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UN envoy outlines Iraq's growth and ongoing struggles

New York, 16 May 2024 - Iraq is a nation brimming with potential but still haunted by legacies of past turmoil, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for the country, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, said in a briefing to the Security Council on Thursday.

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert, also the head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), cited notable advancements in infrastructure, economic reforms, and regional influence, signalling an Iraq on the rise.

"[Today] Iraq looks different to the country to which UNAMI was first deployed some 20 years ago. Indeed, it looks different to the country I arrived in, in 2018. We are, so to speak, witnessing an Iraq on the rise," she said.

However, she acknowledged challenges such as corruption, factionalism, impunity and armed actors remain significant hurdles.

"While the Government is tackling these scourges, they still represent major hurdles to be overcome," she added.

"The same goes for feelings of marginalization and exclusion, which are spreading in and among certain communities. If left unaddressed, they risk fanning the flames of intra- and inter-community tension."

Protect human rights

The senior UN official expressed worries over a recent increase in unannounced executions under anti-terrorism laws.

Additionally, the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Iraqis are yet to be fully safeguarded, she continued, noting that women's empowerment remains a critical issue, with many women still waiting for a seat at the decision-making table.

"What this shows is that women's



empowerment must move beyond symbolism," she said.

"And the need for an active, empowered and protected civic space is as present as ever," she added.

Sombre anniversary

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert also highlighted that this summer will mark a sombre anniversary – a decade since Da'esh (also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant or ISIL) committed the genocide against the Yazidi people.

"At this stage, I can only express hope that the upcoming anniversary will not be wasted but rather used by all authorities, actors and stakeholders to unite and step up to the plate with the sole aim of serving the people of Sinjar," she said.

Continued polarization

Turning to the political situation, Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert noted that holding local elections in December 2023 was a positive step, with most government councils now operational. However, two provinces remain at an impasse, with political negotiations dragging on.

In the autonomous Kurdistan region, political polarization has intensified, and regional elections postponed, she added, warning that "the stakes are high – including and increasingly – within the context of the legitimacy of [the region's] institutions."

The replacement of Iraq's parliamentary speaker has also stalled, reflecting internal divisions.

"I can only emphasize, for multiple reasons, the importance of having the speaker in the chair," she said, expressing hope for resolution with the upcoming parliamentary vote.

Regional dynamics

On a regional scale, Iraq has shown strong resolve in preventing escalation into wider conflicts, contributing to a more stable security environment. Yet, the risk of miscalculation remains high due to the presence of armed actors operating outside state control, the UN envoy said.

The return of Iraqi nationals from camps in northeastern Syria is progressing, but time is of the essence, she noted, cautioning that keeping people indefinitely in restrictive conditions creates greater security risks.

Thursday also marked Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert's final briefing to the Security Council in her role as the Special Representative for Iraq before she steps down at the end of May. The former Minister of Defense of Netherlands was appointed on 31 August 2018, succeeding Ján Kubiš of Slovakia.

By UN News.

UN Security Council unanimously authorises final 19-month mandate extension of UNAMI

New York, 31 May 2024 - The United Nations Security Council, at its 9642nd meeting on 31st May 2024, decided to extend the mandate of the United

Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for a final 19-month period until 31 December 2025, unanimously adopting Resolution 2732 (2024).

You can see the full text of the resolution on page 5.

In this edition ...

A farewell message from Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert

As my tenure as Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq draws to a close, I wish to express my gratitude and deep appreciation to all Iraqis, in particular those I have met and worked with.

Over the past five years, I was repeatedly touched by the generosity and hospitality of a people who never departed from their tradition of welcoming an outsider or assisting those in need, even if at the expense of their own comfort or time. I learned much from listening to Iraqi women and men explaining their history with pride. Though many faced down serious challenges, an optimism for the days ahead often shone through. They welcomed me and other UN colleagues into their towns and homes, inviting us to join for a meal or an event and never passing up an opportunity to showcase Iraq's rich culture and immense beauty. Throughout the country, including the Kurdistan Region, countless people of all ages spontaneously shared, time and again, their hopes and aspirations. And I will forget none of them.

I also truly valued the professional meetings and discussions we had with a wide spectrum of partners. From civil society representatives, academics, tribal chiefs and religious leaders to local, provincial and national authorities, judges, security officials and politicians. Needless to say, their insights and perspectives taught us a great deal and guided our work. Some of these meetings involved individuals putting everyday differences aside to find solutions at critical junctures for Iraq. All such engagement left an indelible impression on me. And, of course, I cannot overstate our gratitude to the many branches of Iraq's government, which, through relentless efforts, facilitated our work and protected UN personnel and operations.

None of this is to say that the UN has been immune to criticism - some of which was justified, some simply based on wrong perceptions about who we are, and what we can and cannot do. But talking to those who understood the values of the Organization, and what it stands for, was most rewarding. As I have said many times, the UN does not have a magic wand. At the end of the day, the balance between conflict and peace, or poverty and prosperity, hinges on the political will of states. But if we can make a difference in the lives of people, it is worth stepping up and continuing to try. Ultimately, the UN has one main priority at its core: advancing peace and prosperity for all - no matter affiliation, faith, background or ethnicity.

Again, I wish to extend my deep appreciation and thanks for the kind cooperation and support shown to UNAMI, the broader UN family in Iraq and to me personally.

Long Live Iraq



Secretary-General appoints Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert of the Netherlands as Special Coordinator for Lebanon

New York, 20 May 2024 - United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced today the appointment of Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert of the Netherlands as his new Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL).

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert succeeds Joanna Wronecka of Poland, to whom the Secretary-General is grateful for her commitment and leadership of UNSCOL.

Currently serving as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (since 2018), Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert brings to this position over 25 years of experience in diplomacy, international security and Middle East affairs. Prior to that, she was Minister of Defence of the Netherlands (2012-2017) – the first woman to hold this position. She previously served as a member of the House of Representatives of the Netherlands (2010-2012) and as a member of the European Parliament (2004-2010). Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert has also worked for the European Commission in Belgium and Latvia, as well as for the City of Amsterdam and in the private sector.

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert is proficient in English, French and German and is a native Dutch speaker.

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

Briefing by SRSB Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert at the 9628th meeting of the United Nations Security Council

New York, 16 May 2024 - At its 9628th meeting held on 16 May 2024, the United Nations Security Council deliberated on the situation concerning Iraq.

Here is the text of the briefing (as delivered) by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert:

“Mr. President,
Distinguished members of the Security Council,

In February, I delivered what I thought would be my final public briefing on Iraq. That said, I am, of course, glad to have the privilege of addressing you once more before departing from my current position later this month.

Mr. President, over the past years, I have highlighted - time and again - Iraq’s many challenges. Now, I often added that, at the same time, Iraq is a country of great opportunity. Of course, any opportunity is only as real as the effort to seize it.

As stated in my previous briefings, several important steps and promising initiatives have emerged. And this has been most visible in the past 18 months, particularly in the areas of service provision and construction.

The country is also grasping opportunities elsewhere, for example through its pivotal position in the region and beyond; the enhancement of its investment climate; the rollout of financial and economic reforms; plans for water management and environmental mitigation and adaptation; and for instance a reduction in dependence on imported fuels.

For the sake of time, I will not go into detail, but Council members and others may wish to refer to recent briefings and reports where further information is provided.

In sum, the picture we wish to portray is an Iraq which looks different to the country to which UNAMI was first deployed some 20 years ago. Indeed, it looks different to the country I arrived in, in 2018. Today we are, so to speak, witnessing an Iraq on the rise.

True, past decades of turmoil still impact the present. And yes, the challenges are manifold, with state institutions still fragile. But we do believe it is high time to judge the country on progress made, and to turn the page on the darker images of Iraq’s



past.

This is not to say that everything is perfect, of course not. And hubris does not help anyone. Rather, it denies the legitimate and rightful demands for change that are still to be met.

Corruption, factionalism, impunity, undue interference and armed actors operating outside state control – while the Government is tackling these scourges, they still represent major hurdles to be overcome.

The same goes for feelings of marginalization and exclusion, which are spreading in and among certain components. If left unaddressed, they risk fanning the flames of intra- and inter-community tension.

Power grabs or punitive policies may benefit one segment of society or community in the short-term. But, in the end, everyone loses. This is particularly true in a country with conflict in living memory.

