

# UNAMI Herald

Volume 11, Issue 2

March—April 2024



## DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Isaczai underlines UN support through joint initiatives towards sustainable water management in Iraq

**Baghdad, 29 April 2024** - Today, at the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, highlighted the significant progress made by Iraq's accession to Water Convention. He underlined UN support through joint initiatives as UN-Water Task Force and Environment and Climate Change Policy Advisory Group towards sustainable water management.



## International Women's Day - invest in women: accelerate progress

**Baghdad, 08 March 2024** - On International Women's Day, we unite to reaffirm our commitment to advancing the rights and empowerment of women and girls worldwide. Under the theme of "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress", we recognize the urgency to address the persistent challenges hindering equality between men and women.

The economic empowerment of women remains a paramount objective in our pursuit of equality. Secure incomes, access to decent work, and meaningful participation in decision-making processes are essential for creating a prosperous and just society. Yet, globally, investment in women falls short, with \$360 billion deficit in funding needed to address the specific needs of women and girls.

Investing in women is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity for inclusive economic growth, food security and income opportunities, leading to better outcomes at the individual, familial, and community levels, ultimately contributing to long-term sustainable development and social stability, particularly amongst the most vulnerable communities.

To commemorate International Women's Day in Iraq, National Directorate of Iraqi Women / General Secretariat of the Council of



Ministers, in collaboration with UN agencies, brought together high-level stakeholders from the Government of Iraq, public and private sectors, civil society organizations, and international partners to amplify our collective commitment to investing in women. The celebration showcased achievements in women's economic empowerment, identifying key gaps, and charted a way forward towards the achievement of equality between men and women in all spheres of life. Iraqi women have shown resilience and determination in their pursuit of economic empowerment, with initiatives aimed at increasing their representation in decision-making roles. Women encounter additional obstacles, including unequal access to food and resources, wage gap, high levels of informal employment, limited access to entrepreneurship opportunities and financial services,

and burdensome care responsibilities. Moreover, women face high risk of violence and discrimination due to social and cultural norms.

Iraq has made strides in advancing women's rights, including through legislative measures to ensure women's representation in parliament and political spheres. Recent parliamentary elections saw a significant increase in women parliamentarians, surpassing the constitutionally mandated quota. This progress is a testament to the potential for change and underscores the importance of continued investment in women's empowerment.

UN Iraq stands ready to work with the Government of Iraq, public and private sectors, and civil society organizations to accelerate progress towards a future where every woman and girl can realize her full potential.

## In this edition ...

**DSRSG Cordone briefs members of the Security Council Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security on developments in Iraq**

**Baghdad, 08 April 2024** – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Mr. Claudio Cordone, briefed members of the Security Council Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security on developments in Iraq. The meeting was attended by representatives from the UN Country Team and UNITAD in Iraq and relevant UN entities in New York. *More on page 3.*

**Sinjar welcomes back 80 displaced families with IOM support**

**Sinjar, 13 March 2024** - After nearly ten years of displacement, 80 families returned to their hometown in Sinjar, Ninewa, through IOM's Facilitated Voluntary Movement (FVM) programme, in close collaboration with the Government of Iraq and Ministry of Migration and Displaced, March 12, 2024. *More on page 24.*

**UNAMI/OHCHR report calls for further measures to address domestic violence in Iraq**

**Baghdad, 07 March 2024** – Ahead of the International Women's Day, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have jointly released a comprehensive report entitled "Accountability for Domestic violence in Iraq: Promoting justice and non-discrimination." *More on page 13.*

**A triumph for accountability efforts: how Iraq and UNITAD supported Portugal's first conviction for international crimes**

**Baghdad, 03 March 2024** - In a significant stride towards justice, the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) welcomed Portugal's recent landmark conviction of an ISIL member, after being charged for international crimes committed in Iraq. The ISIL perpetrator, A.A., an Iraqi national who fled to Europe, was charged of committing war crimes, in Mosul, Iraq, for the kidnapping and whipping of an Iraqi citizen.

*More on page 17.*

**Groundbreaking Iraqi national strategy set to reduce inequalities in the world of work**

**Baghdad, 07 March 2024** (ILO News) - Iraq's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have unveiled a new landmark national strategy that lays the groundwork for building a more prosperous and equitable future for all in Iraq through inclusivity, equal opportunity, and social protection. *More on page 48.*

**Up to 7.5 million children to receive life-saving measles vaccination, a government-led initiative supported by UNICEF and WHO**

**Baghdad, 14 April 2024** – Today, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with UNICEF and WHO kicks off a massive nationwide vaccination campaign to protect children from contagious measles, mumps, and rubella diseases. Over 7.5 million children aged 6 - 12 years in primary schools in addition to kindergartens are expected to be reached during this campaign that ends on 25 April 2024. *More on page 57.*

**DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Isaczai underlines UN support through joint initiatives as UN-Water Task Force and Environment and Climate Change Policy Advisory Group towards sustainable water management in Iraq**

**Baghdad, 29 April 2024** - Today, at the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, highlighted the significant progress made by Iraq's accession to Water Convention. He underlined UN support through joint initiatives as UN-Water Task Force and Environment and Climate Change Policy Advisory Group towards sustainable water management. *More on page 67.*

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



## Strengthening the role of women leaders in community development in Iraq



Baghdad, 07 March 2024 - In its recent training courses, UNDP concluded a series aimed at enhancing the role of women leaders in community

development across Iraq. The training included 35 people from the education directorates of the five liberated governorates. The primary goal was to

empower women, develop leadership skills, and stimulate sustainable development.

Recognizing the paramount importance of advancing women's roles, UNDP in Iraq has proactively initiated measures to amplify the influence of women in steering society toward stability. These initiatives are designed to nurture a generation of empowered women poised to shape Iraq's future.

The training sessions were tailored to equip women with essential skills and imbue them with the confidence necessary for effective leadership. From fostering community engagement to driving sustainable initiatives, the program underscores the indispensable role of women in propelling societal progress.

## DSRSG Cordone briefs members of the Security Council Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security on developments in Iraq

Baghdad, 08 April 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Mr. Claudio Cordone, briefed members of the Security Council Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security on developments in Iraq. The meeting was attended by representatives from the UN Country Team and UNITAD in Iraq and relevant UN entities in New York. Participants discussed efforts to advance women's political participation, legal protection and opportunities to strengthen engagement with Iraq to promote women's rights, including in implementing the second National Action Plan on UN Security Council

resolution 1325.

Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Mr. Claudio Cordone: "Very

good discussion with the SC expert group on key issues in Iraq and UNAMI's and the entire UN role in supporting progress working with Iraq's government and civil society".



## Sixty women entrepreneurs across Iraq benefited from the IOM Enterprise Development Fund for Women (EDF-W) supported by Ulkoministeriö – utrikesministeriet

Sulaymaniyah, 21 April 2024 - Together with Anu Saarela, the Ambassador of Finland to Iraq, IOM visited Sulaymaniyah to meet some successful business women and hear their inspiring stories firsthand.

- ✔ Transforming communities
- ✔ Creating jobs
- ✔ Fostering private sector development

60 women entrepreneurs across Iraq benefited from the IOM Enterprise Development Fund for Women (EDF-W) supported by Ulkoministeriö – utrikesministeriet.

IOM and @Ulkoministeriö - utrikesministeriet will continue working together to empower women business owners in Iraq.



## Brushes, fabric, and cheese: steps to a brighter future for Iraqi women

**Baghdad, 26 March 2024** - With limited access to opportunities and societal pressures, Iraqi women face many challenges in entrepreneurship. But Iraqi women are known for their determination, and it is this unwavering aspiration to overcome social barriers that binds the stories of three women who are making strides in industries traditionally reserved for men. Seeking to build a better future and more equitable opportunities, not just for themselves, but for their communities as well, Bayan, Alaa and Salwa have become national heroes for many women and girls in Iraq.



### Bayan Majid: A Story of Healing and Hope

Bayan Majid stands tall in the vibrant hues adorning the walls of her art gallery in Sulaymaniyah. It's a space that embodies her multi-faceted identity – a painter, an activist, and a mother of three. She established her gallery in 2016 during the peak of the Daesh conflict. Amidst the turmoil and despair in Iraq, the gallery represented a hub for relaxation, where visitors could view artwork and participate in courses.

"Art is not only a form of self-expression," she believes, "but also serves as a tool for purifying the soul, a method of release from suffering". This conviction led her to begin teaching the art of painting to vulnerable populations.

"I don't just create art; I create artists," she says, with a smile that reflects the pride she takes in encouraging creativity.

Through IOM's Enterprise Development Fund (EDF), Bayan received a grant that enabled her to transition her business from a home-based operation to opening a larger café gallery. She also purchased a photo printer and other equipment,

enabling her to reproduce digital prints of her paintings, and put them up for sale, widening her reach and ensuring additional financial sustainability. Furthermore, this support enabled her to employ four additional staff members at her café gallery.



### Alaa Adel: Shifting Gears and Changing Tracks

Across the busy streets of Baghdad's Kharada neighborhood, another unique story of resilience and creativity unfolds. Alaa Adel has made a name for herself in an industry usually dominated by men in Iraq: fashion design.

For years before taking on fashion design, Alaa wore a different hat – that of a professor at the College of Fine Arts at Baghdad University. However, her passion for creative expression and entrepreneurship, coupled with the support of her husband and children, motivated her to leave behind the familiar confines of academia in 2022. Recognizing the limited options in the local fashion industry, which relied heavily on imported clothes, Alaa saw a market for locally designed and produced garments. She established her own fashion design workshop in Baghdad and launched her brand "Iraq Couture".

A grant from IOM's Enterprise Development Fund (EDF) helped Alaa expand her business operations by purchasing new sewing machines, fabric, packaging materials, workshop furniture, as well as establishing new marketing partnerships and hiring five additional employees.

Her innovative business approach, bringing everything from manufacturing to photo shoots inside her transformed workshop, sets her apart from traditional sewing factories. Her business model not only inspires other women entrepreneurs, but also creates an

enabling environment for young women designers, flipping the narrative about women's entrepreneurship in Baghdad.



### Salwa Ahmed: Cultivating Dreams

Beyond the hustle and bustle of Baghdad city lie the fertile plains and rural communities of Latifiya. Here, Salwa Ahmed runs her family's livestock business – traditionally managed and operated by men in Iraq.

Even as a child, Salwa was drawn to the rhythm of agricultural life. With the encouragement and support of her family, Salwa started small and invested her earnings into expanding the business.

"Any time I have some money saved up, I invest in buying new sheep," Salwa says. Through her dedication, her flock has grown to 35 sheep, which allows her to generate revenue by selling their wool, dairy products, and trading the sheep, becoming a role model for other women in her community.

Salwa's journey is not just about personal growth, but also about contributing to her family's well-being. "I cover all my family's expenses from this business," she shares with a sense of pride.

Salwa received a grant from IOM's Individual Livelihoods Assistance (ILA) programme, which helped her expand her business, purchase additional sheep and other materials for her business.

IOM's Enterprise Development Fund (EDF) is an innovative program designed to support livelihoods at the community level through private sector revitalization and economic development by targeting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The EDF provides financial capital to SMEs across various sectors – primary, secondary, and tertiary – with a focus on creating jobs and contributing to post-conflict economic



## Brushes, fabric, and cheese: steps to a brighter future for Iraqi women *(continued)*

recovery. The EDF uses a multi-stage selection process in which businesses are scored based on a custom-built scoring algorithm, followed by a rigorous due-diligence process. The selection process has been catered for the different adaptations of EDF, considering their contexts and specificities in targeting sectoral businesses. Additionally, the EDF's women's program specifically targets businesses owned by women to increase the representation of female business owners and to encourage women's participation in the labour force. The two main objectives of EDF-W are to support female-led businesses to expand through facilitated access to capital, and to support the entry into the

labour force of female jobseekers who may face cultural, economic, and social barriers.

The Individual Livelihoods Assistance (ILA) program is another key initiative undertaken by IOM in Iraq. It is specifically designed to empower vulnerable households to achieve economic stability and create sustainable livelihoods. This program offers a tailored approach, providing individuals with the skills and resources they need to succeed. This includes vocational training, business-financing in the form of cash grants for new or existing micro-enterprises, and support in developing marketable skills. By equipping individuals with the necessary tools and knowledge, the ILA program enables them to not

only generate income but also build resilience and independence.

The stories of Bayan, Alaa, and Salwa are very different, but united by a common thread: They are weaving unique patterns into the women's economic empowerment in Iraq. They inspire hope and resilience in a generation to dream bigger and build a brighter future for themselves, their families, and their communities.

These initiatives are possible through the generous support of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and the Government of Germany through KfW.

By Sahar Alsaffouri | National Communications Officer, IOM

### International Women's Day

## UNAMI Human Rights Office organizes events in Mosul and Kirkuk to celebrate the International Women's Day under the theme "Invest in women: Accelerate progress"

**Mosul, 06 March 2024** - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized an event to celebrate the International Women's Day under the theme "Invest in Women: Accelerate progress". Twenty-four participants (19 females and 5 males) from Ninewa Governorate attended the event. The participants discussed the importance of women's critical role in decision-making and leadership in different areas, including climate change and human rights, and challenges they face in leading initiatives on climate action such as using renewable energy to generate electricity in rural areas. They underscored the importance of climate action for a better future and offered suggestions and recommendations for new initiatives to address the issue.

In Kirkuk on 07 March 2024, UNAMI HRO, the Iraqi Al-Amal Association,



the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights, and the Women Affairs Department in Kirkuk jointly organized an event to celebrate International Women's Day under this year's theme "Invest in women: Accelerate progress" with the support of the Mall of Kirkuk. Representatives from government departments, civil

society organizations, journalists and the private sector listened to working women share their inspirational stories, noting they were able to support their families and play an active role in their respective communities giving them a sense of self-reliance, dignity and accomplishment.

## Happy International Women's Day from UNHCR Iraq

**Baghdad, 07 March 2024** - During a football match today we saw the strength of girls in Iraq.

Sports can be such a powerful tool to empower, boost the confidence and enable women and girls to be active.

We must #InvestInWomen if we want a better world for us all.



## Young girls paint hope in IDP camp art workshop



**Ninewa, 07 March 2024** – In the heart of Hassan Sham camp in Nineveh Governorate, northern Iraq, an artistic journey unfolds, echoing the stories of young souls finding strength and empowerment through the strokes of the paintbrush.

Farah, 17 years old, from Mosul, who is one of the participants getting trained on drawing at the IOM Mental health and Psychosocial Support Center says her feelings are brought to life through drawing as she pours them onto the canvas: "Drawing allows me to express what is inside me - revealing the power of transferring negative emotions into positive energy by pouring my emotions

onto paper, and in the process alleviate unspoken burdens and feeling better"

"When you pick up the pencil and start drawing, you will see what was inside you. It is my way of getting rid of the things that I cannot say," explaining the healing and emotional liberation that art brings.

Amina, a 20-year-old student, lets her feelings dance on paper with every brushstroke. "Drawing is my happy place," she says, emphasizing the sheer joy of letting her feelings out, and the lightness that removes internal conflicts. "I love drawing my hobbies and even my dreams. It's a way to make them tangible, a way to bring

them to life," says Amina, explaining how art empowers her to deal with her daily life as an internally displaced person living in camp.

IOM's art sessions work to promote well-being, nurture artistic abilities, and empower the women and girls to break societal norms that suppress the emotional expression of women and girls.

Farah and Amina found themselves immersed in a world of new knowledge and artistic discoveries through the art course. From the basics of shading to exploring vibrant color palettes, their art has transformed from simple drawings into complex masterpieces.

Amina, who aspires to become a laboratory doctor and a famous painter, envisions a future in which her love of drawing and scientific pursuits coexists harmoniously. "I will not give up my hobby for my other dream. I want to achieve both," she said.

As the strokes of hope continue to shape the future of Hassan Sham camp's women and girls, the art course becomes not just a creative outlet, but a profound journey of self-discovery, resilience, and empowerment for many women and girls.

On the international women's day, the girls crowned their artistic journey in a small graduation ceremony exhibiting their artworks, to celebrate the knowledge they've gained throughout the course and to proudly show their artistic skills with the world.

By Daniah Al Sadoon, IOM Iraq

## On International Women's Day seven Moslawi female speakers shared their inspiring journeys with students

**Mosul, 08 March 2024** - Celebrating International Women's Day on March 8, 2024, UNESCO Iraq, within the "Enhancing Employability for Youth in Ninawa" (EYE-N) Project, joins the global chorus under the theme "Invest in women: accelerate progress".

Seven Moslawi female speakers with different occupations shared their inspiring journeys with students at Al-Intissar Commercial School for Girls. 300 girl Students and teachers actively participated in the interactive sessions, thoroughly enjoying their involvement. International Women's Day is an occasion to celebrate achievements, reflect on progress, and unite in the pursuit of gender equality and women empowerment. It's a day to honor the remarkable contributions of women and to stand together, united in our mission to advance gender equality worldwide.





## Towards women's inclusion in the Arab region for a sustainable future

**Baghdad/Beirut, 08 March 2024** - Women's empowerment and gender equality are vital to achieving the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

The situation for women in Arab countries has been changing over time and, thanks to legal reforms in a number of areas and progress in health and education indicators, Arab women have been able to enhance their capabilities and skills, enter in new fields of the economy and take up more leadership positions.

Today marks International Women's Day. This year's theme is 'Invest in women: Accelerate progress'.

UNDP is committed to working closely across the United Nations system and with partners to support countries to achieve sustainable development and to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment.

Let's take a tour to learn about countries in the Arab region that have been working on empowering women through different projects and initiatives.

Acquiring new skills in Iraq

UNDP in Iraq has been working with partners to provide livelihood and economic support by offering vocational training, cash for work activities, and small business grants among others – to improve women's lives and rebuild



social bonds.

Buthaina Hussein, 30-year-old, a married mother of four is one of the 10 women from the Al Zab village in Kirkuk Governorate selected to take part in the vocational classes. She expanded her baking skills, learning how to make different types of cakes and Iraqi candies and perfecting her decorating techniques after attending 14-day training. By the end of the training, she was taking orders from her neighbours and earning 6000 IQD per cake sold. Buthaina's family was displaced in Kirkuk City for 5 years due to the ISIL insurgency and returned to find everything destroyed. "Everyone in my family is excited about this, my children all support me while I work and they are learning too," she said.

Another successful story is Radasa, 43, who was born and raised in the rural area of Al Shirqaat, Salah al-Din who received training and support with cattle keeping and breeding. She received one cow and a small ox. She plans to use the cow to produce milk for her family and to sell to community members.

UNDP is supporting women by providing trainings in different fields to empower them through acquiring new skills.

UNDP Iraq has offered a training course in computer literacy where Sakinah learned to format devices, install programs, troubleshoot common computer problems, and learned to fix them. Prior to the training programme, Sakinah was not technologically inclined, but now she acquired new skill empowered to give back to her community, leveraging the potential of using technology for development, and securing for herself a role in making it happen in her community.

"I am passionate about sharing my knowledge and empowering other women, I believe that what I have learned, I must pass onto the next woman," said Sakinah.

By Hoda El Nahlawy, Communication Associate, UNDP

## Invest in a woman, empower a community

**Baghdad, 08 March 2024** - Investing in women, giving them a seat at the table and the opportunities to be in important decision-making roles offers multiple benefits for communities at large. This imperative resonates strongly with the work of UN Volunteers serving with UN Women in Iraq.

UN Volunteers Hawzhin Hussein, Noor Alhasany, Hajer Al-Sallami, and Ramia Al-Hakeem promote women's empowerment for a more inclusive and equitable society in Iraq.

Throughout the country, including in the Kurdistan region, they coordinate projects and manage initiatives aimed at empowering women across various sectors. Projects include education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and political participation for women.

Hawzhin, Noor, Hajer and Ramia emphasize that society cannot progress till dedicated investments are made in women-centric initiatives.

Through their combined expertise in the development context, these UN

Volunteers advance the initiatives of UN Women. "Investing in women isn't about giving them a handout. It's about giving them a hand up. Unlocking their potential so they create change across all sectors of society," says Ramia Al-Hakeem. "Investing in a woman is investing in the community and empowering a nation," adds her colleague, Hajer Al-Sallami.

Ajay Madiwale, UN Women's Country Representative in Iraq emphasizes the valuable support provided by United Nations Volunteers. "UN Volunteers play an important role in supporting UN Women's Country Programme across all the pillars of our work. They represent emerging professionals and future leaders in the organization," he says.

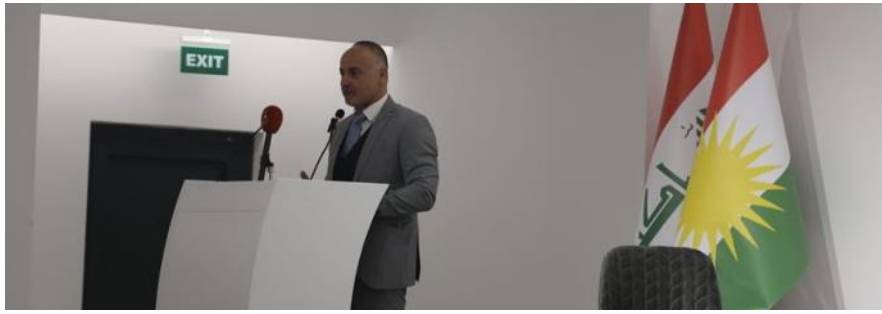
Through collaboration between UN Women and United Nations Volunteers, both entities can leverage their unique strengths to build a more inclusive and equitable future for all." - Ajay Madiwale, UN Women's Country Representative in Iraq.

Speaking about this year's International Women's Day theme: 'Invest in women, accelerate progress', Noor Alhasany says that creating an enabling environment for women is not just a moral imperative. It's a strategic one. She adds, "When we create opportunities for women, we ensure a more prosperous future."

International Women's Day is a call to action and also a stark reminder that women with equal opportunities can create change. A change that has a ripple effect on all spheres of sustainable development.



## UNFPA Iraq participates in a panel discussion that focused on Iraq's National Family Planning Strategy (2021-2025)



**Baghdad, 14 March 2024** - This International Women's Day, UNFPA Iraq participated in a panel discussion

which focused on Iraq's National Family Planning Strategy (2021-2025) and its impact on women's health,

education, and empowerment. The panel explored the strategy's role in supporting Iraq's International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) commitments and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Family planning is essential for promoting women's well-being, improving maternal and infant health, and addressing challenges like adolescent pregnancies. By prioritising family planning, we can foster a brighter, healthier future for women, families, and communities in Iraq.

### Electoral

#### UNAMI on X

**Baghdad, 03 March 2024** - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Claudio Cordone: "It's 10 June for the Kurdistan Parliamentary elections. Looking forward to no more obstacles. @UNIraq is ready to continue to provide its support as requested."

**Baghdad, 18 March 2024** - We take note of today's KDP decision, as we have taken note of the FSC decision last month. We call on all parties to work in the interest of the people, and thus towards solutions, rather than another prolonged impasse. The holding of the 10 June KRI elections is essential.

## The UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance organized a training session on cybersecurity

**Baghdad, 23 April 2024** - In an effort to enhance the knowledge and understanding of security and administrative staff at the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) regarding cybersecurity issues, the UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance organized a training session. The training focused on the risks associated with cybersecurity and provided useful tools for prevention and protection.



### Security

#### UNICEF on X

**Baghdad, 02 April 2024** - UNICEF is deeply saddened by the tragic accident in the Al-Haritha area in Basra. We wish a quick recovery to the children injured. Our deepest condolences go out to all those affected by this heartbreaking loss.

#### UNAMI on X

**Baghdad, 27 April 2024** - We condemn the attack on Khor Mor gas field, which provides electricity to the public in the Kurdistan Region. Our condolences to the families of those killed, and we wish the injured speedy recovery. We welcome investigation to identify and bring the attackers to justice.





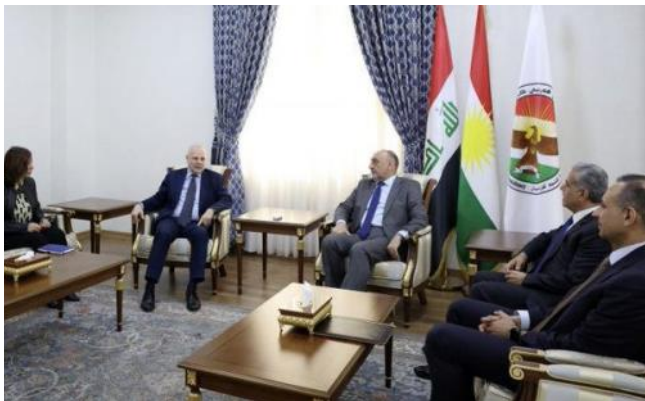
**Baghdad, 04 March 2024** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, was received today by the President of the Republic of Iraq, H.E. **Dr. Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid**. They discussed current political and security situation in the country as well as ways of possible cooperation on projects of mutual interest.

Photo courtesy of the Presidency Media Office.



**Baghdad, 04 March 2024** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today with the PUK President, **Mr. Bafel Jalal Talabani**. They discussed current political and security situation in the country, as well as preparations for the forthcoming elections in the Kurdistan Region.

Photo courtesy of PUK media.



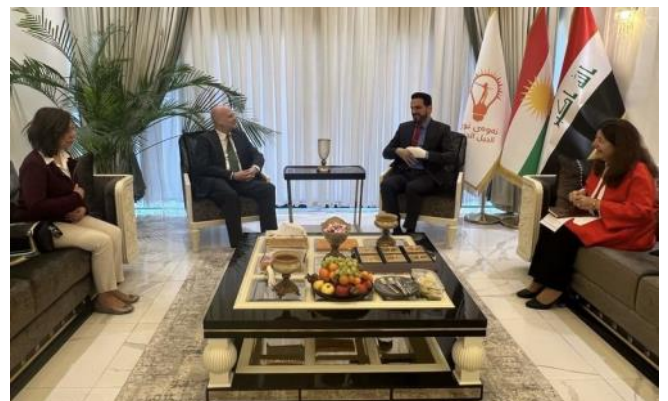
**Erbil, 06 March 2024** – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Claudio Cordone**: “Discussion today with KRI President Chief of Staff **@Fawzi\_Hariri** and advisors **@kurdistanregion** on the preparations for the KRI elections on 10 June. **@Uniraq** is fully committed to support **@IHECOfficial** and KRI authorities in this effort.”



**Erbil, 07 March 2024** – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Claudio Cordone**: “Reviewing today with Minister **Rebar Ahmed** **@Kurdistan** in Erbil the situation in Sinjar, forthcoming elections for the Kurdistan Parliament and other matters. **UNIraq** remains ready to provide support.”

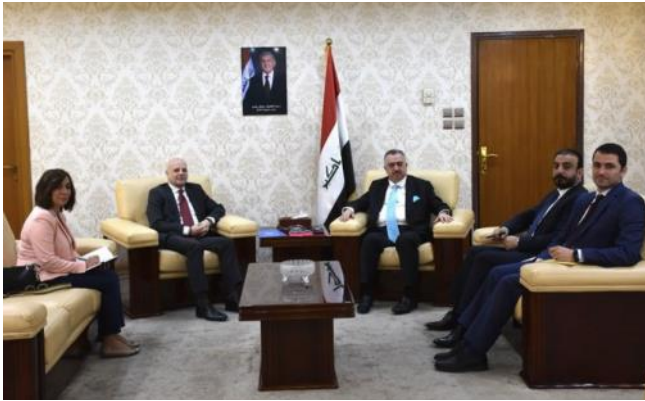


**Baghdad, 10 March 2024** – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**, met in Baghdad with **Maj. Gen. Khalid Ismail Al-Lami**, Head of Legal Department, and **Dr. Thaer Abdullah**, Director of Human Rights Directorate at Ministry of Defense. Discussion focused on the importance of making progress on Kuwaiti missing persons and UNIraq’s commitment to this humanitarian file.



**Baghdad, 10 March 2024** – 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 **Mr. Shaswar Abdalwahid Qadir**, President of New Generation Movement. They discussed the preparations of the Kurdistan Region Parliament elections.

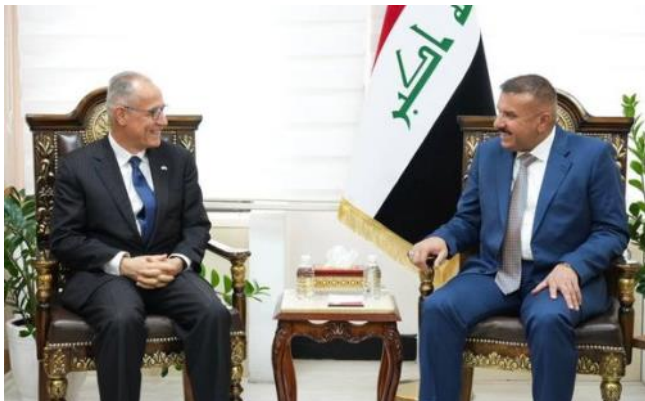




**Baghdad, 13 March 2024** – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Claudio Cordone**: “Discussed with Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary **Omar Barzanji** today ways to advance the file of missing Kuwaiti persons and property. UNAMI encourages intensified efforts to make swift progress and is ready to continue to assist in the process.”



**Koya, 18 March 2024** – The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Claudio Cordone**: “**Visiting the Azady camp** for Iranian Kurdish opposition groups in Koya in the KRI. Their reps reiterated their commitment to civilian status. UNAMI continues to engage with Baghdad, Erbil and Tehran seeking durable solutions. “

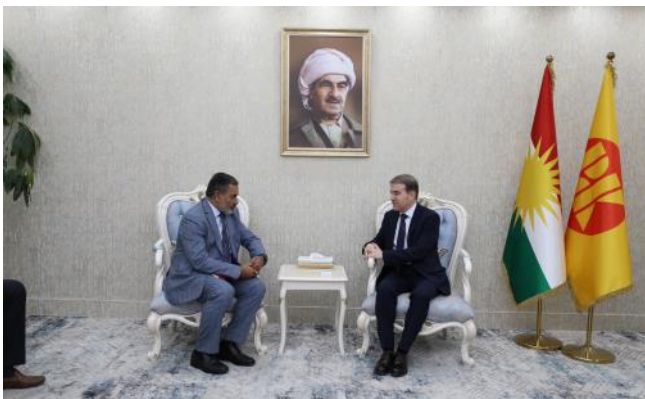


**Baghdad, 18 March 2024** – Today, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Ghulam Isaczai**, met with Minister of Interior, **Col. Gen. Abdul Amir Kamil Al-Shammari**. Discussions centered around cooperation and coordination between UN in Iraq and the Ministry on a number of pertinent issues.



