contract in Iraq. With unwavering determination and a heightened sense of awareness, this valued partnership has the power to unlock Iraq’s full potential, ushering in a future that is both prosperous and equitable for the Government of Iraq and most of all for the people of Iraq.

49 team members from IOM Iraq are now certified trainers in ILO’s Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training package

Baghdad, 6 August 2023 - 49 team members from IOM Iraq are now certified trainers in ILO’s Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training package, designed to support small-scale entrepreneurs to start or grow their businesses.

During the certification process, the selected team from IOM delivered the programme to more than 1,000 IOM-

supported existing and potential entrepreneurs, providing them with quality support services that will allow them to start or enhance the performance of their businesses and create employment opportunities for women and men in different sectors, including green jobs.



Urban recovery and development: holding hands for a brighter future

Baghdad, 08 August 2023 - Naif Nimer received his in-situ core-housing unit at Tel Uzair Complex, Qahtanya Sub-District, thanks to UN-Habitat's efforts in Ba'aj District.

With EU funding through the EU Madad Fund, the project 'Support for Urban Recovery and Peacebuilding in Western Ninewa' facilitated 973 people to return to their homes as 97 core housing units were constructed in Tel Uzair Complex.

Additionally, Al Qahtania Al-Oula Mixed Primary School rehabilitation benefited 250 students, while three water boreholes were provided to supply water to 3000 people.

To empower communities, UN-Habitat provided vocational training to over 400 participants, nurturing livelihood activities.

Always part of our commitment to

meeting people's critical needs and strengthening their collective well-being, UN-Habitat conducted a COVID-19 awareness campaign reaching 10,000 people.

Additionally, our efforts supported 2,189 individuals through HLP (Housing, Land, and Property) rights

activities.

Our dedication extends beyond housing, to caring for the people, fostering a sustainable community ecosystem, and providing the best conditions to promote a lasting and definitive return for IDPs and returnees.



A delegation from the Korea International Cooperation Agency visits UN-Habitat project sites



Sinjar, 09 August 2023 - Today, a delegation from the Korea International Cooperation Agency was warmly welcomed by the Yazidi community in Sinjar.

During the visit, KOICA representatives, accompanied by the UN-Habitat Iraq team and local authorities, visited sites where the project "Promoting Peace and Stability in Iraq by Facilitating Sustainable Returns" is being implemented.

The KOICA Iraq Country Director, Mr. Lee Sunghoon, and his team had the opportunity to witness the support that UN-Habitat provides to ensure the sustainable return of displaced populations to Sinjar.

While visiting Jafriyah Village and Old Tel Qasab Village, the first two phases of rehabilitation, the KOICA representatives visited 3 rehabilitated houses that have been delivered and 3 homes currently undergoing rehabilitation since May 2023 and gained a clear understanding of the impact of UN-Habitat's intervention and support.

In a statement, KOICA's Country Director, Mr. Lee Sunghoon said, "We are happy to be in the field today with the UN-Habitat team, and to see the outcomes and deliverables of the KOICA-funded project. The positive impact that the project has had on improving the living conditions of IDPs and returnees is evident. We, at the KOICA Iraq Office, reinforce our commitment to the people of Sinjar to facilitate conditions ensuring safe and sustainable returns."

The project adopts a holistic approach to assist those made vulnerable through displacement, aiming to support the Yazidi community to return and rebuild their lives. At the core, the project encompasses three major components: securing Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and returnees; providing adequate housing through rehabilitation of houses in Sinjar; and ensuring access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities and basic services.

During the visit, the delegation also

had the opportunity to visit the Handwashing Trailer installed at Al-Yarmouk Public Park and attended a brief Occupancy Certificate Distribution Ceremony in Old Tel Uzair Village. To date, 1483 Land Occupancy Certificates have been delivered under the KOICA-funded project.

Due to a history of discriminatory policies and practices, the Yazidi minority were previously not allowed to register their land rights in Iraq. Since 2017, UN-Habitat has been mapping Yazidi land rights in Sinjar and has so far registered more than 16,716 claims, issuing as many Land Occupancy Certificates, benefiting more than 100,400 beneficiaries.

With KOICA's generous support, UN-Habitat Iraq continues to work with the Yazidi community in Sinjar, supporting IDPs and returnees in protecting their HLP rights, accessing adequate housing and basic services.

Mr. Muslim Qazimi, UN-Habitat Iraq Deputy Head of Country Programme, shared, "We are glad that KOICA, led by Mr. Lee Sunghoon, had the chance to visit each component of the great project they generously support and met the people benefiting from it. UN-Habitat is one of the few UN agencies that works in Sinjar, and we understand the importance of investing in recovery, development, and stability. It is always gratifying when we have the chance to show our donors our joint achievements".

The collaboration between the Government of Japan (Embassy of Japan in Iraq) and UN-Habitat Iraq has yielded numerous benefits for the people of Sinjar

Baghdad, 14 August 2023 - The collaboration between the Government of Japan (Embassy of Japan in Iraq) and UN-Habitat Iraq has yielded numerous benefits for the people of Sinjar.

The most recent achieved milestones include the initiation of a portable water network and a marketplace in Sinjar. This forward momentum aims to provide dependable water access to over 15,000 residents, supporting socio-economic recovery, stabilization, and advancing food safety for improved quality and increased production.

These recent efforts fall under the "Recovery Support to Returnees in Iraq to Strengthen Socio-Economic

Stabilisation, including Improved Food Security" project, funded by the Government of Japan. Ongoing initiatives comprise the restoration of 50 damaged houses, establishment of a co-educational school in Sinjar, and vocational training programs alongside a public outreach campaign.

Working in partnership with local authorities, is notable how the district is taking strides towards local development and socio-economic enhancement.

Within UN-Habitat Iraq, our unwavering commitment is directed towards creating positive impact within communities and the lives of those affected by conflicts and displacement.



This engagement is realized through a comprehensive, multi-layered approach that fosters secure living environments, promotes quality education, and empowers individuals with essential skills and knowledges.

Rehabilitation of WASH facilities in Sinjar and Sinuni | Handwashing trailers in public spaces

Sinjar, 15 August 2023 - During times of conflict, many water and sewage networks were damaged or destroyed, restricting return for residents of conflict-affected villages. Beyond the destruction of water infrastructure, much equipment such as taps, pumps, and generators were looted. To this day, lack of access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities and basic services remains a barrier for Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and returnees.

With the support of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), six new handwashing trailers have been installed in public places around Sinjar and Sinuni including a hospital, school, and public park. The newly installed handwashing units will supply continuous access to clean water, improving the overall living conditions for the local communities.

The opening of these handwashing

trailers throughout Sinjar and Sinuni is a key steppingstone to rebuilding the lives of returnees. It is expected that there will be over 3,000 direct beneficiaries who can freely access these handwashing units.

UN-Habitat prioritises working in the most underserved areas of Sinjar and Sinuni, staying true to the principle of leaving no one behind. Following this implementation, UN-Habitat, through the generous support of KOICA, plans to continue contributing to the sustainable returns of IDPs and returnees by rehabilitating the damaged and non-functional WASH facilities, aiming to reach over 24,800 beneficiaries.

Through our collective efforts, we envision a future where every individual in Iraq has access to WASH facilities with improved public health; building communities that thrive in an environment that reinforces

sustainability and prosperity.

To ensure widespread access to adequate and equitable WASH facilities is a fundamental objective SDG 6. As part of our "Promoting Peace and Stability in Iraq through Facilitating Sustainable Returns" project, we are dedicated to bridging the gap between local needs and global objectives.



The National Multidimensional Poverty Index Analytical Report launched in Baghdad

Baghdad, 16 August 2023 - Today, UNICEF and the Government of Iraq launched the 1st analytical report of the National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in Iraq and the Child-Adjusted Multidimensional Poverty Index (CMPI).

Participating at the ceremony Ms. Sandra Lattouf, UNICEF Representative in Iraq, said the following:

"The launch of the 1st analytical report of the National Multidimensional Poverty Index in Iraq marks a crucial step towards eradicating poverty and advancing the well-being of children and young people towards achieving the 2030 global goals.

The MPI Report launch is a testament to the dedication and strong collaboration of the Ministry of Planning and other stakeholders,

including the Central Statistical Organization.

This report presents us with positive trends, including a significant reduction in multidimensional poverty in Iraq. I am pleased to see that the baseline presented today shows that between 2011 and 2018, 3.8 million Iraqis have lifted themselves out of poverty.

Yet, despite this major achievement,

The National Multidimensional Poverty Index Analytical Report launched in Baghdad *(continued)*



some challenges remain.

First: Nearly half of children in Iraq – 46.9 per cent of them are multidimensionally poor. And 26.6 per cent of the Iraqi population are multidimensionally poor. Poverty is higher in rural areas than in urban

areas, for instance: Muthana, Wasit, and Misan are among the governorates with the highest proportion of people living in multidimensional poverty.

Second: Education is the major contributor to multidimensional poverty, accounting for over half of the overall multidimensional poverty index. An alarming 3.5 million of children experience deprivation in education-related indicators (i.e. school attendance and years of schooling), drastically affecting their overall well-being. Also, there is a clear link between mothers' education levels and child poverty. The figures reveal that 68.9 per cent of children whose mothers had pre-primary education are multidimensionally poor.

Third: According to this baseline, a

significant percentage of children lack access to essential resources. The highest levels of reported deprivation are access to the internet standing at 35.5 per cent (about 6.6 million children), followed by overcrowding standing at 30.9 per cent (about 5.7 million children). In addition, a concerning 25.2 per cent of children are both multidimensionally poor and deprived in child protection, while 5.7 per cent are poor and deprived in child labour.

Fourth: Distinct regional patterns emerge in different deprivation indicators. Poor nutrition and child marriage rates are more prevalent in Muthana than in Anbar. While poor access to drinking water is more severe in Anbar than in Muthana."

Rehabilitated stormwater networks in Fallujah to improve sanitation for 200,000 people

Baghdad, 17 August 2023 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and German Government's KfW Development Bank officially handed over the rehabilitated Jubail stormwater lift station in Fallujah to the Anbar governorate.

The lift station is part of the six German-funded UNDP projects in Fallujah to improve sewage and rainwater management and sanitation in Al-Khadraa neighborhood which has over 200,000 residents. It also includes the rehabilitation of three drainage zones of the Jubail sewage networks, completed in April this year, as well as the rehabilitation of the 11-kilovolt underground feeder completed in June.

Restoring critical infrastructure

During the battle to recapture Fallujah from ISIL, critical infrastructure, such as water and sewage treatment systems were severely damaged, increasing public health risks in already vulnerable communities. In Al-Khadraa, communities resorted to using individual septic tanks, resulting in untreated sewage often seeping onto streets and storm drains that discharged into the Euphrates River, posing an environmental risk, potentially affecting the health of thousands of people.

"The rehabilitation of the Jubail stormwater networks and lift station in Fallujah is an essential component of UNDP's comprehensive efforts to restore water and sewage infrastructure in the region to ensure water quality and health safety for the Iraqi people," says UNDP Iraq Resident Representative Auke Lootsma.



As of July 2023, UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization has completed 297 water projects and 117 sewage systems, serving over 5 million Iraqis across the liberated governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah Al-Din.

"Through the generous support of our steadfast partners, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and KfW Development Bank, we are restoring Iraq's waterways, reducing water pollution, protecting people from flooding, and safeguarding vital water resources," adds Mr. Lootsma.

"Water is life - and sound water infrastructure is essential for improving livelihoods and perspectives of Iraq's future generations. The successful implementation of this project echoes our shared commitment to support Iraq in the stabilization of areas affected by the conflict," says Dr. Maximilian Rasch, Chargé d'Affaires at the German Embassy in Baghdad.

"We are very pleased to see the positive

impact this partnership brings to Fallujah and its communities - together we find solutions to complex environmental and climate issues, as well as decreasing threats to public health that can come from contaminated water sources" says Dr. Anna-Christine Janke, Country Director of the KfW Office Iraq.

"We thank UNDP and Germany for its continued support for the people of Iraq. The completion of the Jubail networks and lift station will help reduce health risks associated with waterborne diseases and water contamination, mitigate environmental concerns, and ensure a cleaner and healthier environment for the people in the area," says Deputy Governor of Anbar, Jassim Muhammad Al-Assel.

"The Jubail plant, which specializes in rainwater drainage, serves the neighborhoods of the south of the city of Fallujah. Its design capacity is 25,000 cubic meters per hour and distributed over 12 large pumping crews. This capacity makes it the largest rainwater drainage station in Anbar," says Fallujah Sewerage Manager, Ayoub Farhan.

A second phase of the rehabilitation of the Jubail stormwater lift station is being carried out by UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization and is expected to be completed in September. It is also funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) provided through the KfW Development Bank. Additionally, they have funded over 280 stabilization projects, which include housing, livelihoods, schools, health facilities, water and electrical networks, and municipal buildings, benefitting 2.5 million people.

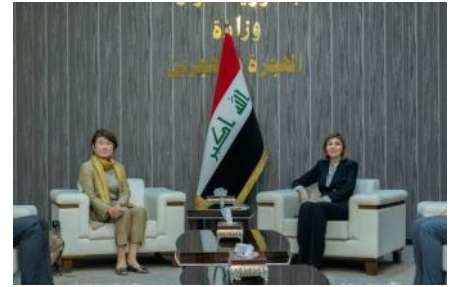
Assistant Secretary-General, and Director of UNDP's Crisis Bureau visits Iraq



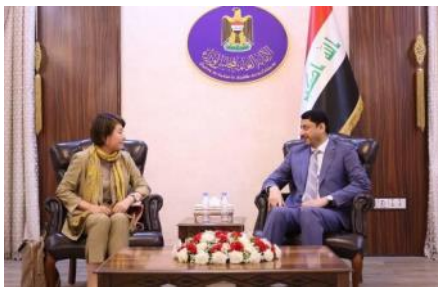
Baghdad, 11 July 2023 - Together, we can build a stronger foundation for peace and unity. Productive meeting between **Ms. Asako Okai**, Assistant Secretary-General, and Director of UNDP's Crisis Bureau, **Ali Dawood** Mayor of Habbaniyah, and **Kenichi Masamoto**, Deputy Chief of Mission (Embassy of Japan), on supporting community reconciliation and reintegration.