Within this context, the recent increase in mass unannounced executions (of individuals convicted under anti-terrorism laws) is a cause for great concern.

There is also much work to do before the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Iraqis are safeguarded. And, let me be clear, such work does not mean promoting any specific private behaviour or disrespecting any culture or religion. Quite the opposite.

Furthermore, any legislative work is expected to take into account the country’s obligations and commitments, including those resulting from international treaties and conventions to which Iraq has signed up. It goes without saying that freedom of expression and non-discrimination are among the rights enshrined in such treaties.

What is more, in Iraq, too many women

are still waiting for a seat at the table. Others, who have secured a seat, are too often being squeezed out of decision-making processes. What this shows is that women’s empowerment must move beyond symbolism.

And yes, the need for an active, empowered and protected civic space, is as pressing as ever.

But again, the Iraq of 2024 is evolving – and fast.

And while it is true that the road ahead will be laden with obstacles, we are hopeful that further progress will be unlocked for all Iraqis - whatever their affiliation, faith, background or ethnicity.

For that to happen, however, it remains of course essential that all of Iraq’s leaders work to put the country on the clearest path to success.

Mr. President, in my previous briefing, I touched upon the successful holding of Iraq’s local elections in December 2023. Today I can say that almost all governorate councils are now up and running.

Two provinces, however - Diyala and Kirkuk - remain at an impasse. Of course, it is not unusual for political negotiations to drag on. It happens across the world.

Having said this, five months have now passed - with no immediate resolution in sight. And the fact that the roadblocks to political compromise mirror those seen on other files is somewhat concerning.

On a separate, but not altogether different, note: six months of negotiations on the replacement of Iraq’s Parliamentary Speaker have, so far, failed to produce results.

While various factors have played into this impasse, internal divisions in the “Sunni house” have not helped matters. At this stage, I can only emphasize, for multiple reasons, the importance of

Briefing by SRSJ Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert at the 9628th meeting of the United Nations Security Council *(continued)*

having the speaker in the chair.

With the next parliamentary vote expected to be held this coming Saturday, there is hope that the new speaker will be confirmed soon.

A related issue to flag here is the reality that Iraq's Federal Supreme Court appears to be increasingly filling the void created by divisive politics.

Of course, legal redress is a useful and peaceful tool for the resolution of disputes.

But the sheer scale of constitutional cases arising from standard political processes, which should instead see politicians working out their differences to find solutions, it does point to a worrying trend.

Turning to the Kurdistan Region.

Since my last briefing, the Region's political landscape has become even more polarized. As you know, after multiple postponements, the long-awaited Regional elections were scheduled for 10 June.

However, on 18 March, one of the ruling parties announced its decision not to participate in these elections. I won't go into the weeds of what happened next, but worth mentioning today is that, inclusive, transparent, and credible Regional elections, capable of producing political finality and certainty, are desperately needed.

The stakes are high - including, and increasingly, within the context of the legitimacy of KR institutions. In fact, if the current impasse was to drag on, the very future of the Region would hang in the balance.

Having said this, after intensive engagement in past weeks, which has been guided by the need for a swift and decisive way out of the deadlock, we are now hopeful that a final, and thus binding, election date will be announced soon.

It is hoped (or better: it is expected) that the vote will take place with as minimal a delay as possible, in any case not later than four months from now,

and with a minority quota.

On Sinjar, Mr. President, it has been nine years since the area was liberated from Da'esh.

However, anyone traveling to Sinjar today would be forgiven for thinking that time has stood still. The city continues to lie in ruins.

And the blueprint offered (by the 2020 Sinjar Agreement) for a unified administration, as well as stable security structures, it gathers more dust as each year passes.

This summer will mark a sombre anniversary: 10 years since Da'esh committed a genocide against the Yazidi people.

At this stage, I can only express hope that the upcoming 10th anniversary will not be wasted but rather used - by all authorities, actors and stakeholders - to unite and step up to the plate with the sole aim of serving the people of Sinjar.

There are solutions; if only there was genuine willingness to make them a reality.

Equally important is ensuring that the pursuit of accountability continues. Certainly now, with UNITAD on its way out.

And speaking more broadly, those affected and displaced by conflict deserve to rebuild their lives. This must include returns to areas which have, so far, been inaccessible because of the influence exerted by armed actors.

To state the obvious: this does not only apply to Sinjar but also to other areas, such as Jurf al-Sakhr - to name just one.

Mr. President, taking a step back to look at the regional security environment: as you know too well, a state of volatility persists.

The good news here is that Iraq's Government has shown strong resolve in preventing the country from being dragged into wider conflict. As the Prime Minister said: this has meant exerting both external and internal

pressure to avoid an escalation.

Through these efforts, I am glad to say that, currently, a more stable security environment prevails in Iraq. Nonetheless, given the country's complex landscape of armed actors operating outside state control, as well as intense regional pressures, the situation remains flammable. In other words: the risk of miscalculation is, still, sky-high.

On the return of Iraqi nationals from northeastern Syria, I am pleased to report that Iraq is continuing its commendable efforts. In saying that, time remains of the essence. And I therefore wish to express hope that returns will soon be scaled up.

Within this context, let me - once again - emphasize that yesterday's fight against Da'esh may still compound the problems of tomorrow. Problems which will not stop at Iraq's doorstep.

Hence, any other government with nationals in Al-Hol and/or other facilities in northeastern Syria carries a duty to act.

I am repeating myself, but keeping people indefinitely in these restrictive and poor conditions ultimately creates greater protection and security risks than taking them back in a controlled manner.

Mr. President, a final point on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives.

As I said last time, swifter progress is needed. And this must involve the overcoming of bureaucratic hurdles and immediate follow-up on outstanding issues.

In other words, an uptick in activities to identify and further excavate burial sites is urgently needed. Also necessary is the reactivation of the joint committee on missing Kuwaiti property. It is quite simple: the pace of the search and return of property, including the national archives, is currently too slow.

Mr. President, in closing, let me say that, throughout my tenure as Special Representative, it looked, at times, like Iraq's society and political framework were poised to come apart at the seams. Now, the conditions which allowed this fraying cannot be expected to just disappear overnight.

Dealing with both the legacy of the past and the many challenges of the present will take time. Also, whether we like it or not, nothing is irreversible.

Yet, while the country has teetered on



Briefing by SRSJ Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert at the 9628th meeting of the United Nations Security Council *(continued)*

the edge, several times, it has found a way to step back from the brink, to continue its journey forward.

As I made clear earlier on, there are persistent and serious challenges, but Iraq's horizon is replete with

opportunities. And yes, the country is also teeming with people who are ready and willing to seize them.

Without doubt, Mr. President, the imprint the country and its people have made on me, will be a lasting

one.

So, once again: – عاش العراق Long Live Iraq

Thank you, Mr. President.”

UN Security Council unanimously authorises final 19-month mandate extension of UNAMI *(continued from page 1)*

Resolution 2732 (2024)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 9642nd meeting, on 31 May 2024
The Security Council,

Recalling all its previous relevant resolutions on Iraq, in particular 1500 (2003), 1546 (2004), 1557 (2004), 1619 (2005), 1700 (2006), 1770 (2007), 1830 (2008), 1883 (2009), 1936 (2010), 2001 (2011), 2061 (2012), 2110 (2013), 2169 (2014), 2233 (2015), 2299 (2016), 2379 (2017), 2421 (2018), 2470 (2019), 2522 (2020), 2576 (2021), 2631 (2022), 2682 (2023), and reiterating resolutions 2107 (2013) and 2621 (2022) on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, and the values set forth in 2367 (2017),

Reaffirming the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Iraq, and emphasizing the importance of the stability, prosperity, and security of Iraq for the people of Iraq, the region, and the international community, particularly in light of Iraq's territorial victory over ISIL (Da'esh), and encouraging Iraq and neighboring countries, in close consultation, to provide outreach, as well as good offices, to support regional dialogue and cooperation, where appropriate,

Supporting Iraq as it continues its stabilization efforts, including the ongoing fight against terrorism, including against ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida and their affiliates, consistent with its obligations under international law including international human rights law and international humanitarian law and continues the task of recovery, reconstruction, and stabilization, including the requirement to meet the needs of all Iraqis, including women, youth, children, displaced persons, and persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities,