**Erbil, 28 March 2024** - The Director of UNAMI Political Affairs Office, Mr. **Manoj Mathew**, met in Erbil today with KDP Politburo member and former Iraqi Cabinet minister **Hoshyar Zebari**. They discussed the forthcoming Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections. UNAMI wishes to again emphasize the importance of holding the elections as scheduled.

Photos courtesy of Mr. Zebari's Office.



**Erbil, 28 March 2024** - The Director of UNAMI Political Affairs Office, Mr. **Manoj Mathew**, met in Erbil today with KDP Politburo member **Dr. Hemin Hawrami**, and underlined the importance of holding KR parliamentary elections as scheduled.

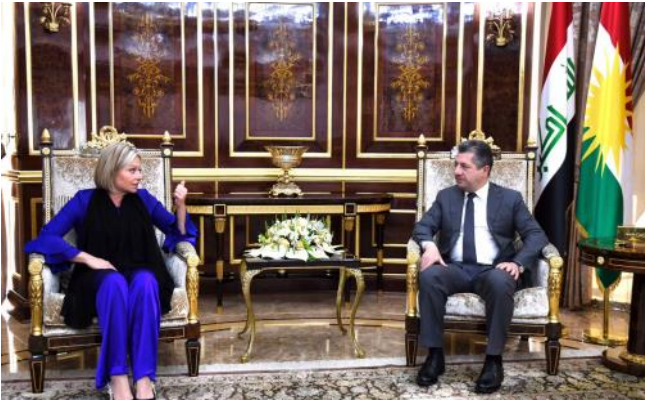
Photo courtesy of KDP Media Office.



**Baghdad, 31 March 2024** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today with the President of the Supreme Judicial Council, **Judge Faiq Zaidan**.

Photo courtesy of the SJC.





**Erbil, 02 April 2024** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today with the Kurdistan Region Prime Minister, **Mr. Masrour Barzani**. They discussed the political situation in the Region and Iraq, including the forthcoming elections for the KR Parliament.  
Photo courtesy of KRG.



**Erbil, 03 April 2024** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today with the Kurdistan Region President, **Mr. Nechirvan Barzani**. They discussed the political situation in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region (KR), Baghdad-Erbil relations and the forthcoming KR parliamentary elections. The discussion focused on finding possible solutions in the interest of the Region and its people.  
Photo courtesy of KR Presidency Media Office.



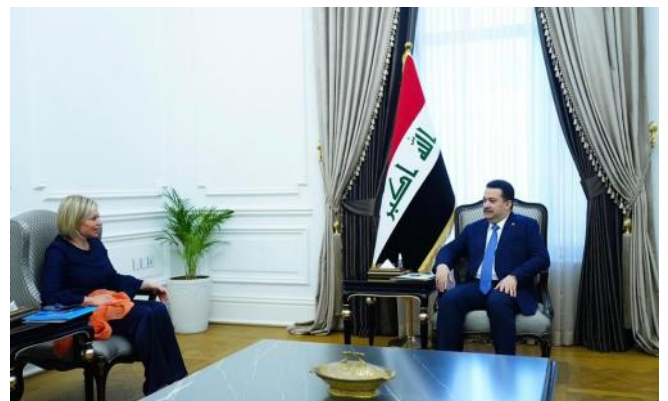
**Erbil, 03 April 2024** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today with the president of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), **Mr. Masoud Barzani**.



**Erbil, 03 April 2024** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region, **Mr. Qubad Talabani**. They discussed the political situation in the Region, including the forthcoming elections for the KR Parliament.  
Photo courtesy of KRG.



**Baghdad, 7 April 2024** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Baghdad with **Judge Jassim Mohammed Abboud**, the President of the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court. During the meeting, they discussed current developments in the country.  
Photo courtesy of the Federal Supreme Court.



**Baghdad, 7 April 2024** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Baghdad with **Mr. Mohammed S. Al-Sudani**, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq. During the meeting, they discussed the cooperation and relations between Iraq and the United Nations.  
Photo courtesy of the PM Media Office.

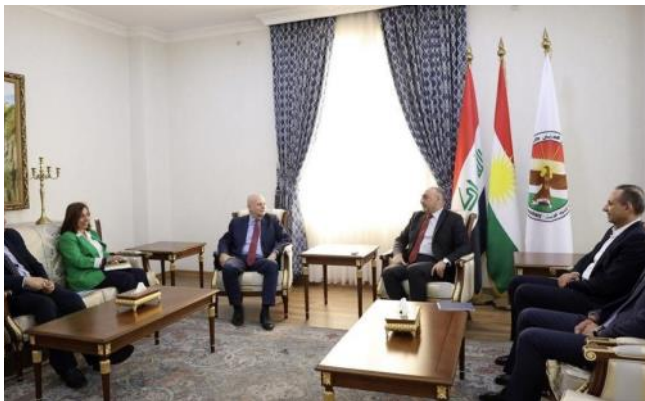




**Erbil, 7 April 2024** - Following a meeting between the Kurdistan Democratic Party leadership and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Member of Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Politburo, **Dr. Hemn Hawrami**, met today in Erbil with a UNAMI technical team led by the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**, to address issues within the context of credible and transparent Kurdistan Region elections which are also swift and inclusive.



**Baghdad, 15 April 2024** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Baghdad with the Head of the Popular Mobilization Authority, **Mr. Faleh Al-Fayyad**. During the meeting, they discussed the current situation in the country and the region.  
Photo courtesy of PMA.



**Erbil, 23 April 2024** - Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "Meeting in Erbil with Kurdistan Region Presidency Chief of Staff, **Mr. Fawzi Franso Hariri**, to discuss the Kurdistan parliamentary elections. UNAMI continues to call for early and inclusive elections.



**Erbil, 23 April 2024** - Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "In Erbil today discussing women political and electoral representation with **members of UNAMI's women advisory group** in the Kurdistan Region along with civil society representatives. Looking forward to early and participatory elections in the Kurdistan Region".



**Erbil, 23 April 2024** - Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "Met in Erbil with **Dr. Khanzad Ahmad**, Secretary General of Kurdistan's High Council for Women and Development, and the 1325 Board. UNAMI remains committed to advancing women's political and electoral participation and supporting the Kurdistan Regional Action Plan on resolution 1325".



**Baghdad, 29 April 2024** - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**, visited this morning the **Imam Al-Kadhim shrine** in Baghdad.



## UNAMI/OHCHR report calls for further measures to address domestic violence in Iraq

### Accountability for Domestic violence in Iraq:

Promoting justice and non-discrimination



**Baghdad, 07 March 2024** – Ahead of the International Women’s Day, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have jointly released a comprehensive report entitled “Accountability for Domestic violence in Iraq: Promoting justice and non-discrimination.”

The findings of the report are derived from a comprehensive analysis of data, including a review of 100 domestic violence court cases in Baghdad, Kirkuk, and Mosul, trial hearing observations, examination of court judgments and meetings with judges,

lawyers, prosecutors, government officials, survivors and their families, as well as civil society. A draft of the report was shared with relevant government ministries through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and their comments have been taken into account in the final version.

UNAMI/OHCHR recognize that Iraq has implemented several positive measures to address domestic violence, such as the adoption of two national strategies and the establishment of the Directorate of Family and Child Protection against Domestic Violence, as well as the assignment of specifically nominated judges in misdemeanor courts for domestic violence cases.

However, the report underscores how domestic violence remains a form of discrimination that significantly hinders women’s enjoyment of their rights and freedoms, and emphasizes the impact of social stigma and other barriers preventing survivors from reporting incidents. The report further highlights the limited scope and effectiveness of investigations, which often result in a lack of justice, remedy, or protection for survivors. The absence of a legal protection framework, particularly a law on domestic violence

in conformity with international standards, exacerbates the lack of awareness among the public and law enforcement agencies and poses substantial challenges in addressing criminal violence within homes.

In light of these challenges, the report recommends further urgent measures within the judicial processes to enhance the reporting of domestic violence cases, ensure protection for survivors and hold perpetrators accountable in line with international human rights standards. It urges the Iraqi government to adopt a comprehensive, survivor-centered approach encompassing legislative action, training for law enforcement and judicial personnel, enhanced survivor support services, and increased public awareness campaigns.

UNAMI/OHCHR remain ready to further work with the Iraqi Government in the implementation of these measures, so as to strengthen protections against domestic violence and further contribute to promoting human rights for all.

Full report is available at:

In English <https://bit.ly/3Tp2IGB>

In Arabic <https://bit.ly/3IpBXWU>

### UNAMI on X

**Baghdad/Geneva, 29 April 2024** - Legislative work is the prerogative of Iraq’s parliament, but it should be compatible with Iraq’s international obligations and commitments.

Safeguarding the fundamental freedoms of all does not mean promoting any specific private behaviour or disrespecting any culture or religion. It is rather the hallmark of any society based on tolerance and respect for human rights.

UN Human Rights: <https://tinyurl.com/yma8dput>

## Comment by UN Human Rights Office spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani on Iraq

**Geneva, 29 April 2024** - We are alarmed by the passing of a new law by Iraq’s parliament that criminalises consensual same-sex relations as well as other forms of private consensual behaviour with jail terms of up to 15 years. The law runs contrary to several human rights treaties and conventions ratified by Iraq, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and should be shelved. The principles of equality and non-discrimination are at the heart of international human rights law. Everyone, without distinction, is entitled to enjoy all human rights, including the right to privacy, the right to be treated as equal before the law and the right to protection from

discrimination on various grounds that include sexual orientation and gender identity.

Under the new law, those found guilty of “establishing a homosexual relationship” will face 10 to 15 years in jail, while anyone who “promotes homosexuality” will be imprisoned for at least seven years and fined at least 10 million Iraqi dinars. As well, the law criminalizes anyone accessing or performing gender-affirming medical treatments with imprisonment of up to three years, and those dressing in clothing associated with the opposite gender with jail terms of up to three years or a fine of at least 5 million Iraqi dinars.

There is extensive evidence that such

laws also legitimize prejudice, expose people to hate crime, police abuse, harassment, intimidation, blackmail and torture. Furthermore, they perpetuate discrimination and denial of access to basic services, including in healthcare, education and housing.



## UNAMI Human Rights Office organizes an event in Mosul to celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Mosul, 04 March 2024** – The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized an event to celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Fifteen participants (10 Male and 5 Female) from societal components of Iraq attended the event. The participants discussed the current situation of ethnic and religious components across Ninewa Governorate and the challenges impacting the realization of their human rights. The participants offered solutions and recommendations to promote non-discriminatory approaches and measures to address challenges facing these groups.



## UNAMI Human Rights Office organizes training for journalists on “Climate Change and Human Rights” in Kirkuk

**Kirkuk, 10 March 2024** - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized a training on “Climate Change and Human Rights” for journalists from Kirkuk, Diyala, and Salah al-Din governorates. Six female and nine male journalists had a lively discussion about links between human rights and climate change, in addition to exchanging tips on climate change reporting. Participants exchanged ideas about how to better integrate a human rights-based approach in their reporting about climate change.



## UNFPA and Rudaw continue empowering women and girls in journalism

**Erbil, 06 April 2024** - UNFPA and Rudaw continue empowering women and girls in journalism. 4th cohort: 26 participants from Suli and Halabja, focused on journalism basics and ethically covering sensitive issues like violence against women. Equipped to tell stories ethically and combat violence in all its forms.

We also hosted the @GoogleNewsInit for two sessions on specialized training in Digital Reporting Skills and Fighting Misinformation. These sessions are indispensable in today's digital age, empowering journalists to navigate misinformation and uphold high journalistic standards.

It was wonderful to welcome the United States Consul General in Erbil

(@USCGERBIL) for a discussion centred on challenges to media freedom and highlighting the crucial role of female journalists in a free and

democratic society.

Thank you British Embassy in Baghdad for supporting these trainings!





## UNFPA's significant partnership with Rudaw Media Network champions both the freedom of the press and the integrity of reporting on critical issues

**Erbil, 22 April 2024** - As we celebrate the 126th anniversary of Kurdish Journalism today, we are proud to highlight once again UNFPA's significant partnership with Rudaw Media Network that champions both the freedom of the press and the integrity of reporting on critical issues. With support from the British Embassy Baghdad, Seed Kurdistan, Google News Initiative, and Internews.iraq, we are at the forefront of empowering women and girls across the Kurdistan region and Iraq through specialized training focused on the ethics and basics of journalism.

This training aims to translate into action the UNFPA and Rudaw Media Network's strong commitment to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, established as key global objectives since 2015.

Through these sessions, we aim to enhance journalists' awareness and sensitivity in reporting violence cases,



ensuring that the information they deliver is handled with the utmost care and responsibility. The training not

only equips them with vital reporting skills but also provides resources for reporting cases and seeking assistance.

## The second phase of the "Breaking the Silence" project in full swing

**Erbil, 24 April 2024** - UNESCO Iraq Office convened working sessions and a specialized workshop with regional government partners and media institutions as part of the second phase of the "Breaking the Silence" project for 2024. Collaborating with the Government Media Office in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, discussions centered on the action plan for remaining project activities. UNESCO's focus includes training security personnel, judges, and human rights representatives in the KRI on global standards for journalist safety and combating impunity. An agreement was reached to launch a roadmap for project activities, funded by the Dutch Embassy in Iraq, with the signing anticipated in the first half of May.

Simultaneously, police officers will undergo training on journalist protection mechanisms. Additionally, UNESCO's CI Officer, held three meetings with various media institutions, forming part of the project's working team. The Babylon Media Foundation received training on safety, security, and digital protection mechanisms, crucial amidst the rapid advancement of AI applications and tools.



## Crimes unresolved and justice unfinished are major contributors to the resurgence of violence and extremism

**Karbala, 01 March 2024** - On behalf of Special Adviser Christian Ritscher, Mr. Anees Ahmed, Director of the Office of Evidence Management gave opening remarks in a conference titled: "Curbing Extremism and Terrorism", organized by Imam Hussain Holy Shrine at Zahraa University in the Holy City of Karbala.

Crimes unresolved and justice unfinished are major contributors to the resurgence of violence and extremism. UNITAD's work has been dedicated to see meaningful accountability proceedings taking place and see no place for impunity for ISIL's international crimes.



## Special Adviser Christian Ritscher gives a lecture on “Cumulative Prosecution: A Concept to Improve Accountability”

**Baghdad, 02 March 2024** - As part of UNITAD's legal lectures series and the Program of Cooperation with Al-Alamain Institute for Graduate Studies, Special Adviser Christian Ritscher was pleased to give a lecture on “Cumulative Prosecution: A Concept to Improve Accountability”, in which Iraqi legal scholars and postgraduate students at the institute took part.

The lecture covered aspects of cumulative prosecution, its elements, legal challenges, advantages and examples, providing postgraduate students with opportunities to engage with UNITAD's legal experts and enabling UNITAD to benefit from the Institute's national legal expertise.



## UNITAD convenes the 7th Biannual Roundtable of the UNITAD-NGO Dialogue Forum

**Baghdad, 06 March 2024** - UNITAD convened the 7th Biannual Roundtable of the UNITAD-NGO Dialogue Forum, bringing together Iraqi and international NGOs with UNITAD leadership and experts to discuss recent updates on UNITAD's work and the roadmap for the completion of the Team's mandate, in implementation of resolution 2697.

Participants commended the Team's work over the past years and emphasized the importance of continued community involvement in justice efforts, and the pursuit of accountability for ISIL's international crimes after the conclusion of UNITAD's operations.

Special Adviser Christian Ritscher extended his thanks to the NGO

community for their invaluable support to the work of UNITAD.





## A triumph for accountability efforts: how Iraq and UNITAD supported Portugal's first conviction for international crimes

**Baghdad, 03 March 2024** - In a significant stride towards justice, the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) welcomed Portugal's recent landmark conviction of an ISIL member, after being charged for international crimes committed in Iraq.

The ISIL perpetrator, A.A., an Iraqi national who fled to Europe, was charged of committing war crimes, in Mosul, Iraq, for the kidnapping and whipping of an Iraqi citizen. The perpetrator was additionally convicted, along with his brother Y.A. of membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL). "This ruling is Portugal's first conviction of a perpetrator on charges of war crimes. It marks a milestone along the path made possible thanks to the unique partnership between UNITAD and Iraq. The Iraqi Judiciary and the Team have been extending crucial support to accountability processes in third states with competent jurisdictions to prosecute international crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq," said Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Christian Ritscher.

In 2020, UNITAD received the request for assistance from the General Public Prosecutor's Office in Portugal and, in response, led an investigation in close cooperation with Judge Raed al-Mosleh, now President of the Nineveh Federal Appeals Court. This resulted in identifying 13 victims and witnesses whom the Team interviewed as prosecution witnesses. UNITAD facilitated for the witnesses to testify -while in Duhok- through video conferencing during the pretrial before the Portuguese judge, prosecutor, and defense lawyer. Afterwards, Judge Raed Al-Mosleh also facilitated for the defense witnesses to testify remotely, during the proceedings, from his courthouse in Mosul, which was the first time for the Iraqi judiciary to arrange remote witness testimonies using video conferencing. In addition, UNITAD's lead investigator gave a key expert testimony during the trial before the Portuguese court.

"We are extremely proud of our joint pursuit on this case with Honorable Judge Raed Al Mosleh, which led to this landmark conviction. It exemplifies the meaningful work of UNITAD together with the Iraqi



judiciary as a partner that supports evidence-based justice processes in Iraq and throughout the world," stressed Special Adviser Ritscher.

This work has been possible thanks to the solid support and continued cooperation between UNITAD and the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council, headed by Chief Justice Dr. Faiq Zaidan, President of the Supreme Judicial Council. The Team has been working together with competent Iraqi judges to ensure the proper preservation of evidence for ISIL crimes in accordance with the highest international standards. Moreover, the continued work with the Iraqi judiciary to build joint case files against ISIL perpetrators has been an important step forward on the path of accountability and meaningful justice, supporting prosecutions throughout the world.

In his recent briefing to the United Nations Security Council in December of 2023, Special Adviser Ritscher highlighted UNITAD's instrumental role in supporting third state investigations and prosecutions as "this ensures that the gap in global accountability does not expand." To date, the Team has supported requests for assistance from 20 third states with competent jurisdictions to prosecute ISIL international crimes in Iraq. This demand for third states support has grown exponentially over the past years.

This conviction in Portugal is the latest in a growing list of convictions in third states resulting from UNITAD's support to prosecutions, in cooperation with the Iraqi judiciary. So far, the Team has supported 17 cases in third state jurisdictions that were under investigation and led to indictments. 15 of these cases ended up in convictions of ISIL members or affiliates.

In 2021, the first conviction of ISIL member for committing genocide

against the Yazidis was issued by the Higher Regional Court in Frankfurt, Germany. ISIL member, Taha Al-J was found guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide following a 19-months trial. Other significant convictions, which UNITAD's support contributed to, include, a conviction by the Swedish district court in 2022 of an ISIL female member for her failure to protect her 12 years old son, from being recruited and used as child soldier by ISIL. Also, in June 2023, the German Higher Regional Court of Koblenz convicted an ISIL female member, Nadine K., a German national who was found guilty of aiding and abetting genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes for the enslavement and abuse of a young Yazidi woman in Iraq. The Yazidi victim, who was enslaved by the ISIL couple for 3 years, participated in the case as a co-plaintiff, and thus, witnessed her day in court.

It is important to note that prosecutions for international crimes allow for the meaningful participation of victims in criminal proceedings. This focuses on the centrality of victims and survivors. Such prosecutions recognize the suffering of the victims and allow for their voices to be heard, through evidence-based trials that establish the truth of ISIL's heinous crimes.

"This remains a core objective of UNITAD's work," said Special Adviser Ritscher adding that "the Team will exert every possible effort to ensure that the fruitful partnership with the Iraqi judiciary yields its desired results in successful prosecutions that lead to convictions on charges of international crimes. This is a common goal for the UN, for Iraq, for third states as well as for the thousands of Iraqi victims and survivors."



**Karbala, 01 March 2024** - During their visit to **Karbala**, UNITAD's senior delegation had the honor to meet His Eminence the representative of the Supreme Religious Authority and the Shrine's Chief Clerk, **Sheikh Abdul Mahdi Al-Karbalai** at the Holy Imam Hussein Shrine in the holy city of Karbala.



**Baghdad, 04 March 2024** - Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** was pleased to receive representatives of Coalition for **Just Reparations' Criminal Justice Working Group**, including members from Yazda Organization, Farida Global Organization and Victims of Iraq in Spyker 1700 at UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad. The group shared their views on the proper completion of the Team's mandate, and the importance of pursuing accountability for ISIL's heinous crimes against all communities in Iraq.

**Baghdad, 06 March 2024** - Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** and senior UNITAD delegation were pleased to welcome **Sheikh Ali al-Kar'awi**, Head of the Iraqi Baina Center for Intellectual and Cultural Security at UNITAD HQ in Baghdad. The delegation visited UNITAD's forensic lab and was briefed on the Team's work in support of evidence-based justice to all victims of ISIL atrocities committed in Iraq.

## UNITAD on X

**Baghdad, 06 March 2024** - UNITAD commends Iraq's national efforts to liberate the Shia Turkman woman from ISIL captivity. The Team reaffirms the importance of investigation and accountability to uncover the truth about ISIL crimes against Turkmen women and all victims of ISIL international crimes in Iraq.

**Baghdad, 08 March 2024** - Today, we remember the victims and survivors of ISIL's Chemical Weapons attack on Taza Khurmatu. The long term impact of such attacks serve as a reminder of ISIL's violent ideology and the magnitude of the heinous crimes which they committed. Survivor communities continue to quest accountability and justice.

**Baghdad, 08 March 2024** - Honoring all the resilient and courageous women who bore the burden of ISIL atrocities and remained steadfast in their calls for justice. Special recognition goes to the crucial roles of women in every shape and form; activists, community leaders, prosecutors, lawyers, and investigators, whose remarkable work demonstrates unwavering commitment to pursuing accountability for ISIL international crimes in Iraq and throughout the world.



## Sarah's journey in rebuilding hope and justice with UNITAD's E-Discovery Review Team

Baghdad, 09 March 2024 - "I thought it is the end of Christianity in Iraq", said Sarah on how it was like during ISIL's rise in Iraq.

Originally from Mosul, Sarah grew up in Baghdad. She has always been passionate about serving her community. Her desire for raising the voice of the Christian community in Iraq led her to excel in her studies. Once she completed her B.A., she worked as deputy principle for a local school, but she always felt there is more to her ambitions.

Her life and the life of her family took a major turn in 2014, when ISIL started systematically targeting the Christian community in Mosul and surrounding areas. "It was a very targeted campaign to empty Iraq of its Christians," she said, adding "Overnight, my relatives were threatened to either leave or be killed. So, they left without taking anything with them, they lost everything. They went to areas like Erbil, Dohuk, Baghdad. Even we, those who were in the heart of Baghdad, were scared. What if we were next?"

The times were bleak for Sarah, her family, and all Christians in Iraq. "It is a state of indefinite fear of what will happen. Can I leave my husband and children and just go to work? Do I take a chance by sending my children to school? Will my husband come home tonight? We were faced by all these scary questions -and even worse- every day."

For Sarah and members of the Christian community, the trauma haunts their lives, even after the liberation. "We are still in shock and disbelief as to how all of this could happen to us, in a blink of an eye. But we firmly believe in rebuilding our community, in justice and healing." She explains.

In the years following the defeat of ISIL, Sarah had learned about UNITAD and its work with all Iraqi communities impacted by ISIL atrocities. "It seemed that this is the place that would allow me to support my community, and make their voices heard; a place that also empowers Iraqi specialists in a range of unique specializations and up to bar with international standards." Sarah then joined UNITAD as a member of its E-Discovery Review team.

The E-Discovery Team enables



national experts with advanced technical skills through the use of modern technology for evidence searches and preservation. The Team currently consists of 80% women from a range of communities impacted by ISIL crimes.

Since joining the E-Discovery Team, Sarah, along with her colleagues have undergone intensive trainings including on the fundamentals of electronic discovery, focusing on machine-learning aided review, search, and quality control checks. This enables the team to conduct high quality analysis and checks on the sheer amount of evidence to help investigators construct impeccable analysis and cases.

Describing the project, Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Christian Ritscher indicated that: "The E-Discovery Review Team is a part of UNITAD's larger approach to enhance national capacities in investigations and evidence management. It plays, also, a pivotal role in improving the efficiency of investigations and adherence to international standards necessary for admissibility of evidence in competent courts, all important to the pursuit of accountability for ISIL international crimes committed in Iraq."

"At the start of my work, I thought this would be a very difficult job. But, through the specialized trainings, and the incredible spirit of cooperation among our teammates, I have come to gain more and more skills and felt better equipped to overcome the challenges in this field of work," said Sarah. "At my team in UNITAD, I found a work environment that supports diversity and empowers the voice of minorities, which makes me thrive."

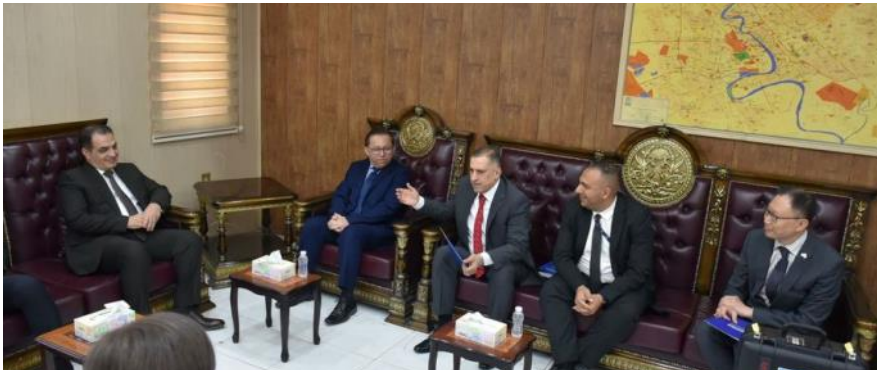
The truth about what happened during ISIL's rein of terror is very grim. "It is what I experienced and what my family survived. And it is

daunting at times. Nonetheless, even at the toughest moments, I remember how brave the survivors have been, rebuilding their lives from scratch, and fighting for justice. I remember my own children and the next generations that deserve to live in peace and security. I think of the future I must help shape for them, in their country amongst their people. And this is where I get my strength to continue. I think that this is my role. To be at a place where we uncover evidence and help shape the truth."

The E-Discovery Team has provided unique chances for national experts, like Sarah, to grow professionally. "Although our educational backgrounds are different, UNITAD's experts successfully tailored the trainings to maximize learning opportunities for all of us. We learned how to use the skills we are gaining in support of crucial investigations. This opens doors for me and other women to be able to serve at UNITAD, and, in other entities in the future, with the set of skills we have developed, and continue to grow. I think it has been very promising for my future career path. Also, I hope that with more knowledge and experience, I will be able to train other specialists and help grow our national capacities in different entities."

Serving her community in Iraq, and acting as a role model for her daughter, Sarah has always followed her passion and ambition against all odds. "Taking ownership, as a woman, over my own career in a high-tech analytical domain, which has previously been male dominated, is a great step for me, and this project, with our contribution to the investigations into ISIL heinous crimes can be a great leap forward towards accountability. I consider this just the beginning," concluded Sarah.

## UNITAD hands over 27.97 terabytes of raw data to the Iraqi Judiciary



Baghdad, 14 March 2024 - In line with the implementation of Security

Council Resolution 2697, UNITAD's Director of Office of Evidence

Management, Mr. Anees Ahmed, handed over 27.97 terabytes of raw data to the Iraqi Judiciary.

Judge Khalid Taha Ahmed, President of Al-Karkh Court of Appeals, with his deputy Judge Ali Hussein Jaffat present, received the 10 encrypted, secure hard-drives.

In preparing for the transfer, UNITAD ensured a thorough process in line with international standards, conducting verifications, integrity checks, and validation procedures. This is to ensure the preservation of evidence and its admissibility for future use in competent courts.

## UNITAD organizes a townhall in Anbar

Anbar, 16 March 2024 - UNITAD organized a townhall in Anbar, bringing together local NGOs, academic institutes as well as the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights, as part of its work to support national capacities in documenting ISIL related crimes.

UNITAD's experts presented on the Team's victim-centered approach to investigations, and using advanced technologies for digitization. A lively

discussion with NGO representatives ensued, focusing on sharing of expertise

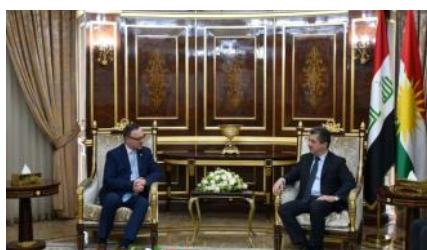
in promoting accountability for ISIL's heinous crimes in Anbar.



## SA visits Kurdistan Region

Erbil, 20 March 2024 - On the occasion of the end of his tenure as Head of UNITAD, Special Adviser **Christian Ritscher** visited Erbil, meeting with H.E. **Masrouf Barzani** Prime Minister of Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), as well as H.E. **Rêber Ahmed**, KRG Minister of Interior, and Dr. **Dindar Zebari**, KRG Coordinator for International Advocacy.

He extended his profound thanks for KRG's great support to the Team's work over the past two and half years, and their valuable cooperation in the pursuit of accountability for ISIL international crimes against all affected communities in Iraq.



## UNITAD on X

Baghdad, 11 March 2024 - UNITAD wishes all those observing Ramadan a very blessed and peaceful month.

Baghdad, 21 March 2024 - UNITAD wishes all those celebrating a happy Nowruz.

Baghdad, 31 March 2024 - UNITAD wishes you a blessed Easter!

Baghdad, 21 March 2024 - Baghdad, 18 April 2024 - The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) wishes Yazidis celebrating Cejna Çarşema Sarê Salê a prosperous Yazidi New Year.