Ramadi, 11 July 2023 - Powerful stories unfolded as **Ms. Asako Okai**, Assistant Secretary-General, and Director of UNDP's Crisis Bureau, engaged in a group discussion with **Iraqis** at the **Vocational Training Centre in Ramadi** to understand the impact of socio-economic reintegration support on returnees from Al-Hol Camp.



Baghdad, 12 July 2023 - During her visit, **Ms. Asako Okai**, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of UNDP's Crisis Bureau, had a knowledge sharing with **Ms. Evan Faiq Gabro**, Minister of Migration and Displacement. The meeting appraised the current situation in Iraq after liberation from ISIL and Government priorities on sustaining peace and reintegration of displaced persons.



Baghdad, 12 July 2023 - From conflict to stability, global interventions pave the way for lasting peace. Productive meeting between **Ms. Asako Okai**, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of UNDP's Crisis Bureau, and Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, **Mr. Hameed Al-Ghezi**, addressing post-war stabilization and IDP returns.



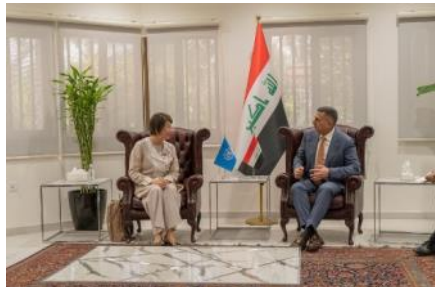
Baghdad, 12 July 2023 - Knowledge sharing for effective solutions. **Ms. Asako Okai**, Assistant Secretary-General, and Director of UNDP's Crisis Bureau, met with **Dr. Maher Johan**, Deputy Minister of Planning to learn about Iraq's position on Durable Solutions and understand the Ministry of Planning's Compact initiative.



Anbar, 12 July 2023 - An impactful meeting took place in Anbar. **Ms. Asako Okai**, Assistant Secretary-General, and Director of UNDP's Crisis Bureau, met with **Jasim Mohammed Abdullah**, the Deputy Governor of Anbar to discuss positive changes and drive sustainable development in the region. To understand the unique challenges and explore effective ways to provide full support, **Ms. Asako Okai** also met with reintegrated families, who are receiving support through UNDP's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support activities.



Basra, 13 July 2023 - **Ms. Asako Okai**, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of UNDP's Crisis Bureau, visited **Nadhraan Model Police Station** in Basra to hear from the station commander and the community about the transformation of policing and security in Basra. Nadhraan is one out of six Model Police Stations across Iraq, where the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supports strategic adaptation of police work to the needs of the community and services such as family and community policing units.



Basra, 13 July 2023 - Paving the way for a bright future in Basra through collaboration and shared goals. **Ms. Asako Okai**, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of UNDP's Crisis Bureau, met with **Mr. Assad Al-Eidani**, Governor of Basra, to address development challenges in Basra, and foster a mutual partnership.



Basra, 14 July 2023 - Tackling water challenges in Iraq for sustainable development. **Ms. Asako Okai**, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of UNDP's Crisis Bureau, and **Mr. Gen Yoneda**, JICA Chief Representative, visited the **Basra Water Supply Improvement Project** constructed by the Government of Iraq under the ODA Loan Programme in Iraq, to provide safe water supply. In a tripartite partnership between UNDP, GoI and JICA, around two million Iraqis in the north and center of Basra city receive clean water through the Basra Water Supply Improvement Project.

Real-time access to weather data and forecasts

Baghdad, 05 July 2023 - The installation of Automatic weather stations provided by the World Food Programme in Iraq ensures real-time access to weather data and forecasts, enabling farmers to make informed decisions based on weather conditions, reducing risks and losses, and increasing the quality of food and their incomes.



FAO renews its call for urgent action to safeguard Iraq's Marshes and buffalo producers from severe climate change and water scarcity

Baghdad, 10 July 2023 - FAO Iraq is deeply concerned about the grave consequences of climate change and water scarcity on the marshes (Al Ahwar) and buffalo producers in the Southern Iraq. Alarming field reports from the project team, which the organization is implementing in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and European Union (EU) funding, indicate that the marshes are experiencing the most severe heat wave in the last 40 years, accompanied with a sudden water shortage in the Euphrates River. The dire situation is having a devastating impact on the marshes system; buffalo producers, farmers, and fisheries forcing many of them leave their homes and migrate mainly to Salah Eddine, Najaf, Karbala and Babel in the central part of Iraq and other cities, searching for drinking water, food, feed and employment.

In the aftermath of FAO's urgent call in 14 July 2022 to support buffalo producers and protect the valuable ecosystem of Al-Chibayish –AlAhwar, FAO with EU support and in coordination with the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) mobilized emergency support for more than 5000 livestock farmers in different forms. Unfortunately, the current situation in July 2023 reflects a grim picture.

On the 7th of July 2023, FAO-MOA project team presented an alarming reports, Rissan Mohsen Zghir, member of the team, reported worrying information highlighting the dire situation in Al-Chibayish, the water level of the Euphrates is only 56 centimetres, and in the marshes from zero to 30 centimetres, with a staggering 90% dryness rate. High salinity levels exceeding 6000 ppm, have raised concerns among farmers, particularly buffalo breeders and

fisheries. Additionally, and according to the Center for Restoration of the Iraqi Marshes and Wetlands at the Ministry of Water Resources (CRIMW), almost 70% of the marshes are devoid of water. "The marshes buffaloes are currently suffering from malnutrition, and some dying from the salty water in the low-lying marshes, the urgency of the situation requires swift and decisive action", said Dr Chedly Kayouli - FAO Iraq Senior Livestock Expert.

According to FAO-EU-MOA field team information, and to address the water scarcity in the marshes and improve water access for buffalo, a government initiative has been proposed to deepen the canals and rivers that feed the marshes. However, due to the current water shortage, no water releases have been made to raise the Euphrates' water level. The available water supply is currently allocated solely for drinking purposes, exacerbating the challenges faced by buffalo breeders and the marshes ecosystem.

Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, confirmed: "The severe water shortage, heat waves and drought in the marshes have put buffalo producers and the entire ecosystem at a very high risk, calling for an urgent short, medium and long-term actions to prevent further destruction and ensure a sustainable

future for this Iraqi World Heritage site."

FAO Representative added, "FAO Iraq with national and international partners is making continuous efforts to address the negative impacts of climate change, water scarcity and the challenges facing the Marshlands."

Dr Abdulhakim El Wear, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa stressed that: "We are following with great concern the negative impact of climate change and water scarcity in the region, especially in the marshes in southern Iraq. FAO, in collaboration with national and international partners will strengthen its existing projects in the southern regions to support buffalo breeders and mitigate the negative impacts of water scarcity, water pollution, and climate change that threaten their lives and livelihoods, protecting the livelihoods of the region's farmers, breeders and to preserve the ecosystem is a collective responsibility." FAO Iraq re-calls on all stakeholders to unite in a spirit of cooperation and determination. Together, let us work diligently to protect the marshes, combat climate change, and ensure the well-being of present and future generations who depend on these invaluable resources.



The second Steering Committee meeting of FAO Iraq's Sustainable Land Management (SLM) project held in Baghdad



Baghdad, 10 July 2023 - The second Steering Committee meeting of the

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Iraq's Sustainable Land Management (SLM) project, funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF), was recently held in Baghdad. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Jasim Alfalahi, Deputy Minister of Environment, and Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Iraq Representative and attended by members from different ministries and project team.

The meeting aimed to discuss and evaluate the implementation strategies

of the project. The preliminary results of the project were discussed, as well as the challenges faced during implementation, especially water scarcity in the south and how to address it, and increasing irrigation efficiency to ensure the achievement of the project objectives. The Steering Committee reviewed the activities to be carried out in the next phase and agreed on a work plan to ensure the achievement of the project objectives.

The FAO Iraq team is closely following the effects of climate change

Baghdad, 17 July 2023 - The FAO Iraq team is closely following the effects of climate change and reduced water supplies on Chibayish Marshes. On 15 July, the team checked the low water level. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations will continue following the evolving situation and will continue work with partners towards sustainable solutions.



Nasiriya, 17 July 2023 - FAO Iraq - European Union in Iraq Project Partners in the South are meeting with the High-Level Field Mission of Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, in Nasiriya, Dhi Qar Governorate.

FAO Iraq develops emergency plan to support buffalo producers hit by the current severe crisis of water scarcity in the marshes-southern Iraq

Basra, 25 July 2023 - Following FAO Iraq's call to action published on July 10, 2023, the organization took swift action by mobilizing its dedicated Extension officers. An emergency workshop was conducted in Basra on the 19 and 20 July 2023. The workshop aimed to address the impact of the environmental disaster that befell the marsh areas, to put an urgent action plan for strengthening buffalo producers' capacities and escape from the quagmire of death that threatens their buffaloes.

The workshop was attended by large number of MOA Extension Officers

from all the districts of the governorates affected by water scarcity crisis in Marshes in Basra, Thi-Qar and Missan Governorates in addition to FAO team. The workshop is commissioned by FAO Representative in Iraq, Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan following an emergency visit to these areas with the FAO team to assess the critical situation in light of the high temperatures and the scarcity of water in the marshes.

During this workshop, Dr. Chedly Kayouli, Senior Livestock Expert, FAO Iraq has highlighted the very critical situation and urged the field Network

teams in the Southern Marshes, taking the initiatives and exert maximum efforts to contribute, even modestly, to saving the Southern marshes from the most serious crisis of its kind in this century, which may destroy life in all its environmental aspects.

The workshop resulted in the concrete implementation of immediate and medium-term actions with rapid results, by pooling the commendable efforts of all the projects currently implemented by FAO in these areas.

The key outcomes are:

1. Discussing and preparing for the urgent interventions to be

FAO Iraq develops emergency plan to support buffalo producers ... (continued)

undertaken and the necessary logistical support required for the distribution of equipment and supplies as well as capacity

2. Updating the criteria for the selection of lists of 3,000 beneficiaries in the most affected areas of the marshes to be considered for emergency assistance.

3. Rapid support to 3,000 buffalo producers with the new feed inputs locally produced and already proven to be successful in the Iraqi Marshes.

4. Providing support to 500 HHs (Buffalo producers), mostly affected by water scarcity and high salinity living inside the marshes, with 300 water tanks of different capacities to transport and store water.

5. Expanding on the

implementation of the Climate-Smart crop production and Environmentally sustainable practices.

6. Supplying dairy equipment and training to 3,000 producers, including 2,000 Women-Headed Households, to improve milk handling, cooling, and processing of traditional dairy products. This intervention, supported by the EU-funded project (004/EC) for improving dairy processing.

Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, also highlighted the urgent need for sustainable solutions to support marsh dwellers, particularly buffalo farmers. These include providing locally produced feed for improving the value chain for buffalo production. These efforts aim to

alleviate suffering, improve incomes and build community resilience.

FAO Iraq's emergency plan aligns with multiple SDGs, reflecting the organization's commitment to addressing urgent environmental challenges, supporting vulnerable communities, and promoting sustainable development in the region.



FAO organizes training workshop on water productivity in Iraq

Baghdad, 30 July 2023 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has taken a giant leap towards sustainable water management and agricultural efficiency with its recent two-day training on WaPOR Data Validation. This event, held on the 26th and 27th of July 2023, marks a significant milestone in Iraq's journey towards optimizing water resources through the innovative use of remote sensing technology.

WaPOR, short for Water Productivity Open-access portal, has emerged as a beacon of hope for agricultural communities across Africa and the Near East, and now its transformative potential is taking root in Iraq. By harnessing the power of remote sensing technologies, WaPOR empowers nations to monitor and enhance their agricultural water productivity, ensuring a greener and more food-secure future.

The Netherlands funded project, "Monitoring Land and Water Productivity by Remote Sensing WaPOR Phase II in Iraq," is playing a pivotal role in fostering water management in Iraq. The recent training event, delivered by the esteemed partners from IHE Delft with support from the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), represents a remarkable convergence of expertise and innovation. Representatives from key ministries, including Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Environment,

the KRG's Ministry of Agriculture & Water Resources, and other WaPOR stakeholders like the universities of Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research, actively participated in the training.

The training aimed to enhance the technical expertise of project stakeholders, validate WaPOR portal remote sensing data and compare it with local data through practical exercises, and establish a clear training plan for 2024 at the country level. Additionally, participants actively discussed the critical need for coordination among beneficiaries and stakeholders to ensure the seamless implementation of project activities. This valuable exercise allowed participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of the power and accuracy of WaPOR's remote sensing capabilities in conjunction with locally collected data.

Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, the FAO Representative in Iraq, inaugurated the training and emphasized the significance of the WaPOR project in

the country. He stated, "water scarcity poses challenges in various areas in Iraq. The WaPOR project is a valuable tool that aids in addressing water use efficiency by monitoring irrigation systems' performance and groundwater abstractions. It assesses the functioning, adequacy, efficiency, and effectiveness of water resource allocation to agricultural lands, thereby supporting food security and nutrition in Iraq."

In recognition of their efforts and successful completion of the WaPOR data validation exercises, participants received certificates from the IHE Delft Institute.

FAO Iraq commends the commitment and active participation of all stakeholders and partners in Iraq in their pursuit of sustainable water resource management and food security. The organization remains dedicated to supporting Iraq in achieving its goals and enhancing agricultural productivity through innovative initiatives like the WaPOR project.



FAO strengthens national capacities in data management and analysis for animal disease surveillance and reporting

Baghdad, 9 August 2023 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (MoAWR-KRI) delivered a hands-on training on “Data Management and Analysis” in Baghdad. This five-day training commenced on 6 August 2023 under “Improving Delivery of Animal Health Services and Disease Surveillance in Iraq” project funded by the United States Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA).

The training, attended by the specialists from the veterinary services in Baghdad, Erbil, Duhok, Nineveh, Anbar, Wasit, Muthanna and Basra governorates, builds on the Event Mobile Application (EMA-i) workshop on “Disease notification and early warning reporting” and aims at developing skills in electronic data management, including verification and in-depth epidemiological analysis for a quality and rapid response to animal diseases outbreaks.