Supporting the Government of Iraq as it continues to deliver on reforms, aimed at meeting the Iraqi people's legitimate aspirations, to address

corruption, respect and protect the human rights of all individuals in Iraq, promote accountability for human rights violations and abuses, deliver essential services, diversify the economy, create jobs, improve governance, combat climate change and environmental and water-related challenges, and strengthen viable and responsive state institutions, including the security sector,

Recognizing the Government of Iraq's efforts to that effect, including working toward full implementation of the Yezidi Survivors Law and disbursing payments and other benefits as required under the law to survivors and victims, and noting the measures taken by State institutions to redouble efforts to pursue accountability for those responsible for human rights violations and abuses including the killing, serious injury, abduction or disappearance of demonstrators and journalists, including women, and to safeguard and respect the rule of law and the right to freedom of expression, further noting the Government of Iraq's efforts towards the implementation of its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and the 2016 UN-Iraq Joint Communiqué on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, and to hold perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict accountable and provide mental health and psychosocial support to all victims,

Welcoming the Government of Iraq's efforts to assist internally displaced persons and displaced Iraqis in Syria to return and reintegrate to their areas of origin or resettle elsewhere in Iraq, renewing the call for international support for those efforts, and stressing the importance of achieving dignified, safe and durable solutions undertaken on a voluntary and informed basis,

Welcoming the Government of Iraq's efforts to address the adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters, Calling on the international community to support durable solutions and development efforts while the

Government of Iraq assumes responsibility for the provision of humanitarian services,

Noting the recommendations contained in the Independent Strategic Review dated 28 March 2024 to streamline the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI),

1. *Takes note* of the Government of Iraq's letter dated 8 May 2024 and decides to extend UNAMI's mandate for a final 19-month period until 31 December 2025 after which UNAMI will cease all work and operations except with respect to any remaining liquidation of the Mission pursuant to paragraph two;

2. *Requests* that the Secretary-General prepare, in consultation with the Government of Iraq, a transition and liquidation plan to be completed by 31 December 2024, for UNAMI to start the transfer of its tasks, as well as the orderly and safe drawdown and withdrawal of its personnel and assets, including identification of an end date for liquidation activities in Iraq;

3. *Decides* to authorize for a period to be determined based on administrative procedures subject to the UN Financial Rules and Regulations, the retention of guard units from within UNAMI's existing footprint to protect the Mission's personnel, facilities and assets, including during the liquidation period;

4. *Calls* on the Government of Iraq to cooperate fully with the UN during UNAMI's transition, drawdown and liquidation;

5. *Commends* the Government of Iraq's efforts to settle internal issues in Iraq and to make progress towards achieving the milestones set out in the Government of Iraq's programme and priorities, including the holding of Iraqi Council of Representatives and Iraqi Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections in due course; preservation and strengthening of functioning institutions to sustain a structured and regular dialogue; and the strengthening of national human rights bodies that

UN Security Council unanimously authorises final 19-month mandate extension of UNAMI *(continued)*

are effective and independent;

6. Notes the request of the Government of Iraq to draw down UNAMI's activities in its letter dated 8 May 2024, and requests the Secretary-General to streamline the tasks of UNAMI as follows:

(a) Provide advice, support, and technical assistance to the Government of Iraq, the Independent High Electoral Commission and other Iraqi institutions with efforts to strengthen electoral preparation and processes to ensure free and fair elections, with the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women, including federal Iraq's parliamentary elections and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region's parliamentary elections, through transparent and inclusive processes, including through regular technical reviews and detailed reporting on electoral preparations and processes, as part of the Secretary-General's regular reporting cycle;

(b) Facilitate, within the transition period, progress towards the final resolution of outstanding issues between Iraq and Kuwait, including the return of Kuwaiti property and the National Archives, and the repatriation or return of all Kuwaiti and third country nationals or their remains, consistent with resolution 2107 (2013), and requests the Secretary-General to make recommendations by 31 May 2025 and present them to the Council for an appropriate follow-on mechanism to support continued progress should these issues not be resolved upon termination of UNAMI's mandate;

(c) Promote, support, and facilitate the following development and humanitarian tasks, in coordination with the Government of Iraq, and in accordance with the Secretary-General's transition plan for UNAMI to be completed by 31 December 2024:

(i) the safe, informed, voluntary and dignified return or local integration, as appropriate, of internally displaced persons, and displaced Iraqis in Syria, including through the efforts of the UN

Country Team, while welcoming the national measures taken in this regard, and timely access to legal assistance and civil documentation for internally displaced persons and displaced Iraqis in Syria, including persons at risk of statelessness, particularly children without birth registration or other documentation of legal identity; programmes dedicated to the reintegration of displaced persons and survivors of terrorist attacks and atrocities, and support for reconstruction of areas liberated from ISIL/Daesh;

(ii) the coordination and implementation of programmes to improve Iraq's capacity to provide effective essential civil and social services, including health care, inclusive of psychosocial support services, and education, for its people and continue to support Iraq's regional and international donor coordination towards strengthening national ownership according to national needs;

(iii) Iraqi, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and other efforts, including through coordination with national institutions and regional organizations and, as appropriate, civil society, donors, and other international agencies, on economic reform, capacity-building and setting conditions for sustainable development, building resilience, and recovery and reconstruction including in areas affected by terrorism;

(iv) the contributions of UN agencies, funds, and programmes to the objectives outlined in this resolution under the unified leadership of the Secretary-General through the Special Representative for Iraq, supported by their designated Deputy;

(d) Promote accountability and the protection of human rights, and judicial and legal reform, with full respect for the sovereignty of Iraq and national ownership, in order to strengthen the rule of law, improve governance in Iraq, and support the Government of Iraq's economic development goals and

projects;

(e) Note, while commending the Government of Iraq on signing and implementing the National Action Plan and efforts to fulfill its commitments in coordination with relevant UN agencies, the importance of treating children affected by armed conflict primarily as victims, and encourage the Government of Iraq and UN Country Team, including UNICEF, to strengthen child protection, including the reintegration of children in accordance with Iraq's national laws and Iraq's obligations under international law, and to continue institutionalizing the measures taken in the implementation of the action plan;

7. Recognizes that the security of UN personnel is essential for the UN to carry out its work for the benefit of the people of Iraq and calls upon the Government of Iraq to continue to provide security and logistical support, to the UN's presence in Iraq;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Council every six months, three times in total, with the first report occurring before 30 November 2024, on the progress made in paragraph six towards the transition of all UNAMI's responsibilities and its residual tasks;

9. Decides to remain seized of the matter.



Electoral

UNAMI welcomes the announcement of the KR elections date

Baghdad, 26 June 2024 - UNAMI welcomes the announcement by Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani of 20 October 2024 as a new and final election date for the elections

of the Kurdistan Region Parliament. UNAMI reiterates its readiness to work with the Independent High Electoral Commission and all other relevant institutions, as mandated by Security

Council resolution 2732 (2024), to ensure inclusive, free and fair elections, with the full participation of women and all other components of Kurdistan Region society.

UNDP on X

Baghdad, 12 May 2024 - Congratulations to the Government of Iraq's Office of National Security Advisory (ONSA) on the tremendous progress made in addressing preventing violent extremism (PVE) at the Governorate level. Thanks to our collaborative efforts – progress was made through: town hall meetings, development of plans of action, engagement with tribal and religious leaders, and engagement with CSOs.

Moving forward, emphasis will be on religious dialogues, tribal engagement, and addressing the challenge of drug use. Together, we're #PreventingViolentExtremism in Iraq.

Healing conversations



Baghdad, 14 May 2024 - In the aftermath of the ISIL in Iraq, approximately 1 million Iraqis remain displaced outside of the country. For many of them, the journey back home remains complex, particularly those who have perceived ISIL affiliations.

Despite these complex challenges, the Government of Iraq has made every effort to ensure that displaced Iraqis can return home. It welcomes several returnees through its Jeddah One Rehabilitation Centre – where they are prepared for the journey back home.

However, the road to reintegrating with communities back home is charged with tension. Communities, reeling with past traumas remain hesitant to welcome them back home. Recognising this divide, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), is collaborating with the Government of Iraq to promote community acceptance in the areas of return.

Through a series of town hall meetings, UNDP and the Government are facilitating crucial conversations in return areas of Anbar, Kirkuk and Diyala Governorates. These town hall meetings have become a unifying platform, bringing different viewpoints together, and discussing the communities' most pressing needs all while promoting social cohesion and stability.