## Head of UNITAD meets President of the Supreme Judicial Council

**Baghdad, 20 March 2024** - On the occasion of the end of his tenure as Head of UNITAD, Special Adviser Christian Ritscher met H.E. Chief Justice Faiq Zaidan, President of the Supreme Judicial Council, and thanked him for his support to the work of the Team over the past two and half years. He expressed his gratitude to the Iraqi judiciary which has been the Team's main partner in pursuing accountability for ISIL crimes in Iraq and throughout the world, trusting in the judiciary's commitment to continuing this effort to achieve meaningful justice for victims and survivors.



## UNITAD conducts a training for the Commission for Investigation and Gathering Evidence’s specialists in Dohuk

**Dohuk, 28 March 2024** - UNITAD's Forensic Science Unit conducted a 4-day training for the Commission for Investigation and Gathering Evidence (CIGE)'s specialists in Dohuk. The training, conducted in cooperation with the UN Team of Experts on Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, tackled digital forensics and advanced evidence handling techniques. It aimed to equip national specialists with necessary capacities in investigations, preservation of multiple types of digital evidence and good practices while performing open-source investigations.

The training signifies a vital step towards bolstering national capacities while upholding international

standards in pursuit of accountability for #ISIL intl. crimes committed in Iraq, including sexual violence crimes.



## German Embassy on X

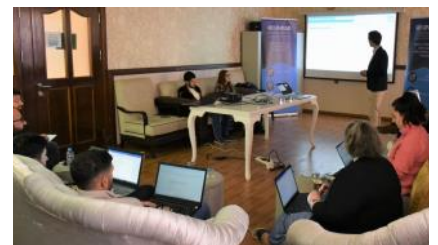
**Baghdad, 29 March 2024** - Accountability is important. Germany is proud to continue its support for the UNITAD project “Investigating the Financial Dimensions of International Daesh Crimes in Iraq”. Thank you for your important work, @UNITAD\_Iraq!



## UNITAD's Forensic Science Unit conducted a training for Yazda Organization

**Baghdad, 30 March 2024** - As a part of its continued engagement and support to Iraqi NGOs serving communities impacted by ISIL, UNITAD's Forensic Science Unit conducted a 4-day training for Yazda Organization. The training, conducted in cooperation with the UN Team of Experts on Rule

of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, aimed to promote the capacities of participants in digital forensics and open-source investigations. This enables national specialists to employ advanced methodologies, principles, and best practices when handling evidence, as well as ensuring processes align with international



## UNICEF provides essential winter clothing to 2000 children

**Fallujah, 03 March 2024** - We all want to stay warm during the cold winter season.

Thanks to the dedicated volunteers from Terre des hommes, UNICEF has provided essential winter clothing to 2000 children affected by conflict in Fallujah, Anbar, ensuring the well-being of every child, even in the coldest seasons.

#ForEveryChild, warmth



## Remedial classes are improving the learning quality of refugee children

**Erbil, 07 March 2024** - Syrian children at Barika Refugee Camp are dreaming big after completing a one-month remedial class in science, math, and Kurdish.

With funding from U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and UNICEF support, these classes are improving the learning quality #ForEveryChild.



## UNHCR says drop in assistance to refugees in Kurdistan to 'last for the foreseeable future'

**Erbil, 07 March 2024** - The United Nations' Refugee Agency (UNHCR) Representative in Iraq recently told Rudaw that the decision to decrease assistance to refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in the Kurdistan Region will hold for the "foreseeable future," as international donors are concerned with "more pressing, urgent humanitarian needs." UNHCR Representative in Iraq Jean-Nicolas Beuze told Rudaw's Dilbxin Dara in an interview aired on Wednesday, that the reason behind the choice taken by the UNHCR as well as the UN's other humanitarian partners and local NGOs to decrease their assistance to refugees from Syria as well as other countries, and IDPs in the Kurdistan Region was that "most of these displaced populations are receiving already services through the public institutions."

Beuze noted that as a result of the efficient public services delivery to refugees exhibited by the Kurdish authorities, which he commended, "we [UNHCR] are less needed and this is very much a good thing, at a time that as we all know there are crises all over the world."

He also added that said measure would "last for the foreseeable future because we [UNHCR] really believe that Iraq is

in a position to deliver those services, quality services, accessible services, to the displaced population, and we see it everyday." Nevertheless, he highlighted that while the funding might be decreasing, the UNHCR has established systems that will ensure refugees and IDPs do not suffer from their scaled back presence.

Despite noting the intent of Kurdish authorities to continue providing said services to displaced populations in the Kurdistan Region, Beuze stressed that "we [UNHCR] count on our donors to continue helping us but we do understand and agree that it's time for them the donors to go and look at more pressing, urgent humanitarian needs than Iraq," highlighting that the world's attention is now more concentrated on the crises in Gaza and Ukraine than that in Syria, where most refugees in the Kurdistan Region come from.

The UNHCR Representative in Iraq specified that as the UN refugee agency enters the planning process for the period between 2025 and 2029, the organization's goal in the Kurdistan Region is to reinforce the capacity of local authorities and public sector providers to "deliver services for the refugees, eventually also for the Iraqi internally displaced but also for the



local population so that we can improve the quality of services... for everyone on an equal footing." He added that the UNHCR and the international community are also committed to giving back to the local population of the Region.

On the issue of the protracted displacement of Yazidis, Beuze noted that it is imperative to find a solution outside of camps. "One of the solutions, for those who want to, will be to return to Sinjar [Shingal] but some won't be able or will not be willing to return to Sinjar so we have to also give them some solutions such as local integration, remaining outside the camp or turning the camp into formal settlements for them to have a decent life," he said.

By Rudaw.



## UN-Habitat supports the sustainable return for affected families

**Sinjar, 10 March 2024** - This week, UN-Habitat rehabilitated and handed over 153 houses to returnee households in Old Tel Banat, Mam Elias, Nisryiah, and Shihabyiah in Sinjar, aiming to support the sustainable return for affected families.

Led by Muslim Qazimi, UN-Habitat Iraq's Head of Programme (acting), the team had the privilege of visiting some families in Sinjar during their initial weeks back in their homes, marking the end of their displacement.

It was a unique opportunity to witness the relief and joy of families who had endured long periods of displacement and are now able to safely return and rebuild their lives. The visit also included a meeting with local

authorities, acknowledging their significant support to facilitate this process.

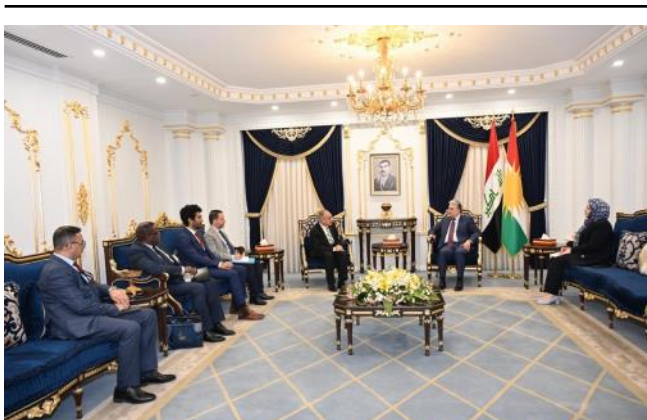
The house rehabilitation is part of the KOICA-funded project "Promoting Peace and Stability in Iraq by Facilitating Sustainable Returns",

which adopts a comprehensive approach to adequate housing and encourage sustainable return. The goal is to enhance overall livelihood conditions, promote a better urban future, and leave no one and no place behind.



**Duhok, 13 March 2024** - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), **Ghulam Isaczai**, met with IDPs at **Khanke camp and from Qasr Ezedin informal settlement** in Duhok yesterday and listened to their issues. He stressed voluntary, informed, safe, and inclusive return through #DurableSolutions pathways.

**Erbil, 13 March 2024** - During a visit to **Harsham Camp** in Erbil today, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), **Ghulam Isaczai**, met with **residents and teachers' representatives** and listened to their views and concerns on Council of Minister's decision to resolve the IDP file in Iraq.



**Erbil, 13 March 2024** - In today's meeting with **Minister Rêber Ahmed** in Erbil, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), **Ghulam Isaczai**, discussed the IDP situation and underscored UN Iraq's commitment to achieve durable solutions for all IDPs in Iraq.

**Sinjar, 14 March 2024** - During his visit to Sinjar today, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), **Ghulam Isaczai**, engaged a **group of IDPs returned from Duhok**, and chaired a coordination meeting attended by humanitarian agencies, Deputy Governor of Ninawa and MoMD representative.

## Sinjar welcomes back 80 displaced families with IOM support



**Sinjar, 13 March 2024** - After nearly ten years of displacement, 80 families returned to their hometown in Sinjar, Ninewa, through IOM's Facilitated Voluntary Movement (FVM) programme, in close collaboration with the Government of Iraq and Ministry of Migration and Displaced, March 12, 2024.

"Returning to my own home is better than staying in a camp," said Sham, an elderly woman from Skiniya village, who lost her daughter and son during the invasion of Daesh and has decided to return to her village with her daughter-in-law.

The latest departures are part of IOM's

ongoing support to assisting displaced families across Iraq in returning to their homes or relocating to a new location, in dignity. Since 2023, IOM has assisted more than 450 families to leave displacement settings and return to Sinjar.

"These families have endured immense hardship, and their return to Sinjar represents a significant step towards healing wounds and rebuilding their communities," says Giorgi Gigauri, IOM Iraq's Chief of Mission. "Since 2019, IOM has supported nearly 4,000 families end their displacement and return home – and we will continue to stand with returnees every step of the

way".

IOM has supported internally displaced populations in finding durable solutions through informed and voluntary returns to areas origin and relocation under FVM since 2019. Participation in FVM is voluntary, and IOM provides a comprehensive support package to assist families in making informed decisions. This includes "go-and-see" visits, where families visit their areas of origin to assess if conditions are conducive to their return, as well as transportation assistance, counseling and support services, housing support, and livelihood assistance.

In addition to facilitating movements, IOM works with partners to support holistic recovery and stabilization of communities. This includes support for infrastructure, such as schools and healthcare facilities; facilitating access to basic services; economic recovery and livelihoods support; restarting small businesses; finding employment; and empowering communities to build a brighter future.

IOM Iraq's efforts to promote voluntary, safe, dignified, and informed solutions to displacement are supported by several international partners, most notably the United States Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM).

## DSRSG/HC/RC visits Ministry of Education and discusses the continuation of education services to IDPs

**Baghdad, 19 March 2024** - Today, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam Isaczai, met with Deputy Minister of Education, Mahdi Saleh Al-Awadi, and discussed the recent Ministry of Education decision regarding its offices in Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the continuation of education services to IDPs.



## Third National Referral Mechanism to aid returnee reintegration opens in Iraq

**Sulaymaniyah, 31 March 2024** - In a significant step towards assisting Iraqi returnees to rebuild their lives, the third National Referral Mechanism (NRM) was opened in the governorate of Sulaymaniyah, following establishment of the ones in Baghdad and Erbil in December 2022. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq has been

supporting the Government of Iraq with the roll out of NRMs to provide adequate reintegration services such as employment opportunities, vocational training, housing assistance, protection, and legal services and more. These initiatives are part of the Government of Netherland's support to enhance capacities on migration governance under the Cooperation on

Migration and Partnerships to Achieve Sustainable Solutions (COMPASS) project.

The Government of Sulaymaniyah, represented by Governor H. E. Dr. Haval Abubakir and Director General of the Joint Crisis Coordination Center (JCC), Ms. Srwa Rasul, inaugurated the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Returnee Reintegration on



## Third National Referral Mechanism to aid returnee reintegration opens in Iraq *(continued)*



March 31st.

Operated by the Displacement and Migration Coordination Committee for Iraq (DMCR), the NRM aims to facilitate the reintegration process for Iraqi returnees by providing access to a range of essential services and is fully supported and operationalized by the government. NRM works by connecting returnees with relevant ministries and non-governmental organizations, and its key features include: free and confidential services for all returnees from abroad; individual counseling and referrals to service providers; follow-up on the reintegration process and

support letters; assistance in small business setup, job placement, vocational and educational training, housing, legal matters, protection, medical and mental health support, and enrollment support for children in schools.

"This project bridges the returnees' reintegration with society, facilitating integration by providing legal procedures, health services, and support for small businesses," said Governor of Sulaymaniyah, Dr. Haval Abubakir, emphasizing the importance of cooperation in facilitating safe and dignified returns, readmissions, and

sustainable reintegration.

The NRM marks a pivotal step in the national management strategy of migration in Iraq, connecting governmental and non-governmental partners to assess the individual needs of returnees and expedite their reintegration process. Caseworkers will confidentially discuss returnees' situations, needs, experiences, and skills to provide tailored support.

"Returning home after many years can be difficult, and finding a way to contribute to society is challenging," says Myra de Vries, First Secretary Stabilisation Affairs of the Government of the Netherlands Embassy in Iraq. "This project aims to ease this transition and provide necessary support".

With funding and support from the Government of the Netherlands, the establishment of the NRM in Sulaymaniyah underscores the commitment to facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration. As the first initiative of its kind in Sulaymaniyah, the NRM sets a precedent for future endeavors aimed at easing the transition for returning migrants and ensuring their successful integration into their communities. Since 2010, IOM has been supporting national authorities in Sulaymaniyah in migration management, combatting irregular migration, trafficking, and smuggling of persons, and providing technical assistance.

## Legal assistance helps Syrian refugee get key documents and lifesaving treatment in Iraq

**Erbil, 07 April 2024** - Abeer, 38, and her husband Muneer fled their hometown in Aleppo, Syria, in 2021. They rented a small home in Erbil, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), and slowly began to rebuild their lives. They were overjoyed to welcome their first child – a boy, Joud – soon after. A year later, they felt blessed at the news of welcoming a second child.

But, during the first weeks of her pregnancy, Abeer felt constantly unwell. Unable to bear the pain, the worried family visited a public hospital. That is when she was diagnosed with cancer.

"I never thought it would be something serious like this. When the doctors told me... I almost fainted. My world collapsed."

Abeer needed immediate and intensive treatments. Due to the criticality of her condition, out of solidarity, the Iraqi

Kurdish doctor agreed to give her the first chemotherapy treatment. While the treatment began working on the



## Legal assistance helps Syrian refugee get key documents and lifesaving treatment in Iraq *(continued)*

malign cells, she unfortunately suffered a miscarriage. Any subsequent treatment to give her a chance to survive, would require her to present identity documents.

“Even with the severity of my condition, without a proof of identity the doctor could only give me one or two treatments... they asked for a UNHCR certificate, but I didn’t have that either,” Abeer recalled of the information she received at the hospital. “If I didn’t get my documents, they would have had to stop my treatment completely.”

Without documents, refugees cannot prove who they are. They cannot access healthcare in public hospitals, register their children in school, apply for social security benefits or even move around safely, for fear of being arrested at security checkpoints and deported.

UNHCR in Iraq registers asylum-seekers free of charge. In 2023, Abeer was one of over 31,000 refugees who were registered by UNHCR and obtained asylum certificates. With these, refugees can receive Humanitarian Residency Permits from

the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Having valid IDs enable refugees to prove their identity, access public services on par with Iraqis, and secure employment. It also protects them against arbitrary arrest, detention and forcible returns

“All my worry is gone thanks to having the Humanitarian Residency Permit... at least now I don’t have to worry about the price or availability of my treatment,” signed Abeer with relief.

While registration services are available, and most refugees in the KR-I have obtained their UNHCR certificates and Humanitarian Residency Permits from authorities, others have not been able to readily receive information on the administrative procedures to receive their documents.

Thanks to the generous funding of Japan, 4,500 refugees and asylum-seekers benefitted from free legal assistance including counselling and representation from UNHCR and its partners, out of a total of 13,800 who were supported with donors’ contributions. Support from Japan and

donors also enabled a total of 7,700 refugees and asylum-seekers to receive information on their rights and the procedure for applying for residency through legal awareness sessions.

“It was a rollercoaster for me to navigate between my condition, my family and the treatment I might not have access to. It was a very challenging time in my life,” said Abeer. “When they called us and told us that I would be able to get treated, I was relieved.”

Iraq hosts about 300,000 refugees – mostly Kurdish Syrians residing in the KR-I – for whom return prospects remain limited due to the ongoing insecurity and human rights and humanitarian law violations and abuse. Refugees continue to enjoy a generally favourable protection environment and access to public services, particularly in the KR-I. However, access to territory and asylum remains restricted despite UNHCR’s advocacy to lift existing restrictions.

By Hamzeh Almomani in Erbil and Farha Bhooyroo in Baghdad, UNHCR

## Sweets shop brings a taste of Syria to refugee camp in Iraq this Ramadan

**Erbil, 08 April 2024** - When Remas fled Syria and took shelter in the Kawergosk refugee camp in Erbil, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), in 2016 with his wife and five children, he had only one certitude: baking pastries is not only his passion; it will help him support his family in exile.

Remas’ pastry skills were passed down to him and his brothers during their teenage years by their father, who learned them from his father. “It runs in the family,” he laughs.

His family’s life in Qamishli in Northeastern Syria was disrupted by conflict. In Iraq, Remas found safety,

but his family struggled to adjust, from living in their own home to living in a camp and struggling to make ends meet.

Faced with financial challenges, he and his wife started a home business. “I started baking sweets at home. Simple ones, of course, as I did not have the ability to buy proper kitchen equipment’s like a gas stove,” he explains. “I could not even rent a place, but I was sure that one day, I would be able to have my own shop”. Over the years, as business grew, so did Remas’ shop. He now rents a shop a 10-minute walk from his home.

During Ramadan, the smell of fresh baked sweets whiff out from Remas’ shop at all hours of the day. In the morning, he prepares Maarouk – a fragrant brioche-like bread from Syria that is a must at Suhoor, the meal eaten before sunrise to prepare Muslims for a day of fasting. The rest of the day, he prepares sweets that customers prefer for Iftar, when families gather in the early evening to break their daily fast. “My favourite sweet to make is Baklava...” he says. “These sweets remind me of home.”

His small shop is overflowing with

orders as Eid al-Fitr, the holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, approaches. “I feel the blessing of Ramadan upon me. Business is doing very well.”

Remas is optimistic about the future. “One day,” he says with a smile, “we will have a bigger place, with room for all the sweets we dream of making.”

Currently, some 8,000 Syrian refugees live in the Kawergosk camp. Out of the 309,884 refugees and asylum-seekers in Iraq, 89.3 per cent are hosted in the KR-I. The majority of Syrian refugees live in urban areas, while some 33 per cent still live in nine refugee camps.

As we gather with our loved ones this Ramadan, let’s remember the refugees and displaced families who will be breaking their fast away from their homes and loved ones. Your support will help set a place for those who have endured unimaginable challenges, offering them hope, and making a lasting impact on their lives.

In 2024, UNHCR needs USD 203.6 million to protect and achieve solutions for forcibly displaced populations and local communities in Iraq.

By Hamzeh Almomani in Erbil and Farha Bhooyroo in Baghdad, UNHCR





## WFP in Iraq continues providing vital assistance to ensure nutritious food reaches 38,000 refugees in need

**Baghdad, 09 April 2024** - The World Food Programme (WFP) in Iraq continued providing vital assistance to ensure nutritious food reaches 38,000 refugees in need to improve food security, embodying the true spirit of Ramadan.



## Football tournament brings joy to the whole community – thank to support from local authorities, UNHCR and partners

**Dohuk, 16 April 2024** - Syrian refugee children are gearing up for the annual football tournament in Domiz refugee camp in Dohuk, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq!

For the sixth year in a row, this competition has been the highlight of the camp's calendar, bringing joy to the whole community – thank to support from local authorities, UNHCR and partners. Sport can play a vital role in helping refugee children improve their mental and physical well-being, develop

skills to deal with stress and anxiety, and connect to their communities. More than a pastime, sport has the

power to restore normalcy to children whose lives were disrupted by forced displacement.



## Strong judicial institutions are crucial in protecting the rights of migrants

**Baghdad, 17 April 2024** - IOM's trainings on international migration law aim to help government officials formulate effective policies and implement them in Iraq. This training was supported by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq.

"In crafting national laws on migration in Iraq aligned with international standards, it is essential for

government actors to possess expertise in international migration law" – Dr. Khalid Abdulkareem, Expert at Al-Nahrain Center for Strategic Studies.

To safeguard the rights of migrants in Iraq, we must confront the lack of laws and policies, bolster judicial guidelines, and enhance administrative procedures". – Dr. Ahmed. Miran, International Criminal Law expert.



## IOM report sheds light on experiences of displaced and returnee women in Ninewa

**Baghdad, 18 April 2024** - IOM report "Women navigating durable solutions to displacement" sheds light on experiences of displaced and returnee women in Ninewa.

The objective of this study is to investigate the experience of displaced women and their reintegration in areas of origin. It examines female-related vulnerabilities and obstacles that affect their reintegration. The report explores what factors influence decision-making during the durable solution process, as well as women's agency to overcome reintegration barriers.

The goal is to present a comprehensive analysis to inform programming and

advocacy efforts supporting internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees. This study builds on IOM's research including Progress Toward Durable Solutions in Iraq: a Pilot Project in Ninewa Governorate (2023), Reimagining Reintegration: An Analysis of Sustainable Returns After Conflict (2023), and Poverty and Precarity: A Comparison of Female- and Male-headed Households in Districts of Return (2023).

These studies developed a quantitative assessment of vulnerabilities related to sustainable integration of women returnees and IDPs. To complement and deepen those findings, this study

takes a qualitative approach to focus on women's agency and decision-making across four barriers to reintegration: (i) access to documentation, (ii) housing tenure, (iii) livelihoods, and (iv) social networks.

Full report is available at <https://bit.ly/3vLT0zW>



## IOM publishes its latest report “Environmental migration in Southern and Central Iraq: assessing access to civil and identity documentation and tenure security”

**Baghdad, 22 April 2024** - Displacement due to climate change and environmental degradation is on the rise in Iraq. IOM Iraq's latest report dives into the unique challenges and barriers faced by environmental migrants to access civil documentation.

Here is the Executive summary of the Report:

Climate change and environmental degradation in Iraq is leading to the displacement of rural communities.

Displaced individuals often move to urban centres, settling in informal areas with compromised living conditions. Irregular housing tenure is common, with environmental migrants facing insecurity in housing and limited access to rights. Additionally, they face resistance from local authorities and communities, who associate environmental migrants to criminal activities and negative labour market changes, leading to integration and social cohesion challenges. Environmental migrants often feel discriminated against and marginalized, contributing to tensions between host and migrant communities.

This assessment found that environmental migrants need legal assistance to access identity and civil documentation, as well as to increase their tenure security and overall access to House, Land and Property (HLP) rights. Most of the barriers hindering access to documentation and HLP rights, as well as the consequences for lacking such documents, are similar to those of internally displaced persons (IDPs) affected by the 2014–2017 conflict. Opaque processes, inaccessible institutions and prohibitive costs, alongside logistic issues such as lack of access to transportation services to visit relevant sites where civil documents are issued, can make securing core documentation nearly impossible for population affected by displacement.

However, environmental migrants face challenges in recognition not only of their needs, but in some cases, of their status as IDPs.

However, unlike IDPs who were displaced after 2014 in areas affected by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) occupation, environmental migrants did not lose

documents, nor did these get destroyed or confiscated. They also do not face issues related to security clearances to apply for documentation. While most participants to focus group discussions (FGDs) expressed having documents at the time of displacement, these expire and cannot be renewed.

However, environmental migrants, particularly in Najaf, face particular issues regarding the official recognition as IDPs by the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) as well as the access to housing cards, which become a barrier when trying to access documentation and increase tenure security.

This is particularly challenging for parents trying to document newborns, with growing numbers of children who do not have access to identity documentation.

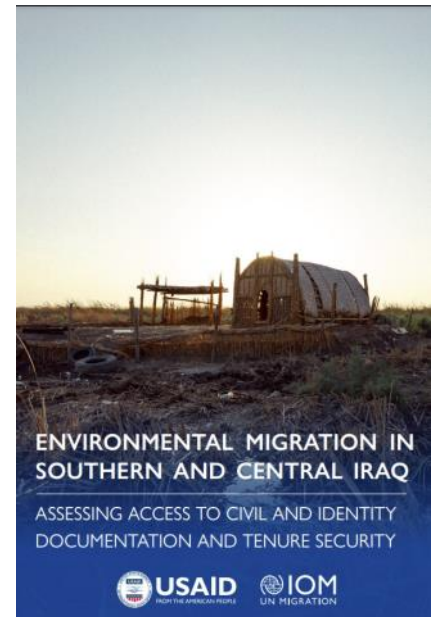
Environmental migrants in informal living conditions face tenure insecurity and eviction risks, particularly in private lands or those public lands allocated for construction and infrastructure. While IDPs relocating for agricultural activities have the potential for improved tenure security, this is contingent on the eligibility for housing cards or IDP status. Lack of information exposes environmental migrants, particularly women, to exploitation and fraud.

The assessment also identifies gender-specific challenges, emphasizing the need for legal assistance and protection services. Additionally, a gap is noted in available data concerning compensation schemes accessible to environmental migrants.

The recommendations for programme design to address challenges faced by environmental migrants in accessing identity and civil documentation, as well as their HLP rights, are as follows:

1. Legal assistance and awareness: Implement, with the support of the donor community, targeted legal assistance programmes for environmental migrants, emphasizing awareness campaigns to address informational gaps, particularly focusing on women.

2. Support to access to documentation: Collaborate with



authorities to simplify documentation processes, addressing issues of accessibility and cost. This includes the organization of mobile visits by bodies in charge of issuing documentation.

3. Special consideration for children: Develop interventions for children born to environmental migrant parents, advocating for their recognition and access to documentation.

4. HLP rights advocacy and support: Advocate for the government to suspend evictions in informal sites, prioritizing durable solutions and securing agricultural contracts for migrants for improved tenure security.

5. Information and anti-exploitation measures: Implement campaigns to educate migrants, especially women, about exploitation risks. Collaborate with authorities to disseminate reliable information and verify the legitimacy of contracts and property deeds.

6. Evidence base strengthening: Conduct research on compensation for migrants and assess access to social protection schemes.

7. Gender-based violence (GBV): Ensure accessible and inclusive GBV response, focusing on persons with disabilities and female-headed households. Conduct regular protection monitoring and safety audits.

Access full report at <https://bit.ly/3Jz0s4k>



## A new report by IOM “Pathways to legal identity“ highlights the related Iraqi legal framework and the challenges to access civil documentation



**Baghdad, 24 April 2024** - The conflict with Daesh left many Iraqis without access to civil documentation. A new report by IOM “Pathways to legal identity“ highlights the related Iraqi legal framework and the challenges to access these documents. Here is the Executive summary of the Report:

Access to identity and civil documentation is a prerequisite to accessing basic rights and services, including social protection, education, health care and nationality, and this is no less true for Iraq.

The importance of identity and civil documentation in Iraq has been highlighted in the context of post-conflict displacement and societal disruption – which have limited access to such documentation and undermined efforts to work towards durable solutions for internally displaced persons and returnees.

Children of female-headed households are particularly vulnerable to being unable to access identity and civil documentation as well as nationality, further compounding vulnerability.

In this context, this report sets out the findings of research undertaken to better understand:

- The legal and practical barriers to children obtaining identity and civil documentation and to obtaining Iraqi nationality;
- The obstacles to women transmitting Iraqi citizenship to their children.

This study is based on documentary analysis of legislation and key informant interviews (KIIs). The author also conducted a preliminary

desk review.

The following eight key findings were reached following the KIIs:

1 Children face significant barriers in day-to-day life without identity and civil documentation

2 Many Iraqis do not have access to documents that are required to obtain further identity and civil documents

3 Following the conflict with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Courts began requesting DNA testing to confirm lineage, which further complicates the process, though with advocacy this is slowly changing

- Finding 3.1 There is a clear rationale for DNA testing, which is widely understood in Iraq

- Finding 3.2 Travelling to Baghdad in order to undertake DNA testing is difficult, if not impossible for some

- Finding 3.3 There is a variety of approaches taken by the Court when ordering DNA testing

4 The conflict with ISIL has led to an increased prevalence of single women raising children without proof of lineage

5 The process to establish proof of lineage is convoluted, requires travel and can be expensive

- Finding 5.1: The process to establish proof of lineage is complex for applicants

- Finding 5.2: Travel may be an inherent requirement to obtaining civil documents

- Finding 5.3 Several direct and incidental costs act as a barrier to registration

6 Cultural and societal norms and values can act as barriers, particularly for children with unknown fathers and women whose husbands are affiliated to ISIL

- Finding 6.1: Children with unknown fathers are at significant risk of not being registered, in part due to cultural and societal norms

- Finding 6.2: Women face specific challenges as a result of their husbands’ affiliations to ISIL, which can prevent access to identity documents

7 Children with unknown fathers are at significant risk of statelessness

8 The circumstances in which a child can obtain Iraqi nationality via their mother remain unclear

The findings reveal that the post-conflict landscape has exacerbated

what appear to be pre-existing barriers and/or increased the prevalence of children vulnerable to non-registration as a result of the barriers.

On the basis of these findings, this report makes six recommendations to inform future programming:

1 Advocate for solutions to complex cases, including in particular, cases where a child’s father is unknown

If a child’s father’s identity is unknown, obtaining proof of marriage or proof of lineage may be impossible. This caseload is recognized as being incredibly sensitive, and includes children born to rape, sexual enslavement and forced marriage:

- Recommendation 1.1: Advocate for legal reform to bypass the need to prove paternal lineage so that proof of lineage does not prevent access to identity and civil documentation, and nationality.

- Recommendation 1.2: Undertake broad consultation to formulate the details of any proposal for reform to ensure that the rights of the child and safety and security of the child’s mother can be protected in the absence of knowledge of paternal lineage.

2 Advocate for a consistent and less onerous approach to DNA testing in proof of lineage cases

Whilst DNA testing is understood to be important, it can also act as a barrier to obtaining a proof of lineage determination. Different approaches are undertaken across Iraq.

- Recommendation 2.1 Undertake a decision analysis in order to understand these differences and establish an evidence base

- Recommendation 2.2: Advocate for a practice direction that details the circumstances in which DNA testing should be ordered, and emphasizes the best interests of the child

3 Reduce the burden of travel by finding localised solutions to registration processes

Travelling to a local Civil Affairs Directorate (CAD) is particularly problematic for those who live a considerable distance away. Applicants should be able to obtain documentation at their nearest CAD.