As surveillance data management and processing play an integral, increasing, and evolving role in supporting early warning of, and response to zoonotic disease events, it is important to improve data management and processing at the local level and integrate with the system at the national level. The



training focused on enhancing veterinary services’ capacities in data collection, the application of different methods for data management and processing, techniques to troubleshoot (quality assurance / quality check) data coming in from the field, as well as processing, verification, exploration, and interpretation of data for decision-making.

The opening session was attended by the FAO Representative in Iraq and officials from relevant ministries. Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, underlined the importance of this joint collaboration with the MoA and MoAWR-KRI on data management and analysis for the early warning, which offers a better understanding and interpretation of animal health situation in the country for targeted disease control. He added: “This

training aims at enhancing the skills of participants in data handling, verification, analysis, and interpretation and could contribute to reduce threats posed by emerging, transboundary and endemic pathogenic agents.”

The project “Improving Delivery of Animal Health Services and Disease Surveillance in Iraq” is a four-year initiative funded by DTRA that seeks to reduce the risk of international movement of animal diseases which introduction and spread could threaten livestock production, food security and nutrition, and the environment of Iraq. The above is expected to be achieved through strengthening the capacity of veterinary services to detect, diagnose and report highly pathogenic animal diseases and improve communication between central and local levels.

Iraqi Government allocates five billion Iraqi Dinars to support FAO and MoA initiative for buffalo producers in South Iraq

Baghdad, 9 August 2023 - Iraqi Government and The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) joined forces to bring a glimmer of hope to buffalo breeders in the southern provinces of Iraq, and effectively address the critical challenges posed by climate change and water scarcity. This unprecedented collaboration demonstrates a historic shared commitment to safeguarding Iraq’s vital agricultural heritage and strengthening local communities.

In an exemplary partnership and swift action, the resounding successes of FAO’s interventions in Nineveh and the Southern Marshes have not gone unnoticed. Funded by The European Union and implemented hand in hand by FAO Iraq with the Ministry of Agriculture, these interventions have

significantly improved dairy / livestock feeding practices and provided vital support to farmers. The development of innovative techniques introduced at large scale in Iraq by FAO led by international expert, Dr Chedly Kayouli, including the innovative use of sugar molasses and fodder, has led to remarkable improvements in milk and meat productivity and quality while mitigating the impacts of drought observed all over the country, bringing commitment of the Iraqi Government for scaling up such successful experience to other Governorates, in particular the outstanding advocacy of the member of the Advisory Commission, Agriculture & Water Resources Office of the presidency of the council of ministers Dr Ibrahim Sattar Jasim Al – Saadi.

FAO’s resounding call to action on July 2023, drew urgent attention to the imminent threat of climate change on livestock and the livelihoods of breeders. This call resonated widely, prompting a concerted response from the highest authority. Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, highlighted the serious impact of water scarcity and climate change on ecosystems and the sustainable livelihoods of breeders and farmers. FAOR indicated that emergency workshop was immediately convened to chart a robust Emergency Plan tailored to provide vital support to buffalo producers facing an acute water scarcity crisis in the Southern Iraqi Marshes. This initiative underscores the unwavering commitment of the Iraqi Government and FAO to the

Iraqi Government allocates five billion Iraqi Dinars to support FAO and MoA initiative ... (continued)



community well-being and the preservation of this Iraqi World Natural Heritage site.

Acknowledging the urgency of the crisis, the Iraqi Minister of Agriculture spearheaded an urgent appeal to the Council of Ministers. Subsequently, during the 32nd session of the Council of Ministers on 8 August 2023, Prime Minister Mohamed Shi'a Al-Sudani took groundbreaking measures. Firstly, a substantial allocation of 5 billion

dinars allocated from the budget for feed support to purchase essential buffalo feed and vital supplies to be generously provided to buffalo breeders in southern Iraq. Secondly, a dedicated joint team from the Ministry of Agriculture's livestock and extension departments together with FAO Iraq experts, will oversee the initiative's implementation.

Dr. Abdulhakim El Wear, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa, expressed his deep gratitude to the esteemed Government of Iraq for its swift and cooperative commitment in supporting breeders to overcome the current water scarcity crisis. He noted that this gesture demonstrates unprecedented governmental trust and support for FAO initiatives, forging new dimensions in

international cooperation. El Waer also added that FAO teams in Iraq, the regional office in Cairo, and headquarters in Rome are dedicated to supporting agriculture in Iraq.

FAO Iraq and the Iraqi Government demonstrate an unwavering commitment to preserving a heritage of immense value, building community resilience, and fostering a sustainable future. As Iraq addresses the convergence of environmental challenges and steadfast dedication, this joint effort represents a decisive step towards improving the livelihoods of buffalo breeders in the southern regions of the country.

This initiative serves FAO Iraq's efforts towards SDGs 2 (Zero Hunger) and 13 (Climate Action), contributing to hunger eradication and climate resilience while uplifting buffalo breeders in Iraq's southern regions.

Labour Issues

The Netherlands and ILO officials visit interventions supporting decent work for displaced populations and host communities in Iraq

The interventions are part of the PROSPECTS programme, spearheaded by the Government of the Netherlands, which seeks to improve access to employment, education and protection.

Dohuk, 09 June 2023 - (ILO News) Representatives from the Embassy of the Netherlands, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) met with workers and youth who are being supported under the PROSPECTS programme in Iraq, a strategic partnership, spearheaded by the Government of the Netherlands, which seeks to improve education, employment and protection in the context of forced displacement.

The PROSPECTS programme brings together the ILO, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank in eight countries across East and North Africa and the Arab States, including Iraq.

The visit included a tour of farms in Dohuk, where the ILO is implementing employment intensive investment programme (EIIP) interventions to improve water irrigation channels, leading to enhanced productivity on targeted farms. Together with a similar programme being implemented to



improve solid waste management, the employment-intensive interventions will generate over 12,000 working days and 300 decent jobs for vulnerable workers, by the end of 2021. The initiative promotes decent work principles and empowers women and men to develop their skills and find longer-term employment opportunities. "It is important to invest in decent job creation and find sustainable solutions to livelihood needs amongst displaced and vulnerable host communities in Iraq. Within the PROSPECTS programme we aim to not only work on livelihoods as stand-alone intervention, but offer comprehensive support that also looks at access to quality education and protection interventions. We were

grateful to visit the project sites today and see the impact of that approach on the ground at first hand," said Mirte Bosch, Senior Stabilization Officer at the Netherlands Embassy in Baghdad. Officials also met with job seekers at a Career Development and Employment Guidance Unit which was established in Domiz 1 camp in Dohuk by the ILO in collaboration with the Swedish Development Aid Organization (SWEDO) and UNHCR to extend career guidance and job matching services to Syrian refugee camp residents. The centre is linked to employment services run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to ensure additional referral pathways outside

The Netherlands and ILO officials visit interventions supporting decent work for displaced populations ... (continued)

the camp are made available for job-seekers.

“The ILO under PROSPECTS in Iraq is implementing an integrated approach to support forcibly displaced persons and host community members to access more and better livelihoods and decent job opportunities. Working with our partners inside the camp in Dohuk is a way for the ILO to extend career guidance and employment services to refugees, hence ensuring more workers and job-seekers have access to decent work,” said Shaza Jondi, ILO’s Chief Technical Adviser for PROSPECTS in the Arab States region.

The visit also included a meeting

with young people at a UNICEF-supported youth centre, where the ILO and UNICEF are collaborating under PROSPECTS to help young people transition from learning and skills development to decent work through a range of self-employment and wage employment interventions.

“UNICEF’s successful collaboration with the ILO under the PROSPECTS partnership serves to support vulnerable young people, who have gone through skills-development services, with additional employability opportunities, hence contributing to transition girls and boys from learning to the world of work,” said Mads Sorensen, Chief, Adolescent Development and

Participation for UNICEF in Iraq.

This includes training youth on entrepreneurship and financial education and providing them with access to financial services so they can set up their own businesses. The ILO recently launched a financial inclusion initiative with the Central Bank of Iraq (CBI), providing young women and men and small businesses with access to much-needed financial services that will help them start and develop their own businesses, while addressing barriers in the business environment hindering access to decent self-employment.

ILO, EU and partners hold final steering committee meeting to discuss joint efforts to promote decent work in Iraq



Baghdad, 18 July 2023 - (ILO News)

The ILO, the European Union and tripartite partners, including senior representatives from the government, employer and worker organizations held a final steering committee meeting to discuss key milestones in their joint efforts to enhance labour governance, inspection and working conditions in Iraq – under an EU-funded project implemented by ILO and key national partners.

Working closely with tripartite partners, the project’s focus has been on strengthening the labour inspection system and improving Occupational Safety and Health, in line with International Labour Standards, through policy development and capacity building.

Emphasis has been placed on compliance with decent work in the agricultural sector. In addition, several activities have been held to promote skills development and entrepreneurship among women and men in agriculture, paving the way for more and better job opportunities to achieve inclusive growth and improve job opportunities.

Since its launch, the programme has achieved several milestones that contribute to the socio-economic

development of Iraq. Some of these include:

Launch of policies and profile on labour inspection and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) that contribute to modernizing the labour inspection system and improving working conditions for workers and their employers, in line with International Labour Standards.

Building the capacities of labour and OSH inspectors from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and other stakeholders through numerous trainings.

Introducing ILO’s Strategic Compliance Planning (SCP) methodology to help the labour inspectorate achieve tangible improvements in labour law compliance and ensure that all inspection activities are risk- and evidence-based.

Supporting the development of the National Center for Occupational Safety and Health (NCOSH) through the provision of portable tools and equipment to monitor environmental hazards in the workplace during inspection visits.

Supporting the establishment of a new National Training Centre for inspectors at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The centre will build the capacity of labour and social security inspectors and other professionals from across governorates on the principles and functions of labour inspection, occupational health and safety and social security.

Introducing several ILO tool kits and

programmes that promote business development and entrepreneurship, such as “GETAhead”, which is a global training package that seeks to develop entrepreneurial skills from a gender perspective – supporting women of low income; as well as Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB), one of ILO’s flagship business management training programmes.

Building awareness on collective bargaining and labour agreements among tripartite partners.

Introducing ILO’s Think.Coop and Start.Coop global learning tools, designed to promote cooperative development in various sectors.

Introducing career guidance and employment service tools to job-seekers and youth.

Raising the awareness of hundreds of workers, farm owners, cooperative members, union members and community leaders on Decent Work Principles, including Occupational Safety and Health, gender equality, business skills, and International Labour Standards.

Supporting the development of several assessments to review regulatory frameworks and identify opportunities for market-based programmes in agriculture and the food value chain; and developing tools, policies, and guides for Labour and Occupational Safety and Health systems targeting inspectors, practitioners and experts in full consultation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, social partners and technical experts from the ILO.

800 youth equipped with life and employability skills under Jousour Programme

Baghdad, 03 August 2023 – UNICEF and WFP Iraq, with funding from BMZ Bund, collaborated to provide joint training for universities and organizations to equip 800 youth with life and employability skills under Jousour Programme. This will promote social inclusion among youth through community engagement.



Advancing livelihoods through financial inclusion in Iraq

Baghdad, 13 August 2023 - The study “Advancing livelihoods through financial inclusion in Iraq” was developed by the ILO under the framework of PROSPECTS, which is funded by the Government of the Netherlands. The ILO is collaborating with different partners to enhance the functioning of the private sector while addressing the barriers to decent self-employment.

This report seeks to provide an overview of the target market and enabling environment for the financial services industry with a view to guiding the structure and implementation of the ILO PROSPECTS pilot initiative. Section 2 presents an overview of the macro-level country context of Iraq.

Section 3 presents the legislation, policies, regulations and key characteristics of the financial sector. Section 4 provides an analysis of the target market, including an initial segmentation of the IDP, returnee, refugee and host sub-segments, their socio-demographic profiles, livelihoods and economic opportunities, as well as their demand for financial services.

Section 5 sums up the findings in a presentation of the market size and the scope of the demand for expanded financial services in ILO PROSPECTS focus areas. It also provides a set of recommendations on the implementation of strategic efforts to facilitate the financial inclusion of forcibly displaced people and host

communities in Iraq.

The study can be downloaded from https://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_890115/lang--en/index.htm



Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs trainers begin intensive training on ILO’s flagship business management programme- Start and Improve Your Business

Baghdad, 15 August 2023 - (ILO News) A ten-day Training of Trainers programme for trainers of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs began in Baghdad on Monday (August 14), focusing on ILO’s Start and Improve Your Business programme – designed for those who want to start or improve their small businesses.

A total of twenty-two trainers from across governorates will be supported to obtain their certification as trainers of the flagship business management training programme. They will initially train 400 women and men who are looking to start or expand their own small and medium enterprises - including entrepreneurs from Forcibly Displaced Populations.

Start and Improve Your Business programme is a system of inter-related training packages and supporting materials for small-scale entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses, which reaches thousands of

entrepreneurs across the world each year. It is structured into four separate training packages, which are designed to respond to the progressive stages of business development - Generate Your Business Idea, Start Your Business, Improve Your Business, and Expand Your Business.

The training programme falls within the priorities of the Decent Work Country Programme , implemented by

the ILO, the Government of Iraq and social partners to support private sector development and entrepreneurship in Iraq. It is being implemented by the ILO under the PROSPECTS Partnership , which is funded by the Government of the Netherlands, as part of a financial inclusion initiative launched in 2021 to support entrepreneurial pathways for refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and host



Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs trainers begin intensive training on ILO's flagship ... (continued)

community members.

Addressing the trainees during the opening day of the training, ILO Country Coordinator for Iraq, Maha Kattaa highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship development, enabling owners of small and medium enterprises, especially youth, to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to develop, manage and grow their businesses.

“Training and certifying a cadre of trainers from the Ministry will help institutionalize the programme within the Ministry. We hope that the success of this initiative will be a stepping stone to expand the horizons of entrepreneurship in Iraq, leading to the wider use of this model to support the development of the private sector and create sustainable and decent job opportunities for young women and men,” Kattaa

added.

The training is in line with the government 'Riyada' initiative for development and employment, launched by Prime Minister in March of this year, which focuses on providing training and financial support for young men and women to start and develop their businesses.