[A platform to discuss solutions to social](#)

[service provision challenges: Sheikh Hamid in Fallujah](#)

During the first town hall in Fallujah, Anbar Governorate, Sheikh Hamid Hadi Al-Arsan, a key member of the Anbar Governorate Central Peace Committee, reflected on the initial reluctance of the community to embrace the returnees.

“There was a lot of rejection by the Anbar community of those returning especially those who are perceived to have been part of ISIL, because of their role in the death of many Anbar families,” Sheikh Hamid said, adding that, “Once we realised this, the Central Peace Committee and the tribal Sheikhs started the Anbar covenant document - a roadmap that has helped many return with the agreement of the community particularly the consent of victims' families.”

With the UNDP-organised towns, Sheikh Hamid believes they can now move to discussing and identifying solutions to their communities' key concerns including the limited-service provision and lack of job opportunities for youth, including those who are returning.

[Unifying different viewpoints – Jamal in Anah, Anbar](#)

In Anah district, 36-year-old Jamal Nasser Taha, a government employee who also doubles as the head of the

Pulse of Hope volunteer group. The volunteer group supports various community reintegration efforts – helping returnees and other community members access livelihood and psychosocial support programmes offered by UNDP and other actors.

As a volunteer, Jamal shared that one of the major barriers he faces comes from families who reject the idea of returnees.

“The town hall meetings are great platforms for bringing these varying viewpoints together in one place giving community members the chance to meet, discuss and address them together,” Jamal shared, adding that he hopes that they will be scaled so they benefit everyone in the community.

[Modelling co-existence and unity – Huda in Kirkuk](#)

For Huda Muhammad Al-Sabil, the head of the education and volunteer department in the Kirkuk local government, these gatherings are important for reducing the gap between returning families and other members of the community.

“Looking across the room you see various women and other members of the community. These meetings are a model for co-existence and an extension of the work we do to promote reintegration and cohesion,” Huda shared.

Under her department, returnee families receive comprehensive support, including vocational training to equip them with new skills essential for finding work and providing for their families. These programs offer more than just skills development, they are opportunities to interact with others in the community. Additionally, her team conducts awareness campaigns on social cohesion in schools and various community gatherings, fostering a sense of unity and understanding.

[A platform for networking – Mervat, Divala](#)

Unemployment remains one of the key factors affecting young people in the areas of return. The town halls are therefore a place to network and meet different people who can provide links to employment opportunities.

Healing conversations (continued)

“Personally, workshops have helped me connect with influential individuals, enabling me to find employment and engage in voluntary work,” Mervat Hazim Mohammed, a young woman in her twenties shared during the meeting. The meetings, she explained have broadened her cultural horizons, and enhanced her personal development.

Laying the path to sustainable peace and development

“It’s very important to get the communities talking as many of them endured the loss of loved ones and property. While many are eager to resume their lives, they are also afraid of this process of return. This process is going to be long-term, so UNDP’s facilitation of these conversations is

vital,” Muhammad Kopurlu (pictured left), the head of the Kurdistan Organization for Human Rights Watch (KOHRW), who moderated the town hall in Kirkuk Governorate shared.

Organised in partnership with local partners Al-Tahreer Association for Development, these meetings gather local authorities, Local Peace Committees, tribal and religious leaders, youth and women’s groups, security officials, returnees, and other vulnerable segments of the communities. They serve as platforms for healing discussions, raising awareness about the return process, and fostering community support for returnees, essential for their successful reintegration. During the meetings, participants also propose ideas for

community-led initiatives that they can later refine with UNDP support and implement to promote community acceptance and cohesion.

Altogether, the meetings attracted 340 community members across the four Governorates, 114 of whom were women. Recommendations from the meetings guide both UNDP and the Government in addressing the communities’ most pressing needs as Iraq advances towards sustainable development.

Through its Social Cohesion Programme, UNDP is using an integrated approach through town hall meetings, and livelihood programmes to foster return, reintegration, social cohesion and stability in areas of return.

Local authorities call for enhanced collaboration for social cohesion in Iraq

Erbil, 23 May 2024 - As Iraq transitions to the development phase, local authorities have emphasized the importance of sustaining peace and social cohesion and increasing collaboration among the Government, local peace actors, and International Organizations to ensure a smooth transition.

The call for increased collaboration was made during the inaugural conference on "Strengthening Social Cohesion and Reintegration of Returnees: The Role of Local Peace Actors in Iraq," convened by The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the Office of the National Security Advisory – Strategic Affairs Office, held on Monday, 20th May 2024.

The one-day conference provided a platform for local peace actors and leaders from the four liberated Governorates (Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Anbar and Kirkuk) to discuss strategies to promote return, and reintegration of displaced people and for enhancing social cohesion in areas of return. It focused on the pivotal role of local peace actors in driving these efforts forward. Peace committees from the four governorates shared their success stories, challenges and lessons learned as they supported the return of displaced Iraqis from inside and outside the country.

“When local peace committees were formed, we were able to see the real heroes who were bringing society back together again. It’s important to hear the stories of these heroes today,” Dr.

Saeed Jayashi, Advisor for Strategic Affairs - Office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA).

LPCs have been playing a pivotal role in accelerating community acceptance of numerous Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees into their communities. Their efforts have fostered community acceptance, tolerance, and co-existence, thus encouraging more displaced Iraqis to return home.

Several LPC members in attendance shared the challenges at the start of their work, with some community members accusing them of supporting one group over others. Despite these challenges, their perseverance led to the successes that are fostering community acceptance.

One notable success story shared by Mr. Ibrahim Khalil, the Mayor of Ramadi, Anbar Governorate, highlighted the LPCs’ support for families who suffered and lost loved ones at the hands of other families

during the ISIS period. In a remarkable gesture of goodwill and social cohesion, these affected families later adopted children from the families responsible for their loss, demonstrating profound forgiveness and a commitment to rebuilding their community.

With UNDP’s support, 24 Local Peace Committees have been established in the four governorates. The committees, which are led by the town mayors, are an inclusive platform comprised of local authorities, tribal leaders, women, and youth representatives. One of the Iraqi women activists in attendance emphasized the active involvement of women in LPC work, “We have even had all-female LPC teams visit specific areas to address issues directly impacting women.”

The LPCs have facilitated the return of 4,577 families through mediation sessions and peace agreements signed with communities in the areas of return.

“Since 2017, UNDP has been actively



Local authorities call for enhanced collaboration for social cohesion in Iraq *(continued)*

supporting the Government of Iraq and local peace mechanisms in peacebuilding, reintegration, and social cohesion efforts. We remain committed to supporting these efforts as Iraq embarks on its development phase," Ghimar Deeb, the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, stated at the conference.

Multiple Local Peace Committees established and activated recently are undergoing capacity-building programmes with UNDP support. This follows the development of a new strategy to expand the presence of LPCs to more areas in the country as part of efforts to strengthen the return and reintegration process as well as increase community engagement, and social cohesion.

"The process of return requires collaborative efforts and we hope that we shall continue to see this collaboration with all our partners," Mr. Khalid Ibrahim, Director of

Ninewa Branch - Ministry of Migration and Displacement

The conference attended by various Local Peace Actors, Government Officials, and representatives of international organisations closed with a call for increased support for social services in the areas of return including housing and employment opportunities in the areas of return.

Through concerted collaboration and support to social cohesion efforts, Iraq can look forward to a future filled with peace, prosperity, and an all-inclusive society.

UNDP's Integrated Social Cohesion Programme supports efforts towards peaceful and more cohesive societies in Iraq. In addition to empowering Local Peace Committees, UNDP has been extending livelihood support to returnees, IDPs and vulnerable members of the communities in the areas of return through vocational training, business skills development,

and small business grants. This is in addition to the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) provided to all those who experienced trauma from past conflicts.

Through these efforts, 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 5,398 individuals including IDPs, returnees, and community members will be supported in 2024.

Its work in facilitating social cohesion and reintegration of returnees from North East Syria and IDPs is made possible with the generous contributions of USAID, the European Union and the Governments of Denmark, Sweden Japan, and Germany.

Political Consultations



Readout of the Secretary-General's meeting with H.E. Mr. Fuad Mohammad Hussein, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq

Manama, Bahrain, 15 May 2024 - The Secretary-General met with **H.E. Mr. Fuad Mohammad Hussein**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq.