4 Engage with Courts continuing to request Ikhbar

Whilst Ikhbar (the legal process of “disavowing”) is no longer a requirement across most of Iraq,

## A new report by IOM “Pathways to legal identity“ highlights the related Iraqi legal framework ... *(continued)*

Targeted advocacy with these Courts should be undertaken to ensure consistency across the country.

5 Pursue an education campaign around the rights of the child to obtain Iraqi nationality via their mother.

Responses from the KIIs suggest that there is a lack of understanding as to how CADs apply the Iraqi Nationality Law:

- Recommendation 5.1 Clarify the Government’s position
- Recommendation 5.2: Conduct an

education campaign targeting public servants and lawyers that assist vulnerable groups

- Recommendation 5.3: Advocate for reform to the Iraqi Nationality Law so that men and women have equal rights to transmit their nationality to their children, irrespective of whether a child is born within or outside of Iraq

6 Amplify the voices of affected women to ensure that any proposed solutions are fit for purpose.

In the wake of the conflict with ISIL,

women are particularly impacted by the barriers to obtaining identity and civil documentation for their children.

It is recommended that further research be undertaken with women directly, via KIIs and/or focus group discussions, to understand the issues and the value of any potential solutions from their perspective.

Full report is available at [https://iraq.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11316/files/documents/2024-04/report\\_lineage\\_citizenship\\_short-version-march-2024-final\\_jm.pdf](https://iraq.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11316/files/documents/2024-04/report_lineage_citizenship_short-version-march-2024-final_jm.pdf)

## Ninewa Joint Coordination Forum collaborates on supporting government efforts in Ninewa

**Mosul, 24 April 2024** - The 3rd meeting of the Ninewa Joint Coordination Forum was held yesterday, bringing together key governmental departments, UN agencies, and NGOs to collaborate on supporting government efforts in Ninewa, and addressing the needs and challenges faced by IDPs and returnees.



## UNHCR and ITC join efforts to support the economic empowerment of refugees and host communities in Iraq

**Erbil, 30 April 2024** - UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and the International Trade Centre (ITC), joint agency of UN and World Trade Organization fully dedicated to supporting small businesses in developing countries to trade, enter into a groundbreaking partnership to facilitate the socio-economic integration of refugee and local community members in Iraq.

This partnership establishes a comprehensive framework under which ITC and UNHCR will collaborate to promote inclusive economic growth and self-reliance among refugees and local communities. The joint efforts are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the Iraq Government Vision 2030 and National Development Plans that all seek to expand income opportunities leaving no one behind and thus fight against poverty.

ITC and UNHCR will strengthen and



expand their ongoing joint work, placing a special focus on interventions that aim to advance inclusive and profitable economic opportunities in the agricultural sector and other promising sectors for Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), considering the specific needs of refugees and asylum seekers, their legal status and

protection needs.

The two entities will also work together to strengthen agribusiness competitiveness in refugee hosting areas; and in forging and implementing strategies to champion and augment inclusive economic empowerment of youth and women in Iraq.

Eric Buchot, Representative, Head of



## UNHCR and ITC join efforts to support the economic empowerment of refugees and host communities in Iraq *(continued)*

ITC Country Programme in Iraq, and Jean-Nicolas Beuze, UNHCR Representative to Iraq signed the letter of intent.

Emphasizing the strategic importance of the collaboration, Eric Buchot said, “ITC and UNHCR partnership showcases the importance of inclusive economic opportunities for refugees’ self-reliance, integration, social stability, and long-term solutions to displacement. Supporting refugees’ economic inclusion is not only a matter of humanitarian assistance

but also a strategic investment in sustainable development and peacebuilding.”

“Our collaboration with the ITC will enhance socio-economic integration for refugees and Iraqis. Together, our goal is to create better job opportunities, particularly in agriculture, and prioritize trainings to give more chances to refugees and Iraqis to access these jobs. Refugees want to become economically self-reliant and they want to contribute to the local economy so as not to be a burden on anyone. For UNHCR, it is

equally important that Iraqis, particularly Kurdish, be equally supported so that everyone benefits from these initiatives. ITC brings its expertise in job creation and we bring our knowledge on how to involve communities, especially those displaced. Together we can win the challenge of developing local economies to the benefit of all,” said Jean-Nicolas Beuze, UNHCR Representative to Iraq.

This collaboration marks a significant step towards fostering economic self-reliance among refugees in Iraq.

### Rebuilding social bonds through baking



**Kirkuk, 27 February 2024** - In 2014, running through 2017, the conflict with ISIL led to violence and displacement in Iraq. Forcing many to flee their homes and find refuge elsewhere both inside and outside Iraq.

Even though the conflict ended and occupied areas were liberated, its negative impact continues to ripple through the affected communities in various parts of the country. Several displaced people who returned home still struggle with the aftershocks of conflict. Many lost their homes, sources of livelihood, good health, and the community bonds that held everything together. Women and children particularly suffered from specific challenges including a lack of opportunities to contribute to their family incomes as they struggled to rebuild.

As part of efforts to address these challenges, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) working with partners like Human Appeal is providing livelihood and economic support as well as mental

health support services to returnees and host community members through vocational training, cash for work activities, and small business grants among others – to improve their lives and build back social bonds.

One of the key vocational activities provided is baking classes for women. In United Through Food, a UNDP-curated cookbook celebrating Iraqi cuisine – baking is identified as one of the traditional aspects of Iraqi culture. For UNDP’s social cohesion initiatives, baking is a gateway for women – usually delegated homemaking roles only – to contribute to their families’ incomes. Below, we share the stories of three inspiring women from Al Zab in Kirkuk Governorate, whose lives have been transformed by these efforts.

#### Dreaming of sponge cake - Buthaina Hussein’s story

“I used to dream of making sponge cake, but now I can make it,” exclaimed 30-year-old Buthaina Hussein, a married mother of four. She is one of the 10 women from the Al Zab village

in Kirkuk Governorate selected to take part in the vocational classes led by Human Appeal, a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Implementing Partner working in the areas of return.

During the 14-day training, she expanded her baking skills, learning how to make different types of cakes and Iraqi candies and perfecting her decorating techniques. By the end of the training, she was taking orders from her neighbours and earning 6000 IQD per cake sold. She hopes to even make more as demand increases.

Buthaina’s family was displaced in Kirkuk City for 5 years due to the ISIL insurgency and returned to find everything destroyed. “We had to start all over again,” she said, adding that they are rebuilding their family home and she is happy that she can also make a small contribution to that now.

“Everyone in my family is excited about this, my children all support me while I work and they are learning too,” she said.

She is also excited about her new friends from the classes, “we have become like sisters and consult each other on recipes and other ideas.”

#### From homemaker to businesswoman: Rania

In the same baking class, 32-year-old Rania Kalam is also embracing her new life as a baker. She also proudly describes herself as a businesswoman since she started getting orders right after upgrading her skills. In addition to baking cakes, the training introduced her to dishes like pizza and Iraqi candies, leading to orders for birthday celebrations and engagement parties.

## Rebuilding social bonds through baking (continued)

"With my first order, my whole family was outside waiting for the pick-up and took photos of the whole thing, it was such a happy day," Rania shared excitedly adding that her husband now helps her make deliveries.

"Even if the little profit I make meets only my needs, it's enough because it reduces the expenses for the whole family," Rania explains adding that savings go to other family needs. Her family fled Al Zab for one and half years returning in 2017 to rebuild.

### Suzan gets help

For Suzan Salih, a married mother of six, the baking classes introduced her to the project's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS).

She was struggling with family rejection after she was appointed to become the first female mukhtar in Shmeet, Alzab district. Traditionally, this position is reserved for men and her brothers saw it as a dishonour to their family when she accepted it.

Despite her family's disapproval, she took on the role offered by the Mayor after working at his house. The disapproval from her brothers affected her deeply, hindering her concentration during baking classes.

It was during the baking classes that she learned about the MHPSS. Feeling isolated, Suzan approached a counsellor from the Human Appeal team. Through individual and group sessions, she found valuable mental health support.

"Now, I focus on supporting my family and those who care about me," Suzan shared, grateful for the newfound

strength. Although she's yet to start her home-based baking business, she plans to sell pastries to the local school once she secures a grant.

In her role as mukhtar, Suzan aims to unite people, including returnees. Despite initial challenges, she feels there's more acceptance now, especially from her father and in-laws. She looks forward to a brighter future, empowered by mental health assistance, and determined to make a positive impact in her community.

Building lasting bonds through baking Despite their varying backgrounds, all ten women – who are evenly divided into returnees and host community members - are now good friends, and frequently exchange tips on baking, building the kind of relationships that promote reintegration and social cohesion within their communities. Their trainer continues to guide them in pricing their products while the Human Appeal staff supports them find new markets to sell their goodies.

"We are particularly impressed by the drive these women have shown in starting their businesses even before receiving their toolkits," Hani Zuhair, the Project Manager of Human Appeal said, adding that this was a marketable skill because the culture of having dessert and baked goods at home and events is picking up once again in these rural communities. Through the project, beneficiaries also learn about hygiene, the importance of education in their communities, and other topical issues in their communities. This is intended to raise their awareness and enable them to become ambassadors for

change within their communities.

All ten women received a baking tool kit that included an oven, a food processor, and mixers among other items to enable them to grow their home-based businesses and sustain their livelihoods in the long run. Those who show interest will also be supported with job placement opportunities to enable them to continue building their skills while they earn.

### About this initiative

UNDP is providing this support through its Community-Based Reconciliation and Reintegration in Iraq project. Currently being implemented in Kirkuk, Diyala, and Anbar Governates, the project will benefit 170 beneficiaries, including 82 women.

Through efforts such as these, UNDP reached 3,925 returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with direct livelihood support including vocational training as well as 5,482 returnees, IDPs, and host community members received MHPSS support in 2023 alone. A further 9000 individuals will be supported in 2024.

As recovery continues and Iraq embarks on its journey toward lasting peace and sustainable development, these efforts - which are made possible with the generous contributions from UNDP's Funding Window for Peacebuilding - remain crucial for providing the building blocks towards a peaceful and socially cohesive Iraqi society.



## Rubble to roads: IOM and UNEP support Kirkuk's road to recovery in Iraq

**Kirkuk, 07 March 2024** – Building on the shared vision for a durable solutions model village, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Iraq today handed over a mobile debris recycling system and equipment to Kirkuk Governorate today in Al Mansuriya village, Multaqa district. As part of the debris management efforts, nearly 60,000 tonnes of debris were recovered and removed from Al Mansuriya village – one of the 135 villages in the region that witnessed catastrophic destruction of private homes and public infrastructure in 2016. Leveraging the support and commitment of the host community, nearly 400 residents were employed in the debris

removal and recycling process under Employment for Public Works (EPW) schemes, sorting, crushing, recycling, and rebuilding the village that used to house over 500 families.

"Enough with destruction," exclaims Mohammed Emad Awad, a maintenance worker and EPW participant of the project. "Let us move towards reconstruction and rebuilding the country".

Echoing the sentiments of Awad, two more families have returned to the village, after a decade of displacement. "If we just clean up the rubble, people will return," asserts Saab Al-Shimari, one of the recent returnees to the area. "The main obstacle to returns is the debris".

Supported by the Government of Japan,

the handover of the Kirkuk debris recycling system marks a significant step in ongoing efforts to assist national authorities in sustainably managing the estimated 55 million tonnes of debris created by the conflict with Daesh.

UNEP West Asia Regional Director, Sami Dimassi, emphasized that "retaining materials in the economy instead of discarding them is key to unlocking opportunities, whereby we maximize the use of our resources, foster the concept of circularity to generate employment and safeguard social, economic and environmental benefits."

"The successful completion of this project is a double win," shares IOM Iraq Chief of Mission, Giorgi Gigauri. "We are able to support the recovery and reconstruction of



## Rubble to roads: IOM and UNEP support Kirkuk's road to recovery in Iraq *(continued)*

the communities, and at the same time empower local authorities to continue the work in a sustainable manner, drawing on principles of a circular economy.”

Another milestone of the project is the building of the first asphalted road using recycled materials in accordance with national road construction standards. Material testing of the recycled aggregate by Kirkuk Municipal laboratories confirms its compliance with the Iraqi State Commission for Roads and Bridges design standards for road foundational layers. The 600m x 8m road is one of the village's five main residential strips, and the remaining 13,650 tonnes stockpile of recycled aggregate material produced under the project will be sufficient to rebuild around 80 percent of the roads of

the village destroyed by the conflict. Previously, in July 2022, IOM and UNEP handed over the first debris recycling centre to Mosul Municipality. This debris initiative in conflict-affected areas also

opens the way for the recycling of routine construction and demolition waste, contributing to building back better and embedding circularity in Iraq's development.



## UNDP on X

**Baghdad, 05 March 2024** - Another milestone is achieved towards an investment-friendly Iraq! The draft Law on Arbitration is approved by the Council of Ministers and referred to the parliament for consideration. UNDP has provided technical support in law drafting through its European Union funded Arbitration work.



## Dutch Ambassador in Sinjar visits UN-Habitat projects supported by the Netherlands

**Sinjar, 06 March 2024** - His Excellency Hans Sandee, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Iraq, was welcomed in Sinjar by the UN-Habitat Iraq team, led by Mr. Muslim Qazimi, the acting Head of Country Programme.

The visit provided Ambassador Sandee with a closer look at the field activities and beneficiaries of the project titled “Policy Dialogue on Legislative Reform to Improve Land Governance and Secure Tenure Rights for Vulnerable IDPs in Iraq,” supported by the Government of the Netherlands through LAND-at-Scale.

During the visit, he observed an awareness-raising session on Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights and enhancing access to Compensation

claims, and personally distributed Land Occupancy certificates to households. The overarching goal of the project is to

improve land governance and strengthen security of tenure for vulnerable populations.



## Ensuring continued access to clean water in Al-Sakrah town in Anbar-Anbar province

**Anbar, 11 March 2024** - This initiative, supported by USAID Iraq, is helping rehabilitate Al-Sakrah station, a vital water source for citizens. Fluctuating water levels near Haditha Dam pose significant challenges, affecting water flow and causing Al-Sakrah station to constantly adjust water levels to meet increasing

demand. To address this issue, we rehabilitated the intake station and installed three pipe stations. This ensures an uninterrupted water supply to Al-Sakrah.

Over 3,000 Iraqis will benefit from improved access to water, thus helping improve their quality of life.

UNDP and USAID provide clean water, for infrastructure sustainability.



## UNDP Iraq concludes Food Industry Training sessions in Kurdistan Region



**Erbil, 13 March 2024** - UNDP Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Kurdistan Regional Government concluded Food Industry Training sessions at three locations (Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Akre). This effort

was possible through generous funding from USAID Iraq.

The initiative empowers female graduates from the Agriculture Department through providing them with essential skills to establish small agricultural businesses in the food

industry sector. The training helped enhance the participants' skills in producing and drying agricultural products while employing technology and adhering to hygiene standards.

These women are now confident enough to enter the competitive food industry market. Beyond skills development, the program helps foster entrepreneurship and promote the growth of unique agricultural products.

During the eight-day training in each location, 63 female participants engaged in both theoretical and practical sessions, laying a robust foundation for their future endeavors.

We extend our support to these inspiring women as they embark on their journey towards economic prosperity.

## UNDP Iraq works at the Marshlands with its Canadian partners directly with the local communities to address water needs and promote biodiversity conservation

**Basra, 23 March 2024** – UNDP Iraq works at the Marshlands with its Canadian partners directly with the local communities to address water needs and promote biodiversity conservation.

Canada has long been recognized as a major player in global biodiversity conservation. Their dedication to preserving the unique biodiversity of the Mesopotamian marshes is not new, with their initial efforts dating back to as early as 2008.

UNDP project in the south aims to improve water security by responding to the local communities' needs, especially those of women. It focuses on rehabilitating low-carbon water treatment units and restoring the Basra hatchery to enhance local biodiversity. Additionally, the project

supports the environmental police in Basra by providing them with training and essential tools, enabling them to safeguard the environment effectively. Women have always been at the heart of the marshlands' dynamics, and we are keen, along with Iraqi Women Empowerment Department, to support women in taking an active role in water resource management, fish hatchery

operations, and environmental conservation efforts.

Essential to our project is ensuring that the Iraqi marshlands meet the criteria set by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Achieving this status would highlight the global significance of the marshes and ensure they receive heightened levels of much needed care and protection.



## Transitioning to E-land Governance in Iraq

**Baghdad, 24 March 2024** - In a significant move towards enhancing Iraq's long-term development and reform process, the Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), announces the launch of the 'Modernising Urban Land Knowledge (MULK)' programme. Funded by the European Union, the MULK programme strives to reform and modernise land management in Iraq by supporting the transition to a digitised e-land administration system,

making significant strides in supporting an improved investment climate, and in ensuring security of tenure for all.

Over three years, the programme focuses on building the foundation for the digital transformation of land management. This includes developing an enabling legal framework, building institutional capacity, devising technical specifications, and engaging civil society in meaningful policy dialogue. These efforts are aimed at ensuring land management

modernization is not only viable, but also inclusive and sustainable.

At the programme launch, Mr. Ahmed Luebi, Director General for Justice Affairs, emphasized the programme's significance in vastly improving Iraq's property records and land administration systems. "Modernising land governance systems is key to Iraq's reform agenda and is crucial for facilitating future investment, paving the way for a more productive and prosperous economic future for all Iraqi citizens," he stated.



## Transitioning to E-land Governance in Iraq (continued)

Mr. Tsvetomir Tsekov, Programme Manager, Delegation of the European Union to Iraq highlighted the strategic alignment of the MULK programme with Iraq's Government priorities: "This programme builds upon the longstanding collaboration between the European Union and UN-Habitat, supporting the Government of Iraq in reaching its long-term development goals. It closely aligns with national and international development priorities, especially e-governance, social, and sustainability targets outlined in Iraq's Vision for Sustainable Development 2030."

Mr. Muslim Qazimi, acting Head of UN-Habitat Iraq, highlighted that the MULK programme represents a significant step forward in promoting equity and bolstering economic development in Iraq. "By working to

establish an effective and secure digitised land management platform, MULK not only supports the upholding human rights but also offers investors greater confidence in their investment decisions."



## Anbari Women receive a boost in livelihoods support from UNDP, the Embassy of Japan and Technostar sponsored by Brother International

**Baghdad, 28, March 2024** - UNDP and the Japanese Embassy in Iraq celebrate the delivery of 100 sewing machines, a significant step towards supporting stable livelihoods for women. Donated through Technostar Ltd. representing Brother Int. Ltd, this initiative underscores the commitment to fostering stability and prosperity in post-conflict areas across the country.

Supporting livelihoods, rebuilding lives Technostar Ltd. Sponsored by Brother Int. Ltd, is donating 100 modern sewing machines to support the livelihoods of women in Ramadi. These women have received training at the vocational training centre, facilitated by UNDP, which has trained hundreds of women. This vital support aims to bolster the women's efforts to become self-reliant and rebuild their lives and finances, which have been affected by the conflict.

"Iraq is turning a new page as it enters into an era of transformative development. nonetheless, both the Government of Japan and UNDP, are here to support the country, as it enters this new chapter. And what better way to do this than supporting the courageous women through the provision of livelihoods' support and training provided through this programme," said Auke

Lootsma, UNDP Resident Representative in Iraq.

This donation is a part of a broader series of contributions by donors to the region. In Anbar, livelihoods support and training in sewing has been a huge help to the community, allowing women to learn a trade whilst earning a living, as formerly occupied communities continue to rebuild their lives one step a time.

Today, Technostar the leading provider of technology solutions in Iraq, is giving 100 Brother sewing machines towards the empowerment of women and their families, helping them build sustainable livelihoods.

"As a promoter of the concept of human security, we believe that stability and development of the society cannot be realized without ensuring the empowerment and protection of the most vulnerable individuals such as IDPs[1]. As a part of the efforts to materialize such an idea, the Government of Japan has provided vocational training, particularly to the women in partnership with the UNDP," said H.E. Japanese Ambassador Futoshi Matsumoto.

### UNDP and Government of Japan's support to peace-building

At the request of the Iraqi government

and international partners, the UNDP has engaged in several critical projects to facilitate the return of internally displaced Iraqis, laying the groundwork for reconstruction and mitigating the risk of violence and extremism.

The Programme adopts an integrated approach, promoting sustainable livelihoods and employment opportunities by rehabilitating infrastructure in productive and industrial sectors, contributing to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.

The donation of these sewing machines represents a tangible investment in the future of Iraq's liberated areas, providing women with the tools they need to build stable and prosperous lives.

Through collaborative efforts and sustained support from the international community, Iraq moves closer to realizing lasting stability and prosperity for all its citizens.

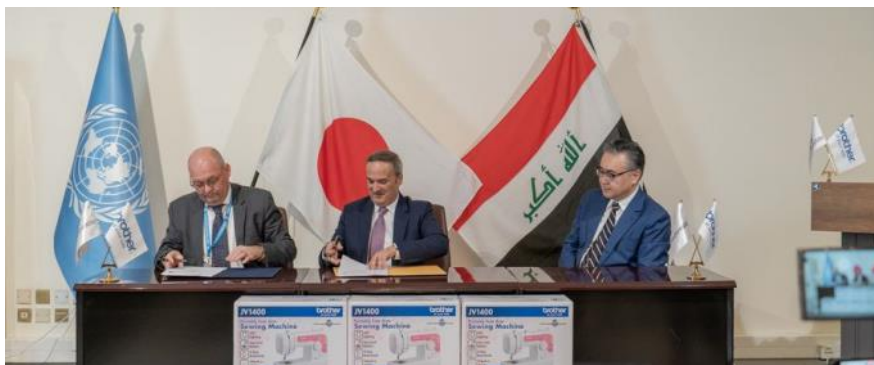
### About Technostar

A leading provider of innovative and reliable products, services, and office solutions that help businesses maximize their work efficiency.

Technostar has been providing technical support to enterprises for more than ten years. These technical support services troubleshoot each query and enable organizations to become efficient and agile, from the simplest office machine to the most sophisticated solutions.

Since the company was established in 2008, it has been in front of the development IRAQ's office technology market and they become a major provider of digital imaging and office solutions and after-sales services for small to large companies.

Its services include Banking & Finance, E-Commerce, Health Care, Oil, Logistics & Supply chain, and Retail industries.



## UNICEF signs the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Iraq

**Baghdad, 28 March 2024** - “This signing ceremony paves the way to start the implementation of this important data tool to better understand the situation of girls, boys and women in Iraq,” said Sandra Lattouf, UNICEF Representative in Iraq during the signing ceremony of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Iraq.

Co-financed by the Government of Iraq, the European Union in Iraq and Germany through Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ), MICS will support the Iraqi Government in collecting comparable data on children and women.



## Ensuring access to clean water in Amriyat Al-Samoud

**Anbar, 01 April 2024** - UNDP Iraq is proud to announce the completion of Bouhathal and Boudej Water Network in Amriyat Al-Sumoud in Anbar, Iraq which will enable access to clean water for over 1,200 residents!

Our initiative, funded by USAID Iraq, addresses challenges stemming from a damaged, inefficient, and old water networks. It ensures continuous access to clean water for the community, especially during peak demand periods in the extremely hot summer months.

With the installation of a new modern water network, we’ve expanded access to reliable potable water for residents in the area and nearby schools. Together, we’re making a difference in the population of Amriyat Al-Samoud.



## New big environmental step for Iraq!

**Baghdad, 05 April 2024** – We’re excited to announce a new partnership between UNDP and WFP in Iraq!

Together, we’re working towards important shared goals by:

- Strengthening climate information systems.
- Restoring the marshes and supporting local communities.
- Obtaining international carbon credits.
- Mobilizing resources for adaptation.
- Enhancing water and food security.





## The Minister of Industry and Minerals meets with a delegation from the United Nations Development Program in Iraq

**Baghdad, 04 April 2024** - His Excellency the Minister of Industry and Minerals, Professor Dr. Eng. Khaled Battal Al-Najm, met today, Thursday, with the representative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Iraq and his accompanying delegation to discuss prospects for cooperation and joint coordination to support the development of the industrial sector.

During the meeting, joint projects between the Ministry and the Program were reviewed and the work that had been accomplished to rehabilitate and reconstruct a number of asphalt factories in the governorates of Nineveh, Anbar, and Salah al-Din, and mechanisms for enhancing joint work were discussed.



In addition to the rehabilitation and equipping of the textile factory in Anah-Anbar and Waladi textile factory in Ninewa. These factories offer both

long and short-term job opportunities for hundreds of Iraqis, especially women in Ninewa and Anbar governorates.

## Iraq officially signs the Singapore Convention on Mediation

**Baghdad, 17 April 2024** - Iraq has officially signed the Singapore

Convention on Mediation, a milestone towards developing commercial dispute

resolution in Iraq. Financed by the European Union, UNDP's ongoing technical support to the Government of Iraq has contributed to this achievement.

The Convention now awaits ratification and implementation by the Council of Representatives. UNDP will continue providing technical support going forward, thereby contributing to building a more favorable environment for investments and business development in Iraq.

Learn more: UN Treaty Collection: <https://tinyurl.com/4wrd8766>

Singapore Convention on Mediation: <https://www.singaporeconvention.org/>



## The land will be green again!

**Baghdad, 20 April 2024** - Today marks an unforgettable anniversary. It was 10 years ago today that ISIL launched a devastating attack on Sinjar, etching a painful scar in Iraq's history, especially for women and girls. The United Nations later recognized this atrocity as genocide against the Yazidis.

But amidst the darkness, there is a light. "Today, we are tirelessly working to revitalize our village through upcoming projects under the United Nations programmes," says Sheikh Nayef, a Yazidi leader.

UNDP Iraq's Funding Facility for Stabilization has successfully rebuilt over 150 projects, these efforts have directly benefited more than 1 million Iraqis in Sinjar, Sinouni, and Qayrawan regions, instilling hope.

Every day, the United Nations Development Programme stands in solidarity, honoring the memory of the

#Sinjar massacre victims. Our commitment to stabilize and support them remains unwavering.

	<b>HOUSING</b>	Projects: 5 Beneficiaries: 6,456
	<b>EDUCATION</b>	Projects: 42 Beneficiaries: 99,026
	<b>HEALTH</b>	Projects: 29 Beneficiaries: 265,500
	<b>ELECTRICITY</b>	Projects: 17 Beneficiaries: 155,700
	<b>LIVELIHOODS</b>	Projects: 11 Beneficiaries: 1,823
	<b>WATER</b>	Projects: 23 Beneficiaries: 295,300
	<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	Projects: 23 Beneficiaries: 227,335

Photo: UNDP Iraq Sinjar Mountains



**Sulaimania, 18 April 2024** - Speaking at the #SuliForum24 today, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), Mr. **Ghulam Isaczai** showcased UN Iraq humanitarian work in Iraq during conflict years in Iraq. He further informed on the transition from humanitarian to development and cooperation with government towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



**Baghdad, 23 April 2024** - Today, the UN Country Team in Iraq, led by the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), Mr. **Ghulam Isaczai**, are outlining UN strategic priorities for the next 5 years. With in-depth consultations, we are shaping UN Cooperation Framework to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Iraq, focusing on enhancing social services, economic growth and climate action.

## Social housing provides people in need access to safe, secure and affordable housing



**Baghdad, 21 April 2024** - Everyone has the right to safe, secure, and affordable housing. Social housing provides people in need access to this right.

UN-Habitat emphasises the importance of good housing in enhancing living conditions for those in vulnerable and unsafe situations, while also supporting

urban development.

In Mosul, Ninewa Governorate, plans are underway for a new social housing complex aimed at assisting at least 48 households, benefiting around 300 people. This includes returnees, female-led households, and those with disabilities. The construction is expected to start in mid-2024 and finish

by early 2025.

The Japan Village project, led by UN-Habitat and funded by the Government of Japan, will develop the Rajm Hadeed neighbourhood, established as a residential area for the returnees in the Master Plan for Mosul.

It will provide housing and important services such as water, electricity, and roads.

Building on the previous success of delivering the Bab Sinjar housing complex in Mosul, an achievement also supported by the Government of Japan, UN-Habitat and local authorities continue to collaborate closely.

This is demonstrated, for instance, by a recent consultation with Ninewa's Deputy Governor, Mr. Sirwan Rozhbayani, focusing on aligning the project's objectives with the community's urgent needs.

## 5th International and 18th National Scientific Conference on Statistical Apps held in Baghdad

**Baghdad, 24 April 2024** - Today at the 5th International & 18th National Scientific Conference on Statistical Apps, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, reiterates UN Iraq's commitment to leveraging statistics for Sustainable Development. Accurate data drives our efforts to leave no one behind in Iraq. "UNFPA's commitment to the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government for implementing the population census is unwavering.

The census is pivotal towards sustainable development and delivering services without leaving anyone behind," said Mr. Garik Hayrapetyan,

UNFPA Iraq Deputy Representative, at the 5th International and 18th National Scientific Conference on Statistical Apps.





## Innovation drives economic growth

**Baghdad, 23 April 2024** - IOM supports Iraqi innovators and change makers in developing solutions for their communities.

Enterprise Development Fund Innovation is part of the broader EDF framework, designed to exclusively target 'innovation' supporting both innovative start-ups (at the ideation stage) and early-stage innovative businesses (those that can demonstrate product-market fit) with significant potential to create sustainable jobs in, but not limited to, the technology sector.

The tech and start-up industry in Iraq is still at a nascent stage and represents an underexplored market segment in Iraq. Supporting businesses to nurture innovation and explore new ways of thinking about business management opens up blue ocean markets that can create and absorb young, innovative jobseekers and entrepreneurs.

Here are few stories:

### Black Ace - Sulaymaniyah

As a university student at American University of Iraq, Tara Muhammed worked two or three jobs at a time, in addition to taking a full course load. She was saving to buy a car, which she imagined would grant her more independence.

But when the time came to actually buy the new vehicle, Tara was at a crossroads. She'd promised herself that after finishing college she would start her own business within five years—and that self-imposed deadline was looming.



So, instead of using her savings to buy the car, she decided to invest \$10,000 in an IT Solutions startup called Black Ace in July of 2019. "I knew I was going to be an entrepreneur," Tara, now 27, said from behind her sleek desk. "I just know myself. I always had more to offer."

At first, the stress of her loved one's doubts felt too much to deal with on top of the formidable task of starting a new business. So Muhammed decided not to tell people, besides her

business partner, Nali Qadir, who has worked at Black Ace from the beginning.