“We thank all our trainers from the governorates for participating in the Start and Improve Your Business Training of Trainers. These trainings and programmes are essential in developing the capacities of our cadres (of trainers),” said Abbas Fadel, Director General of the Department of Labour and Vocational Training at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

“Trainings are the essence of everything. In order to develop the labour market, we must continue to

develop the skills of our trainers. Moving forward, you will be tasked with conducting these trainings, and the impact of this work will be felt in the labour market and among our youth,” Fadel continued.

Following the completion of the initial Training of Trainers (TOT) programme, trainers will begin delivering the training package to young entrepreneurs, under the supervision of ILO's Master Trainer.

Under PROSPECTS' financial inclusion initiative, the ILO has also been collaborating with the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Federal Iraq in advancing financial education among youth in Iraq. This is being done through the creation of a pool of trainers across Iraq in Financial Education who in return are training young women and men on financial literacy.

How to enhance inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the labour market?

Baghdad, 22 August 2023 - ILO Country Coordinator in Iraq, Ms. Maha Kattaa, and Head of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ms. Thikra Abdul Rahim, met and discussed various aspects related to the enhanced inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the labour market - such as through revising laws and regulations, implementing training and capacity building programmes, promoting access to education and social protection and promoting employment that is free from discrimination.



The head of the Iraqi Industry Union receives the delegation of the International Labor Organization

Baghdad, 25 August 2023 - Professor Adel Akab, President of the Iraqi Industry Union, met with Dr. Maha Katta, Coordinator of the International Labor Organization in Iraq, in the presence of the Union Board Member, the Chairman of the Najaf Chamber of Industry, the Secretary General of the Union Agency and the Union's Coordinator with the International Labor Organization. They discussed ILO's efforts in supporting the private industrial sector.



DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai: “Together, we can turn the goals of anti-corruption and integrity into a sustainable reality.”

Basra, 15 July 2023 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, participated today at the “Strengthening Public-Private Dialogue on Anti-Corruption and Integrity Issues” conference held in Basra.

Here is the text of his remarks on this event:

“Good morning, excellencies, and distinguished guests,

It is an honor to speak at this momentous occasion, the “Strengthening Public-Private Dialogue on Anti-Corruption and Integrity Issues” Conference, hosted here in Basra.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Judge Haider Hanoun, Head of the Federal Commission of Integrity of Iraq, for the kind invitation, and I congratulate the esteemed Federal Commission for organizing this significant event.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Governor Mr. Asaad Al Eidani, for graciously hosting this conference. The choice of venue in Basra reflects the deep connection between the public and private sectors. It showcases Basra's commendable efforts in creating an attractive business environment for foreign investments and fostering private sector development aligns well with our objectives.

Dear participants.

Corruption is a complex, multi-dimensional, and cross-sectoral phenomenon that hampers economic, political, and social development in all nations. Its consequences are far-reaching, affecting both governments and businesses. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often find themselves in a particularly vulnerable position due to their limited capacity to tackle corruption effectively. Consequently, addressing corruption necessitates a holistic and systemic approach, involving the active participation of all stakeholders.

To overcome this global challenge and achieve national reconciliation, security, and good governance, it is imperative to establish effective and regular communication and coordination between the public and private sectors. Such collaboration serves as a foundation for trust-



building in government institutions. When private sector stakeholders witness their effective representation and see their contributions valued, their confidence is bolstered. This results in tangible benefits not only for the private sector but also for the broader community.

Considerable progress has been made in the global fight against corruption, but much work remains to be done. Engaging the private sector in understanding the multifaceted nature of corruption, strengthening legal and institutional frameworks, and fostering a culture of change have been significant steps forward. These essential elements are enshrined in the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

Through active engagement with civil society and the private sector, governments can build robust governance systems, thereby enhancing the integrity of the business sector. This is crucial to ensure an attractive and competitive business environment, which, in the long run, leads to healthier markets and increased investor confidence. By encouraging companies to adopt stronger anti-corruption practices and robust corporate governance systems, as well as advocating for equitable and transparent competition through well-designed laws and regulations, governments foster innovation, efficiency, and value for consumers.

Therefore, in line with Iraq's commitments, the United Nations is fully committed to enhancing cooperation with the partners and stakeholders present here today. Together, we can turn the goals of anti-corruption and integrity into a sustainable reality. This collaboration aims to create an environment that

attracts foreign investments and promotes private sector development.

In our quest to combat corruption, it is crucial to recognize the strong link between this fight and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set forth by the United Nations. The SDGs provide us with a comprehensive framework to promote inclusive and sustainable development, leaving no one behind. Goal 16 specifically calls for the promotion of peace, justice, and strong institutions, emphasizing the need to combat corruption and ensure transparent and accountable governance.

With the participation of nearly 150 key stakeholders from the private sector, associations, syndicates, national authorities, civil society organizations, and international organizations, we have the opportunity to strengthen the public-private dialogue, share knowledge and best practices, and forge partnerships that will drive real change. Together, we can make significant strides towards a future where integrity prevails, corruption is eradicated, and the SDGs become a reality for all.

In conclusion, it is our collective responsibility to uphold integrity and combat corruption. We must cultivate a shared belief that the fight against corruption is a joint obligation between the public and private sectors. By engaging multiple stakeholders, we can drive this agenda forward. This endeavor not only holds tremendous significance but also has the potential to stimulate economic growth in the future.

Let us join forces, with unwavering dedication, to build a culture of transparency, accountability, and integrity in Iraq.

DSRSG/RC/HC meets Chairman of the Federal Commission of Integrity and Governor of Basra

Basra, 15 July 2023 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai: "An honor to meet Judge Haider Hanoun, chairman of the Federal Commission of Integrity, and Governor of Basra, Mr. Asaad Al Eidani, during the Conference on Strengthening Partnership and Dialogue between Public and Private sectors to fight corruption in Basra.

We discussed UN Iraq support to the commission including strengthening

legal and institutional frameworks and capacity enhancement".



Basra Conference enhances partnership and dialogue between private and public sectors to face corruption in Iraq

Basra, 16 July 2023 – Through an unprecedented initiative, the Iraqi Federal Commission of Integrity in cooperation with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) organised in the Governorate of Basra the "National Conference on Strengthening Partnership and Dialogue between the Public and Private Sectors - The Way to Combat Corruption." The Conference brought together 150 representatives of the Federal Commission of Integrity, Basra Governorate, Private Sector companies, The Ministry of Industry, Iraqi Federation of Industries, Contractors Union, Banks Association and international organizations working in the field of combating corruption. The conference aimed at supporting partnerships and dialogue between the public and private sectors for the purposes of combating corruption, showcasing methods to enhance the effectiveness of prevention measures, integrity and legal frameworks concerned with the work of the private sector.

Noting the importance of the conference, Judge Haider Hanoun, Head of the Federal Commission of Integrity affirmed that "The Commission has thoroughly prepared for the battle against corruption, in which victory depends on such preparations that included strengthening partnership and dialogue between private/public sector and taking into account the preventive measures needed to stop corruption within the private sector. This is within the framework of the pillars and provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), to which Iraq acceded a decade and a half ago."

The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Resident

and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, emphasized the importance of this event and highlighted "corruption hampers economic, political, social development and the rights of everyone. It is our collective responsibility to uphold integrity and combat corruption. Now is the time to come together to take action against corruption for a safer, better and fairer future for all."

Mr. Ali Elbereir, Head of UNODC Office in Iraq affirmed that "MENA region economies face significant corruption related challenges that affect trade and investment development, calling for the need to ensure fair competition by raising awareness and promoting the implementation of common anti-corruption provisions and the application of deterrent anti-bribery measures, noting that public-private cooperation is a critical factor in protecting integrity and preventing corruption."

The Conference included vital sessions on relevant legal frameworks and codes of conduct, prevention of conflict of interest, determinants of failure and success in public/private partnership, methods of corruption prevention, and

successful experiences to enhancing integrity.

By engaging with the private sector, Governments build strong governance systems and enhance business sector integrity, which are essential to ensure attractive and competitive environment to businesses and on the longer term affirm healthier markets and greater investors' confidence. Governments can foster private sector innovation, efficiency, and value for money for the consumers by encouraging companies to adopt stronger anticorruption practices and robust corporate governance systems and to compete fairly.

The Conference is organized within the framework of the project "strengthening the capabilities of the private sector in the field of combating corruption and enhancing integrity in the Arab countries," which is funded by the Siemens Integrity Initiative. The project aims at supporting six Arab countries, namely the Republic of Iraq, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Sudan, the Kingdom of Morocco and the State Libya and the United Arab Emirates, in countering corruption and enhancing integrity in the private sector.



UNODC: Human trafficking still exists in every corner of the world

Baghdad, 29 July 2023 - We must reject social inequalities, standards, and values that create an environment conducive to trafficking.

Join UNODC with Nadia Murad Basee and raise awareness to #EndHumanTrafficking.

The campaign for World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2023 aims to raise awareness of disturbing developments and trends identified by UNODC and calls on governments, law enforcement, public services, and civil society to assess and enhance their efforts to strengthen prevention, identify and support victims, and end impunity.

Global crises, conflicts, and the climate emergency are escalating trafficking risks. Displacement and socio-economic inequalities are impacting millions of people worldwide, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers. Those who lack legal status,

live in poverty, have limited access to education, healthcare, or decent work, face discrimination, violence, or abuse, or come from marginalized communities are often the primary targets of traffickers.

Globally, national responses, particularly in developing States, appear to be deteriorating. Detection rates fell by 11% in 2020 and convictions plummeted by 27%, illustrating a worldwide slowdown in the criminal justice response to trafficking. The COVID-19 pandemic also changed the characteristics of trafficking, pushing it further underground and potentially increasing the dangers to victims by making the crime less likely to come to the attention of the authorities. In fact, 41% of victims who manage to escape their ordeal reach out to the authorities on their own initiative – another clear sign that anti-trafficking responses are

falling short.

“Leave no one behind” is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In the context of trafficking in persons, leaving people behind means

- failing to end the exploitation of trafficking victims,
- failing to support victim-survivors once they are free from their traffickers, and
- leaving identifiable groups vulnerable to traffickers.

At the implementation mid-point of the 2030 Agenda and ahead of the SDG Summit 2023 this year, it is crucial to raise awareness and reinforce global commitments to eliminate trafficking in persons as specifically mentioned in SDG 5, 8 and 16.

UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization team is in the process of rehabilitating the Baiji sub-police centre

Baiji, 31 July 2023 - UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization team is in the process of rehabilitating the Baiji sub-police centre, serving around 35,000 people, thanks to generous support from Belgium.

UNDP is strengthening local police services in Iraq by rehabilitating police stations and building trust between citizens and local police. This restores a sense of security in communities, ensuring responsive, effective, accountable and accessible services are available for all.

When completed, this center will be the eighth police centre in Salah Al-Din serving around 382,000 citizens.



The Parliament plays a crucial role in shaping a robust legal framework

Baghdad, 23 August 2023 — Supported by the EU, UNDP Iraq organized the UNCAC and Legislative Anti-corruption Reform workshop focusing on equipping Iraqi Parliamentarians and legal experts with the skills and knowledge needed for effective legislative drafting and impact assessment.

Approximately 40 participants, including members of the Parliament, heads of departments within the Commission of Integrity, representatives from the Supreme Judicial Council, and other bodies involved in legislative processes, took part in these discussions.



العراق من أوائل الدول التي صادقت على اتفاقية الأمم المتحدة لمكافحة الفساد في عام 2008 وانضمت لها في 2008. وبدل ذلك على جهود استباقية كبيرة على المستوى الإقليمي. فاريمان موراداسيلوف، مختص في مكافحة الفساد.



The main value of this workshop is an increased understanding of a broader range of legal instruments that public officials in Iraq can use to mobilize state, civil society, media, businesses and citizens to fight corruption in line with Iraq's international obligations.

Yama Turabi, Project Manager, Anti-Corruption & Arbitration Initiatives.

Victims Voices' Silencing Terrorism: Iman Abdullah

Baghdad, 21 August 2023 - What we witnessed, particularly the girls among us, was truly horrific," says Iman Abdullah, 22, from Sinjar, Iraq, a Yazidi survivor of terrorism, who was kidnapped by ISIS nearly a decade ago. To mark International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, UNODC is publishing Iman's story, who was held captive for a year along with another girl from her village. Her kidnappers were "trafficking and raping girls, in addition to various forms of torture," she recalls.

Iman told UNODC that after she was freed, "it was hard for me to come to terms with what had happened. It was a traumatic experience, and I was only 13 years old at the time."

Iman is one of many survivors of terrorism who took part in a UNODC psychosocial support programme in Iraq, implemented in partnership with the Lebanese Association for Victims of Terrorism (AVT-L)

"I participated in this programme so that I could tell my story, be strong, and get my message across to the world," Iman said. "I gained valuable experience in assisting girls, as there are thousands of them who have become victims of ISIS," she emphasized, voicing her hope that the programme will also help other victims, "as there are thousands in camps who are in need of support."

When asked about her wish for the future, Iman said "I hope that we will return to our home and live a normal life like any human being, as these are our rights."



"Victims of terrorism need a broad range of support from government and community actors to help them recover from the trauma they have experienced and to rebuild their lives," says Masood Karimipour, chief of UNODC's Terrorism Prevention Branch.

Supporting their physical and mental rehabilitation and successful reintegration into communities is essential, as victims of terrorism often face stigmatization when they return to their communities.

UNODC is promoting a coordinated approach across the Government, at the local community level and benefiting from the work of civil society to ensure that victims have the range of assistance they require.

By providing a platform for victims' voices to be heard, showcasing their resilience and strength can be inspiration for the many thousands of victims of terrorism worldwide.

UNODC is working with partners around the globe to ensure that there is justice for victims of terrorism by promoting accountability for those who have committed such heinous crimes.

This must be done in the context of the wider international community's efforts to address the root causes and conditions which can lead to terrorism including lack of socio-economic opportunities, weak governance, and human rights violations. UNODC contributes to these efforts by building crime prevention and criminal justice policies and practices that respect human rights, build resilience from the ground up, strengthen alliances between authorities and civil society, prevent radicalization to violence, and ensure accountability for terrorism crimes. Only by working to address these conditions in a whole-of-society response, can we effectively prevent terrorism in the long-term.