The Secretary-General and the Deputy Prime Minister discussed Iraq and the future of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

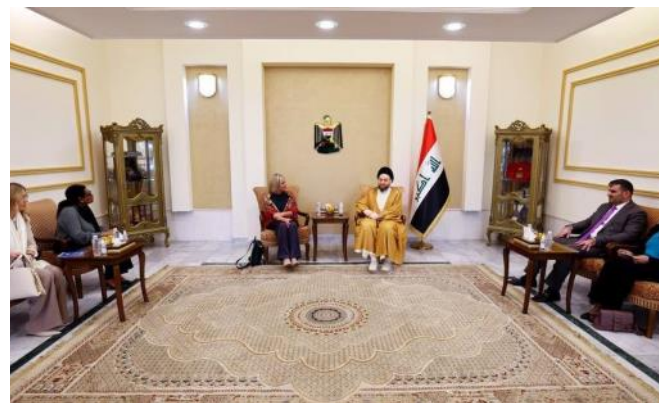
The Secretary-General reiterated that the United Nations was focused on supporting Iraq and the Iraqi people as they move forward.

They also discussed regional developments, including the situation in Gaza. The Secretary-General thanked Iraq for its recent substantial financial support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Photo by UN Photo.



Baghdad, 30 April 2024 - Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, **Mr. Claudio Cordone**: "Good discussion today with **Rajab Kakae** on the situation of the Kakae component in Iraq."



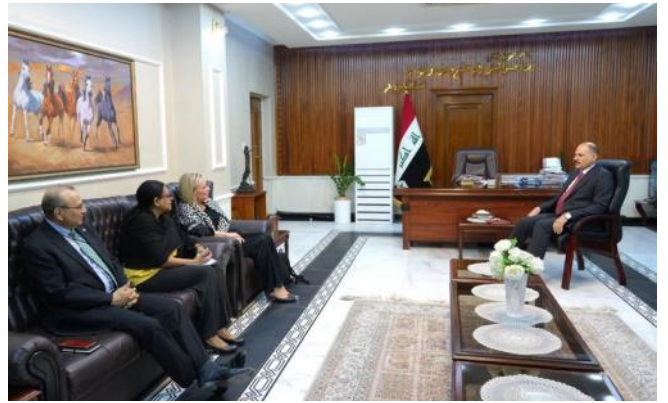
Baghdad, 05 May 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Baghdad with the Head of the Al-Hikma National Movement, **Ammar Al-Hakim**. They discussed the current political situation in the country.

Photo courtesy of Al-Hikma National Movement.



Baghdad, 05 May 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 National Security Advisor, Mr. Qassim Al-Araji. During the meeting, they discussed the current security situation in the country, including the file of the Al-Hol Camp in Northeastern Syria.

Photo courtesy of the NSA.



Baghdad, 06 May 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 in Baghdad with Judge Jassim Mohammed Abboud, the President of the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court. During the meeting, multiple issues were discussed, including the need for inclusive Kurdistan Region elections as soon as possible.

Photo courtesy of the FSC.



Baghdad, 07 May 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Baghdad with the President of the Supreme Judicial Council, Judge Faiq Zaidan, to discuss the situation in the country.

Photo courtesy of SJC.



Stockholm, Sweden, 07 May 2024 - UNAMI Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Mr. Claudio Cordone, joined other UN officials in a Strategic Dialogue on Climate, Peace and Security to identify key lessons and best practices, aimed at pursuing the Climate, Peace and Security agenda in UN field missions. The dialogue took place in Stockholm on 4-5 May and was organized by the Folke Bernadotte Academy and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.



Erbil, 09 May 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met in Erbil with Mr. Qubad Talabani, Deputy Prime Minister, Kurdistan Region. They discussed the current political developments in Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region. Photo courtesy of KRG Media Office.



Baghdad, 13 May 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met in Baghdad with Head of the Taqaddum Party, Mr. Muhammad Al-Halbousi. During their meeting, they discussed the current political developments in Iraq and the region.

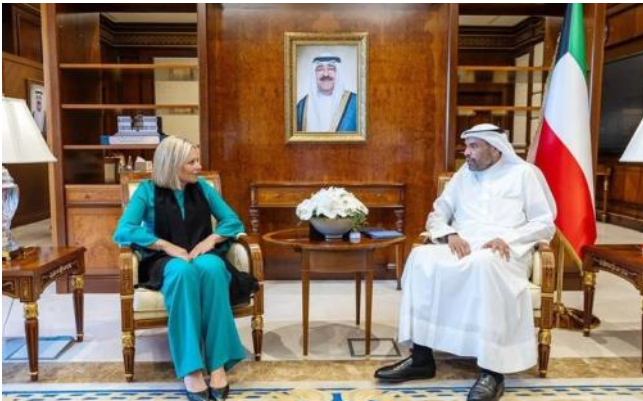


Baghdad, 13 May 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, met today in Baghdad with Azim Alliance leader, **Engineer Muthana al-Samaraiie**. During their meeting, they discussed the current political developments in Iraq and the region.



Erbil, 21 May 2024 - The Head of UNAMI Office in Erbil, **Francesco Revuelto-Lanao**, met today with the Deputy Prime Minister of Kurdistan Region, **Qubad Talabani**. They discussed the current situation in the region.

Photo courtesy of the KRG.



Kuwait City, 23 May 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**, was received in Kuwait City today by the Foreign Minister of the State of Kuwait, **Mr. Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya**. During their meeting, they discussed current developments in the region.

Photo courtesy of KUNA.



Baghdad, 26 May 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**, was received today in Baghdad by His Excellency **Dr. Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid**, President of the Republic of Iraq.

Photo courtesy of the Presidency Media Office.



Baghdad, 26 May 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**, was received today in Baghdad by **Mr. Mohammed S. Al-Sudani**, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq. Photo courtesy of the PM's Media Office.



Erbil, 28 May 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 in Erbil with **Mr. Masoud Barzani**, President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party.



Erbil, 25 June 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance and acting Head of UNAMI, **Claudio Cordone**:
 “Met today in Erbil **Qubad Talabani** @qubadjt and **Fawzi Hariri** @KRPresidency while UNAMI’s electoral team met civil society. Looking forward to the announcement of elections date in coming days. Time for the Region’s institutions to regain their full legitimacy thru the ballot box.”



Baghdad, 27 June 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance and acting Head of UNAMI, **Claudio Cordone**:
 “Meeting today IHEC Chair **Judge Omar Mohammed** and board members after the announcement of 20 October 2024 as KR parliamentary elections date. UNAMI will continue to support, including on increased women participation, in line with its renewed mandate.”

Women Empowerment

More to be done to advance women’s empowerment, says SRSG Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert



Baghdad, 19 May 2024 - Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert met with civil society representatives and Women Advisory Groups (WAG) members from Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region, along with Ajay Madiwale, UN Women Country Representative. The meeting was an opportunity to exchange views on ongoing efforts towards, as well as residual challenges to, the advancement of women’s rights in Iraq. The participants highlighted the critical role civil society plays in promoting women’s empowerment, the need for progress on key legislation to protect women’s rights in Iraq, such as the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, and the value of women’s full participation in decision-making processes. They emphasized the distinct challenges

facing specific categories of women, including women and girls with disabilities and women from minority groups. During the meeting, SRSG Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert stressed that any pending legislation should have the protection of women and girls as a core objective. “There are genuine concerns, not just from women, but from all those in favour of promoting a safe and just society. As I leave Iraq, I laud the efforts of Iraqi women and men in

advocating for legislation that supports the empowerment of women and girls. What’s more, any legislation related to children should be guided only by the best interests of the child.”

“As I have said before, too many women have been blocked from taking a seat at the table. And some of those who have gained a seat find themselves, still, excluded from decision-making processes. Women’s empowerment must go beyond symbolism.”

“And yes, the need for an active, empowered and protected civil society is as pressing as ever”, the SRSG concluded.

At the end of the meeting, SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert noted that UN Iraq would continue to support the Government of Iraq and civil society in ensuring progress towards the full realization of Iraq’s commitments to the protection and empowerment of women and girls across the country, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.



Unbroken: Faiza's journey to empowerment

Mosul, 21 April 2024 - "I discovered that I could benefit from bad circumstances and turn them into opportunities and find a reason to move forward, and to endure and challenge myself."