"She's a leader, not just a boss if you know what I mean," Nali said as he sat behind stacks of paper in his office, next door to Tara's.

By 2021, Black Ace was not only thriving, it was operating at a profit. "It works like magic," Tara said. "People started to consider you ... they find you."

Two years after founding Black Ace, Tara had made enough money to buy the car she'd foregone two years earlier—though she'd worked such long hours since starting the business that she still hasn't found time to get her driver's license.

Black Ace now employs 10 workers, 6 of which were hired after the company received a \$23,100 EDF grant that was distributed from March to November of 2021. Tara's team works diligently, washed in the glow of their computer screens as they write code and run simulations of new apps and site designs.

"It feels really good when you create opportunities," Tara said. "Two years ago I was working a job and now I've created nine positions."

In the office, Tara's team speaks highly of her leadership, and her skills as a programmer. Areen Muhammad, 24, has worked as a backend developer at Black Ace for 18 months. "It's been amazing," he said. "For me, as a male, it's important to see that Tara is a role model for other women."

Valan Luqman, 22, works as a sales agent. She was hired as part of the EDF grant expansion in mid-2021. "Since getting here, I've learned things I would have never learned anywhere else," she said. "I really admire Tara personally ... her work ethic, as well as her intellect. She's brilliant. She helps us with every step we take."

Tara has ambitions of continuing to expand Black Ace to Baghdad.

### Kahi Dairy Factory - Dohuk

A group of men line up for their lunch break, making jokes and laughing as they pile food onto their trays. Each day, their breakfast, lunch and transportation is provided, in addition to the salaries they receive at the Kahi Dairy Factory in Qasir Ezdin Village in Dohuk.

Hishyar Khorshed, 28, is the longest tenured worker at the factory. He

operates all the machinery with ease, and he's in charge of helping the other workers mix materials for various milk and yogurt products manufactured at the factory. White milk speckles his black boots as it spills from the hoses pumping a fresh creamy yogurt into plastic tubs.

Recently, Hishyar started to train an influx of new workers that were hired as part of the \$30,000 EDF grant Kahi Dairy received in 2021. The factory used its funding to buy a new production line, hire five workers, and expand its line of products.

A few years ago, Serbast Dewli Saeed, 20, was working at Kahi Dairy, but he was laid off in 2020 when production slowed down during the Covid-19 pandemic. Serbast was unemployed for months, before eventually finding work in a poultry factory. He described the working conditions there as untenable.

"I was only there for 15 days," he said. "I couldn't stand it." Saeed said



he's very happy to be back at Kahi Dairy since they upped their production and started bringing back workers in 2021.

Because of the factory's EDF grant, twenty year-old Hussein Ahmad was hired at Kahi Dairy three months ago. After a string of short-term jobs Hussein said he was grateful to find a job with long-term prospects where he can make connections and earn wages to support his family.

### Ali Althwene Carpentry - Salah al-Din

On the street outside Ali Althwene Carpentry, Gasam Mohammed, 45, stands in the sun rubbing sunflower oil into carefully cut pieces of wood. Sawdust drifts out of the shop's open doors, falling around him gently on the street. With eleven years at the business, Gasam's work there has been steady, allowing him to provide a good life for his wife and six children.

Ali Hamdi Tawfiq established Ali Althwene Carpentry after working as a carpenter for twenty years. He

## Innovation drives economic growth *(continued)*



started out alone, with just a single piece of machinery. After years of local commissions, he grew to six employees and found stable footing in the market. But eventually, after more than a decade of making the same furniture designs, Ali had grown uninspired. He

didn't look forward to his work in the same way, or see a path growing the business. But everything changed when Ali received a \$25,000 EDF grant in 2021.

"Before the grant, I didn't have any inspiration to create new designs," he said. "I was limited by the tools I had."

Ali came alive as he described the renaissance he experienced after his new machines arrived.

"I was inspired to make these designs and to share them with the community on social media, and since then we've had a lot of new business," he said.

One of Ali's recent designs, a new kitchen line, has been particularly

popular in the community. To fulfill the increased orders, Ali Althwene Carpentry sources their raw materials from Kirkuk and Erbil, generating more business for the other Iraqi factories that provide goods and services the carpenters need to do their jobs.

Moder Nasat, 23, worked at Ali Althwene Carpentry for two years. In that time, he went from novice to proficient carpenter. He also brought social media savvy to the business, helping Tawfiq set up Facebook and Instagram pages to promote their products. @carpentrytikrit now has 3,000 followers.

## Over 3,000 residents of the Azadi neighbourhood in Sinjar now have access to drinking water

**Sinjar, 27 April 2024** - Over 3,000 residents of the Azadi neighbourhood in Sinjar now have access to drinking water, owing to a recent upgrade that extended the existing water network by 9,350 meters. This intervention, led by UN-Habitat Iraq and supported by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA Iraq Office), involved extensive collaborations with the Ninewa Directorate of Water and the Municipality of Sinjar. A team led by Mr. Muslim Qazimi, the Head of UN-Habitat Iraq, visited the site to directly observe the impact of the improved water access and to gather feedback from the community. As water access has increased, so has the responsibility to use this vital resource wisely. To

support this, beneficiaries participated in an educational campaign informing

community members on how to conserve water and limit waste.



## UNICEF with funding from European Union in Iraq implements a SCADA system to enhance monitoring and control for the R-zero Project in Basra

**Basra, 28 April 2024** - Explore the pumping station inside the R-zero in Basra ! Serving 2 million people, including 47% children, this infrastructure faced challenges due to aging systems and manual operation methods during severe water scarcity and contamination crises in 2018.

UNICEF with funding from European Union in Iraq implemented a SCADA system to enhance monitoring and control for the R-zero Project in Basra. This project is considered crucial for ensuring smooth operations and minimizing water loss, ensuring a sustainable future #ForEveryChild in Basra.





## UN-Habitat holds the Second Executive Committee Workshop in Baghdad

**Baghdad, 28 April 2024** – Today, UN-Habitat held the Second Executive Committee Workshop in Baghdad to discuss the implementation of the legal decree issued by the Council of Ministers to formalize the Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights for the residents of Sinjar.



### Agriculture

## Improving the delivery of animal health services and disease surveillance and strengthening Iraq veterinary legislation

**Erbil, 29 February 2024** - FAO Iraq representative, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, convened an important meeting with KR-I Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources, Ms. Begard Talabani. Alongside FAO's legal and technical experts, discussions delved into phase one and nuances of the phase 2 of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency [US Department of Defense] funded project, offering a detailed overview of technical reporting and legal frameworks. Significant developments unfolded as both parties agreed to officially launch project activities post-Ramadan, promising substantial progress in bolstering animal health service and early warning program using electronic

disease reporting system. Plans are underway to foster seamless coordination between Kurdistan Region

and Federal authorities for drafting the animal health law, ensuring a robust regulatory framework.



## Ensuring a sustainable future



**Baghdad, 04 March 2024** – (ITC News) Meet young Iraqi entrepreneur Isen Sameer, whose dedication not only revolutionized his own life but also of the community.

**Aiming high**

Born in 1998 and equipped with an agricultural diploma, Isen's journey unfolds in Karmlees, a small city in Ninewa, a city that endured prolonged conflict.

It is a tale of resilience, innovation, and unwavering commitment to transform

his life.

At university, Isen's inspiration was kindled by an empowering speech made by the head of his department about the importance of self-reliance over public sector dependence.

Isen embarked on his entrepreneurial journey at age 20, marking the beginning of a venture that would soon illuminate his community with hope and progress.

Fueled by the encouragement received at university and motivated by his

grandfather's legacy in beekeeping, Isen embarked on a journey of learning and raising awareness about modern beekeeping techniques and their benefits for strengthening biodiversity. He melded traditional methods with modern techniques honed during the COVID-19 pandemic, evolving into a responsible grandson with a voice that resonated with the elders.

"At the outset of my career, I joined forces with my grandfather, a seasoned beekeeper, in his business. However, when my suggestions for modern techniques and new approaches were met with resistance, I decided to venture out on my own. Today, in a turn of events that I consider a significant personal achievement, my grandfather often seeks my advice, acknowledging the value of the innovations I've introduced."

Isen's enterprise, Karemlash Honey, specializes in honey products, queen

## Ensuring a sustainable future *(continued)*

bees, bee swarms, pollen, royal jelly, propolis, and beeswax. Focusing on sustainability, he recycles bee waste for candle making, pioneers in artificial insemination, and explores the production of bee venom.

### Buzzing success

Navigating the challenges of working with a community reluctant to adopt modern beekeeping techniques and financial constraints, Isen's breakthrough came with the discovery of the European funded SAAVI project through the Directorate of Agriculture.

"I heard about it from a group of beekeepers and applied online. We were thrilled to see the program's support for the agriculture sector and were encouraged to apply," Isen recalls. SAAVI project provided him with essential training in entrepreneurship and agriculture, alongside a grant that helped expand his operations. The support from the project enabled him to acquire sophisticated machinery for artificial insemination.

"ITC SAAVI has trust in our potential. I received comprehensive training that

included 10 coaching sessions about innovation, design thinking, sales and value chains. This helped me in preparing a business plan that won me the grant to develop my business. This presents an invaluable opportunity for the youth, enabling them to assert their significance and capabilities within the value chain."

With SAAVI's assistance, Isen is poised to enhance his production and sales by 15%. The introduction of new machinery will help him employ another staff member and expand his team from four to five members. He wants to begin the production of bee venom, a venture that demands significant investment and innovation.

"SAAVI support had a big positive impact on my personal and business life. It changed many of my concepts about working in the Iraqi local market", he says.

His business, which has already achieved the milestone of exporting honey to United States despite the high shipping cost, he is now strategizing to penetrate the Arab market and

improve packaging and product quality. Giving back

Isen planted 800 trees in 2022, contributing to the fight against drought, boosting production, and enhancing the scenic beauty of his city, known for its rich array of churches and potential as a tourist hub.

He advocates for starting modestly, seizing every opportunity, expanding networks, and continuously honing skills and techniques.

An inspiration for entrepreneurs in Iraq and beyond, Isen leads by example, showcasing the profound impact of innovation, resilience, and community-centred entrepreneurship.

### About SAAVI

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 funded by the European Union and implemented in close collaboration with the Government of Iraq, the Norwegian Refugee Council and other partners.

## Cultivating the future: Ahmed's path to sustainable agriculture in Iraq

**Baghdad, 05 March 2024** - In Iraq, agriculture is a cornerstone in tackling food problems and creating employment opportunities, especially in rural areas. With its potential to combat environmental degradation and water scarcity, hydroponics is proving to be a good solution for sustainable food production. By growing plants without soil and using nutrient-rich water solutions, hydroponics saves water, a precious resource in Iraq. It also enables year-round cultivation, reducing dependence on seasonal weather patterns and mitigating the impact of extreme temperatures and desert conditions on crop yields.

### UNDP equipping farmers in Iraq

To tackle pressing agricultural and environmental issues, the United Nations

Development Program (UNDP) initiated a capacity-building program in the Shirqat region. The aim is to equip farmers with the knowledge and skills needed to implement hydroponic systems effectively, promoting agricultural productivity and economic prosperity while addressing Iraq's specific needs.

Meet Ahmed Turki Nayef, a farmer from Al-Shirqat, and father of two children, a historically important town north of Baiji in Salah Al-Din governorate. Al-Shirqat is crossed by the Tigris River, which divides the city in two and has numerous farms on its banks. Surrounded by hills and with a fertile plain suitable for agriculture, Al-Shirqat serves as an important agricultural hub from which various crops and produce are exported to neighboring cities. The presence of the

river also ensures a vital supply of drinking water for the city's residents.

### Innovative techniques that require less water

As one of the participants in the modern agriculture and sustainability technology courses in Shirqat, a transformative journey began for Ahmed. In these courses, he learned about the latest agricultural practices, including fixed sprinkler farming, distillation-based agriculture, and hydroponics. With his newly acquired knowledge, Ahmed began a first experiment using modern farming techniques on his small plot of land. However, his ambitions go far beyond this: he has a vision of a model agricultural project that encompasses the entire agricultural land of Salah al-Din and beyond.

Using drip farming, Ahmed has achieved remarkable success in growing winter crops such as barley and wheat, as well as a variety of vegetables such as onions, garlic, celery, and chard. He ventured into hydroponics and successfully grew strawberries and ornamental plants, highlighting the efficiency and productivity of this method.

"Today, I can now produce and grow many products with minimal effort and the best quality, which competes in the local market, after introducing modern technologies to my farm. In the future, I aspire to scale up this experience."





## Cultivating the future: Ahmed's path to sustainable agriculture in Iraq (continued)

### Building knowledge for a sustainable future

Ahmed is proud of his achievements, especially in promoting modern agricultural practices among his colleagues. He emphasizes the economic benefits and better product quality that can be achieved through modern methods and advocates eliminating outdated practices. Ahmed thanks the United Nations for facilitating the training course, which has helped him progress towards realizing his agricultural ambitions.

" These trainings have helped me realize

part of my dreams, as I have started advising all farmers to abandon the old and traditional methods and replace them with modern methods to ensure the economic aspect, as well as to ensure the product and its good quality with the least possible effort and cost, I advise everyone to cultivate through irrigation and distillation for its quality and economy, not to mention avoiding the problems of traditional agriculture."

About the training:

The United Nations Development Program seeks to provide all transformative possibilities for modern

agriculture in Iraq. With the introduction of advanced irrigation technologies, such as those offered by companies like Hutter, Iraq can address water issues while increasing agricultural productivity and sustainability. Capacity-building initiatives like the one in Shirqat are critical steps towards achieving food security and agricultural resilience in Iraq.

Ahmed's journey is an example of the innovation and resilience of Iraqi agriculture and paves the way for a sustainable and prosperous agricultural future in the region.

## Update from the Baghdad International Agricultural Fair!

**Baghdad, 05 March 2024** - The Food and Agriculture Organization in Iraq and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) booth is now fully prepared to welcome visitors.

Come and explore the remarkable array of high-quality dairy products, crafted with exceptional know-how, thanks to the support of FAO Iraq - European Union project implemented in Nineveh and the south.

Taste the difference and witness the impact of sustainable agriculture in action!

MoA technical deputy accompanied by FAO Iraq representative Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan and team paid a visit to FAO-MoA booth at the Baghdad International Fair.

Another occasion to meet FAO – EU in Iraq funded project's talented dairy producers and to acknowledge the quality of their dairy products.

A group of children from Al Amal Foundation for Orphan Care visited

joint FAO Iraq/MoA booth where they were welcomed by FAO representative in Iraq, his team, and the DG of

Horticulture Department at MoA, Dr. Hadi Hashem and were offered symbolic gifts.



## WFP Iraq is helping the Najaf Directorate of Agriculture transform everyday food into sustainable farming practices

**Najaf, 11 March 2024** - In months, the compost, rich in organic matter, will be distributed to farmers, cutting chemical fertilizer reliance by up to 80%. A win for the environment and a win for farmers, with improved soil structure leading to 25% increased agricultural production.

By collecting 40 tons of food waste and fronds, we can create 30 metric tons of organic compost!

WFP Iraq is helping the Najaf Directorate of Agriculture transform everyday food into sustainable farming practices and support smallholder farmers in their fields.



## UNDP in Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Kurdistan Regional Government, concludes Food Industry Training sessions

**Erbil, 14 March 2024** – UNDP in Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Kurdistan Regional Government concluded Food Industry Training sessions at three locations (Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Akre). This effort was possible through generous funding from USAID.



## WFP Iraq strengthens the government's capacity in Salahaldin, Anbar and Diyala

**Baghdad, 17 March 2024** – WFP Iraq strengthens the government's capacity in Salahaldin, Anbar and Diyala by installing 4 barley hydroponics units and providing training 26 staff to promote sustainable food production through climate-smart agriculture to foster adaptation and improve food security.



## The fight against red palm weevil discussed at an essential workshop

**Baghdad, 19 March 2024** - Today, FAO Iraq, FAO in NENA experts and FAO Iraq representative Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, participated in an essential workshop organized by the Iraqi Prime Ministers Office Advisory Commission (PMAC) along with Government officials from various ministries and authorities to discuss way forward in the fight against red palm weevil.

We have reaffirmed FAO's commitment to support Iraqi Government efforts at all levels, in addition to providing various extension materials to farmers and Ministry of Agriculture extension

officers. Monitoring tools will also be delivered, along with interventions in the

development of the date palm value chain under European Union in Iraq funded project.



## Nature based solutions help us promote better food security for Iraq

**Baghdad, 12 March 2024** - Together with the Ministry of Water Resources, WFP Iraq brought together technical experts and partners to discuss Iraq's preparedness in the use of wastewater for the restoration of agricultural systems at a 3-day workshop. Innovative approaches and technologies

WFP presented at the workshop will help the Iraqi Government to maximize safe water re-usage in cities and rural areas. Nature based solutions help us promote better food security for Iraq.





## FAO Iraq 's interventions have led to significant developments in the tomato value chain

**Baghdad, 27 March 2024** – FAO Iraq's interventions and guidance, supported by the European Union in Iraq funded project, have revolutionized tomato production in Al-Qaraf fields. With profits nearly doubling, farmers celebrate success and eagerly anticipate two more months of abundant harvests!  
FAO Iraq 's interventions have led to significant developments in the

tomato value chain, resulting in substantial boosts in profits and fruitful harvests.

Farmers now enjoy a remarkable 40 to 50% increase in income.

Through collaboration between FAO Iraq, Ministry of Agriculture and local farmers, advancements in the tomato value chain underscore resilience and sustainability in agriculture.



## FAO in Iraq, in partnership with the Iraqi government, launches the Training of Trainers series in Najaf for the upcoming nationwide agri-survey to enhance the Iraqi agri sector

**Najaf, 15 April 2024** - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq, in partnership with the Iraqi government, launched the Training of Trainers series in Najaf for the upcoming nationwide agri-survey to enhance the Iraqi agri sector, funded by the European Union and FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme. This is the first three-day session on the subject out of three planned. It gathered experts from ASGIS and Ministry of Agriculture from Baghdad, Anbar, Diyala, Babil, Karbala, Najaf, and Wasit governorates to equip with essential skills as trainers of enumerators for data collection. This initiative establishes the foundation for data-driven decisions, poised to transform Iraq's



agricultural policies and practices. The opening session was attended by Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Iraq Representative, who underscored: "This agricultural survey is pivotal — not

just for data collection but as a foundation for transformative and effective policies in Iraq's agriculture, enhancing productivity and sustainability".

## In Najaf FAO launches a workshop on the application of good agricultural practices

**Najaf, 16 April 2024** - Today, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and funded by Sida - Styrelsen för internationellt utvecklingssamarbete - and the Government of Canada, launched a 3-day training workshop at the Extension centre in Najaf governorate on the application of good agricultural practices to improve date palm productivity and pest management.

The opening session was conducted in the presence of Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Iraq Representative, Dr. Hussein Al-Wasiti, PM Agriculture Advisor to the Prime Minister, Mr. Muneim Shahid, Director-General of Najaf Agriculture Directorate, and Dr. Jawad Hasan, Head of Extension



Centre. They expressed their gratitude for this important workshop, which addresses crucial issues to improve the date palm sector in Iraq. The workshop included a field day

where participants received practical training in pollination, thinning, and irrigation, empowering them with essential skills for successful date palm farming.

## FAO is committed to pioneering smart agricultural practices and irrigation technologies that boost food security and tackle climate change challenges

**Baghdad, 21 April 2024** - On World Creativity and Innovation Day [21 April], the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and its partners champion the future of agriculture. We are committed to pioneering smart agricultural practices and irrigation technologies that boost food security and tackle climate change challenges. Let's build a sustainable future together.



### Live update from central Jebayesh Marshlands - Baghdadiya!

**Basra, 24 April 2024** - Iraq Ministry of Agriculture and FAO Iraq team, led by Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Country Representative for Iraq, is on the marshes monitoring the situation, and we're thrilled to share some positive news.

Compared to last year, there's been a significant improvement:

↘ Drop in Water salinity levels by 50%, now at 800-1500 PPM.

↗ Significant Increase in water coverage around 79% of the total marshland area in central Ahwar/Jebayesh

Remarkably, out of the 75 households previously established, who had left due to tough climate conditions (water shortage, quality etc), 20 have returned



to Baghdadiya. A hopeful sign of improving conditions.

The Ministry of Water Resources continues its efforts to enhance the

situation and support local communities. Together, we can ensure the marshlands thrive, benefiting both people and biodiversity.

### Hawija is blossoming!

**Hawija, 24 April 2024** - Hawija is blossoming! Locals, empowered by the IOM Employment for Public Works programme, are mastering farming skills to have an income. A supportive nursery offers subsidized seeds and plants, nurturing both the community and our planet.



## Iraq's first initiative for micro-insurance will help smallholder farmers preserve lands and livelihoods in the face of Iraq's challenging climate

**Baghdad, 26 April 2024** - With Insurance Diwan, the World Food Programme (WFP) held the Climate Risk Insurance Workshop to enable farmers access to insurance for their produce. Iraq's first initiative for micro-insurance will help smallholder farmers preserve lands and livelihoods in the face of Iraq's challenging climate.





## FAO and MoA closely monitor date palm value chain development and combat the red palm weevil

**Baghdad, 27 April 2024** - The Iraq Ministry of Agriculture and the FAO Iraq team, led by Representative Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan, visited the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations-European Union funded project partner Date Palm field in Safwan district. We are closely monitoring date palm value chain development and combatting the red palm weevil. Together, we are advancing agricultural sustainability.



## Innovative solutions by FAO and partners for more resilient communities in Southern Iraq



**Thi Qar- Al-Chibayish, 29 April 2024** - In a collaborative effort, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), alongside its esteemed partners, is spearheading a transformative initiative aimed at bolstering resilience and sustainability within communities and safeguarding the environment in southern Iraq.

Initiated with financial support from the European Union through the 'Restoration and Strengthening the Resilience of Agri-Food Systems in Southern Iraq' project and now complemented by several other projects funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the Norwegian government, and in collaboration with Iraqi Ministries of Agriculture, Water Resources, Environment and local authorities, FAO's interventions have played a crucial role in delivering vital assistance to rural communities and buffalo breeders.

The tangible impact of the efforts made has been remarkable, emphasizing the importance of resilience and sustainability in community development. Such successes serve as a testament to the power of collaborative action and underscore the need for continued support to strengthen these vital lifelines.

Moving forward, FAO is doubling down on its commitment to innovation and

sustainability, with a strategic focus on water and energy uses. Through synergistic partnerships with governmental entities such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Water Resources, the Ministry of Environment, local authorities and donors, FAO is poised to introduce much-needed modern climate resilient practices to sustain the region's landscape and soils.

At the heart of this initiative is the introduction of a home solar water desalination unit. This unit has been meticulously designed and assembled by the organization's team of experts. Solar panels provide electricity for the Home Water Desalination Unit, generating clean energy. In addition, they provide television and satellite systems for viewing satellite channels, while also serving as a reliable source of energy for multiple household uses.

The impact of this endeavor goes beyond simply providing more luxury. By reducing the financial burdens associated with purchasing potable water and fuel to operate traditional electric power generators that pollute the environment, the cost of living for homeowners will be reduced by approximately \$300 per month, which represents the expenses of purchasing fuel and clean water.

The impact of this endeavor goes far

beyond mere convenience. By alleviating the financial burdens associated with purchasing potable water and fuel to run traditional polluting electricity generators. The cost of living for homeowners will be reduced by approximately \$300 per month, which represents the expenses of purchasing fuel and clean water, particularly in the central marshlands within Al-Ahwar. FAO's solar-powered solutions will enable and empower families to thrive in place, rather than succumb to the pressures of harsh environmental conditions. Furthermore, this innovation will leave women within the household with less house-work burden, as well as improved hygiene.

"Building community resilience requires concerted efforts and unwavering commitment from all stakeholders," said Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq. "We are extremely grateful for the spirit of cooperation shown by our esteemed partners. Together, we are not only providing immediate relief, but also laying the foundation for long-term sustainability. As we face today's challenges, FAO remains steadfast in our mission to provide innovative and sustainable solutions that not only strengthen livelihoods, but also preserve the environment for generations to come."

This initiative represents a collaborative effort involving governmental entities, local authorities, and valued donors including the European Union, Canada, Sweden and Norway.

FAO and its partners are steadfast in their commitment to scale-up government-led efforts and foster resilient communities and perfectly aligned with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), among others. With steadfast dedication and an innovative ethos, FAO stands ready to pave the way for a brighter, more sustainable future, ensuring that no one is left behind.

## Groundbreaking Iraqi national strategy set to reduce inequalities in the world of work

Launch of the Iraq National Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Inequalities in the World of Work marks a significant milestone in the country's journey towards a more inclusive and equitable labour market.

**Baghdad, 07 March 2024** (ILO News) - Iraq's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have unveiled a new landmark national strategy that lays the groundwork for building a more prosperous and equitable future for all in Iraq through inclusivity, equal opportunity, and social protection.

The "Iraq National Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Inequalities in the World of Work for the Years 2024-2028" was launched at an event in Baghdad attended by representatives from government agencies, social partners, civil society organizations, and the private sector. Participants discussed the implementation framework and ways to garner support for the strategy's objectives.

Enhancing equality and non-discrimination is among the fundamental principles and pillars endorsed internationally and regionally, as well as being a fundamental right to achieve justice and encourage economic prosperity. Minister of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Mr. Al-Asadi, pointed out that Iraq provides the appropriate legislative protection to ensure rights and protection for all Iraqis.

ILO Deputy Regional Director for Arab States Peter Rademaker said the strategy marks a significant step towards fostering a more inclusive and equitable labour market in the country, "Across the globe, growing inequalities – inequalities in access to decent work, in earnings and benefits for workers and their families, and among and between countries and populations - are hindering efforts to create inclusive, sustainable, and resilient labour markets," Rademaker said at the launch event. "In response to this challenging global situation, Iraq's new national strategy marks an important step towards creating a work environment in the country where every individual, regardless of background or circumstance, has equal access to opportunities and fair treatment," he added.



With about a quarter of Iraqis living in poverty, the country suffers from stark inequalities which stretch beyond poor wealth distribution into unequal access to employment, social protection, public services and other resources.

Inequality between women and men in Iraq remains particularly pronounced. In 2021, female labour force participation in Iraq was among the lowest in the world, standing at 10.6 per cent. Young people, persons with disabilities, refugees and internally displaced persons are also among those left behind.

Participants in the launch event stressed that the new strategy is therefore a timely initiative to accelerate progress in closing the inequality gap. The initiative is the result of extensive research and a participatory approach involving stakeholders across Iraq.

The strategy was developed through a rigorous process of extensive research and national consultation and collaboration, with the support of the ILO. It outlines five key pillars to address various challenges and promote inclusive economic growth through fostering a more inclusive and equitable labor market in Iraq.

Firstly, it focuses on creating employment opportunities by directing resources towards public works programs, transitioning to a

green economy, expanding small and medium-sized projects, adopting poverty-alleviating measures, and supporting policy-making processes.

Secondly, it aims to promote equal access to quality education and lifelong learning by enhancing inclusivity in the education system, improving skills development opportunities, and aligning education with labor market needs.

Thirdly, the strategy emphasizes ensuring adequate protection for all workers through strengthening legal coverage, ensuring compliance with labor laws, and enhancing social dialogue.

Furthermore, it seeks to accelerate the transition to the formal economy by supporting workers in the informal sector, facilitating the transition to formal employment, and implementing supportive regulations. Lastly, the strategy prioritizes achieving comprehensive social protection by expanding social protection coverage and ensuring access to social protection floors. Through these concerted efforts, the strategy endeavors to address inequalities and promote sustainable economic growth in Iraq.

The strategy also places a strong emphasis on achieving equality of women and men in the workplace, with initiatives aimed at promoting women's participation and protection.





## ILO builds the capacities of Iraqi labour inspection system



**Baghdad, 24 April 2024 - (ILO News)**

The International Labour Organization, organized a basic training course on labour inspection in Baghdad for the period 16-18 April 2024, in which 20 public employees from the staff of the Department of Labour and Vocational Training in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs participated, who were candidates for carrying out labour inspection duties.

The objectives of the training course focus on providing candidates with the knowledge and skills necessary to exercise the duties and powers of labour inspection. The candidates were able to successfully complete the training course and be approved among the labour inspection staff in Iraq after passing a test prepared for this purpose in accordance with the requirements of Iraqi Labour Law No. 37 of 2015 regarding the appointment of labour inspectors.

Candidates for labour inspection positions received training on international labour standards for labour inspection and the legal frameworks regulating the functions and tasks of the labour inspection system in Iraq under the currently enforced labour law, as well as inspection visits in terms of initial preparations, types of those visits, methods of implementing them, and preparing reports on those visits, as well as focusing on protecting the

rights of male and female workers in the labour market, especially in the construction sector in Iraq, and ways to enforce the law regarding combating child labour, protecting working women and migrant workers, organizing juvenile labour, protecting workers' rights to vacations and wages, the right to organize a union, and ways to eliminate forced labour and prevent discrimination in employment and occupation, in accordance with international labour standards and national labour legislation, focus was also placed on occupational risks in the construction sector and the best ways to enforce labour legislation in this sector in general and within public works programs in particular.

After the conclusion of the training course, the Department of Labour and Vocational Training, in the presence of the International Labour Organization, organized a ceremony to officially approve the candidates participating in the aforementioned course as labour inspectors after they recited the relevant oath, as Mr. Osama Al-Khafaji, Director General of the Department of Labour and Vocational Training at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, confirmed "Conducting the basic training course for labour inspection in cooperation with the International Labour Organization is an important step towards enhancing the number of qualified labour

inspectors in Iraq and addressing the shortage in this aspect so that the department can carry out its responsibilities in following up on working conditions and working to improve them, in cooperation with workers, employers and their organizations."

Maha Kattaa, the ILO Country Coordinator in Iraq, said, "The organization places among its priorities strengthening the governance of labour inspection in Iraq and building the capabilities of the labour inspection system because of its importance in enforcing labour legislation with the aim of improving working conditions, preventing child labour, preventing forced labour, and preventing discrimination in employment and occupation, preventing violence and harassment in the world of work, regulating labour relations, protecting workers from occupational hazards at work, and other standards that lead to achieving decent work."