Victims' Voices, Silencing Terrorism: Jinan Hassan

**Disclaimer: This story contains graphic references due to the telling of victims' experiences. Readers' discretion is advised.*

Baghdad, 21 August 2023 - Jinan Hassan is a 55-year-old Iraqi woman who works in the public sector. She is also a mother of three girls. One Thursday, infamously known in Iraq as "bloody Thursday," Jinan and her three daughters were injured in a terrorist attack, which led to deformities on their faces and eyes, and the permanent loss of her middle daughter's eye. "We experienced a psychological barrier that made us feel isolated from the rest of the world and caused us to withdraw from social interactions."

In 2021, Jinan participated in the

psychosocial support sessions provided through the UNODC project "Supporting victims of terrorism within the criminal justice framework, including psychological support" in Iraq, which was implemented in partnership with the Lebanese Association for Victims of Terrorism (AVT-L) and was funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

"In fact, both my middle daughter, the most affected, and I participated. After these sessions, I felt comfortable and the nightmare I was suffering from ended. It was a new beginning for me and my daughter. I felt that my psychological state had changed, which was reflected in my clothing style and overall approach to life," Jinan noted.

When asked how she sees the next chapter of her story, she affirmed that

"I have greatly benefited from the victims of terrorism rehabilitation programme, and I hope that it will expand further and include more categories of people. I would like to be a trainer in this programme, training and rehabilitating victims of terrorism who have suffered from ISIS as I am fully aware of this experience."

This story, the second in a five-part series, marks the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism which takes place on 21 August. This series is originally featured as part of the UNODC "Victims' Voices, Silencing Terrorism" campaign, which was conducted in June 2023 through a combination of social media outreach and on-the-ground presence in Baghdad, Iraq.

The campaign reached 23 million

Victims’ Voices, Silencing Terrorism: Jinan Hassan *(continued)*

people in Iraq and the Middle East and North Africa region and was conducted in collaboration with Iraqi authorities, the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Association of Victims of Terrorism in Lebanon (AVT-L) and funded by the Netherlands. The campaign focused on providing an alternative narrative to that of terrorist groups by raising awareness of the resilience of victims of terrorism and the importance of having their voices heard. The messages and stories they tell have the power to silence the negative and harmful fear-oriented messages spread by terrorist groups. The campaign featured several victims of terrorism supported by the project, as they used their voices to tell their own stories of resilience and

overcoming and spoke of how more victims should be encouraged to do the same. The campaign also focused on highlighting the importance of

understanding who is a victim of terrorism, what are victims’ needs, the role of the community, and the achievements of the project.



Mine Action

Czech Ambassador visits UNMAS clearance site at Al Shifa Hospital

Mosul, 31 July 2023 - Last week, UNMAS in Iraq organized a field visit to the Al Shifa Hospital Complex in Mosul, Ninewa Governorate, for the Ambassador of the Czech Republic, His Excellency Petr Stepanek. The UNMAS team delivered a briefing on the previous clearance work implemented by UNMAS in Iraq.

UNMAS Iraq implementing partners, Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD) in partnership with Sharetea Humanitarian Organization (SHO) supported the visit and delivered a brief on the UNMAS Iraq led capacity enhancement partnership model that has been running for the last two and a half years. This model is enabling FSD to transfer skills and experience so that SHO will become a national, capable and independent clearance actor.

In addition H.E. Stepanek was briefed

on current operations and UNMAS activities in Iraq, including technical and advisory support to the Government of Iraq Directorate for Mine Action, and the supporting advocacy work that is conducted for the

wider mine action community in Iraq. UNMAS would like to thank the Government of the Czech Republic for supporting mine action activities in Iraq and looks forward to further collaboration.



The Iraqi National Mine Action Strategy 2023-2028 launched in Baghdad

Baghdad, 9 August 2023 – Today, the Minister of Environment officially launched the Iraqi National Mine Action Strategy 2023-2028 in Baghdad. The UNMAS team was pleased to join the official ceremony and congratulate DMA, IKMAA, and GICHD on the achievement and collaboration over the past years.



UNICEF and the Iraq Ministry of Health hold a capacity building workshop on principles and application of Social and Behaviour Change and Behavioral Science

Baghdad, 01 July 2023 - UNICEF in collaboration with the Iraq Ministry of Health recently held a three-day capacity building workshop on principles and application of Social and Behaviour Change and Behavioral Science. With thanks to KfW Development Bank (KfW Group), this workshop will contribute to the system strengthening of health care services in Iraq.



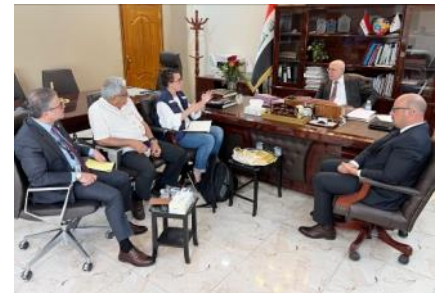
WHO supports the launch of the first care program for survivors of Crimean-Congo Dengue Disease in the Middle East Region

Basra, 10 July 2023 - The WHO, in cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Health, supports the launch of the first care program for survivors of Crimean-Congo Dengue Disease in the Middle East Region, which started in Basra Governorate with a special focus on strengthening clinical and laboratory capabilities.

Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq, said: "Pleased to meet Dr Riyad

Al-Hilfi, Director of Public Health at the Ministry of Health, along with my colleague Dr Anaïs Legand of WHO to discuss the implementation of the first-ever Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) survivor care program in Iraq and the region.

The program is critical to complement the overall strategy to respond to the CCHF outbreak and provide multi-aspect care for survivors."



Strengthening coordination and fostering the #OneHealth approach is critical to effectively responding to the CCHF outbreak

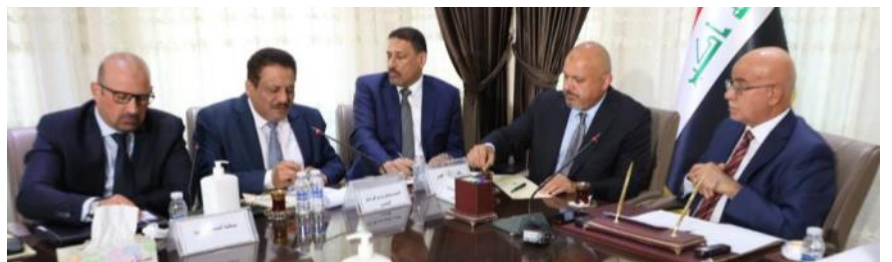
Baghdad, 12 July 2023 - Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq: "Honored to be part of the Higher Committee for the control of Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) in Iraq and participate in the multi-sectoral meeting organized under the leadership of the Iraqi Minister of Health, H.E Dr Saleh Al-Hasnawi. Strengthening coordination and fostering the #OneHealth approach is critical to effectively responding to the outbreak."

In a related news, WHO, in collaboration with Duhok's Directorate

of Health, commenced a capacity-building workshop on enhancing surveillance, prevention and case management of epidemic-prone communicable diseases, with a focus on

CCHF and cholera.

The 13-day workshop is planned to target over 200 health staff in hospitals and primary healthcare centres across Duhok.



WHO and Ministry of Health of Iraq recognized AMR as a critical intervention

Baghdad, 24 July 2023 - WHO considers Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) as one of the biggest threats to public health in the 21st century.

WHO and Ministry of Health of Iraq recognized AMR as a critical intervention and agreed on a roadmap to tackle AMR in Iraq in all public health fields, including infection prevention and control.



Vaccines save children's lives in remote areas of Iraq



Baghdad, 18 July 2023 – Across the country, caregivers are bringing their children to get vaccinated as part of the Ministry of Health, UNICEF and WHO multi-antigen campaign.

At one of the Primary Health Care Centers in the south, the sounds of babies fill the waiting room. Veiled women carrying their babies are in a rush to get their children vaccinated to protect them from deadly diseases.

Asma Ali, 36, is one of the mothers waiting to get her 3-month-old baby girl, Rawan, vaccinated. Accompanied by her mother-in-law, Fourat, Asma is eager to vaccinate her newborn baby girl.

“I always bring my children to get vaccinated on time,” said Asma with pride. “I want to protect them from all diseases and give them the best start in life.”

In the 10-day-long campaign, a total of 1,303,587 doses of vaccines were used to vaccinate 523,584 children, more than half are girls. This includes 332,023 children vaccinated against measles, one of the most contagious diseases.

“This multi-antigen campaign is important to protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases,” said Dr. Falah Wadi, Health Officer, UNICEF in Iraq. “It is critical especially when it comes to zero-dose children.”

Due to poverty, social norms and traditions, Asma got married at an early age. She has six children, five girls and one boy.

“I dropped out of school at the age of 14,” recalled Asma. “But thanks to the health workers, I was made aware of the importance of vaccinating my children and this is why I am here today.”

Reaching the unreachable

Reaching the hardest-to-reach children is often times challenging. Yet, UNICEF established partnerships with various sectors of society that can influence caregivers and create demand for vaccine uptake.

With financial support from Al Waleed Philanthropies, UNICEF mobilized over 3,800 health workers and partnered with community mobilizers and religious leaders.

“We engaged with community mobilizers and religious leaders to reach the most vulnerable children with vaccines,” added Wadi. “This is critical so that children like Rawan are not left behind.”

In the southern part of Iraq, children living in the marshlands are among the hardest to reach. Nestled between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, sits the Mesopotamian Marshes in Chibayish. The hamlet is most

affected by climate change pushing families to move to areas where there is more water. While a few families remain.

“These families are most impoverished,” said Daham Jassim, Mobile Team Vaccinator, referring to the ones residing in the marshlands. “They live in remote areas and find it difficult to reach primary health care centers.”

Daham Jassim is one of the campaign's mobile team vaccinators. For the past 20 years, he has been working on vaccinating children, especially those hardest to reach.

“I came here to vaccinate these children to ensure that every child is protected,” added Jassim.

Thanks to Jassim and other health workers, a total of 49,981 children who are under-immunized or missed out completely on their vaccines, were vaccinated during this campaign.

Between 2019-2021, globally 67 million children, about twice the population of California, missed out on vaccinations. Yet, in Iraq, immunization coverage has reached the highest levels in two decades, hoping that it will accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Through the intensified integrated immunization outreach services have reached 90 per cent of children aged under 5 with the third dose of diphtheria, pertussis and 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,” said Wadi. “We hope to minimize the resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases and further advance immunization coverage to beyond 95 per cent.”

By Monique Awad, UNICEF Iraq

World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq and UNHCR place the foundation-stone for a new Primary Health Centre in Domiz, Duhok

Duhok, 27 July 2023 - Together with the World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq, UNHCR placed the foundation-stone for a new Primary Health Centre in Domiz, Duhok. Everyone will benefit from the new health centre including refugees, internally displaced Iraqis, and members of the local community.



Iraq eliminates trachoma as a public health problem

50th country recognized by WHO for eliminating a neglected tropical disease, marking the halfway point towards the 100-country target set for 2030

Geneva, 31 July 2023 - The World Health Organization (WHO) congratulates Iraq for having eliminated trachoma as a public health problem, making it the fifth country in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region to achieve this milestone.

"The success of Iraq's national trachoma programme has shown what can be achieved with national leadership and collaboration", said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "Freedom from trachoma will positively impact the lives of the most vulnerable populations now and in the future".

Iraq established its national trachoma programme in 2012 to coordinate the final domestic push against the disease. A trachoma surveillance system was developed to detect and manage cases within secondary and tertiary eye care facilities, as well as through school pre-enrolment and school eye screening programmes conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Thousands of refractionists, optometrists, ophthalmologists, specialist eye surgeons and other trained healthcare staff contributed to these efforts.

Post-elimination, Iraq and WHO will continue to closely monitor previously endemic areas to detect and if necessary, combat any resurgence of disease.

"WHO has validated Iraq as having eliminated trachoma as a public health problem, making it the eighth country in the Eastern Mediterranean Region that has eliminated at least one neglected tropical disease" said Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. "This is a remarkable achievement, and it illustrates that with dedication countries can achieve success in eliminating diseases, even under challenging circumstances. Iraq's success in eliminating trachoma is also a true demonstration of our regional vision of Health for All."

Trachoma, the leading infectious cause of blindness worldwide, is still known to be endemic in six countries of WHO's Eastern Mediterranean



Region, but there has been substantial progress in the number of people in the region requiring antibiotic treatment for trachoma elimination purposes, which has fallen from 39 million in 2013 to 6.9 million in April 2023.

Global progress

Globally, Iraq joins 17 other countries that have been validated by WHO for having eliminated trachoma as a public health problem. These are Benin, Cambodia, China, Gambia, Ghana, Islamic Republic of Iran, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Togo and Vanuatu.

Iraq is also the 50th country to be acknowledged by WHO for eliminating at least one neglected tropical disease (NTD), globally. This major milestone is the halfway mark to the 100-country target set for 2030 in the WHO road map for neglected tropical diseases. Since the beginning of 2023, 5 other countries have successfully completed the relevant validation processes for one NTD.

"The contribution that NTD programmes are making towards universal health coverage is impressive as by definition they extend outreach to pockets of underserved populations" said Dr Ibrahima Socé Fall, Director, Global NTD Programme, WHO. "Thanks to Iraq's dedication and commitment, the world is now closer to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals targets".

The disease

Trachoma is a neglected tropical disease. It is caused by infection with

the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*, which spreads from person to person through contaminated fingers, fomites and flies that have come into contact with discharge from the eyes or nose of an infected person.

Environmental risk factors for trachoma transmission include poor hygiene, overcrowded households, and inadequate access to water and sanitation.

To eliminate trachoma as a public health problem, WHO recommends the SAFE strategy¹ a comprehensive approach to reduce transmission of the causative organism, clear existing infections and deal with their effects. The 2021–2030 neglected tropical disease road map targets the prevention, control elimination and eradication of 20 diseases and disease groups by 2030. Progress against trachoma and other neglected tropical diseases alleviates the human and economic burden that they impose on the world's most disadvantaged communities.