A forty-four-year-old Faiza* from Mosul amazes others with her confidence, positive outlook, and desire to inspire fellow women.

It was not always like this. The burn scars on Faiza's skin tell a story of the trauma she endured and the battles she had to fight in silence for 11 years. Beneath her confident smile today there is a story shaped by the echoes of violence that once seemed overwhelming.

Faiza once harbored simple dreams of a happy family. At seventeen, she married and had three children, but her marital bliss was shattered as her husband subjected her to physical violence, leaving her with severe burns from their last fight. She had had enough.

"I decided to get a divorce," says Faiza, her voice steady with determination.

Isolated by her community, a single mother with three children to raise without a stable income and burn scars to accept, Faiza had to take in a lot with no one on her side to rely on.

Fortunately, support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) arrived when she



needed it most. Through IOM's assistance for survivors of violence against women and girls, she received one-on-one support from a case worker, who provided her with psychosocial support and referred her to a few other service providers who could support her with remaining needs.

Since October 2023, 37 violence survivors have benefitted from IOM's case management support based on a survivor-centered approach. Photo is for illustrative purposes: IOM 2024/Raber Aziz

"I began to feel confident and positive," she explains, reflecting on her transformation.

With newfound resilience, she rebuilt relationships with her children after a long period of emotional instability, stress, and nervousness. The next brick in building back her life when her case worker referred her to the IOM's graduation approach programme. Here, she received a scholarship, essential training on how to start a business, and

was given a cash grant, which allowed her to have a stable income.

"I have become a mother that my children can be proud of."

Full of energy, and equipped with new skills, Faiza now aspires to a career as an inspector or nurse, driven by a desire to inspire other women:

"I am proud to be a role model and an example for others. I want other women who are survivors of violence to speak up, not to be afraid, and ask for support."

With the support of the U.S. Department of State Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration, IOM helps women like Faiza recover through individualized case management support, psychosocial support, and referrals. Since October 2023, 37 survivors of violence against women and girls have received much-needed specialized case management through a survivor-centered approach that considers the survivors' capacities and skills to increase their resilience and promotes their dignity, rights, agency and empowerment. Additionally, as part of this initiative, 13 survivors were referred to the IOM's graduation approach programme to contribute to their long-term recovery. *The name was changed to protect privacy.

By Olga Borzenkova | Communications Officer, IOM

Warda's fight against early marriage

Erbil, 13 May 2024 - Warda, a 13-year-old from Ninewa Governorate, Iraq, has been displaced from the Wana area at the age of 12 months. In 2014, Warda's five sisters, brother, and parents sought refuge at Bahirka Camp in Erbil Governorate. Her journey was fraught with challenges, the most daunting of which was child marriage. Warda is currently in Grade 7. At the camp, she participated in the Adolescent Girls Toolkit programming at the Women and Girls' Safe Space supported by UNICEF and funded by the German Government through the German Development Bank - KfW.

"By participating in this programme, I learned so much about personal hygiene, the menstrual cycle, and body awareness. But what really stood out was how this knowledge helped me regain my self-confidence," Warda recalled.

Fighting the Odds: Warda's Triumph Over Tradition

Warda's father was determined to marry off his daughter's young. As

Warda's eldest sister was married at 15, before completing her education, her other sister, on the cusp of turning 15, was on the verge of a similar fate this year.

"My family also wanted to marry my second sister to her cousin, who was already married and divorced," explained Warda. She felt the looming threat of her own marriage, despite being only 13. Her father's words overwhelmed her and reminded her of her vulnerability: "You will get married to anyone who proposes, even if he is 30 years old."

Warda tried really hard to tell her father that she and her sister should not get married when they were still children. But no matter how much she explained, he would not listen. It was tough for her, but she did not give up. Warda spoke of the persistent efforts of the social workers from the Women and Girls' Safe Space who visited her home to convey the impact of child marriage on a girl's life. Despite their earnest efforts, Warda's father remained

unconvinced. The team, undeterred, sought another approach and for the next two months, visited Warda's family repeatedly. Their determination paid off when, after countless discussions, Warda's father was finally convinced.

He had initially been swayed by traditional beliefs and economic pressures, thinking that marriage at a young age would secure his daughters' futures. However, despite the social workers' convincing arguments of the long-term consequences of child marriage, Warda's father understood



Warda's fight against early marriage *(continued)*

that child marriage would actually hinder their prospects, trapping them in a cycle of poverty and limiting their opportunities for personal and professional growth. This tireless advocacy not only saved Warda and her sister from the same fate as their older sister but also led to a transformative shift in her family's mindset, paving the way for her and her sisters to pursue their dreams and complete their education.

"I was afraid, and now I feel strong," said Warda. I call on all girls not to marry at an early age, as it has harmful effects on their bodies, their psychology, and their lives in general." Warda's dreams of becoming a lawyer to defend people's rights, especially girls and women are no longer distant. She is on the right path to fulfilling her aspirations. In a world where the voices of young girls are often silenced or ignored, Warda's story stands as a

reminder that every girl deserves a better chance at life, free from the shackles of child marriage. And with the right support, that future is not just a dream but a reality waiting to be embraced.

Note: To protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals mentioned in this story, some of the names have been altered.

By Shahad Butrus Bulbul, UNICEF Iraq

UNICEF on X

Baghdad, 27 May 2024 - If all girls were to complete secondary school, the level of child marriage would likely fall by two thirds (66%). If all girls continued to higher education, the level of child marriage would drop by more than 80%. This is the power of education to #endchildmarriage.

UNHCR observes Menstrual Hygiene Day

Baghdad, 28 May 2024 - Many women and girls around the world are held back from achieving their full potential due to poor menstrual hygiene caused by limited access to proper education, hygienic products, and sanitation infrastructure. This issue is worsened by persisting taboos

and stigma surrounding menstruation which negatively impacts both health and social status. In 2023, UNHCR provided support to nearly 4300 girls and 1486 women by supplying sanitary kits, helping them address menstrual health challenges and associated health issues.



Menstrual health is a human rights issue, not just a health one

Baghdad, 28 May 2024 - Today, on Menstrual Hygiene Day, UNFPA partners with SEED, Rudaw, Together for Human and Environment and with support of KOICA Iraq Office and Canada in Iraq to increase awareness and educate women and girls to help break taboos and stigmas and enable them to manage their periods with

dignity and confidence.

From informative sessions to the distribution of reusable pads, we're breaking the stigma and promoting hygiene.

Learn more about how we can help empower women, by ending period poverty: <https://forherdignity.org/> Together for a #PeriodFriendlyWorld!



One-Stop Assistance Centres for Women and Girls (OSACs) in Kirkuk and Mosul are transforming lives

Baghdad, 14 June 2024 - Discover how our One-Stop Assistance Centres for Women and Girls (OSACs) in Kirkuk and Mosul are transforming lives. These centres offer a safe haven where women and girls receive vital support, from psychosocial counselling to legal support, life skills training and more.

To see the services UNFPA provides with the generous support of KOICA Iraq check the video at <https://www.facebook.com/UNFPAIraq/videos/802273198637025>

Together, we are building a brighter, safer future for the women and girls of Iraq.



UNFPA is committed to ethical reporting on all forms of violence

Baghdad, 20 June 2024 - Sexual violence in conflict leaves scars that last a lifetime. For almost a decade, Yazidi survivors have endured unimaginable suffering, yet continue to courageously pursue justice and healing. UNFPA stands beside the Yazidi communities, providing essential psychosocial support, life skills training, and life-saving services in Sinjar.

UNFPA is committed to ethical reporting on all forms of violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. We empower women across Iraq with journalism training on safe reporting practices to ensure the

protection and safety of survivors. Today, on the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, UNFPA reaffirms our

unwavering commitment to a world free from sexual violence.

Together, let's raise our voices, support survivors, and demand justice.



UNAMI on X

Baghdad, 19/06/2024 - Today, on the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, we honour survivors and acknowledge their resilience. Let us stand together to provide justice and support for the survivors and create a world where no one suffers such brutality.

Women empowerment is center to the mission of UNFPA

Baghdad, 24 June 2024 - In humanitarian settings, women are learning more than just life skills — they are gaining the skills to become resilient, independent, and influential in their communities. Through training in literacy, sewing, knitting, and other livelihood opportunities, women are not

only finding means of economic empowerment but also nurturing their self-esteem and sense of purpose.