This training course was implemented with the support of the European Union European Union in Iraq through the ILO program "Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT) towards decent work and affordable housing in Iraq" in partnership with UN-Habitat Iraq and International Trade Centre which aims, among other things, to stimulate decent work opportunities for young men and women while addressing the urgent need for affordable and reasonable housing, especially for low-income people and vulnerable groups in Iraq. The training capacitated the new Labour Inspectors in their new functions, including labour governance within the proposed National Public Works Programme and construction industry, which are to be addressed by the BEIT project.

## Director-General of the International Labour Organization meets Iraqi Prime Minister

**Baghdad, 27 April 2024 - Gilbert F. Hounqbo, Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO):** At our meeting, I thanked Iraqi Prime Minister, Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani, for inviting me to the Arab Labour Conference, hosted by Iraq. We discussed cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and efforts to promote decent work, including through labour law, social security, and trade union reforms.



## ILO Director-General Hounqbo calls for collective action in the Arab states to address growing challenges in the world of work

Baghdad, 27 April 2024 (ILO News)

– The mounting challenges facing the world of work in the Arab region can only be addressed through concerted joint efforts and multilateral partnerships, including the Global Coalition for Social Justice, ILO Director-General Gilbert F. Hounqbo told attendees at this year's Arab Labour Conference (ALC) in Baghdad.

"It is only by working towards a common vision that can we rise to the challenges facing the world of work today, seize opportunities, and advance towards a future with social justice for all," Hounqbo told delegates during the ALC opening session.

The Global Coalition is an ILO-led initiative to foster multilateral cooperation, strengthen social justice globally and accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It has brought together more than 200 partners so far, including governments, worker and employer organizations and civil society, including numerous partners from the Arab region.

Extending the invitation to other Arab stakeholders to join the Coalition, Hounqbo announced: "This month, the League of Arab States decided to join the Coalition, an addition I am proud of and deem to be a historic feat for the ILO, the Arab world and social justice worldwide."

Hounqbo participated in the opening session of the ALC, convened by the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) under the auspices of Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shaya'a Al Sudani, along with a delegation of senior ILO officials including Regional Director for Arab States Ruba Jaradat.



During his address at the opening session, the Director-General expressed his profound concern at the renewed conflict in Occupied Palestinian Territory and the impact it is having on Palestinian workers and employers, as well as potential spill-over effects on the economies of neighbouring countries.

"In the last six months, tens of thousands in Gaza have lost their lives or been injured, hundreds of thousands have been displaced, and millions now face hunger, poverty, and disease," Hounqbo said. "The conflict has also led to the loss of livelihoods and jobs in Gaza and the West Bank, and risks destabilizing many economies in the region."

To help address the labour market impact of the war, the ILO has embarked on an Emergency Response Programme for which it as launched a USD20 million appeal. Hounqbo noted to delegates that the ILO response has so far benefitted over 9,000 Gazan workers stranded in the West Bank, and it has allowed the ILO to collect data on the war's impact on the Palestinian labour market to further help inform the agency's response. The ILO has also

partnered with the United Nations Development Programme to launch an Emergency Employment Scheme in Gaza to deliver jobs and critical health and municipal services.

In his address to the conference, the Director-General also stressed the critical role of the Arab region in the global transition towards a low-carbon economy and the potential that it holds for the region.

"By investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency, we can pave the way for a more inclusive, resilient, and prosperous future for the Arab world," he said, noting that the Arab region could create ten million new jobs by 2050 through decarbonization and green industrial growth.

This year's ALC included Arab Labour Organization Director-General Fayez Al Mutairi's report to the conference on the impact of the technological revolution on human resources. Hounqbo said the conference was a valuable opportunity to both tackle the complex issues facing the region, including the impact of AI and technology on the world of work, and celebrate key achievements in the Arab world.

On the sidelines of the conference, Hounqbo met with League of Arab States Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul-Gheit, ALO Director-General Al Mutairi, and Arab government, worker and employer representatives to discuss decent work challenges and opportunities across the region.

Hounqbo attended the ALC, held in Baghdad from 27 April to 4 May, as part of his first official visit to Iraq, where he is scheduled to meet Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid, and national employer and worker representatives.





## ILO Director-General calls for national momentum to achieve social justice in Iraq



**Baghdad, 29 April 2024** (ILO News) – ILO Director-General, Gilbert F. Houngbo, has concluded his first official visit to Iraq, during which he praised the country for transitioning from a focus on emergency relief response to stabilization and development, while calling for continued advancement towards greater social justice, growth of decent jobs and protection of workers in the country.

During his visit, on 27-28 April, during which he was accompanied by the ILO Regional Director for Arab States, Ruba Jaradat, and other senior ILO officials, the Director-General discussed progress made through the ILO's work in the country with Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani, and Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Ahmed Jassem Saber Al-Asadi. The meetings also explored possibilities for further cooperation to accelerate decent work and economic growth in the country.

Houngbo also met the ILO's social partners in Iraq, including representatives from the General Federation of Iraqi Workers (GFIW), the Conference of Iraqi Federations and Workers Unions (CIFWU) and the Iraqi Council Union (ICU), as well as employers' representatives from the Iraqi Federation of Industries (IFI). The discussions focused on strengthening freedom of association and fostering tripartite social dialogue for better protection of workers' rights in Iraq.

The Director-General held further talks with UN Resident Coordinator, Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, and members of the UN Iraq country team, on forming close partnerships between the ILO and UN agencies on the ground, as part of the UN's wider goal of 'delivering as one' in Iraq.

"I commend Iraq for the progress

made in the past years, which has paved the way for a sustained transition to stabilization and development, decent work and more constructive relations between workers, employers and the state, based on social justice for all in the country," Director-General Houngbo said during his visit.

The ILO and the Government of Iraq launched the country's first four-year Decent Work Country Programme in 2019. They have also worked together to support private sector development and job creation, strengthen social protection, address child labour, and enhance labour governance and social dialogue.

"The ILO is committed to continuing our technical support to Iraq, and to working together in close partnership, towards the promotion of inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment and social protection for all," ILO Regional Director for the Arab States, Ruba Jaradat, explained.

The ILO Director-General also met Iraqi youth representatives to hear their views on how their country can create more and better jobs. "Addressing challenges that young people face in the world of work is one of the ILO's priorities," Houngbo said. "This is especially crucial in a country like Iraq where more than a third of the youth are unemployed. Young people need to be engaged as agents of change, and we must do all that we can to include them in spaces

where critical decisions on the future of work are being made".

Houngbo also praised Iraq for being the first country in the Arab States region to join the Global Coalition for Social Justice, highlighting the country's focus on the social dimensions of sustainable development and economic growth. He also expressed his appreciation for the country's commitment to ratification and implementation of ILO's International Labour Standards.

The ILO Director-General also attended the 50th Session of the Arab Labour Conference, held in Baghdad, where he delivered a keynote address and met Arab Labour Organization Director-General, Fayez Al Mutairi, and worker, employer, and government representatives from across the Arab States region.

Iraq's implementation of its Decent Work Country Programme has led to an extensive range of world of work-related developments. These include the Ratifications of the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) and the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), thus aligning the related national standards with international labour standards. Other reforms include the adoption of a new national Social Security and Pension Law (No 18 of 2023) that expanded social security coverage to all private sector workers, including in the informal economy, and the endorsement of the Iraq National Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Inequalities in the World of Work for the Years 2024-2028.

The ILO and its tripartite constituents are currently engaged in developing the second Decent Work Country Programme for 2025-2029, to support Iraq's continuing progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8, on Decent Work and Economic Growth.



## Enhancing fraud detection skills in Iraq

**Basra, 29 February 2024** - The Government of Iraq, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has successfully completed a series of targeted capacity-building workshops in forensic auditing.

The forensic auditing workshops started in March 2023 and have built the capacities of the Federal Boards of Supreme Audit (F/KBoSA) and the Commissions of Integrity (F/KCoI) in Baghdad and Erbil to detect fraud and corruption – as part of their critical mandate in safeguarding public funds in Iraq.

A total of eight workshops were conducted in Baghdad, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Basra for some 200 participants including auditors, lawyers, and IT experts from FBoSA, KBoSA, FCoI, and KCoI – who were equipped with skills in recognising fraud, preparing comprehensive forensic audit reports, and most notably practising preventive auditing which emphasizes strengthening the internal control framework to mitigate fraud risk.

The workshops fostered a collaborative environment where peer-to-peer learning was encouraged as part of efforts to build a culture of shared understanding and joint problem-solving while addressing financial crimes across the relevant institutions in the sector.

“The workshop helped us to share practical and scientific ideas that we can deploy in our work environment to combat fraud and corruption in Iraq. Also exchanging professional experiences with colleagues from other government agencies was eye opening,” Dalal Abdul Rahman Yassin, Financial Controller, KBoSA.

### The Importance of Forensic Auditing

Forensic auditing is a specialized form of auditing that focuses on investigating patterns of potential financial irregularities or fraud.



Forensic auditing helps in effectively combating financial crimes. The workshops equipped participating organisations such as FBoSA, KBoSA, FCoI and KCoI with the much-needed skills to investigate these crimes collaboratively and fostered a culture of collaboration while also deepening the understanding of global standards in forensic accounting and auditing.

By arming professionals with the tools, they need to combat financial crimes effectively, the workshops enabled the participating entities and government departments to uphold their entities. Representing a significant step forward in Iraq's journey towards a more transparent and accountable financial ecosystem, laying the groundwork for a safer and more prosperous future.

“Through the workshops we have become more knowledgeable about scientific methods of detection and discovery of fraud especially Data Analytics, Digital Forensics and Cybersecurity. We would like to learn such special techniques considering the rapid developments in digitalization and the e-government rollout in Iraq.” Mr. Haitham Sabah Hussein, Director Digital Auditing, FBoSA.

### UNDP's role

This training is part of the UNDP project on: 'Strengthening the Rule of Law and Human Rights to Sustain Peace and Foster Development in Iraq,' whose aim is to fortify the capabilities of various investigative bodies in

effectively tackling complex financial crimes.

“Our financial crime programmes are building a diverse skillset of practitioners and the forensic auditing workshops stand out for their deep focus on financial analyses and how auditing can be used as a tool in fighting crimes,” said Romana Schweiger, Programme Manager of the UNDP Rule of Law/ Security Sector Reform Programme.

Through the generous funding of the US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), the project has since 2021 supported over 700 investigating judges and prosecutors, police investigators of the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), Commission of Integrity (CoI) investigators, auditors of the FBoA and the KBoSA, as well as financial analysts of the Anti-Money Laundering & Countering Financing of Terrorism Office from Iraq's Financial Intelligence Unit to effectively investigate and adjudicate complex financial crimes.

This is part of the wider UNDP Iraq programme on Rule of Law and Security Sector Reform which supports the Government of Iraq's efforts to build trust and confidence between, legal entities, public finance institutions, security sector institutions, and communities. This includes ensuring institutional development and capacity building for accountability and oversight.

## A new training approach to promote people-centred policing

**Baghdad, 03 March 2024** - Strengthening investigation skills of Iraq's police officers and increasing their ability to uphold human rights was the goal of a two-years cooperation programme between THE Ministry of Interior (MOI), UNDP and the Government of Germany.

Listen as UNDP's Senior Police advisor, Nedal Rashdan, and Dr. Maximilian Rasch, Chargé d'Affaires of

the German Embassy in Baghdad explain why this work is important.



<https://www.facebook.com/UnitedNationsIraq/videos/1399185950706172>





## UNMAS raises awareness of the importance of women’s engagement in mine action in Iraq

**Erbil, 05 March 2024** - UNMAS Iraq conducted a one-day workshop for Iraqi government officials from the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), as well as women staff members of Iraqi national NGOs, the Health and Social Care Organization in Iraq (IHSCO) and Shareteah Humanitarian Organisation (SHO). The workshop, which was held in Erbil, aimed to raise awareness of the importance of women’s engagement in mine action in Iraq. Through the generous contributions from several donors, UNMAS Iraq is

committed to ensuring justice between women and men throughout operations

and promoting women's participation and empowerment in mine action.



## UNMAS Iraq proceeds to the next step in support of a localized mine action response with the introduction of the ‘direct grant model’

**Baghdad, 07 March 2024** - In early 2024, after three years of implementation of the “partnership model”, UNMAS Iraq proceeded to the next step in support of a localized mine action response with the introduction of the ‘direct grant model.’ This model will further strengthen national mine action capacity and ownership. Through this model, National Non-Governmental Organisations will fully autonomously and, with the knowledge

and best practices gained through the partnership model, implement survey and clearance operations, as well as explosive ordnance risk education activities in the most devastated and vulnerable locations in Iraq.

With thanks to our international donors for their generous contributions, UNMAS Iraq will continue the efforts to provide the necessary support to national mine action operators.



## UNMAS Iraq welcomes an additional contribution from the Government of Estonia

**Baghdad, 11 March 2024** - UNMAS Iraq welcomes an additional contribution from the Government of Estonia, providing further support for humanitarian mine action activities in Iraq. This additional financial support will allow UNMAS Iraq to support vulnerable Iraqi communities by

mitigating the threats posed by explosive ordnance through continued survey and clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

UNMAS would like to take this opportunity to thank Estonia for its generous contribution in support of the Iraqi mine action sector!



## UNICEF conducts an Explosive Ordnance Risk Education training session in Basra

**Basra, 04 April 2024** - Today is International Mine Awareness Day! UNICEF conducted an Explosive Ordnance Risk Education training session in #Basra to raise the awareness of children and adults on how to identify, report and protect themselves from explosive ordnance.

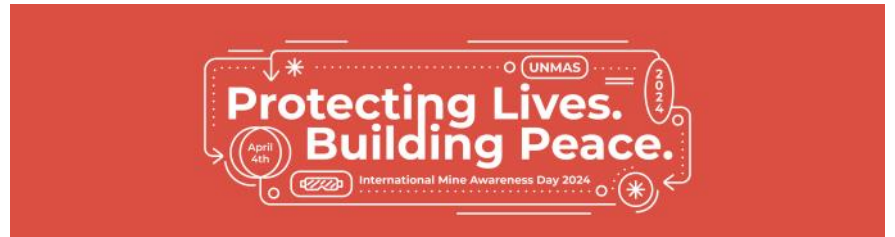


## Observing the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action

**Baghdad, 04 April 2024** - On 4 April, the global community comes together to observe the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action. On this occasion, UNMAS pays tribute to the tireless efforts of mine action workers who are dedicating their lives to a safer Iraq, free from hazardous lands where people live in peace and prosperity. Read the stories of three courageous women from the mine action sector in Iraq.

UNMAS Iraq expresses its gratitude and appreciation for all the donors who have generously contributed to support

the Iraqi Mine Action Sector throughout the years!



### De-mining stereotypes in Iraq

**Baghdad, 09 April 2024** - "Working in the mine action sector showed me that traditional constraints are created to be broken!" says Dina Khuder. She, Mahrosa Abdulmuneer, and Maha Jamal are Iraqi women working for the Shareteah Humanitarian Organization, an implementing partner with the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Sinjar.

Women are valuable players in mine action

Mahrosa Abdulmuneer is a searcher, who works to rid areas of explosive ordnance. To sharpen her skills, she has participated in every training course and capacity-building opportunity. "As a mother of two kids, I believe that my work is contributing to providing safe areas for children to play around and live their childhood and make nice memories," she says. "I'm saving another life on my land."

Maha Jamal, a member of the Explosive Hazard Management Team, has enrolled in capacity enhancement initiatives throughout the last three years to advance her knowledge and skills. She joined the mine action sector because of seeing the direct effect of

mine action on people's lives. "I feel proud and happy when I discover and remove an explosive item knowing that I'm saving another life on my land," says Ms. Jamal.

Supporting communities in restoring their lands



### UNMAS implementing partner, Health and Social Care Organization in Iraq (IHSCO), and The HALO Trust conducted a one-day mine action localization workshop

**Baghdad, 22 April 2024** - The Iraqi NGO, and UNMAS implementing partner, Health and Social Care Organization in Iraq (IHSCO), and The HALO Trust conducted a one-day mine action localization workshop. The workshop, funded by the Government of the Netherlands, was attended by more than 20 mine action stakeholders from various Iraqi national NGOs, including Al Ghad, Baghdad Organization, Women Empowering as well as the Embassy of UK.

Localization ensures sustainable mine action efforts. For Iraq to meet its obligations under international treaties, including the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), localization and full national



ownership is a necessity. UNMAS Iraq has supported capacity development of national NGOs over the last three

years through the Partnership Model, which came to an end in December 2023.



## UNMAS Iraq Programme 2023 Annual Report has arrived!

**Baghdad, 25 April 2024** - In 2023, UNMAS Iraq continued with the three pillars of activities, including - Technical Support for the Government of Iraq (GoI) national mine action authorities (NMAAs), Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE), and Explosive Hazard Management (EHM). These pillars ensure that Iraqi communities are safe and to facilitate the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their areas of origin.

UNMAS Iraq also emphasized gender equality in mine Action. By the end of 2023, nearly 28% of staff members of UNMAS Iraq partners were women and they served in operational and technical mine action roles.

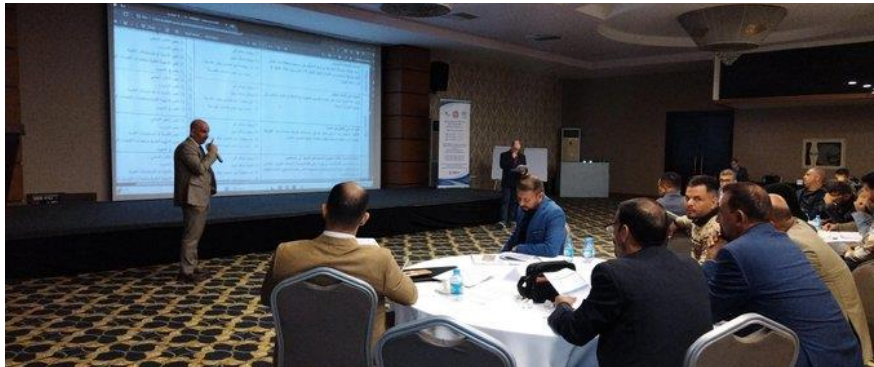
Thank you to all donors who contributed financially and supported UNMAS Iraq.

To learn more please visit:  
[https://www.unmas.org/sites/default/files/unmas\\_iraq\\_2023\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.unmas.org/sites/default/files/unmas_iraq_2023_annual_report.pdf)



## Healthcare

### WHO and Ministry of Health digitize information vital for a healthier Iraq



**Baghdad, 7 March 2024** – WHO, in partnership with Iraq's federal and Kurdistan regional health ministries, today concluded the launch of Phase II of the Health Resources and Services Availability Monitoring System (HeRAMS) project revision workshops.

This launch, devised as a series of 3 workshops spanning a couple of days each, engaged over 150 data collectors from across nearly all of Iraq's directorates of health. The main aim was to provide them with a chance to review and update the HeRAMS paper and electronic formats, address Phase I issues, and rectify gaps in data collection and processing.

"WHO is pleased to coordinate the launch of this key project with the national

health authorities. It has been encouraging to see the dedication of over 150 national personnel from the north, centre and south of the country as they regrouped to review the obstacles and challenges faced during the Phase I implementation and move forward to address them collectively," said Dr Georges Ki-Zerbo, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq.

"These efforts will help maintain the applicability of this kind of survey and strengthen a digitized health system in Iraq. Congratulations to the Ministry of Health, WHO and all partners who contributed to this significant milestone," he added.

The HeRAMS project was initiated in 2022 and finalized in 2023, bringing

digitization to Iraq's health system. HeRAMS will facilitate the digitization of the health system by providing a backup list of the country's public health facilities in their entirety and identifying gaps in the health services delivered. A schedule of annual reviews was launched to monitor the implementation process and address any vagueness, gaps, and changes needed to update the project surveys and data processing.

Since the Phase I launch in 2022, Ministry of Health staff have visited 5205 health facilities to conduct the HeRAMS survey, and 13 reports have been generated. The project has also enhanced national data collection and management capacity through 6 training workshops, benefiting about 300 health staff and data collectors dedicated to working on HeRAMS.

Substantial progress has been made towards enhancing Iraq's health system by digitizing health information, both about health infrastructure and human resources. In turn, the HeRAMS project is improving equitable access to quality health services for all in Iraq.

WHO would like to extend its gratitude to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for its invaluable support in implementing this vital project.

### Detection of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis increased by 19% in 8 Iraqi governorates, thanks to IOM's Mobile Medical Teams support

**Baghdad, 24 March 2024** - Iraq is considered to have one of the highest rates of tuberculosis (TB) in MENA region. IOM Iraq has been supporting Iraq's National Tuberculosis Program since 2017 with:

- Lab and medical equipment
- TB medication

- Technical+operational support
- New diagnostic machines and systems
- and more.

IOM Iraq has deployed mobile medical teams to governorates that were affected by conflict and displacement to support Iraq's National Tuberculosis Program response in hard-to-reach

areas for host, displaced and refugee communities.

In 2023, detection of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB) increased by 19 per cent in eight Iraqi governorates affected by conflict and displacement, thanks to IOM's Mobile Medical Teams support.

## Yes! We can end TB!



**Baghdad, 24 March 2024** – Today, Iraq celebrates its remarkable success in tuberculosis (TB) control, which reflects the transformative impact of international collaboration and innovation.

Iraq has made significant steps in the fight against TB through its partnerships with the National TB Program (NTP), WHO, International Organization for Migration, Iraqi Anti-TB Association and others.

From 2013 to 2023, Iraq saw a dramatic decline in TB incidence, falling from 45 to 23 cases per 100 000 people. This achievement has propelled Iraq into the ranks of low-burden countries for TB, reflecting the effectiveness of its TB control strategies.

One fundamental advance has been the shift in the treatment approach for

drug-resistant TB since 2020, from a series of injections to an all-oral regimen. This move has improved treatment outcomes and lessened the burden on patients, marking a significant milestone in Iraq's TB control efforts.

Another breakthrough has been the adoption of BPaL/M, a second-line treatment regimen which lasts only 6 months rather than 2 years. This innovative approach has been progressively implemented in both community and detention areas, offering renewed hope for more effective and accessible TB treatment in Iraq.

Central to Iraq's success has been the implementation of a real-time, web-based and case-based platform on DHIS2. This serves as a tool for surveillance, electronic patient file

archiving, and programme performance monitoring. This technology has revolutionized TB service delivery and monitoring, ensuring that patients receive timely and appropriate care.

Since Iraq has a low rate of HIV infection, it is not common to encounter this state of coinfection, but NTP Iraq recommends that its facilities screen all those with TB for HIV (testing coverage was 84% in 2023).

A TB survivor's journey from diagnosis to treatment highlights the human side of this success story: "I was hopeless and never thought I would overcome my disease, but with the support of the health care providers and the effective treatment provided, I am now TB-free and living a healthy life, fearless of affecting my family or friends."

Marking World TB Day 2024, Dr Georges Ki-Zerbo, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq, hailed Iraq's achievements in TB control: "Iraq's success in combating TB exemplifies the power of collaboration and innovation. By working together, we can end TB and create a healthier future for all."

Iraq's success in combating TB demonstrates the profound impact of collaboration, innovation and the commitment of health actors to improve public health in Iraq.

## HeRAMS transforms health care management in Iraq

**Baghdad, 7 April 2024** – The Health Resources and Services Availability Monitoring System (HeRAMS) initiative has digitized health care management in Iraq and made vital information accessible for planning and decision-making purposes.

The project was launched in January 2022 to ensure availability of information about essential health resources and services for decision-makers at all levels. Completion of -building and data collection by mid-June 2024 will provide a comprehensive dataset on essential health resources and services provision. This can facilitate evidence-based

decision-making to achieve health equity and ensure equal access to essential health services for all in Iraq.

"This success is a reflection of the power of collaboration and innovation in health care management," said Dr Georges Ki-Zerbo, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq. "By working together with the national health authorities, we have been able to create a platform that not only responds to emergencies but also strengthens the overall health system, ensuring better access to health care for all."

The initiative has standardized the collection, analysis and dissemination of

information related to essential health services across Iraq. Compiling, maintaining, regularly updating and continuously sharing a master list of health facilities, resources and services has boosted the country's health information systems.

Experts from WHO headquarters and the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean took part in a mission to Iraq and the Kurdistan region of Iraq in January 2022. Following this, the federal and Kurdistan region ministries of health sought support for a nationwide implementation of HeRAMS. A joint effort by the WHO Country Office in Iraq and both ministry of health teams then laid the foundations for this implementation.

"Initially, it was believed that HeRAMS would solely aid in emergency response. However, we have demonstrated its capability to also support developmental efforts effectively," stated Dr Ali Kareem Al Mayahi, Deputy Director-General for Technical Affairs in the Planning Directorate of the Federal Ministry of Health.

The project implementation strategy was guided by WHO's "Digital implementation investment guide". This helped assist the





## HeRAMS transforms health care management in Iraq *(continued)*

Iraqi ministries of health and technical partners to plan the HeRAMS implementation, and at the same time, align this effort with Iraq's national health system goals. Active participation from both ministries was key to ensure ownership and sustainability of the project.

The first round of HeRAMS implementation took place in 2022 and

2023. This initial phase resulted in an online dynamic dashboard and over 500 pages of descriptive analysis, including an advanced model for accessing health services.

This success paved the way for the second round of implementation, starting in early 2024. This latest round involves capacity-building workshops and revisions to the data collection process. It has also seen a

roadmap put in place for the long-term sustainability of HeRAMS. This roadmap has gathered the highest political commitment from both health ministers.

WHO would like to express its gratitude to the federal and Kurdistan region ministries of health and the United States Agency for International Development for their support in advancing this transformative project.

## The World Health Organization congratulates Iraq on achieving this incredible milestone towards sustaining a polio free world

**Baghdad, 09 April 2024** - The World Health Organization congratulates Iraq on achieving this incredible milestone towards sustaining a polio free world.

Iraq's achievement highlights the importance of sustained political commitment and cross-sectors collaboration. The success of Iraq's

Ministry of Health is attributed to the efforts of numerous trained healthcare professionals who maintained the trust and reliance on Iraq's Health System.

## Up to 7.5 million children to receive life-saving measles vaccination, a government-led initiative supported by UNICEF and WHO

A measles, mumps and rubella national campaign where more than 30,000 health workers will be mobilized to end disease transmission and save lives.

**Baghdad, 14 April 2024** – Today, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with UNICEF and WHO kicks off a massive nationwide vaccination campaign to protect children from contagious measles, mumps, and rubella diseases. Over 7.5 million children aged 6 - 12 years in primary schools in addition to kindergartens are expected to be reached during this campaign that ends on 25 April 2024.

"This campaign comes at a critical time to end the transmission of measles, one of the most contagious diseases," said Dr. Saleh Al-Hasnawi, Minister of Health. "Through our collaborative efforts with UNICEF and WHO, the Ministry of Health can safely and effectively stop the circulation of the measles virus and save the lives of children from this deadly disease by vaccinating children everywhere."

The Minister of Health for the Kurdistan



Region Government, Dr. Saman Barzangy, added: "Measles is a communicable viral disease that the Regional Government is committed to prevent and protect the health of its citizens and future generations by adopting a region-wide mass measles vaccination drive for children in schools and kindergartens."

This massive campaign is fully resourced by the Government with technical support from UNICEF and WHO. More than 30,000 frontline workers will deliver the vaccines, conduct community awareness, and monitor the campaign.

"This nationwide immunization campaign reflects the strong commitment of the Ministry of Health to saving children's

lives," said Ms. Sandra Lattouf, UNICEF Representative in Iraq. "It will strengthen the health system to provide essential health services to every child in Iraq and will accelerate progress towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goal 3.2."

"WHO remains committed to collaborating with the Ministry of Health, UNICEF and all partners to further advance the national immunization programme towards universal health coverage," said Dr. George Alfred Ki-Zerbo, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq. "Together, we are steadfast in our commitment to halting the disease transmission, saving lives and securing a healthier and safer future for all."

Ten days ahead of the World Immunization Week, marking 50 years of the essential programme on immunization, this campaign underscores the power of vaccines in saving children's lives.

Over the past five decades, vaccines have saved up to 3 million lives every year, adding to a total of more than 130 million people. Vaccines alone have increased infant survival by 30 per cent. As one of the cheapest and most effective public health interventions, it is critical to continue to prioritize vaccines to reach every child.



## Iraq launches its National Strategy for Suicide Prevention



**Baghdad, 29 February 2024** - Iraq stands united in commitment to save lives and heal wounds unseen. Iraq's National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, launch by the Government of Iraq, ensures no one feels alone in their struggles.

"Today, we take a confident step in developing a realistic strategy based on scientific research and solid treatments to confront this phenomenon and prepare for it because the Iraqi individual is the goal, and he is the existential value of the state and society", said Dr. Saleh Dhamad, Advisor to the Prime Minister for Health Affairs.

"This strategy is not merely a

document; it is a commitment to the people of Iraq. It reflects our shared determination to create an environment where individuals feel supported, heard and empowered to seek help when needed," said Giorgi Gigauri, Chief of Mission, IOM Iraq. Suicide is a tragedy that affects Iraq like anywhere else in the world. The Government of Iraq's Suicide Prevention Strategy reflects our shared commitment to fostering a culture of compassion and support and a brighter future for all Iraqis.

This activity was supported by the German Federal Foreign Ministry. Statement by Giorgi Gigauri, Chief of Mission, IOM Iraq:

"Today marks a pivotal moment in the journey of resilience for the people of Iraq. I'm honored to announce the launch of Iraq's National Strategy for Suicide Prevention – a very significant initiative by the Government of Iraq, supported by IOM. Suicide is a deeply complex and tragic issue that impacts individuals and communities across the globe. Iraq is not exception. Despite being three times lower when compared to other countries, the suicide rate in Iraq has more than doubled over the last six years. This reality calls for urgent action. The National Strategy for Suicide Prevention focuses on providing awareness and education, accessible support system for all affected, including displaced people, refugees and migrants. The strategy will also provide practical support to the Government of Iraq and other civil society actors to effectively address this predicament. In unity, we will prioritize mental health – breaking silence and erasing stigma. Together, we build a resilient Iraq – one where every life is valued, and no one struggles alone. Join us in this collective effort, because together, we can make a difference, leaving no one behind. Thank you."

## When art transcends silence: finding joy and peace through paintings



**Ninewa, 23 April 2024** – Silence prevailed inside Sarah's world: there were no sounds of her family's laughter, nor any music to sway to, or the sounds of the outside world. Only a life sentence of complete stillness, until colours sweetly crept into Sarah's world and converted the silence into a kaleidoscope of colours.