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¹The SAFE strategy consists of: Surgery to treat the blinding stage (trachomatous trichiasis); Antibiotics (trachomatous trichiasis); Antibiotics to clear the infection, particularly mass drug administration of the antibiotic azithromycin, which is donated by the manufacturer, Pfizer, to elimination programmes, through the International Trachoma Initiative; Facial cleanliness; and Environmental improvement, particularly improving access to water and sanitation.



Building the capacity of healthcare providers helps them meet the unique needs of adolescents and youth

Erbil, 01 August 2023 - Building the capacity of healthcare providers on reproductive health, family planning, mental health and more helps them meet the unique needs of adolescents and youth and better tackle the challenges young individuals face. UNFPA, with generous support from British Embassy Iraq is hosting a five-day training in Erbil for 26 healthcare providers from central and south Iraq! The training is designed to be

interactive and engaging, incorporating facilitation techniques to better

understand how to approach and support cases within health centres.



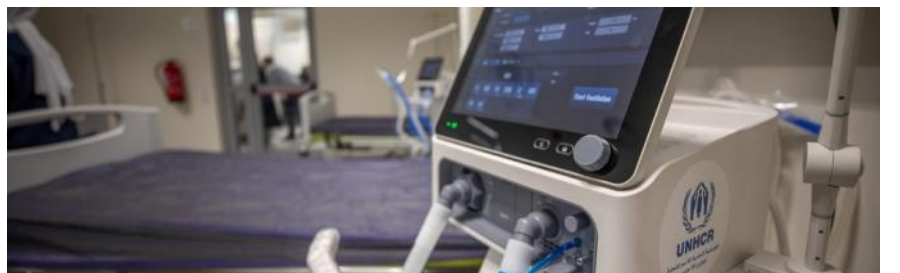
New WHO Representative in Iraq visits Jadaa 1 Camp in Ninawa Governorate

Baghdad, 02 August 2023 - Dr. Wael Hatahit, new WHO Representative in Iraq, visited Jadaa 1 Camp in Ninawa Governorate, where WHO supports the provision of quality healthcare services for hundreds of returnees from Al-Hol camp in Syria. The support of the Population, Refugees, and Migration Bureau of the U.S. State Department in this project was crucial in bringing back hope to many. During the visit, Dr Hatahit met Othman, 7, who doesn't let his disability hold him back. Every day, he heads to school with a bright smile and impressive energy. Othman's determination is an inspiration to us all.



UNHCR opens a new Emergency Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in Azadi Hospital, Duhok

Duhok, 05 August 2023 - UNHCR recently opened a new Emergency Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in Azadi Hospital, Duhok. Together with the Directorate of Health, the ICU unit has been equipped with 8 beds, ventilators, monitors and more.



WHO in Iraq delivers 16 tons of vital pharmaceuticals to treat chronic diseases

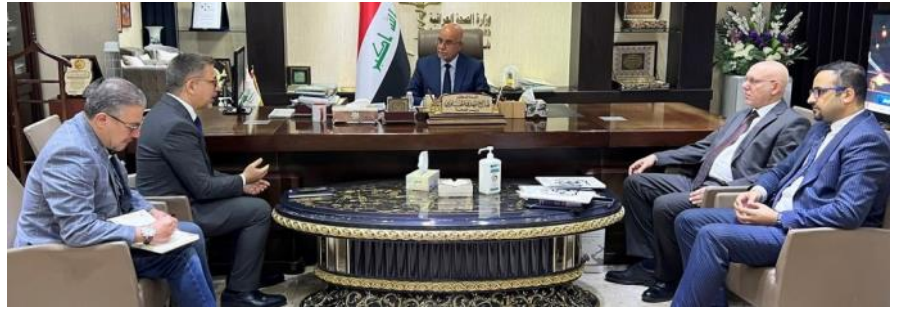
Baghdad, 05 August 2023 - With support from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance and EU Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid, the World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq has delivered 16 tons of vital pharmaceuticals to treat chronic diseases and other medical conditions at primary healthcare centres serving thousands of IDPs in Anbar and Ninawa governorates.



New WHO representative in Iraq meets with the Iraqi Minister of Health

Baghdad, 06 August 2023 – New WHO representative in Iraq, Dr. Wael Hatahat, met today with the Iraqi Minister of Health, Dr. Saleh Al-Hasanawi to research ways to strengthen the strategic partnership between the organization and the ministry.

The sides discussed joint efforts to take necessary public health measures during the #VisitNext40.



WHO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, concludes a workshop on data quality enhancement of Iraq's measles and rubella surveillance system

Baghdad, 10 August 2023 - WHO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, concluded a 2-day workshop on data quality enhancement of Iraq's measles and rubella surveillance system, targeting 20 provincial respiratory diseases surveillance officers and 10 officers representing the Communicable Diseases Control Centre, Expanded Programme on Immunization and the Nation Measles Lab.



Boosting primary health care and referral services in six Iraqi provinces

Baghdad, 10 August 2023 - WHO continues its partnership with the humanitarian aid office of the American Agency for International Development and the European Union for Humanitarian Aid through a project to boost primary health care and referral services in six Iraqi provinces. The project, which targets the governorates of Anbar, Duhok, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninawa and Sulaymaniyah, aims to provide primary health care services to approximately 800,000 people from the vulnerable groups in internally displaced camps and outside camps, secondary displacement sites,

as well as host communities. "This project is essential to ensure that people in need of humanitarian assistance in Iraq have access to high-quality health care services." "We are

grateful for the support provided by the USAID office and the European Union for Humanitarian Aid, which has enabled us to reach tens of thousands of people in need."



The Intensive Care Unit at Dr Gamal pediatric hospital in Sulaymania just got upgraded today

Sulaymaniyah, 16 August 2023 - The Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Dr Gamal pediatric hospital in Sulaymania just got upgraded today. With support from UNHCR, the ICU is now equipped with new beds, ventilators, monitors, nebulizer, oxygen regulator, and more. Host community and refugees alike will benefit from the services.



WHO conducts workshops in Baghdad and Erbil on using mass gathering risk assessment tools

Baghdad/Erbil, 21 August 2023 - To ensure robust health measures for Arbaeen in Iraq, the World Health Organization, in partnership with Federal & Kurdistan Ministries of Health, conducted workshops in Baghdad & Erbil on using mass gathering risk assessment tools, targeting 77 health professionals involved in the mass gathering planning and response.



Family Planning

UNFPA praises the efforts of the Iraqi government for prioritizing the population census

Baghdad, 24 July 2023 – The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning, Prof Dr Muhammad Ali Tamim, announced that the long-awaited population census is finally on the horizon. After addressing security and political challenges, the Ministry is set to conduct the census before the end of next year.

The Minister met today with several diplomatic missions and international organisations operating in Iraq to discuss their support for this crucial initiative. With their cooperation and backing, the census project is well on its way to becoming a reality.

UNFPA praises the efforts of the Iraqi government for prioritising the census, and extends its support to the make the census a comprehensive and accurate one to pave the way for a brighter future for Iraq!



Mental Health

WHO, in collaboration with the Federal and Kurdistan Ministries of Health, concludes a workshop on enhancing mental health service packages

Baghdad, 09 August 2023 - To strengthen mental health services in Iraqi primary healthcare centres, WHO, in collaboration with the Federal and Kurdistan Ministries of Health, concluded a 4-day workshop on enhancing mental health service packages, targeting 35 healthcare providers from around the country.



Zahra's agri-business dream to revive Basra's greenery



Basra, 27 June 2023 - (ITC News) 31-year-old Zahraa Abdulsattar is a native of Basra. She graduated from the Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Soil and Water Resources Science at Basra University.

Inspired by Basra's renowned palm trees, she envisions a project on tissue cultivation to revive Basra's greenery.

"Before I start my business, I plan on conducting a feasibility study, and then will seek guidance and expertise of professionals in palm cultivation, such as a professor well-versed in the field." While many are dedicated to the revival of palm trees, Zahraa's focus remains on tissue cultivation as an effective means of combatting environmental challenges such as diseases, soil salinity, dust, and various plant ailments.

To identify and understand the needs and concerns of youth entrepreneurs in Iraq, especially those impeding their successful participation in the

agricultural value chain, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) conduct a nationwide Youth Entrepreneurship Barometer survey through the European Union-funded Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy in Iraq (SAAVI) project.

The survey called the Youth Barometer, is conducted across five governorates, and serves as a means of understanding and amplifying the views of young people in Iraq who are looking to start their own businesses and contribute to the economy. Barriers that require coordinated action are also identified.

Zahraa has recently finished the 10 online modules on entrepreneurship and agricultural skills.

Her participation in the SAAVI Tadreeb training, has not only provided her with valuable knowledge but has also supported her confidence and

equipped her with the necessary skills to embark on this project. Just halfway through the training, she already feels that she has made significant progress.

"I've shared information about the training with my friends and family members who may also be interested. The Association of Agricultural Engineering played a pivotal role in introducing me to this transformative training opportunity".

The upcoming Youth Barometer will be launched in August 2023. It identifies opportunities and challenges facing young people, across eight key themes including social and cultural norms, access to finance, infrastructure, market access, and ecosystem support.

The first Youth Entrepreneurship Barometer, was launched in October 2022. According to the findings, 79% considered entrepreneurship to be a desirable career choice, but more than 90% had never received support from an incubator, an accelerator and a youth association. 2 in 3 youth identified access to finance as a key hurdle in setting up a business.

The findings are a reminder that creating new opportunities and so many other young people in Iraq is the need of the hour.

SAAVI seeks to promote inclusive economic growth and job creation, particularly for Iraqi youth, by improving agricultural competitiveness and supporting trade development. The project is implemented in close collaboration with the Government of Iraq, NRC, and other partners.

WFP Iraq on Twitter

Baghdad, 10 July 2023 - Today, WFP Iraq met with representatives of the Iraqi government to discuss alternative climate financing through the carbon credit market, encouraging the transition to a low-carbon economy while promoting sustainable development.

UN in Iraq marks the International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms

Baghdad, 12 July 2023 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai: "Today is the International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms. Iraq is heavily impacted by these storms. Lets spread awareness about afforestation, sustainable land management and effective dust control measures. Together, we can build a cleaner and healthier future for Iraq".

Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai
Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq

“Sand and dust storms are wreaking havoc in Iraq, in recent years more than ever, compelling people to seek shelter or hospital. Those storms have profoundly affected the country's ecology and disrupted its economy, eroding Iraq's fertile soil as well as forcing rural families to migrate in pursuit of a better livelihood. We urgently need robust technical collaboration at the local, national and regional levels to effectively address this escalating threat.”

#SDSDay #Unite4Land

SDG SUMMIT 2023
Sustainable Development Goals

UN-Habitat joins the global community in recognizing the importance of addressing the challenges posed by sand and dust storms

Baghdad, 12 July 2023 - On this significant occasion of the International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms (July, 12th), UN-Habitat joins the global community in recognizing the importance of addressing the challenges posed by sand and dust storms. This annual observance serves as a crucial platform to raise awareness about the impacts of these environmental phenomena and the urgent need for collective action.

UN-Habitat is actively contributing to the agenda of sand and dust storm prevention through our project, "Improved Resilience to Transboundary Sand and Dust Storms in Kuwait and Iraq." This project, funded by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), is designed to enhance the resilience of cities and communities in Kuwait and southern Iraq to the devastating impacts of sand and dust storms, in collaboration with the Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research, University of Thi Qar and University of Al-Muthanna.



We are actively engaged in the restoration of ecosystems in the origin areas of these storms in southern Iraq, as storms are formed by lifting sand particles from dry and bare soils into the air. Furthermore, we are working hand in hand with local authorities and communities in southern Iraq to enhance their resilience and capacity to adapt to desertification and mitigate the causes of sandstorms resulting from climate change.

Together, we are working towards reducing the formation of sand and dust storms, protecting human health, and building resilient communities in Kuwait and southern Iraq.

On this day, we also wish to inspire other authorities, donors, and organizations to understand the urgency of the matter and dedicate efforts and resources to the prevention and mitigation of sand and dust storms, striving for a sustainable future for all.

UNAMI on Twitter

Basra, 15 July 2023 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai**, from Basra today: "In Basra today where temperature hit 51 degrees Celsius. The impact of climate change is clearly visible in southern Iraq. Enough talk! but more urgent action is needed to address climate change at the global, regional and national levels".

A delegation from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction - Regional Office for Arab States visits Iraq

Baghdad, 01 August 2023 - A delegation from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction - Regional Office for Arab States (UNDRR Arab States) recently visited Iraq to prepare for an upcoming workshop on Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation into the new Iraq Common Country Analysis and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. During the visit, the delegation had the honor of meeting members of the UN Iraq Country Team - including UNDP, WFP, FAO, and IOM - and explored ways to enhance collaboration and jointly work on disaster risk management and climate adaptation. The delegation also had productive discussions with the Ministry of Environment, gaining valuable insights into the Government's priorities and

strategies concerning Disaster Risk Reduction, and explored how to support risk-informed development, with a special focus on early warning systems.

Another important topic on the agenda was the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction into Climate Change Adaptation and loss and damage data.



Iraq starts its journey towards eliminating POP containing chemicals

Beirut, 4 August 2023 - A delegation from the Ministry of Environment of Iraq finalized today with UNEP West Asia in Beirut, the National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), starting the country's journey towards eliminating POP containing chemicals.



Excited about the powerful partnership between WFP Iraq and UNEP WestAsia

Baghdad, 03 August 2023 - The UN Environment Programme West Asia and the World Food Programme (WFP) in Iraq signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen collaboration in the priority areas of: climate change, nature action, science-policy and capacity building and outreach to vulnerable communities. Excited about the powerful partnership between WFP Iraq and UNEP WestAsia. Together, we're tackling climate change challenges and help build resilience and reduce the vulnerabilities of communities impacted by climate change in Iraq.



Promoting change for sustainable development

Baghdad, 05 August 2023 - UNDP and Al-Alamein Institute, had capacity building training for Iraqi media on water scarcity and climate change to be able to understand and empower them on how to report and cover these critical issues affecting Iraq, hosted at the Bahr al-Uloom Forum Hall for Dialogue in Baghdad.