When a woman acquires these skills, she can support her family, contribute economically, and strengthen the entirety of her community.

Women empowerment is center to the

mission of UNFPA, and with support from the U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, we are committed to helping women discover and learn various jobs through training programs and resources.

Human Rights

UNAMI's Human Rights Office continues advocacy for the protection of human rights

Baghdad, May — June 2024 - Promotion of accountability and the protection of human rights are some of the core functions entrusted to UNAMI by the Security Council approved mandate. Here is an overview of the activities of the UNAMI Human rights Office in the past two months:

Baghdad, 30 April 2024 - The UNAMI Human Rights Office organized an event today to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination and related intolerance. The workshop brought together 19 participants (13 men and 6 women) representing the Council of Representatives, government officials, diverse societal components, religious leaders, religious endowments, civil society and human rights defenders.

Participants discussed the importance the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, observed annually on 21 March, and its significance in the promotion and protection of Iraqi minorities and assessment of the mechanisms and

legislative frameworks for combatting racial discrimination and related intolerance in Iraq. Focus group discussions included racial discrimination and related intolerance: challenges and their effects on the protection of societal components and strategies for strengthening collaboration between stakeholders in combatting racial discrimination and

related intolerance in Iraq. A number of measures were discussed for reforms and policy changes to enhance social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in Iraq.

Cultural songs celebrating Iraq's rich diversity were played by a group of musicians from the Moonlight Centre for Culture in Baghdad.



UNAMI's Human Rights Office continues advocacy for the protection of human rights *(continued)*

Kirkuk, 30 April 2024 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized a training on “Violence and harassment against women in the world of work” for staff members of the Women Affairs Department in Kirkuk governorate. 16 female and 3 male staff members received a brief on the Iraqi and international legislation on the matter. Participants discussed how to identify cases of violence and harassment in the workplace and their



impact. They were encouraged to reflect on their role in addressing this issue

and developing measures to make the workplace a safe space for women.

Baghdad, 02 May 2024 - Baghdad Human Rights Team commenced a three-day training for social workers from Babil province to equip them with the skills and tools to provide psychosocial support to children affected by armed conflict.



Baqubah, 06 May 2024 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized a training on “Violence and harassment against women in the world of work” for staff members of the Women Affairs Department in Diyala governorate. 15 female and 3 male staff members received a brief on the Iraqi and international legislation on the matter. Participants discussed how to identify cases of violence and harassment in the workplace and their impact. They were encouraged to reflect on their role in addressing this issue and developing measures to make the workplace a safe space for women.



Baghdad, 07 May 2024 - UNAMI Human Rights Office, in coordination with the College of Education for Women at the University of Baghdad, organized a roundtable to discuss the human rights curriculum with a view to develop and enhance the human rights programme delivered at the College. The roundtable brought together 23 participants (19 women and 4 men), including the Dean of the College of Education for Women. During the roundtable, the participants discussed the current curriculum and the needed steps to develop it, the enhancement of teaching staff capabilities by providing them with the necessary theoretical qualifications and



practical experience in the field of human rights, as well as the possible

support and capacities that UNAMI HRO could provide.

UNAMI’s Human Rights Office continues advocacy for the protection of human rights *(continued)*

Tikrit, 12 May 2024 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized a training on “Violence and harassment against women in the world of work” for staff members of the Women Affairs Department in Salah al-Din governorate. 17 female and 3 male staff members received a brief on the

Iraqi and international legislation on the matter. Participants discussed how to identify cases of violence and harassment in the workplace and their impact. They were encouraged to reflect on their role in addressing this issue and developing measures to make the workplace a safe space for women.



Basra, 13 May 2024 – UNAMI Human Rights Office held a roundtable discussion today with Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights, local officials, and civil society representatives including human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, and academics on role of civic space in promotion and protection of human rights, current challenges, and ways of engagement with United Nations Human Rights System. Twelve participants attended the event (7 men, 5 women).



Baghdad, 19 May 2024 - UNAMI Human Rights Office, in coordination with the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) Baghdad office conducted the sixth and final session in a series of human rights training for students at the Police Academy of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior. The training included lectures on the basic principles of human rights, prevention of torture, prevention of enforced disappearance and human rights in law enforcement operations.



Babil, 20 May 2024 - UNAMI Human Rights Office, in coordination with the Iraqi High Commission for Human

Rights (IHCHR) Babil Office held a roundtable discussion with Babil Police Command on the due process rights of

defendants and the right to a fair trial under Iraqi and international law. Twenty-eight police officers, from the Directorate of Intelligence and Counter-terrorism, Directorate of Counter Narcotics and Directorate of Counter Economic Organised Crime as well as the National Security Service, attended the roundtable, which focused on fair trial guarantees under national and international legal frameworks including the right to legal counsel, the right to remain silent and the right to an adequate defence. The roundtable also covered the human rights legal framework applicable to arrests and investigations as well as the prohibition of torture. During the event participants also discussed the Iraqi Criminal Procedure Code, the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture.



UNAMI's Human Rights Office continues advocacy for the protection of human rights *(continued)*

Baghdad, 21 May 2024 -Today, the UNAMI Human Rights Office held a workshop aimed at strengthening civil society engagement with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in preparation for CERD's upcoming review of Iraq, which will take place in August. 25 participants (20 men and 5 women) attended the event, including representatives and members of Iraq's religious and ethnic component groups, faith leaders, representatives of civil society and the IHCHR.

During the workshop the participants received guidance on how to prepare and submit reports to UN Treaty Bodies, including the CERD. They then engaged in focus group discussions on the status of the government's implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Racial

Discrimination and identified key issues for inclusion in the 'shadow reports' which Iraqi civil society

organisations will prepare and submit to the CERD as part of its review process.



Basra, 21 May 2024 - UNAMI Human Rights Office organized a roundtable discussion on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Basra. The event brought together local government officials, representatives of PWDs, and the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights. Participants engaged in structured discussions to identify challenges and gaps in accessing and implementing disability rights, and developed recommendations to improve the current situations of PWDs in Basra. Eighteen participants attended the event (10 men, 8 women).



Erbil, 22 May 2024 -The UNAMI Human Rights Office organized a one-day workshop in Erbil on Freedom of Expression for civil society and officials from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The event brought together 29 representatives (27 males and 2 females) from various security services and civil society as well as journalists. Participants discussed concrete measures and recommendations, including "Guarantee the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly in law and practice, Guarantee freedom of expression and opinion by protecting the action of journalists, media professionals, human rights defenders from all use of violence and threats" to strengthen the promotion and protection of freedom of expression and civic space in the



Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Participants welcomed the opportunity to have a platform for dialogue between

security forces and journalists to discuss freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly.

UNAMI's Human Rights Office continues advocacy for the protection of human rights *(continued)*

Baghdad, 22 May 2024 - UNAMI's Human Rights Office, in coordination with the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) and the

Human Rights Directorate at the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), organised a two-day human rights workshop for members of the PMF Security Directorate. The workshop, attended by thirty-four personnel provided an introduction to international human rights law, and covered a range of topics including international standards on the prohibition of torture and enforced disappearances, the use of force, national and international human rights protection mechanisms and human rights in counter-terrorism.



Basra, 23 May 2024 - The UNAMI Human Rights Office held a roundtable discussion in Basra on accountability for domestic violence. Participants included local government officials, representatives of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR), lawyers, journalists, civil society representatives, and human rights defenders. Seventeen participants attended the event (6 men, 11 women) and discussed the findings of the UNAMI/OHCHR public report



“Accountability for Domestic Violence in Iraq: Promoting Justice and Non-Discrimination.”

Download the report:
EN: <https://bit.ly/4bvfcUT>
AR: <https://bit.ly/3VayHWB>



Baghdad, 25 May 2024 – UNAMI Human Rights Office organised a roundtable discussion titled “Promoting Freedom of Expression in Iraq”. The event, the first in a series planned in different governorates, brought together 19 participants (5 women and 14 men) including journalists, writers, bloggers, social media users, defence lawyers, civil society representatives and human rights defenders. Participants discussed the obstacles to their full enjoyment of freedom of expression and freedom of the media in Iraq, both in the online and offline environment, and proposed solutions to address the concerns identified. Key findings and suggestions from



these discussions will form the basis for a forthcoming direct dialogue between non-governmental stakeholders and

relevant government, judicial and regulatory authorities planned for mid-June 2024.