Sarah is a 19-year-old girl with a hearing disability who lives in the heart of Hassan Sham camp for internally displaced persons in Ninewa, northern Iraq. Every day, she faces the challenges of being deaf, such as being unable to attend school or communicate

with the people around her, with courage and determination. However, her mother, Ekhlal, 40, tells us that she's just like her sisters.

"At home, she's the same as her sisters," says Ekhlal. "She helps me and her sisters with all household chores, and her hobby is drawing. She is the happiest when she draws."

Sarah has five brothers and three sisters, and despite her disability, Sarah has friends she communicates in sign language. With the help of her sisters, she learned sign language in the kindergarten in Hassan Sham camp.

Sarah's family went through many hardships: they were displaced in 2017 from Hassan Sham village, and could not return to their homes, and struggled to communicate with the host community. It took some time, but somehow the family was able to integrate with the community of Hasan Sham camp.

Despite these difficulties and Sarah's disability that isolated her from the world, art gave her solace. When she learned from her friends about the art sessions delivered at IOM's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support centre inside the camp, she was excited to participate and practice her hobby and learn more. She enrolled in the 12-week long art therapy course that explored art theories, history and techniques and helped her express her thoughts through a new medium.

With time, Sarah started to find threads of connection with her surroundings through painting. With each brushstroke, Sarah poured her emotions onto the canvas, transforming negativity into vibrant bursts of blue,



## When art transcends silence: finding joy and peace through paintings *(continued)*

red, or green, and each colour reflected a feeling and formed what she wanted to say.

“We noticed a significant improvement in her psychological state once she started drawing,” adds Ekhlās. “She was smiling more often”.

The art sessions became Sarah’s sanctuary, where she could explore new techniques, experiment with different palettes, and unleash her creativity without barriers.

As Sarah honed the skills of her new hobby, her passion for art grew stronger, evident in her eagerness to attend each session and engage with her classmates more freely, she built connections with the other girls during the art sessions, a connection which will remain there even after the end of the course. Her family also witnessed a remarkable transformation in her demeanour, as joy radiated from her, and she became more confident and

expressive as a young artist.

“We are so relieved for our daughter’s happiness. We finally found a way to make her happy,” shares Ekhlās.

After three months, the culmination of Sarah’s artistic journey came with the graduation exhibition held at the MHPSS centre on International Women’s Day. Alongside her fellow participants, Sarah proudly displayed her artworks, each piece a testament to her resilience and inner strength. As visitors marvelled at the beauty of Sarah’s creations, they were moved by the feelings Sarah’s expressed in each painting—the story of a young girl who refused to be confined by any disabilities and instead found her voice through the medium of art.

Sarah’s paintings captivated the audience, and to her family’s pride, every piece was sold. Each sale was not just a transaction but a recognition of Sarah’s talent and a celebration of her

triumph over adversity. On that memorable day, as Sarah stood before her sold-out paintings, she felt a profound sense of accomplishment.

Through her art, Sarah had transcended the limitations imposed by society and proved that creativity knows no bounds. Sarah’s journey serves as a poignant reminder of the transformative power of art and the resilience of the human spirit. On World Creativity and Innovation Day, her story inspires us all to embrace our unique abilities, overcome obstacles, and unleash our creative potential to make the world a brighter place.

IOM’s MHPSS activities at Hassan Sham U2 Camp are supported by U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM).

By Daniah Al-Sadoon | Public Information Assistant, IOM

## Mental health support is not a luxury. It is a human right.

**Sulaymaniyah, 24 April 2024** - Mental health support is not a luxury. It is a human right. UNHCR and authorities in Iraq take this seriously: 356 teachers in 25 schools in urban areas + refugee camps in Sulaymaniyah were trained on how to help refugee and local community children get through tough times.



## Environment

## DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Isaczai visits WFP Mangrove tree nursery project in Khor Al-Zubair, Basra

**Basra, 29 February 2024** - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (DSRSG)/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, visited the World Food Programme (WFP) Mangrove tree nursery project in Khor Al-Zubair, Basra, which aims to plant 95 million trees by 2029. He also engaged with school students at the site on environmental issues, highlighting the important role young people can play in raising awareness about climate change impact in Iraq.



## Launch of the Iraq Environment and Climate Change Policy Advisory Group: a vital initiative to foster a united front for effective implementation of climate policies

**Baghdad, 11 March 2024** – Today, H.E. Mr. Nizar Amidi, Minister of Environment, and Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), launched the Iraq Environment and Climate Change Policy Advisory Group in Baghdad.

The Group will serve as an informal platform to foster policy dialogue, collaboration, coordination advocacy, and the exchange of information between and among the Government of Iraq, Development Partners, civil society organizations, academia and private sector on all aspects related to climate change and environment. The objective of the Advisory Group is to support Iraq's efforts to achieve its



climate and environmental objectives. “Coordination is essential to climate issues for maximizing effectiveness, leveraging resources, and addressing the interconnected nature of climate challenges at local, national, and global levels”, highlighted DSRSG/RC/HC.

H.E. Minister Nizar Amidi emphasized that “the creation of the advisory group, in support of joint climate action, is considered an important development in strengthening the partnership between the Government of Iraq and United Nations agencies”.

## UNDP launches its new Environmental Justice Programme in Iraq

**Baghdad, 13 March 2024** - UNDP Iraq is excited to announce the launch of its new Environmental Justice Programme in Iraq in collaboration with the Supreme Judicial Council and the Ministry of Environment. The programme will strengthen the country's justice systems to safeguard the right to a healthy environment. Including:

→□ Foster collaboration between the environmental inspectors, environmental police, and the

Judiciary.

→□ Provides grassroots support to

legal aid programmes on environmental rights.



## UN-Habitat uses a scientific approach to develop sustainable solutions to prevent transboundary storms at their source

**Baghdad, 14 March 2024** - The “Improving Resilience to Cross-Border Sand and Dust Storms in Kuwait and Iraq” project, supported by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, seeks to address and mitigate the increasing impact of sand and dust storms on human settlements in southern Iraq and Kuwait.

Based on recent scientific findings, the project will use biological stabilization techniques to limit the spread of sand and dust and reduce activities from two important hotspots responsible for up to 40% of sand and dust storms in the Arabian Gulf countries.

By planting native species and drought-resistant trees, the increased green coverage will act as a windbreak to reduce wind movement and the spread

of sand and dust.

UN-Habitat uses a scientific approach to develop sustainable solutions to

prevent transboundary storms at their source, restore ecosystems, rehabilitate landscapes, and reverse desertification.





## Recycling to boost water security in climate-vulnerable Iraq

**Baghdad, 22 March 2024** - Wastewater treatment plants are helping the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) save water and reduce its environmental footprint amid shrinking resources.

A joint UNAMI-UNICEF programme to recycle wastewater through advanced treatment technology at UN locations in Iraq could serve as a model in addressing freshwater scarcity due to the changing climate.

“Iraq is one of the countries most threatened by climate change, which is severely impacting water resources,” Harish Joshi, UNAMI’s Chief of Mission Support, told Politically Speaking. “Water supply is much less than the actual needs.”

Water insecurity represents the most critical climate-related emergency for Iraq, where the levels of the country’s main rivers, The Tigris and Euphrates, have dropped in recent years. By 2035, it is estimated that Iraq will have the capacity to meet only 15% of its water demands.

At the same time, 90% of Iraq’s rivers are polluted, and 7 million people are currently suffering from reduced access to water, representing a significant multiplier of threats to the country’s stability.

Water scarcity is also drying up wetlands in the south, driving families to leave their land and move to the cities.

### Recycling water

“Our goal is to recycle our wastewater to produce water that can be used for technical and irrigation purposes,” Joshi explained, adding that the



mission is setting up an automated irrigation system that will rely on the recycled water, instead of consuming freshwater.

“Our expectation, once the irrigation system is completed, is to save up to 53% in freshwater consumption in Baghdad,” Joshi said, adding that the overall investment of \$1.16 million in the wastewater treatment plants in the four UN compounds within Iraq should be recovered over six years.

The plants, which have so far been used in testing capacities, were officially launched on 20 March 2024.

### Fostering good relations

According to Joshi, UNAMI’s initiatives to reduce the mission’s carbon footprint and water consumption can provide an example to follow for both the local community and the other institutions in neighboring compounds.

“It is our intention to get our neighbors on board providing them with options to use the treated water for their irrigation purposes rather than leave it out in the river”, he explained, adding that this could encourage others to replicate the wastewater and other green projects carried out by the mission, from solid waste management to the use of solar panels.

UNAMI is also implementing other measures to save water. For instance, it installed 176 low flow faucets in the kitchens of the compound’s accommodation areas in Baghdad. The mission is also installing water meters to monitor consumption and is regularly raising awareness among staff about using water carefully.

“We’re very conscious that the Mission can set an example and show what is really possible,” Joshi concluded.

## United Nations Country Team in Iraq sheds light on water challenges and promotes cooperation on World Water Day 2024: water for peace

**Baghdad, 22 March 2024** – On the occasion of World Water Day, the United Nations Country Team in Iraq draws attention to pressing water issues facing the nation and is advocating for enhanced cooperation to address these challenges. The theme for this year’s World Water Day, ‘Water for Peace,’ resonates strongly with Iraq, where water scarcity, pollution, and unequal access have the potential to create tensions and hinder social and economic development. Iraq is located in an already water-stressed region and faces a host of related challenges. The country’s water resources are shared



with neighboring countries, rendering transboundary water management as critical for fostering cooperation and maintaining peace.

“The impact of climate change further complicates Iraq’s water situation – as rising temperatures exacerbate water scarcity, jeopardizing agricultural

## United Nations Country Team in Iraq sheds light on water challenges ... (continued)

productivity, food security, and public health. Additionally, the degradation of water quality due to pollution and inadequate waste management practices poses a significant threat to human well-being and environmental integrity. This is why the UN continues to work side by side with the Government of Iraq and our partners to mitigate this critical issue," said Ghulam Isaczai, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq.

Optimizing sustainable water resource management

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Iraq acknowledges that water and sanitation are fundamental human rights, crucial for health, dignity, prosperity, and peace in the pursuit of achieving SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation.

The UNCT and the Government of Iraq (GoI) have collaborated to combat growing water scarcity and the deterioration of its quality. With support from international partners and the GoI, it has worked to optimize the sustainable utilization of water resources, enhancing its management, through a project that aims to monitor the Euphrates-Tigris basin through a web- and GIS-based platform, improving water management through the provision of tools that address water supply, quality, access, and the sustainable management of river basins within its territory.

In the south, UN agencies rehabilitated seven major water treatment plants, significantly improving access to potable water for surrounding

communities. In the Al Hawizeh Marshlands, the UN along with local governments have empowered crisis-affected communities, enhancing access to clean water through solar photovoltaic (PV) water purification systems and rehabilitated water facilities, enabling approximately 960,000 individuals to gain access to safe drinking water.

Preserving food and energy systems through innovative practices

As the world commemorates "Water for Peace," there is an urgent need to unite around protecting and conserving our most precious resource. Food and energy systems, economic productivity, and environmental integrity all rely on a well-functioning and equitably managed water cycle. The UNCT has supported the preservation of Iraq's water resources by increasing and stabilizing water availability at the farm gate, optimizing agriculture and water productivity, through climate-smart agriculture and solar powered irrigation initiatives in southern Iraq, as part of the Water-Energy-Food Nexus. These initiatives stabilize water availability and increase water-use efficiency, improving agricultural yields and profits for rural communities. The UN has also supported Iraq through real-time remote sensing data monitoring land and water productivity, including analysis of water consumption and irrigation system performance.

Supporting the water sector for the most vulnerable

The UNCT continues to support the water sector in addressing water scarcity and achieving impactful

results for children and their families through strengthening systems and developing consensus on equitable and inclusive water governance and resource management frameworks; eliminating water pollution and strengthening local markets to increase access to equitable and climate-resilient water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities in communities, schools, and health facilities. It also involves innovating and implementing initiatives to address water scarcity, including efficient water use, wastewater treatment and reuse and rainwater harvesting. At the largest medical complex in Baghdad, the UN supported the GoI to install eight wastewater treatment plants benefiting more than 3.5 million people. Prior to this, over 2,300m<sup>3</sup> of untreated water was discharged into the Tigris River daily. The UNCT is also supporting the national climate change campaign to create awareness on impact of climate change, water scarcity and pollution with a focus on sustainable behavior change communication.

The UN stands side by side in supporting Iraq's water resource management

On this World Water Day, we call upon all stakeholders, including the government, civil society organizations, private sector entities, and individuals, to prioritize water cooperation as a pathway to peace, stability, and sustainable development. By working together, Iraq and its partners can overcome water-related challenges, ensure equitable access to water resources, and create a prosperous and harmonious future for all.

## UNDP and Canadian partners address water needs and promote biodiversity conservation in the Marshlands

**Basra, 26 March 2024** - Working in the Marshlands with our Canadian partners directly with the local communities to address water needs and promote biodiversity conservation. Women have always been at the heart of the marshlands' dynamics, and UNDP is keen, along with Iraqi Women Empowerment Department, to support women in taking an active role in water resource management, fish hatchery operations, and environmental conservation efforts.

Essential to UNDP's project is ensuring that the Iraqi marshlands meet the criteria set by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Achieving this



status would highlight the global significance of the marshes and ensure

they receive heightened levels of much needed care and protection.



## ILO publishes a guide: "How to Deal with Solid Waste and Benefit from It: A Guide for Workers in Collecting and Managing Solid Waste."

**Baghdad, 30 March 2024** - In light of the International Day of Zero Waste, the ILO published a guide: "How to Deal with Solid Waste and Benefit from It: A Guide for Workers in Collecting and Managing Solid Waste." This guide is meticulously developed to empower those at the forefront of our waste management efforts. With a focus on simplicity and accessibility, it bypasses the barrier of educational prerequisites, aiming to enhance waste management workers' safety, productivity, and technical skills through easy-to-understand language.

Find the Guide here:

<https://tinyurl.com/bduhucd5>



## UN Agencies launch joint programme to support Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon in climate change response



**Cairo, Egypt, 4 April 2024** – The International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) today launched a joint programme to support the health system responses of the governments of Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon to climate change adaptation and risk reduction over the coming two years.

The programme, operating under the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund, aims to strengthen the resilience of health systems and migrant populations to climate change and disaster risks by incorporating an inclusive human mobility lens into national public health adaptation and risk reduction strategies of the target countries.

"Natural hazards that displace people, claim lives, damage property and impact health are strongly linked to climate change," said Mr Othman Belbeisi, IOM Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa. "Thus, there is a strong need for a comprehensive approach that recognizes the linkages between climate change adaptation and risk reduction efforts in a manner that is inclusive of all impacted communities including migrants."

"The escalating impacts of climate change

globally and particularly in our region are leading to drastic health risks, especially among migrants who face difficulties in accessing adequate health services. This programme aims to create a coherent, multistakeholder approach to enhance resilience and preparedness within health systems, with a focus on the needs of migrants, who are often affected by climate change and its related risks," said Dr Hanan Balkhy, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

"The UNDRR Regional Office for Arab States is committed to supporting local authorities in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon in disaster risk management and resilience-building efforts by developing local resilience action plans, which ensure that local authorities and communities are better equipped to handle disasters and emergencies and can respond effectively and efficiently," said Mr Fadi Jannan, Deputy Chief of UNDRR Regional Office for Arab States.

The Middle East and North Africa region is among the world's most vulnerable regions to climate change due to its mostly arid climate, coupled with serious water scarcity, continued population growth and urbanization.

Health impacts commonly identified in the region include cardiovascular and

respiratory diseases caused by rising temperatures; resurgence and proliferation of vector-borne diseases; air pollution; and foodborne and waterborne diseases caused by degraded quality of water resources.

The programme thus seeks to integrate climate change adaptation and risk reduction strategies, with a specific focus on addressing the unique challenges faced by migrant populations in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon.

Migrants often face challenges in accessing adequate health services due to factors such as their location, their legal status in transit and destination countries, the affordability of health services, and negative perceptions towards migrants in some host communities.

This integration is also crucial given the projected increase in climate-induced displacement and the associated health risks, particularly in regions with high exposure and low adaptive capacity, such as the Middle East and North Africa region.

The programme will address the information gap on the intersections between climate change, risk reduction, health and human mobility by producing and sharing relevant data. It will also hold capacity-building activities for government officials to improve the integration of an inclusive human mobility lens into local public health adaptation and resilience action plans.

A series of trainings will be organized to enable health professionals in the target countries to obtain the knowledge and skills to respond in an inclusive manner to health threats exacerbated by climate change and in disaster situations. Further, awareness-raising activities will target migrant communities in the involved countries.

## Decisive action on climate change requires effective enforcement of environmental protection laws

**Baghdad, 23 April 2024** - At UNDP, we're stepping up our efforts in our new Environmental and Climate Justice Programme. This initiative brings together environmental, law enforcement, legislative and judicial institutions in a collaborative effort. On 21 April, the Ministry of Environment co-hosted a deep-dive discussion with environmental police and inspectors.

What did we learn? Collaboration between the Ministry of Interior and Environment along with increased resources, capacity development, legal development and increased citizen engagement are important for the implementation of environmental laws. Learn more about the programme here: [bit.ly/iq23424](https://bit.ly/iq23424)



## UNICEF with funding from the Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq is dedicated to tackling the impact of climate change

**Basra, 08 April 2024** - "It's a wonderful place, but it's also at the same time horrific to see the effects of climate change here in person," said Ms. Laetitia van Asch, Deputy Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Iraq during her visit to the Marshlands.

Children and young people in Iraq are suffering significantly from the effects of climate change which is intensifying rapidly. UNICEF with funding from the Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq is dedicated to tackling the impact of climate change, aiming to ensure a brighter future #ForEveryChild.



### Water Conference

## 4th International Baghdad Water Conference

United Nations in Iraq extensively participated at the 4th International Baghdad Water conference. Following is just a small selection of these activities.

## Water Convention National Policy Dialogues experience inspires Iraq to establish a national dialogue with support from the UN country team

**Baghdad, 27 April 2024** - The 4th Baghdad International Water Conference kicks off with strong focus on governance and multistakeholder cooperation to address water challenges. Water Convention National Policy Dialogues experience inspires Iraq to establish a national dialogue with support from the UN country team. As a downstream country like Iraq, Kazakhstan was invited to share its experiences under the framework of the National Policy Dialogues NPD, supported by the European Union.

Background:

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water

Convention) is a unique international legal instrument and intergovernmental platform which aims to ensure the sustainable use of transboundary water resources by facilitating cooperation. Initially negotiated as a regional instrument, it has been opened up for accession to all UN Member States in 2016.

The Protocol on Water and Health, jointly serviced by UNECE and WHO-Europe, is a unique legally binding instrument aiming to protect human health by better water management and by reducing water-related diseases. The Protocol provides a practical framework to translate into practice the human rights to water and

sanitation and to implement SDG 6.

<https://unece.org/environment-policy/water>





## 4th International Baghdad Water Conference (continued)

**Baghdad, 27 April 2024** - At the Baghdad International Water Conference 2024, WFP Iraq and Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources launched the finalized joint drought study. Through extensive research, we have delved into Iraq's drought impacts, identifying strategies for adaptation,

mitigation, and anticipation." This study will empower policymakers and stakeholders with insights and tools for sustainable water management and robust drought response systems. These findings are not just about securing food systems — they are vital for informed policy-making.



**Baghdad, 27 April 2024** - FAO Iraq's Representative Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan joined the main session under the theme: "Towards a better water future. Together we can!" organized under the Prime Minister's patronage and supervised by the Minister of Water Resources.

Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan insisted on FAO's and partners commitment to working with the Iraqi government for sustainable water management. Our joint interventions focus on innovative solutions to ensure resilience, especially for rural communities. Thanks to our valuable donors the



European Union, Canada, Norway, Sida-Styrelsen för internationellt utvecklingssamarbete, for their trust

and support for sustainable water uses and resilient local communities central and southern Iraq.

**Baghdad, 28 April 2024** - Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), Mr. Ghulam Isaczai: "Great to see our climate change youth activists and volunteers at the UN Booth, at the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference. The UN has a big presence at the conference and supports all efforts to facilitate transboundary water cooperation".



**Baghdad, 28 April 2024** - UNICEF and the Ministry of Environment officially launched the Climate Landscape Analysis for Children and Young People (CLAC) report, providing recommendations on how to mitigate the impact of climate change, and engage with children and young people for a brighter future for all. "The climate crisis is not an environmental crisis, but a child rights crisis," said Dr. Jassim Al Falahi, Deputy Minister of Environment during the official launch of the and Young People during the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference. "We need to collectively work to find innovative and sustainable solutions to ensure a safe, clean and sustainable environment for our children and young people," added Dr. Jassim Al Falahi, Deputy Minister of

Environment during the conference. "This conference reflects the strong commitment of the Government of Iraq to prioritizing the water agenda and accelerating progress towards the

achievement of the SDGs," said Ms. Sandra Lattouf, UNICEF representative in Iraq, during the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference.





## 4th International Baghdad Water Conference (continued)

**Baghdad, 28 April 2024** - The World Food Programme (WFP) Iraq signed an extension to its agreement with the Ministry of Water Resources during the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference. This partnership addresses critical challenges facing Iraq's water and food security in the face of climate change and climate variability.



**Baghdad, 28 April 2024** - At the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference, FAO session on enhancing sustainable water management practices was chaired by Deputy FAO Iraq Representative, Ms. Veronica Quattrola.

Ms. Quattrola set the stage, emphasizing FAO's dedication to optimizing every drop, promoting inclusivity, and ensuring no one is left behind in our quest for sustainable water management. Together, let's pave the way for a brighter water-secure future. Mr. Waleed Hassan Abouelhassan, Senior Natural Resources Officer from FAO SNG, who shares practical strategies for sustainable water management and agriculture tailored to Iraq's context. In his intervention, Dr. Jauad El Kharraz, Executive Director of Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RCREEE),



explores the Water-Energy-Food Nexus and Climate Resilience. Dr. Ali Karnib from American University of Beirut presents during his intervention a Quantitative analysis of the Water-Energy-Food Nexus and the role of water accounting in governance. Last intervention with Mr. Mukhalad Abdullah presents a governance

assessment of water management in Iraq, emphasizing the role of Water Users Associations in equitable water distribution.

In the session conclusion, Ms. Veronica Quattrola addressed heartfelt thanks to speakers and participants for a fruitful discussion on enhancing sustainable water management.

**Baghdad, 28 April 2024** - FAO is delighted to announce the kick-off of its session on Innovative Water Management at the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference. In presence of the FAO Iraq team, led by Representative Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan, featuring contributions from experts from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, and the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), exploring sustainable solutions for water scarcity and agricultural resilience.

First up, Mr. Abdourahman Maki from FAO Sub-regional office for North Africa (SNE), sharing insights on innovative frameworks for harnessing non-conventional water resources in agriculture. The second intervention is with Ms. Fidaa Haddad, Senior Programme Officer at FAO Near East and North Africa (NENA), takes the stage to discuss enhancing drought resilience through integrated land and water management in drylands. Dr.

Marco Arcieri, International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage President and Water Resources Researcher, sheds light in the third intervention on strategies for the reclamation and rehabilitation of saline and sodic soils, addressing water scarcity and enhancing agricultural resilience. During the 4th intervention, Dr. Waleed Abouelhassan, Senior Natural Resources Officer from FAO SNG, explores solutions for matching

water supply with demand through integrated approaches.

Grateful to all speakers for their invaluable insights, moderator Mr. Mahmoud Abdullah from the Iraq Ministry of Water Resources, the session Rapporteur, and all participants and attendants for their active engagement in this session at the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference.





## DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Isaczai underlines UN support through joint initiatives as UN-Water Task Force and Environment and Climate Change Policy Advisory Group towards sustainable water management in Iraq

**Baghdad, 29 April 2024** - Today, at the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, highlighted the significant progress made by Iraq's accession to Water Convention. He underlined UN support through joint initiatives as UN-Water Task Force and Environment and Climate Change Policy Advisory Group towards sustainable water management. Here is the text of the DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai intervention at this panel:

*Question:* As the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Iraq, you have supported Iraq in the process of accession to the Water Convention and, after that, established the UN-Water Task Force, comprising various UN agencies, to support Iraq in its efforts for sustainable water management and implementation of the Water Convention and more recently launched the Iraq Environment and Climate Change Policy Advisory Group. Against this backdrop, how can the UN system support Iraq and its neighbors in acceding and implementing the Convention and sustainably managing their transboundary water resources? What advice can you give to other countries in the region considering accession regarding the engagement of RCOs?

*Answer:* I am pleased to address our significant progress in water resource management, mainly through Iraq's accession to the Water Convention and the UN's various engagements concerning water issues, e.g., supporting Iraq's water diplomacy capacities, and addressing Iraq's climate challenges. Our initiatives include enhancing Iraq's ability to meet its climate action commitments, particularly through projects that use advanced data systems to improve water and drought management, as well as improving resilience against environmental challenges like transboundary sand and dust storms, in addition to implementing nature-based solutions, such as constructed wetlands in vulnerable communities. Furthermore, installing solar-



powered water pumps and constructing water catchment ponds in drought-prone areas are pivotal in ensuring sustainable water supply and management.

In our commitment to institutional improvement, we have initiated online water billing and smart metering systems in selected governorates, improving the efficiency and transparency of water management. We are also enhancing the capacity of water facilities to provide safe drinking water in Basrah and other regions.

Water is a top priority for the UN in Iraq and is central to the upcoming UNSDCF.

Iraq is facing a severe water crisis exacerbated by climate change, escalating conflicts, and environmental degradation.

Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which provide up to 98% of the surface water, have decreased by 30-40% over the past 40 years.

Agricultural practices, which consume over 70% of water resources, are notably inefficient, leading to the region's lowest water productivity in agriculture.

Rapid urbanization and population growth compound the country's water management challenges, urgently requiring strong water management policies.

We are leading a National Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management, preparing for a Climate Transboundary Risk Assessment in the Euphrates Tigris River Basin,

and developing a National Adaptation Plan for the water sector. These efforts exemplify our proactive approach to fostering the region's sustainable and resilient water future.

In our collective efforts, we founded the UN-Water TF last year to effectively respond to the country and its people's needs regarding water challenges. The TF is focused on promoting and supporting national leadership and ownership of the country's water development objectives and processes while assuring no one is left behind through an inclusive, whole-of-government, and whole-society approach.

In close consultation with gov and non-government stakeholders, Water TF will provide technical assistance, coordination, and advocacy services on the following priority areas:

- Early water monitoring systems for surface and groundwater
- Freshwater, riverine, and marine ecosystem restoration – towards Ecosystem-based Adaptation
- Community-Based Watershed Management
- Sustainable land management
- Water- and Food Security
- Water use efficiency
- Water recycling and harvesting
- Water pollution
- Water governance and water users' associations
- Irrigation infrastructure,

## DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Isaczai underlines UN support through joint initiatives as UN-Water Task Force ... (continued)

planning, and development

- Water Resources Management capacity building
- Water assessments/enhancing data and knowledge
- Benefiting from global legal instruments

The Water TF's primary task is to initiate an inclusive National Dialogue on Water while supporting the Government to implement its national water strategies to improve the country's water security situation. In addition, the Water TF will support the Government in implementing the recently joined UN Water Convention and engaging in global and regional water events.

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Meanwhile, implementing the Convention offers new opportunities to boost Iraq's domestic water management and governance frameworks and a solid basis for strengthening cooperation with Iraq's riparian countries.

**Q:** Now, as we look to the horizon, how can the UN system further support Iraq and its neighbors in embracing and implementing the Water Convention?

**A:** Firstly, the United Nations can catalyze dialogue and cooperation. We build trust and collaborative spirits by fostering environments

where nations can discuss, plan, and manage shared resources. Workshops, meetings, and conferences under UN auspices can help sustain these crucial conversations. Building on the rules and framework of the UN Water Convention ensures that such dialogues ensure equity and sustainability of cooperation.

Secondly, technical assistance and capacity building are indispensable. Through the UN, we can offer tailored training and support, enhancing local capabilities in water management and policy implementation. Our aim is not merely to advise but to empower.

Moreover, the UN can provide robust policy and advisory support, aiding nations in crafting comprehensive water management strategies. This support extends beyond water to address interconnected environmental challenges, such as mitigating sand and dust storms that plague our region.

Additionally, for nations considering joining the Water Convention, the UN can illuminate the path—clarifying the benefits and elucidating the obligations. Our Resident Coordinators' Offices are at the forefront, ready to assist with legal, technical, and procedural guidance.

Another cornerstone is promoting

regional integration through support for transboundary water agreements. Such efforts foster better resource management and enhance political stability across borders. The UN Water Convention provides a tested and effective framework to guide these efforts towards sustainable solutions.

Lastly, I emphasize the importance of research and data sharing. In this regard, through its thematic program area "Monitoring and Assessment," the Convention supports countries in establishing mechanisms to exchange data on transboundary water parameters such as quality and quantity. A collective regional approach to data can significantly improve decision-making, helping us to manage our water resources with the precision they require.

To nations considering accession, engage deeply with your UN Resident Coordinators. They can offer insights specific to your context and ensure that your journey toward accession is well-supported and aligned with your national interests.

Together, with sustained commitment and collaborative effort, we can achieve a resilient and prosperous region anchored in the principles of sustainability and cooperation.

Thank you."



## UNIraq kicked off the #waterislife campaign

**Baghdad, 29 April 2024** - Today, at the Baghdad International Water Conference 2024, UNIraq kicked off the #waterislife Campaign, a year-long effort to raise awareness about Iraq's water situation. Let's all join hands to preserve this precious resource.

Here is the message by the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, released on this occasion:

"Al-Salaam-Alaikum.

I am Ghulam Mohammed Isaczai, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Iraq.

Water is essential to life, yet we are currently facing a significant crisis.

In recent years, the rivers have run lower, and the fields have dried up more than ever before.

Through collective efforts and cooperation, we can tackle this



challenge.

Crucial steps such as upgrading water systems, protecting the rivers from pollution, and investing in innovative water management practices are paramount.

Let's work together to protect water for the future of Iraq.

I have a plea for all of you: start acting now, and make those small, essential changes in your daily life.

Every drop counts and so does every action.