The workshop was attended by H.E. the Minister of Health, Dr. Saleh Al-Hasnawi, Chairman of the Follow-up Committee on the recommendations of the Climate Conference, Dr. Ali Razzouqi, Chairman of the Agriculture, Water and Marshlands Committee, and Faleh Al-Khazali, the Senior

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, Mr. Jassim Al-Attayah, as well as the

spokesperson for the Ministry of Water Resources, Dr. Khaled Shamal and participants from other Ministries.



UNICEF in Iraq and Ministry of Youth and Sports launch platforms to empower youth to combat climate change

Baghdad, 13 August 2023 – On International Youth Day, UNICEF and the Ministry of Youth and Sports launch a series of new innovative platforms designed to empower Iraqi youth and address the pressing challenges posed by climate change.

These pioneering initiatives, including the National Youth Council and the Youth United for Climate Action coalition, mark a significant step towards equipping young people with the skills and knowledge to actively contribute to their communities and

pave the way for a sustainable future. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and with UNICEF's support, these multi-faceted platforms will play a pivotal role in nurturing an informed and empowered generation of youth. The initiatives align seamlessly

UNICEF in Iraq and Ministry of Youth and Sports launch platforms to empower youth to combat climate change *(continued)*



with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, reflecting a shared commitment to fostering youth engagement, driving climate action, and advancing sustainable development in Iraq.

"This joint work with UNICEF represents a momentous leap forward in our efforts to empower Iraqi youth and confront the urgent challenge of climate change," says Mr. Ahmed Muhammed Al-Mubaraq'a, Minister of Youth and Sports. "Through these platforms, we are equipping our young citizens with essential tools

and opportunities to emerge as leaders within their communities, champion positive change and contribute to a resilient and sustainable future."

"These transformative platforms, resulting from our strong collaboration with both the Government and committed young people, will enable Iraqi youth to take up leadership in sustainable development and climate action. Investing in youth skills, knowledge, and passion is key for these young agents of change to catalyze

enduring, positive impact," says Sandra Lattouf, UNICEF Representative in Iraq.

The Youth United for Climate Action coalition, a new flagship initiative, represents an unprecedented union of Iraqi youth dedicated to addressing climate change head-on. Through evidence-based research, innovative solutions, and grassroots campaigns, the coalition will champion strategies for climate adaptation and mitigation. The National Youth Council provides an inclusive platform for young Iraqis to voice their concerns, ideas, and aspirations. The National Life Skills Programme, implemented earlier this year, continues to empower young individuals with crucial skills in employment, entrepreneurship, and environmental awareness.

These groundbreaking initiatives reflect UNICEF's unwavering commitment to championing the rights and well-being of every child and young person, ensuring they possess the tools and opportunities to shape a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

Iraqi youth for a sustainable future: collaborative campaign highlights environmental action

Baghdad, 24 August 2023 – Committed to a cleaner environment, Iraqi youth have launched a climate action campaign, bringing together governments, UN entities, activists, and the private sector to address environmental challenges and to act now to protect our planet. This initiative, spurred by International Youth Day, observed annually on 12 August, highlights "Green Skills for Youth: Towards A Sustainable World", aiming to engage and empower Iraqi youth, harnessing their potential as drivers of change for a more resilient and eco-conscious society.

Youth Empowerment in Action

Kicking off the campaign on 12 of August, an online campaign, followed by a dynamic discussion among 50 students of medicine focused on youth empowerment, active participation, and green skills to address global challenges and come up with collective solutions.

Rallying for a Plastic-Free Future

In a determined effort to beat plastic pollution, more than 500 individuals



answered a call advocating for zero-plastic, converging on the banks of the River Tigris in Baghdad on 18 August to collect plastic bottles, bags and litter.

Capturing Climate Realities

An inclusive photography competition in Mosul, Ninewa Governorate, spotlighted the reality of climate change, highlighted environmental shifts, and focused on the needs of people with disabilities. Through impactful images, the contest conveyed change, inclusivity, and awareness.

Rooted in Renewal: Nationwide Tree Planting Initiative

Guided by collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, a back-to-school tree-planting campaign instills responsibility in the young students. Thousands of trees will be planted in various Iraqi governorates, a testament to the resolve to nurture and protect the environment. Simultaneously, the Department of Media and Information will extend the initiative to three governorates in the Kurdistan Region

Iraqi youth for a sustainable future: collaborative campaign highlights environmental action *(continued)*

through a seed/tree planting drive.

Digital Waves of Change: Amplifying Environmental Awareness

Two online campaigns are forthcoming. "Less Plastic," a social media initiative, aspires to unite youth and influencers in curbing plastic waste. The campaign highlights the significance of the United Nations Conference of Parties (COP) and the roles played by governments and the UN, and fosters a united call for action.



Resident Coordinator Ghulam Isaczai said: "United by purpose, young Iraqis,



influencers, and stakeholders have ignited a beacon of hope through these diverse initiatives in advocating for and acting to protect the environment. With trees taking root, plastic waste highlighted, and voices raised to protect the environment, these dynamic youth are taking the solid steps towards a greener, more resilient future."

Editor's note: These activities wouldn't be possible without the dedication of IFMSA - Iraq, Green Space Organization, Clean Iraq, and the Fighter Life Leaders Team, and the private sector enablers: Careem Taxi, BeCorp Inc., and Hala green water bottles initiative.

Culture

UNESCO's dedicated team is transforming the Old City of Mosul

Mosul, 08 July 2023 - Together with the European Union's generous support, UNESCO's dedicated team is transforming the Old City of Mosul. UNESCO is thrilled to announce the completion of paving the alleys, ensuring safe and reliable access for the community. 124 houses getting rehabilitated | Accessible alleys improved | Impacting lives in Mosul. Preserving heritage brings tangible improvements to people's lives.



UNESCO successfully concludes the second Cultural Resource Management training module in Erbil

Erbil, 11 July 2023 - UNESCO successfully concluded the second Cultural Resource Management training module in Erbil. The 5-day training program empowered young professionals with in-depth knowledge of Cultural Resource Management tools, and techniques. Through interactive sessions, participants engaged in lively discussions, practical exercises, and on their site visits, enhancing skills and understanding of authenticity and integrity in Cultural Resource Management.



UNESCO celebrates liberation of Mosul by handing over 100th rehabilitated historic house



Mosul, 20 July 2023— Commemorating the 6th anniversary of Mosul's liberation from Daesh occupation, UNESCO has officially handed over Heritage House No. 100, marking a significant milestone in the achievement of its work to restore the historic part of the city.

As part of its flagship initiative "Revive the Spirit of Mosul", UNESCO launched in 2020 the rehabilitation of 124 historical houses within Mosul's Old City, which suffered severe damage during the recent conflict. This project was made possible through the generous financial support from the European Union and the fruitful collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Culture and local authorities.

Three years later, 80% of the rehabilitation works in this project are successfully completed, and the displaced families are back in their beloved homes. On this anniversary of the liberation of Mosul, the 100th restored house has officially been

delivered to its owner, at a symbolic key handover ceremony.

The reconstruction of these houses was done according to the highest heritage standards: using traditional techniques, and traditional materials, so that this exceptional heritage of Mosul can once again be transmitted from generation to generation.

"Returning to live in this house is like a dream. Every corner of this house holds precious memories, and I deeply miss the wonderful connections with our neighbors," said the 82-year-old owner, Najat Abdel Aziz. Najat lived in the house with her nine brothers and sisters her entire life before she had to leave because of the destruction it suffered. "The restoration of these houses serves as a catalyst to inspire people to return to the area and fosters a sense of hope among the residents," she emphasized.

The devastation by Daesh in the area resulted in the displacement of hundreds of residents, who sought

refuge in other locations. For a prolonged period, the historic heart of Mosul remained in a state of disrepair, despite having been at one point a cherished neighborhood for generations of Moslawis.

However, since 2020, through this initiative, UNESCO has been diligently rehabilitating historic houses along the path stretching from Al-Nouri Mosque to the Prophet Zarzis area, while also enhancing water and electricity infrastructure. As a result, over 650 residents have been able to reclaim their original homes, offering them a chance to rebuild their lives in a place steeped in history. The return of the inhabitants has also made possible the reopening of local shops. Life is finding its place again in the heart of Mosul.

Restoring these heritage houses also means creating jobs for 4710 workers and craftsmen. UNESCO provided training to local workers in various methods of rehabilitating heritage buildings. 1568 of local job seekers were involved in the rehabilitation process, in partnership with the Ministry of Labor.

The rehabilitation of the 24 remaining houses is on track: they will be delivered to their owners by the end of the summer, 2023. This successful project in Mosul has also been a source of inspiration: it has been extended to Basra (Southern Iraq) where UNESCO is currently restoring 11 historic houses, in coordination with the local authorities.

Education

UNESCO in partnership with the MoHER, is implementing the second phase of quality management & leadership training

Mosul, 02 July 2023 - UNESCO Iraq Office in partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and North Technical University in Mosul starts of Phase 2 of the Quality Assurance Training program as part of the "Enhancing Youth Employability and Resilience for Peace in Ninewah" project. Thanks to the generous funding provided by the Japanese Government, 25 staff members involved in the Quality Assurance process at the Technical Institute Mosul are now undergoing intensive training to enhance their quality management and leadership skills. The training taking place at North

Technical University in Mosul, includes applied learning, case studies, and the development of a comprehensive Quality Improvement Plan tailored to the institute's needs.

This phase follows the successful completion of Phase 1, which focuses on theoretical foundations. Phase 2 aims to provide hands-on learning experiences and equip participants with practical knowledge that can be directly applied to their roles. By the end of the program, participants will have the ability to conduct self-evaluations, develop clear quality improvement plans, and gain a deeper understanding of the existing

standards in place.

The "Enhancing Youth Employability and Resilience for Peace in Ninewah" project is aligned with UNESCO's mission to promote inclusive and quality education, cultural dialogue, and sustainable development. Through the Quality Assurance Training program, the project aims to empower staff members at North Technical University, paving the way for enhanced quality management and leadership within the institution.



The crucial role employers play in developing essential skills among youth to actively engage in fostering peaceful discourse within society

Mosul, 06 July 2023 - Today, sixteen private sector companies received an orientation on "Critical Thinking, Media, and Information Literacy" as part of UNESCO's "Enhancing Youth Employability and Resilience for Peace in Nineveh" project. This project is funded by the Government of Japan with the aim of promoting peace and resilience discourse. During the orientation, the participants learned about the crucial role employers play in developing essential skills among youth to actively engage in fostering peaceful discourse within society. They also focused on the importance of preventing hate speech and division in their communities.

The orientation session was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Northern Technical



University. During the session, the participants delved into the media landscape in Iraq and emphasized the significance of fostering critical thinking skills among the audience, particularly given the abundance of

media content creators. Furthermore, they engaged in discussions on ways to promote community peace through their respective company projects in partnership with the Northern Technical University.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is about assisting people acquire knowledge and skills for the world of work

Baghdad, 12 July 2023 – In Iraq, UNESCO started in 2021 the Phase 2 of the project "Job Creation through Technical and Vocational Education System Strengthening and Labour Market Linkages" aiming to help creating sustainable jobs in a country where unemployment rates are high, and more than half of unemployed people are young people.

Through this project, UNESCO works intensively with Ministries, local Directorates and Vocational schools and University faculty to develop centres of Vocational excellence as models and a resource for other institutions across Iraq.

Working in partnership with government and the private sector, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is about assisting people acquire knowledge and skills for the world of work. Like other components of the education system, TVET focuses on meeting the needs of learner, but its focus on the world of work means that it is also focused on meeting the needs of employers - ensuring the current and future workforce is skilled, productive and ready for work. Overall, the project aims to improve the relevance of the TVET system in Iraq to equip all youth and adults with the skills required for employment, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning. Additionally, the project contributes to the

implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4.3 and 4.4.

The 4th Steering Committee meeting of the TVET 2 project took place at the Prime Minister's Guest House. The UNESCO Project Team presented the accomplishments of the past six months and received approval for the work plan for the final six months of the project. Dr. Hamid Khalaf, the Advisor to the Prime Minister, expressed satisfaction with the progress made and commended the team's efforts. He extended gratitude to the EU for their

continuous support in the TVET reform in Iraq.

Dr. Falah Al Quaisi, Deputy Minister of Education, expressed appreciation to UNESCO for their efforts in rehabilitating and upgrading vocational schools in Iraq and KRI. He also welcomed the recent opening of Mosul Vocational School. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the project's contribution towards increasing youth employment in Iraq. The EU commended the Iraqi Government for their cooperation with the project, acknowledging its vital role in the ongoing success.



UNESCO organizes the “Preventing Violent Extremism through Creating a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment” workshop



Baghdad, 20 July 2023 - In the framework of the “Preventing Violent Extremism through Education in Iraq” project supported by the Government of Canada, UNESCO

Iraq Office, in coordination with the National Committee for Preventing Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism and the Ministry of Education, organized the “Preventing Violent Extremism through Creating a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment” workshop. The workshop was attended by 37 members and representatives of the National Committee, Ministry of Education and the sub-Committees from the General Directorates of Education of 11 governorates in Iraq. The workshop presented UNESCO's approach to Preventing Violent Extremism which aims at strengthening the capacities of education actors and provide them with the key skills and techniques to create a welcoming and inclusive

educational environment for students, making them feel safe and supported and build their defenses for peace nurturing their resilience and academic excellence. The workshop stressed the importance of relying on the role of education in preventing the drivers of violent extremism and making learners active agents for peace.

The workshop came as a part of a series of workshops planned to strengthen the capacities of the National Committee and subcommittees to Prevent Violent Extremism through Education in Iraq, toward the expansion of the programme implemented with the Ministry of Education in Nineveh and Anbar governorates to other governorates.

UNESCO hosts the final meeting for the "Preventing Violent Extremism through Education in Iraq" project in Baghdad

Baghdad, 23 July 2023 - Today, UNESCO hosted the final meeting for the "Preventing Violent Extremism through Education in Iraq" project in Baghdad. The gathering brought together various representatives from important entities such as the Prime Minister Advisory Commission, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, as well as other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and agencies involved in Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) in Iraq. The focus of the meeting was to showcase and discuss the efforts made in preventing violent extremism in Iraq and beyond, particularly highlighting the implementation experience of the recent UNESCO project supported by the Government of Canada.

During the meeting, there were presentations from both UNESCO's headquarters and its Iraq office. They covered the global and local approach to PVE, providing valuable insights into the strategies and initiatives. Additionally, the UNESCO chair at Ulster University presented findings from the scoping study conducted by their experts at the beginning of the program. This presentation shed light on the lessons learned and the challenges faced throughout the programme implementation.

Furthermore, a panel discussion took place, featuring representatives from the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, the UNESCO chair at Mosul University, and one of the CSOs working on PVE. This panel discussion allowed for a comprehensive exchange

of ideas and perspectives from different stakeholders, adding depth to the discussions.

By the conclusion of the meeting, all participants reached a consensus on key recommendations and guidance for future PVE programs in Iraq and other regions.



UNESCO enhances the pedagogical skills of the teachers and introduces the new Competence-Based curricula

Baghdad, 24 July 2023 - UNESCO, in collaboration with the European Union, is dedicated to improving Vocational Education in Iraq with the ultimate goal of enhancing the employability of Iraqi Youth by equipping them with relevant skills required by the Private Sector. A critical aspect of achieving this goal is to focus on the professional development of teachers in Vocational schools.

To address this, a comprehensive 5-day workshop is being conducted for Vocational school teachers, focusing on

digital literacy for the classroom. The primary objective of this workshop is to empower teachers to effectively utilize key software applications such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Google Forms, and AI technologies, thereby enhancing their teaching and learning methodologies.

This workshop forms a part of a series designed to enhance the pedagogical skills of the teachers and introduce the new Competence-Based curricula. By enhancing the skills and competence of teachers, the overall performance of

Vocational schools can be significantly improved, leading to a more productive and competent workforce in Iraq.



UNICEF, funded by Daewoo E&C, to provide early childhood education support to 750 children from disadvantaged areas of Basra

Baghdad, 06 August 2023 – UNICEF has signed a partnership with Daewoo E&C to provide 750 young children with access to early childhood education (ECE) services in disadvantaged areas in Basra Governorate.

Co-led by the Basra Directorate of Education, this partnership will ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for every child, enhancing school readiness and facilitating a steady and effective transition to primary education. ECE is central in enabling younger children to start primary education at the right age and with the necessary competencies to succeed.

With Daewoo E&C's support, UNICEF will build five ECE centers in five schools (one classroom per school). Each ECE center will include a classroom, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and a small safe play area, serving two shifts. In alignment with Iraq National Education Strategy, UNICEF is supporting the Government's goal to provide access to ECE for at least 30 per cent of all children in Iraq by 2031.

"UNICEF will support the Ministry of Education (MoE) in providing vulnerable girls and boys with access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education, which will accelerate progress towards Sustainable



Development Goal 4.2," said Sandra Lattouf, UNICEF Representative in Iraq. "With Daewoo E&C's support, MoE and UNICEF will ensure that these children are able to fulfil their rights and reach their full potential." "Daewoo E&C is proud to have entered into a partnership with UNICEF to provide early childhood education (ECE) support to 750 children from disadvantaged areas in Basra Governorate," said Baek Jungwan, CEO of Daewoo E&C. "I hope our support for ECE will help create a stable and healthy future for children in Iraq and we plan to further contribute to the development of health and education of communities overseas."

School-Based Management committees will be established in the five schools as part of strengthening ECE systems. Based on the Parents Teachers Association, the members of the committee will be trained and

supported to elaborate a school improvement plan. This will ensure community ownership of the implementation of the ECE component.

To strengthen the capacity of teachers, 40 teachers will be trained on ECE, contributing to delivering quality education focusing on the holistic development of the child. As additional training, 40 teachers and caregivers will also strengthen their skills in young child protection.

The programme will also aim to reach children in the community through summer activities for 750 children immediately when the project starts to prepare the young children for the next school year as the construction will take months to be completed. 750 parents will also be reached to support their parenting skills and community mobilization will be implemented to raise awareness on ECE.

Youth

Reigniting young Iraqis' passion for sports and the arts

Diyala, 26 June 2023 - In the heart of Muqadadiya town in eastern Iraq lies the Bani Saad Youth and Sports Forum. Established in 1986, this youth centre in Diyala has evolved over the years, shaping countless lives through its various programmes.

It has nurtured athletes, some of which had played and won national championships. It is also a hub for artistic and cultural activities, fostering creativity and providing opportunities for personal growth.

At the helm of this transformative institution is Ahmed Hassan Omari, its director who has been tirelessly leading the centre since 2014. Spending 10 hours at the centre every day, Ahmed has dedicated himself to transforming

the lives of young people in his community. From organising poetry nights to coaching football teams to planning new projects, Ahmed does his job passionately.

Ahmed's dedication to the centre has been recognized by many, praising his efforts to bring back hope in his community, especially among the youth, after the ISIL conflict.

"I see myself in them. When I was in my teenage years, I could not pursue my love for sports and the arts because my family could not afford it. I don't want the younger generations in my community to experience what I did. A lot of them have so much potential but need support and guidance. So, I help them reach their full potential so they

can make their dreams a reality," he says.

Every month at least 800 people as young as 10 years old visit Bani Saad Youth and Sports Forum. They play football, volleyball, basketball, table tennis, billiards, and chess. Painters, sculptors, poets, and photographers converge at the centre to discuss art and collaborate on projects. Some come to play music and act on stage. Others take part in skills training and learn sewing, knitting, and handicraft.

"I consider all of them my sons and daughters. We welcome everyone and encourage them to sign up for our activities. Our team works hard to conceptualize new ideas and find better ways to serve the people of Diyala,"

Reigniting young Iraqis' passion for sports and the arts ... (continued)

Ahmed shares.

Bani Saad provides safe spaces where people can freely work and showcase their talents. Actors and painters love the centre's large, quiet halls because it helps them concentrate on their art.

A symbol of hope and resilience

The Bani Saad Youth and Sports Forum has always been a symbol of hope and resilience in Diyala. After surviving a bombing in 2007, it badly needed rehabilitation. However, due to lack of funding, its reconstruction only commenced in 2011 and completion was hindered by the ISIL conflict in 2014.

Ahmed, who had just taken over the centre that year, closed the facility and suspended all activities. Despite security threats, Ahmed and his team always checked on the centre.

"We had to protect the centre at all costs. It was all that we had," he says.

Ahmed and his team chose to remain in Diyala and look after the youth centre, determined not to let fear get to them. Months after the conflict ended, Ahmed and his team slowly brought back some of the centre's activities, even with limited resources, equipment, and participants.

Through the years, Bani Saad has become a transformative facility in Diyala, supporting young talents and cultivating an environment that empowers everyone to flourish.

In 2021, UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization worked with Ahmed, his team, and the Diyala governorate to rebuild and upgrade the Bani Saad Youth and Sports Forum. In November 2022, the youth centre reopened boasting its new specialized rooms, bigger theatre hall and basketball and football courts, a



fountain, and gardens, all solar-powered.

"Young people are the future of Iraq. I want Bani Saad to be a haven where young people in Diyala can find inspiration to pursue their goals and dreams," Ahmed says.

With the expansion of the youth centre, Ahmed and his team are now able to accommodate more than 1,000 visitors per day. It also enabled them to offer new activities like sewing to attract more people.

"Even in the face of challenges, we want this centre to help people realize their dreams and embrace their passions. I believe Bani Saad will play a vital role in the future of our community, and not just for the youth. We will continue to work hard to provide those in need with the necessary tools to uplift their lives," Ahmed adds.

Rebuilding lives stitch by stitch

Shayma Ahmed, 48, and Nour Khalid Ahmed, 28, spend at least three hours a day at the Bani Saad Youth and Sports Forum, stitching beautiful garments, learning new techniques, and connecting with fellow seamstresses.

Facing the challenges of living in post-ISIL, Shayma and Nour found a renewed sense of purpose through



their shared passion for sewing, which they discovered while participating in Bani Saad's skills training.

"This centre holds a special place in my heart. I always feel at home here being surrounded by supportive friends who celebrate my growth," Nour says.

The bonds that Shayma and Nour form with trainees fuel their passion to teach and spark inspiration in others.

Like Nour, Shayma found solace in Bani Saad. Every hour they spent at the centre, they discovered more and more their potential and their talents flourished. Now both trainers, they hold sessions thrice a week and impart their knowledge and expertise to others.

"We not only gain invaluable technical skills but also get the chance to build friendships within the community. It feels good to empower others and witness our trainees' progress," Shayma says.

Shayma and Nour share similar aspirations. They wish to fulfill their dreams of establishing their own businesses, leveraging their sewing skills.

About

The Bani Saad Youth and Sports Forum in Diyala was rehabilitated by UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization with support from the Government of Germany. Built using sustainable and eco-friendly approaches, this centre is solar-powered and has systems in place to further reduce energy and water consumption, lower carbon emissions, and manage waste properly. Bani Saad serves more than 50,000 people. As of June 2023, UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization has completed over 3,600 projects, improving the lives of more than 8.3 million people in the five governorates liberated from ISIL.



National Child Data Portal launched on Iraqi Child's Day

Baghdad, 13 July 2023 - "UNICEF is committed to advancing the rights of children in Iraq by supporting the Government in delivering quality results #ForEveryChild using evidence-based decision making," said Ms. Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq, during today's launch of the National Child Data Portal in marking Iraqi Child's Day.

"The National Child Data Portal enables all stakeholders to shed light on issues that are most relevant to children in Iraq," said Dr. Dia'a Kathem, Head of the Central Statistics Organization, today in marking Iraqi Child's Day.

"I would like to call on the



Government of Iraq and others to continue to engage with young people to create a better world

#ForEveryChild in Iraq," said Amna Ali, on behalf of young people in Iraq, today during Iraqi Child's Day.

Engraving history



Baghdad, 13 July 2023 - In his small corner shop in Baghdad, surrounded by an assortment of leather goods and accessories, Mohammed Baqer sits on a stool, bending over and carefully working on a leather purse with a sharp electrical tool.

When asked what he was doing, he raised his head, the same frowned look on his face, and responded confidently: "I'm engraving initials on a purse". Then went back to focus on his delicate

work.

Asked to engrave the letter 'S' in English on a purse, he snapped back: "I only do Arabic calligraphy."

A youthful 22-year-old from Baghdad's Karradah neighbourhood, Mohammed has been working on leather for many years, a profession known as Sarajeh. The word Sarajeh comes from Sarj - a mount's saddle.

Mohammed says that this profession is dying, but for him the work is

rewarding and sometimes 10 hours a day to keep up the business he took on after his father and grandfather. "We are trying to keep our heritage alive as much as we can," he added. As he spoke, shoppers stopped for a look at the display of his work adorning the front of his shop in the busy Souk al-Saray on al-Mutanabbi Street in Baghdad's historic centre.

Mohammed went on to describe his work: "The Saraj-man works on leather to engrave letters on different type of items such as wallets, handbags, frescoes, leather covers for the Holy Qu'ran, and many other leather crafts." Many of his engravings speak of the rich history of Iraq and this shines through on the simplest of leather wallets that he has proudly placed on the shelves of his shop from proverbs to Arabic and Islamic writings.

By Sana'a Kareem, Public Information Officer, UNAMI

UNICEF, ILO and WFP Iraq, funded by EU Partnerships, conducted the National Social Protection Strategic Framework workshop

Baghdad, 02 August 2023 - UNICEF, ILO and WFP Iraq, funded by EU Partnerships, conducted the National Social Protection Strategic Framework workshop to secure final approval for it and to establish annual milestones for system development, shaping the future of social protection #ForEveryChild in Iraq.



Empowering Iraqi youth with skills for development!

Baghdad, 01 August 2023 - Last week, UNICEF and WFP collaborated to address key priorities on youth skills and participation, by providing a comprehensive package of skills building with a focus on life skills, employability, and #entrepreneurship, contributing to the "Learning to Earning" agenda. Together, UNICEF and WFP adopted an innovative approach by working with universities and Civil Society Organizations to equip 800 young people with life and employability skills, complementing the WFP Josour programme, and advancing a shared vision to promote youth social inclusion through community engagement.



UNAMI on Twitter

Baghdad, 12 August 2023 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, on the occasion of the International Youth Day 2023:

"Young people make up 60 percent of Iraq's population. The need to engage them on a green Iraq, and the many other issues central to this country's future, is crystal clear. Whether my generation-fellows like it or not: young people will, very soon, be leading the way. Their voices must be heard."



Iraqi youth celebrates ways as agents of change for the global goals

Baghdad, 12 August 2023 – On International Youth Day UNAMI talks with Iraqi youth who celebrates ways as agents of change for the global goals. Tuqa Abdulraheem, teacher and Head of Whites organization for women and children: I hope that every young man and woman lives safely and peacefully in this country. Every woman and child gets more safety and stability from their families. The United Nations Mission in Iraq supported many volunteer youth teams and I was one of the volunteers in the teams.

We worked on a very important goal of sustainable development goals, which is number six: how to maintain and obtain healthier and cleaner water by rationalizing water consumption in Iraq.

Zahraa, volunteering program manager: During my work, I was able to coordinate almost 300 volunteers in the Kurdistan region from different cities and villages in the Kurdistan region.

We were able to record 2500 volunteer hours in planting trees and tackling climate change.

My plan in the future is to form special teams in all cities and villages of the Kurdistan region and to have projects

on the issue of addressing climate change.

Join us!

Murtadha, Al-Tameemi, software engineer: I noticed the amount of waste collected on the banks of the Tigris.

I decided to clean up the place. At the time, I shared it on Instagram and asked people to participate with me or from their places to clean public places.

People's reaction was awesome. Thousands of people have started to participate in cleaning campaigns

throughout Iraq, and that's how we launched the Cleaning Ambassadors campaign, which works to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals 15 and 13 for a better life on land and a pollution-free environment.

Our volunteer team continues to do this work and we will not stop until we see our country and planet better.

You can access the video produced by UNAMI Strategic Communications and Public Information Office at <https://bit.ly/3PbtwTg>