Let us work together to preserve this precious resource.

Thank you."

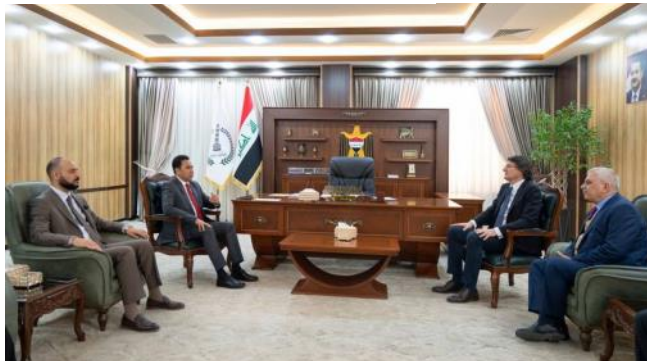


## French Ambassador witnesses the significant progress made on the rehabilitation and renovation of the House of Prayer, carried out by Iraqi hands

**Mosul, 28 February 2024** - UNESCO welcomed the visit of the French Ambassador to Iraq, H.E. Mr. Patrick Durel, H.E. the General Consul of France in Mosul, H.E. Mr. Jean-Christophe Augé and the representative of the Dominican Order, to witness the significant progress made on the rehabilitation and renovation of the House of Prayer, carried out by Iraqi hands. The project is funded by ALIPH and implemented by UNESCO, in close partnership with the Dominican Order, the Iraqi Ministry of Culture, and France, as

part of the UNESCO's #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul Initiative. The project aims at rehabilitating the

historical complex of "House of Prayer" as a multipurpose space hosting educational and cultural activities.



**Mosul, 13 March 2024** - Paolo Fontani, UNESCO Representative to Iraq, met with Abdul Qader Al-Dakhil, the Governor of Nineveh, to discuss the latest updates and developments in the #RevivetheSpiritofMosul Initiative and explore avenues for cooperation.



**Najaf, 17 March 2024** - Paolo Fontani, UNESCO Representative to Iraq, met with Yusuf Makki Kanawi, the Governor of Najaf, to discuss UNESCO's projects in Iraq and explore avenues for cooperation.

## Brick by brick: restoring Al-Hadba Minaret's legacy

**Mosul, 02 April 2024** - In the pursuit of preservation, 45,000 original bricks have been carefully recovered from Al Hadba Minaret. Carefully cleaned and cataloged, ready to be integrated back into the fabric of the Minaret's reconstruction. The work has been done by the consolidated, great effort of employees of Nineveh SBAH, and UNESCO.

Each brick holds the essence of history, every brick carries a story, a silent witness to the resilience of Mosul's cultural heritage. As we are rebuilding the minaret inclined as it was using the old techniques, the missing pieces will be smoothly replaced with bricks crafted and produced in Iraq, ensuring a harmonious blend of tradition and progress.



## UNESCO, with EU financial support, completed the rehabilitation of the historic Ziyada Palatial House in Old Mosul

**Mosul, 25 March 2024** - UNESCO, with financial support from the European Union, completed the final phase of rehabilitating the historic Ziyada Palatial House in Old Mosul. This house is considered one of the most important heritage palaces in Mosul, renowned for its distinctive architectural style.



## Exciting news from Al-Tahera Church in Mosul

**Mosul, 16 April 2024** - Exciting news from Al-Tahera Church. We've reached the ceiling, and the church is reclaiming its glorious shape. Take a look at how the UNESCO restoration is unfolding in partnership with the UAE. <https://bit.ly/3W0nl8y>

Ten fine arts students from Mosul have revealed the breathtaking original decorations inside Al-Tahera Church.

Witness the beauty they've uncovered and join us on this journey of rediscovery and preservation.

In Mosul, UNESCO is not just building, but building sustainably. We're proud to introduce innovative techniques and

eco-friendly materials in every project, like the solar panels on the roof of Our

Lady of the Hour convent, setting the stage for a greener, more resilient city.



## Celebrating World Book Day

**Erbil, 24 April 2024** - Celebrating #WorldBookDay, a group of Moslawis embarked on an enlightening journey to the Erbil Book Fair 2024.

Guided by the Central Library - University of Mosul and Mosul Heritage, the group explored literature from diverse cultures and languages, fostering cultural exchange.

World Book Day reminds us of literature's impact in uniting communities, empowering individuals, promoting critical thinking, nurturing peace and preserving cultural heritage.

This activity is organized within the "Restoring Mosul University Library"



project, supported by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation -

Jordan and Iraq - AICS Amman Keep reading, always!

## Education

## Another milestone towards refugee inclusion!

**Erbil, 26 February 2024** - Today, the Kurdistan's Minister of Education, the Governor of Erbil, and UNHCR Iraq laid the foundation stone for the construction of three 12-classroom schools in Kasnazan, Shawes, and Mamzawa in Kasnazan sub-district in Erbil.

This will benefit both Iraqi and refugee children. How?

✦ More space for both refugee and local students.

✦ Access to quality and inclusive education for all.

✦ Improved social cohesion.

"I commend UNHCR's strong collaboration and commitment to support the KRG's successful strategies developed for refugee inclusion in the national education system in Kurdistan Region of Iraq," said H.E. Dr Alan Hama Saeed, the KRG's Minister of Education.

The construction of these schools - and



many other projects - is part of our commitment to support the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's Ministry of Education on the implementation of its Refugee

Education Integration Policy benefitting Kurdish and refugee children, as well as qualified refugee teachers.



## The power of early childhood education in shaping the future of children!

**Sulaymaniyah, 03 March 2024 -**

With UNICEF support and funding from Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ), Al-Ekhwa Primary School in Sulaymaniyah established an Early Childhood Education (ECE) classroom for children from internally displaced families.

The ECE classroom focuses on providing comprehensive development opportunities #ForEverychild. From interactive playgroups to engaging preschools, these initiatives go beyond academics, addressing cognitive, social, emotional, and physical aspects of child development.



## Thirty teachers from the Directorate of Education in Ninawa are increasing their Competency-Based Pedagogy and assessment

**Mosul, 03 March 2024 -** 30 teachers (23 female, 7 male) from the Directorate of Education in Ninawa are increasing their Competency-Based Pedagogy and assessment. The conception of Competence Based Pedagogy aims to reverse the traditional educational model based on 'inputs' (the curriculum) and traditional educational practice which generally attempt to approach academic education. The traditional curriculum defines what the teacher should teach. The change in the "Competency Approach to Training" is the movement towards a definition of what the student needs to learn to perform to the standards required in employment.



This training programme is under the umbrella of UNESCO's Revive Spirit of Mosul Initiative, Enhancing Employability for Youth in Ninawa

Project (EYE-N) funded by KOICA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Directorate of Education in Ninawa.

## The Fifth Steering Committee of EU funded TVET Reform Project (TVET-2) commends the results and the impact of the TVET-2

**Baghdad, 06 March 2024 -** The Fifth Steering Committee of EU funded TVET Reform Project (TVET-2) Chaired by Dr. Hamid Khalaf, Director of the Higher Committee for Education Development, with participation of the EU Representative and the Representatives of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR), Presidents of Technical Universities and UNESCO commended the results and the impact of the TVET-2 and agreed to sustain the efforts. An exciting development for skilling of Iraqi youth for meaningful employment.



## UNESCO introduces "TVET E Book", an IT based approach to deliver curricular content to the trainers and students

**Baghdad, 04 March 2024** - UNESCO, in collaboration with the EU and the Ministry of Education, is enhancing the employability of graduates from Vocational schools across Iraq. As part of this transformative initiative to align the training process with the evolving demands of the Iraqi labor market, the focus is not just on curriculum development but also on fostering a deep engagement from the learners themselves on emerging technologies. Recognizing the evolving learning employment landscape, UNESCO has introduced "TVET E Book", an IT based approach to deliver curricular content to the trainers and students. This innovative resource boasts a user-friendly, interactive Graphic User Interface (GUI) that empowers both students and teachers to seamlessly access over 215 diverse learning modules in key sectors such as Construction, Tourism, Agriculture, and IT. Available in English, Arabic,



and Kurdish, these modules feature dedicated sections for both teachers and students, complete with all the essential materials and engaging activities.

650 of these E Books have been provided to the five Vocational schools, replacing traditional textbooks thus starting a new approach to deliver TVET. Complementing this technological leap, educators have undergone comprehensive training in modern pedagogy to maximize the potential of this digital tool within the

Iraqi classroom, thereby elevating student motivation to new heights.

The recent ceremonies in Karbala and Erbil marked the handover of these E Books, orchestrated by the EU Ambassador H.E. Thomas Seiler, and Deputy Ambassador, David Healy. Notably, the Graphic Interface, a significant stride in digital learning, was crafted by the adept Iraqi software developer "Twekl." This collective effort represents a pivotal advancement in fostering a technologically enriched education environment in Iraq.

## Minister of Education Al-Jubouri emphasizes the importance of effective governance in achieving quality education in Iraq

**Baghdad, 07 March 2024** - EU, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Ministry of Education collaborate on, Equitable Quality Education in Iraq: Improved Teaching and Learning and Enhanced Educational Management (ITALEEM) 2024 – 2027.

In a meeting with the Ambassador of European Union in Iraq and the Representatives of UNESCO and UNICEF, Minister of Education Dr. Ibrahim Namis Al-Jubouri emphasized the importance of effective governance in achieving quality education in Iraq. The collaborative initiative, supported by the European Union with a 24 million euro investment, will support



the Educational Management Information System (EMIS), Continuous Professional Development for Teachers,

better school management in close collaboration with civil society organizations.

## Collaborative partnerships for child rights!

**Baghdad, 26 March 2024** - UNICEF and faith leader endowments came together in a participatory action planning consultation to plan and prioritize behaviour change interventions focusing on child rights, social justice and social cohesion and peacebuilding. With the active participation of 50 faith leaders, key messages and behavioural strategies were finalized to support the Core Commitments to Children and ensure essential services are available and accessible.





## Beyond failures: Lawand's reconnection to education



**Sulaymaniyah, 28 March 2024** - Lawand, an 18-year-old originally from the Bazian area in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, and now residing in the Raparin area, grappled with substantial academic challenges. When he failed both grades 7 and 8, he was excluded from his conventional school. Fortunately, the Back-to-Learning campaign, led by the Ministry of Education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, with support from UNICEF, and funded by the United States Government and Germany through KfW Development Bank, paved the way for his transition to an evening school.

### A New Beginning

Lawand's story took a positive turn when a team from the Directorate of Education visited his home as part of

the door-to-door Back-to-Learning campaign led by UNICEF. Their intervention not only supported Lawand but also facilitated his enrollment in a new school – Mateen Elementary School for Boys, where he joined the 8th grade.

Despite the difficulties he faced, Lawand's determination was fueled by the unwavering support of his mother, a sociology teacher. Her encouragement became a driving force, pushing Lawand to complete Grade 9 and pursue further studies, particularly in a sports department institute.

"Embracing the journey back to school, I've found profound happiness," he says. "Witnessing friends progressing while I stood still, battling both bullying and harsh words, I persevered.

Today, I stand triumphant, grateful for the opportunity to complete my studies and secure a meaningful job. My wish for all is to stay the course, face challenges head-on, and never succumb to the difficulties that may arise on their education journey."

Mateen Elementary School for Boys, established in 2010, serves students aged 16 to 45 who encounter challenges such as continuous failure, dropping out, or financial constraints. Nawzad Othman, the school principal, shed light on the positive impact of the Back-to-Learning campaign. The initiative not only led to an increase in student registrations but also raised awareness among families about the importance of education.

Nawzad emphasized the school's commitment to supporting students facing diverse challenges. He shared success stories of individuals who graduated from the school since its establishment, highlighting the dedication and vision often exhibited by students supported by UNICEF.

In Lawand's personal journey and the broader context of Mateen Elementary School, this story highlights the transformative power of education, the crucial role of support structures, and the positive impact of initiatives like UNICEF's Back-to-Learning campaign in providing second chances for education.

By Shahad Butrus Bulbul, UNICEF

## Happy World School Meals Day!

**Baghdad, 10 March 2024** - Happy World School Meals Day! Kudos to WFP Iraq and Iraqi Ministry of Education for their collaborative efforts. The government took over operational responsibility and the National School Feeding Program will now reach 770,000 children across 25 districts.

WFP Iraq is proud to be part of this journey and remains committed to extending technical and capacity strengthening assistance with the government of Iraq. With school feeding in the national budget for 3 years, we're advancing education and well-being.

Thanks to WFP Iraq, Ministry of Education, and all partners for shaping Iraq's first national school feeding policy, ensuring every child's right to health, education and nutrition. A vital step towards ensuring every child's right to nutritious meals for a brighter future.



## EU, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Ministry of Education collaborate on Equitable Quality Education in Iraq: improved teaching and learning and enhanced educational management (ITALEEM) 2024 – 2027

**Baghdad, 22 March 2024** - In a meeting with the Ambassador of European Union in Iraq and the Representatives of UNESCO and UNICEF, Minister of Education Dr. Ibrahim Namis Al-Jubouri emphasized the importance of effective governance in achieving quality education in Iraq. The collaborative initiative, supported by the European Union with a 24 million euro investment, will support the Educational Management Information System (EMIS), Continuous Professional Development for Teachers, better school management in close collaboration with civil society organizations.



## UNICEF's lifelong impact: from detention to graduation

**Dohuk, 24 March 2024** - The Reformatory Directorate of Juveniles and Women in Dohuk stands as both a challenge and an opportunity, witnessing since its establishment in 1998 the struggles of those entangled in the web of crime. Affiliated with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, it accommodates juveniles in conflict with the law aged 11-18 and women, fostering rehabilitation through its departments— pre-trial, post-trial, and aftercare.

Within these walls, young lives intersect with the criminal justice system. A reality marked by stories of theft, violence, and other offenses. UNICEF's consistent presence since 2016 provides a glimmer of hope, creating pathways for rehabilitation and reintegration. The reformatory currently houses 12 convicts, with fluctuating numbers of people who have been arrested.

With financial support from the Government of the Netherlands, UNICEF has made significant efforts to improve the Juvenile Justice System, contributing to the enhancement of the capacity of Juvenile Police, Juvenile Courts, lawyers, and staff of Juvenile Reformatories, and supporting the reintegration process into society after release. This has resulted in many children in conflict with the law benefiting from non-custodial procedures, such as probation, subsequently reducing the number of children in detention.

With unwavering support from UNICEF and the dedicated efforts of the reformatory staff, the juvenile and



women reformatory in Dohuk achieved a significant milestone on 25 January 2024. It proudly received the prestigious Mandela Prize for 2023 from the Justice Network for Prisoners, recognizing exceptional service and meticulous adherence to legal procedures for children in conflict with the law. This accolade underscores the reformatory's commitment to full compliance with international standards and its ranking as first in Iraq, reflecting the positive impact of its initiatives.

Building Futures through Education, Vocational Skills, and Social Support Majed Hussein is a devoted social worker who has been with the center for more than 23 years. Having served as the director for a few years, Majed, who has worn multiple hats within the reformatory, acknowledges the practical impact of UNICEF's involvement: "UNICEF has been here from early 2016 supporting various programmes, including vocational training in carpentry, computer skills, sewing, arts, and appliance repair, equipping individuals with skills for a fresh start upon release."

The reformatory's commitment to holistic development includes initiatives like expanding and improving schools for juveniles and a library provided by UNICEF. "This reformatory center has a school for classes from the 7th to the 9th grade. For later stages, we provide essential support to ensure the completion of studies through external exams," Majed says.

"We've supported a student in completing school, providing necessary paperwork, and facilitating external exams. This year, the student not only passed the 12th grade with an impressive 72 per cent average, but also received assistance to apply to university for a bachelor's degree," he adds. Social workers, like Majed, extend efforts beyond academics, tirelessly preparing juveniles for reintegration.

Halat Abdulkarim, the current director, affirms UNICEF's influence. "UNICEF consistently provides vocational training and prioritizes psychosocial well-being through dedicated social workers," she says. "UNICEF provides legal representation and support to the



## UNICEF's lifelong impact: from detention to graduation *(continued)*

children in conflict with the law through dedicated lawyers and has been instrumental in establishing a nursery for the children who are accompanying their imprisoned

mothers," she elaborates. Challenges persist in the reintegration process, however. "Finding jobs for released juveniles remains a challenge," Halat explains. "We rely on

UNICEF's continued support to work with the Government to find solutions and address these gaps, ensuring a comprehensive rehabilitation strategy." By Shahad Butrus Bulbul, UNICEF

## Providing access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) - investing in early childhood education

**Basra, 07 April 2024** - A five-year-old boy, Ali, stepped into the world of education as he enrolled in a kindergarten at 17-Athar Primary School in Basra in December 2023.

"I always dreamt of the day when I would enroll in a school and have my school bag and uniform, just like my cousin," said Ali joyfully.

With funding from the Korean Committee for UNICEF, DAEWOO E&C, UNICEF inaugurated two early childhood education (ECE) classrooms at Mohammed Sadeq Al-Sader and 17-Athar primary schools. The programme included essential furniture, equipment, and school supplies but also laid the foundation for

transformative experiences by conducting training sessions for teachers.

"I learned to write the alphabets and numbers. Do you want me to show you?" added Ali confidently as he took a marker and moved towards the whiteboard.

"Ali is very quiet and clever, he eagerly absorbs each lesson," said Ms. Nahla, his teacher. "This programme gave these young children the opportunity to learn, discover new things, and play in a safe and nurturing environment."

A child's early years lay the groundwork for their future growth, setting a solid base for lifelong learning and the development of thinking and social skills.

"When I come back from school, I teach

my younger sisters what I learned every day. I dream of becoming a teacher when I grow up, so I can teach so many children how to read and write," said Ali with enthusiasm.

Investing in early childhood education As we venture to Salman Al-Mohamadi Primary School, we meet Saja, a brilliant five-year-old girl who despite her shyness shows enthusiasm for school, waking up early every day.

"I enrolled Saja in the ECE class because I want her to be well prepared for school and facilitate her interaction with other children," said Hanan, Saja's mother.

Evidence suggests a potential return rate of seven to 16 per cent annually from high-quality preschool programmes targeting the most vulnerable groups, including children living with disabilities.

"I love our new class and the teachers are very kind. They teach us so many things," said Saja. "Art is my favourite subject and I love to sing and draw. Our teacher, Ms. Amani, showed us today how to draw trees and flowers."

Through the generous funding from the Korean Committee for UNICEF, DAEWOO E&C, UNICEF will establish three additional ECE classrooms. Up to 700 children like Ali and Saja will benefit from these classrooms and will be able to set a solid foundation for their future.

By Arwa Akram, UNICEF



## A brighter future for students by enhancing their skills and increasing their chances of finding meaningful employment

**Baghdad, 25 April 2024** - UNESCO, alongside the EU and the Ministry of Education, is supporting transformation of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Iraq and the KRI. With the TVET 2 project, UNESCO has designed and implemented competency based TVET curricula that focus on practical skills to match the ever-evolving needs of the Iraqi job market.

Recently, a vital three-day workshop took place in Baghdad from April 20-23, bringing together passionate educators and ministry officials. During this time, we collaborated on ways to strengthen competency-based teaching methods.

We're not just thinking about the present; we're planning for the future by discussing how to expand these curricula over the next three years. Additionally, we're working on support systems for Trainers to enable them to apply these new teaching methods in day-to-day learning and practical activities.

At UNESCO, our goal isn't just to see short-term improvements; we want to ensure a brighter future for our students by enhancing their skills and increasing their chances of finding meaningful employment. This three-day workshop has further strengthened the foundations for TVET and

identified concrete implementable actions to sustain the momentum for creating a workforce that's not only skilled but also empowered to enhance their personal and professional life.



## A Canadian Embassy delegation witnesses the transformative impact in empowering Basra's youth with support of the Canadian Government

**Basra, 06 March 2024** - Yesterday, a Canadian Embassy delegation, headed by the Head of Cooperation Ms. Amal El-Atifi visited Al Khaleej Al Arabi youth center in Basra and witnessed the transformative impact in empowering Basra's youth with support of the Canadian Government.

From fostering green skills and civic education, young women and men in Basra are leading the change for a brighter future, and UNICEF, in collaboration with partners and the Directorate of Youth and Sport of Basra, remains committed to supporting the sustainability of these initiatives.



## Mariah's resilience: empowering adolescents for brighter tomorrows women to the table to prevent violent extremism

**Ninewa, 09 March 2024** - Mariah is a spirited 13-year-old girl, originally from Mosul city, whose life has been a testament to courage in the face of adversity. Despite the challenges posed by the conflict with ISIS between 2014 and 2017, Mariah and her family chose to stay in Mosul, demonstrating resilience in challenging times.

Mariah's family, comprising her mother, four sisters, and two brothers, has endured the ravages of war without succumbing to despair. When Mariah was just 7 years old, her father passed away, leaving the weight of providing for the family on her mother's shoulders. To make ends meet, her mother sells handmade loofahs, while her brothers sell groceries. Mariah had to take on the role of caregiver for her 10-year-old sister with special needs, displaying a level of compassion far beyond her years. However, the burden of responsibility threatened to overshadow her dreams, leading her to consider abandoning her education.

Promoting Equity and Opportunity for All

### in Conflict-Affected Zones

With funding from the Government of Japan, UNICEF supports the Al-Karama Reintegration Center, a vital resource for adolescents like Mariah. This center serves as a sanctuary, offering comprehensive assistance tailored to families affected by conflict.

At the Al-Karama Reintegration Center, Mariah found solace and renewed determination through various programmes, including psychosocial support and educational initiatives. Additionally, she received personalized assistance from her case worker, Dalal, who provided emotional support and guidance throughout her journey. "Dalal has been a source of hope and encouragement for me. She is always there to listen and offer support," Mariah says.

"I can't stand the bullying directed at my family, especially towards my sister with special needs, and the taunts about my father's loss in the conflict. It is heartbreaking to see my mother's sorrow.

However, the psychosocial support I have received has given me the strength to face adversity," Mariah adds.

In Iraq, around 37 per cent of young people are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), based on 2020-2021 Labor Force Participation data. Gender disparities are significant, with NEET rates much higher among females (52.3 percent) than males (22.1 percent). In particular, Ninewa governorate shows the highest gender disparities, with NEET rates at 35.5 percent for males and a striking 75.3 percent for females.

The accelerated learning program enabled Mariah to make up for lost academic years, instilling newfound confidence. "Thanks to The Karama Center, I've been able to continue my education. I love going to school now; I am in the second grade. I have made six friends, and Zuhur, one of them, is my closest companion," she shares. With the support of her peers and mentors, her aspirations began to take shape. Mariah dreams of becoming a dentist.

Mariah's story exemplifies UNICEF's commitment to empowering adolescents, and illuminating pathways to brighter futures. It serves as a reminder of the promise of a world where every young person is nurtured, empowered, and equipped to fulfill their potential.

Mariah's journey also illustrates the transformative impact of community support, underscoring the boundless possibilities when communities come together to uplift their youth. Through initiatives like these, Mariah's narrative, alongside countless others, becomes a testament to the resilience and potential of adolescents worldwide.

By Shahad Butrus Bulbul, UNICEF





## A path to success, Huda transforms her life



**Basra, 11 March 2024** - Huda, a 21-year-old woman, found herself at a crossroad at the age of 18 when she faced the responsibilities of marriage. Despite her deep love for education and her dreams of pursuing art, Huda had to make a difficult decision. "I had to drop out of school when I got married. It was not easy as I had to put my academic aspirations on hold, especially after welcoming my first child," said Huda.

Recognizing her dedication, Mujtaba, Huda's husband, was very excited when he stumbled upon an educational opportunity published on social media. It was a workshop that equips young people like Huda with employability and life skills. With Mujtaba's unwavering support, he eagerly encouraged Huda to enroll.

With the generous contribution from Canada, UNICEF has implemented a programme aimed at improving the economic status of young people in Baghdad, Anbar, and Basra. To ensure a smooth transition of young people into the labour market and to promote their social inclusion as agents of positive change in their communities, the programme equipped 1,300 young people with life skills and digital skills and provided employability and entrepreneurship training and capacity building, including mentorship, on the job training and support to small businesses. Women comprised the vast majority of the programme, with 60 per cent of the beneficiaries being young females.

"Young people's unemployment across

the region is very concerning, and it is even more challenging for young women," said Marleen Renders, UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Adviser for Adolescent Development. "That is why economic empowerment for women is of utmost importance, enabling them to achieve better situations and support their families."

After completing the workshop, Huda secured a job at a beauty salon. "This experience not only enriched my technical expertise but also improved my interpersonal skills, empowering me to effectively engage with my clients at the beauty salon."

Advancing Young People's Learning, Social Inclusion, and Transition to

### Work

Huda's aspirations did not end, she wanted to capitalize on her newly acquired entrepreneurship skills. "My goal now is to establish my own beauty salon. Thanks to the entrepreneurship insights and skills that I gained from the workshop, I believe I can do it," added Huda with a smile.

Now, Huda stands in the face of another significant chapter in her life. She is looking forward to returning to school. "I also aspire to earn a degree in arts while continuing to work. I believe I can manage both as I became very confident in my business."

Huda's journey, coupled by her husband's unwavering support, serves as an inspiring testament to her resilience, self-discovery, and the pursuit of one's passion despite the challenges faced.

Huda is not just shaping her destiny; she is also building a solid foundation for her son's future. She emphasized: "One of the most important things to me is being a role model for my son Eilia. I want him to know that I am a strong woman whose mission in life is to secure the best education for him."

By Arwa Akram, UNICEF



## Remedial classes are designed to help young students develop essential foundational skills in various subjects



**Baghdad, 07 March 2024** - Syrian children at Barika Refugee Camp are dreaming big after completing a one-month remedial class in Science, Math, and Kurdish.

Meet Thanoon, a determined 12-year-old currently lives in Ashti camp for internally displaced persons in Sulaymaniyah Governorate, Iraq. Originally from Salaheddin Governorate, he is in Grade 6 at Ashti School.

"I want to become a judge in the future," Thanoon shares with a determined look on his face, "with a vision to make just decisions and improve people's lives."

Thanoon is committed to his goals. "I

joined the remedial classes in my school to enhance my school performance and achieve excellent grades," he explains. These remedial classes at Ashti School, conducted over a one-month period during the summertime, are thoughtfully designed to support young students in building foundational skills across various subjects.

Meet Fatima, a 10-year-old girl from

Salaheddin Governorate. Fatima currently resides in the Ashti camp for internally displaced persons in #Sulaymaniyah Governorate. Despite facing numerous challenges, she thrives in Grade 3 at Ashti School.

"I dream of becoming a lawyer in the future to make my family proud and to support oppressed people. That's why I eagerly attend school every day – to transform this dream into reality," said Fatima.

With funding from U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and UNICEF support, Fatima and Thanoon are some of the students who joined the remedial classes at Ashti School during the summertime. These classes are designed to help young students develop essential foundational skills in various subjects.



## UNESCO's training enhances employment for youth in Nineveh

**Nineveh, 07 April 2024** - Under the "Reviving the Spirit of Mosul" initiative,

this training program comes to enhance employment for youth in Nineveh (EYE-

N).

From 20 January 2024 till 25 March 2024, 50 young people (20 women) graduated from the vocational training center in Mosul in installing and maintaining solar panels system, paving the way for a sunny future!

Project funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and implemented by UNESCO with the Vocational Training Center in Mosul. UNESCO will train approximately 500 young men and women in the coming months in various sections, including carpentry, electronics repair and more!



## Collaborative partnerships for child rights!

**Baghdad, 28 March 2024** - UNICEF and faith leader endowments came together in a participatory action planning consultation to plan and prioritize behaviour change interventions focusing on child rights, social justice and social cohesion and peacebuilding. With the active participation of 50 faith leaders, key messages and behavioural strategies were finalized to support the Core Commitments to Children and ensure essential services are available and accessible.





## Warmest wishes for the holy month of Ramadan!

**Baghdad, 11 March 2024** - "Ramadan is a month of worship, generosity and forgiveness, an occasion for Muslims worldwide to gather with family and friends in a spiritual and joyous atmosphere. Let us not forget those who are suffering from conflicts and those who are struggling to feed themselves or their children across the globe. Let us wish for peace and prosperity for everybody, everywhere. The UN family in Iraq extends its warmest wishes to all Iraqis on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan" – Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI.



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Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI

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*Ramadan Kareem*

## Nowruz greetings

**Baghdad, 20 March 2024** – "Nowruz salutes the renewal of nature and life. Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010, International Nowruz Day also serves as a reminder to work for peace, look after our planet and ensure a healthy environment for future generations. While many prepare to celebrate, others throughout the world are suffering greatly. Let us hope that, this year, Nowruz marks new beginnings, leading to peace and prosperity for all. The UN family in Iraq extends its warmest wishes to the Kurdish people and to all Iraqis." - Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI.



*Nowruz Piroz*

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*Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert*  
Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI

## World Water Day commemorated in Iraq

**Baghdad, 22 March 2024** - On this World Water Day, a recent UNICEF U-Report poll covering almost 4,500 young people revealed that:

- 82% of young people are aware of the impact of climate change on Iraq's water resources.
- 57% of young people believe that Iraq is facing a water crisis.
- 60% of participants called for increased community awareness to mitigate water scarcity in Iraq.

On this World Water Day, let's unite our efforts to preserve our precious water resources for a sustainable future #ForEveryChild and young person.



## United Nations in Iraq observe Earth Hour

**Baghdad, 23 March 2024** - Tonight the United Nations in Iraq joined Earth Hour, a global show of solidarity with

our planet. Together, let's turn off the lights and turn the world towards a brighter

future for us all.



## Easter greetings

**Baghdad, 31 March 2024** - UNESCO wishes a happy Easter to the Christians of Iraq. It is marked by a new major achievement in the reconstruction of the Al-Tahera church in Mosul: the reinstallation of the cross on the dome.



## This Earth Day, United Nations Volunteers were glad to unite with governmental, international and UN partners for a cleanup campaign at Dlopa Resort

**Erbil, 23 April 2024** - This Earth Day, United Nations Volunteers were glad to unite with governmental, international and UN partners for a cleanup campaign

at Dlopa Resort, a popular picnic destination in Erbil. When it comes to combating plastic pollution in Iraq and the Kurdistan

Region, and to tackle the challenges of the Climate Emergency, let's all volunteer and take action!