Erbil, 26 May 2024 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized a workshop on “Investigative Human Rights Techniques under International Human Rights Law” for Law Enforcement officials (KRI Security forces) from Erbil governorate. A total of 22 participants benefitted from this training. Participants were briefed about general principles and concepts of international human rights law, including United Nations

reporting and review mechanisms and state obligations. It also addressed the rights of detainees under international conventions, the Constitution of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional law, and the role of investigators in protecting these rights, particularly during interrogation stage.



UNAMI's Human Rights Office continues advocacy for the protection of human rights *(continued)*



Kirkuk, 28 May 2024 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)

organized a one-day training on "Submission of Stakeholder Report by civil society organizations to the

Universal Periodic Review" for NGOs from Kirkuk, Diyala, and Salah al-Din governorates. A total of 10 organizations benefitted from this training, with 1 female and 10 male representatives in attendance. Participants received an overview of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, explaining the process for drafting the civil society report, the submission procedure, and guidelines on how to participate in the 4th cycle review of Iraq scheduled for January/February 2025. Participating organizations can make submissions individually or jointly as feasible.

Erbil, 29 May 2024 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) held a one-day high level workshop entitled 'Strengthening Accountability for Criminal Violence in Domestic Settings in the KRI: Establishment of the Coordination Mechanism' in collaboration with the High Council for Women and Development, and the Ministry of Interior.

The workshop brought together 18 high-level representatives (10 women, 8 men) from key institutions in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq working in the field of prevention and response to violence against women, including the High Council for Women and Development, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Judicial Council, the Department for Combating Violence against Women, KRI Police



Department, and the General Prosecutors Office in the Ministry of Justice.

Participants discussed the Terms of References and Action Plan for the Roll Out of the Coordination Mechanism

aimed at building a structured platform for sharing relevant and crucial information amongst key institutions that work to prevent domestic violence and protect survivors and vulnerable individuals.

Baghdad, 29 May 2024 - UNAMI Human Rights Office held a workshop aimed at strengthening the engagement of Iraq's religious and ethnic component groups with the next Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Iraq, which is scheduled to take place in early 2025. The UPR is a unique mechanism of the Human Rights Council that calls for each UN Member State to undergo a periodic review of the actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to overcome challenges to the enjoyment of human rights.

39 participants (29 women and 10 men) attended the event, including members and representatives of Iraq's religious and ethnic component groups, faith leaders, and representatives of the IHCHR and civil society.

During the workshop UNAMI Human Rights Office gave presentations on the Universal Periodic Review mechanism and provided guidance on how non-governmental organisations can prepare and submit 'stakeholder

reports' for consideration under the UPR process. Participants held focus group discussions on Iraq's implementation of previous UPR recommendations and identified key issues for inclusion in these reports.



UNAMI’s Human Rights Office continues advocacy for the protection of human rights *(continued)*



Basra, 5 June 2024 – UNAMI Human Rights Office organised a roundtable

discussion titled “Promoting Freedom of Expression in Iraq”. The event, the

third in a series planned in different governorates, brought together 23 participants (7 women and 16 men) including journalists, writers, bloggers, social media users, defence lawyers, civil society representatives and human rights defenders.

Participants discussed the obstacles to the full enjoyment of freedom of expression and freedom of the media in Iraq, both in the online and offline environment, and proposed solutions to address the concerns identified.

Key findings and suggestions from these discussions will form the basis for a forthcoming direct dialogue between non-governmental stakeholders and relevant government, judicial and regulatory authorities planned for mid-June 2024 in Baghdad.



Erbil, 06 June 2024 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized a two-day workshop on “NGO engagement with UN Human Rights Mechanisms” with the participation of 33 (9 female and 24 male) representatives of NGOs from Erbil, Duhok and Sulaymaniyah. The training aimed at enhancing their understanding of United Nations human rights mechanisms and familiarizing them with role of civil society actors in effectively working with these tools for the implementation of the state human rights obligations and the recommendations issued to the state by these mechanisms.



Baghdad, 13 June 2024 – UNAMI Human Rights Office facilitated a one-day dialogue on “Promoting Freedom of Expression in Iraq”. The event provided an opportunity for journalists, defence lawyers, civil society representatives, bloggers and social media influencers to

engage in structured discussions with representatives of relevant government ministries (including the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs), the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, the

Commission on Media and Communications, and members of the judiciary.

Participants discussed obstacles to the full enjoyment of freedom of expression and freedom of the media, both in the online and offline environment, as well as potential solutions to address the concerns identified. These included legislative and institutional reforms, consultative approaches to legislative and regulatory processes, awareness-raising programs, protection of social media influencers online, and the consistent application of existing Iraqi laws.

The event is the latest in a series of consultative discussions on freedom of expression facilitated by UNAMI Human Rights Office and is intended to provide the basis for future constructive dialogue.



UN-Habitat and UNODC are partnering with the Ministry of Justice to improve the conditions of detention for children and young people

Baghdad, 29 May 2024 - UN-Habitat and UNODC are partnering with the Ministry of Justice to improve the conditions of detention for children and young people in Baghdad and Mosul under the EU-funded project 'STRIVE Juvenile: Preventing and Responding to Violence against Children by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups'.

Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3KCPpbf>



Living with Disabilities

Mobile teams prepare to conduct awareness campaigns across Iraqi cities and hard-to-reach areas

Baghdad, 13 May 2024 - Meet the dedicated members of the mobile teams who will be conducting awareness campaigns across Iraqi cities and hard-to-reach areas, starting from Baghdad. They will inform about essential services available for persons with disabilities and identify gaps to ensure their meaningful inclusion in the community.

This initiative is part of the Iraqi Ministries of Health, Social Affairs, and Education under the Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) strategy—a multi-sectoral approach aimed at

enhancing equality of opportunities and social inclusion for persons with disabilities.

IOM Iraq conducted a three-day Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) training for these team members to equip them with crucial skills for their outreach efforts ahead of their mission:

- Effective communication skills
- Trauma-informed care
- Psychological First Aid (PFA)

This project is supported by USAID Iraq and U.S. Embassy Baghdad.



UNAMI on X

Baghdad, 19 May 2024 - Every voice deserves to be heard, every person deserves to be seen. Join us in celebrating diversity and unique abilities of people with disabilities. Together, let's break barriers, foster inclusion, and build a world where

The importance of embracing and supporting individuals with disabilities

Baghdad, 31 May 2024 - Message from the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai, on Disability Inclusion:

"Hello everyone,

Today, I want to take a moment to share something close to our hearts.

At the United Nations, we believe in the power of diversity and inclusion. Today, I want to specifically address the importance of embracing and supporting individuals with disabilities.

Each person brings unique strengths and perspectives to our teams, and it's crucial that we create an environment

where everyone feels valued and included.

As leaders, it's our responsibility to ensure that all barriers are removed, and all voices are heard.

Let's commit to fostering a culture of understanding, and equal opportunity.

Together, we can make a difference and create a more inclusive world for everyone.

Let's continue to champion diversity and inclusion in all that we do.

Thank you for your dedication to this cause."



Women and girls with disabilities continue to face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence

Baghdad, 12 June 2024 – UN Women reports that women and girls with disabilities continue to face multiple

and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence. We need to:

- ✓☐ Engage them as agents of change
- ✓☐ Co-design with them legislation, policies, programmes, and services

UNFPA is committed to empowering all youth, including those with disabilities

Baghdad, 22 June 2024 - These bright young women celebrate their achievements after completing a life skills course. Empowered and equipped for the future, they are ready to take on new challenges and make a positive impact.

UNFPA believes in the power of inclusion! We're committed to empowering ALL youth, including those with disabilities. Every young person deserves the right to thrive and reach their full potential.



Freedom of Expression

World Press Freedom Day celebration accompanies UNESCO workshop discussing safety of journalists covering climate issues in Iraq

Baghdad, 06 May 2024 - Iraq recently hosted a pioneering UNESCO workshop. The event, held on May 5th, brought together a diverse group of journalists and environmental experts to address the safety concerns of journalists reporting on climate issues in the country. This initiative not only highlights the pressing need for a secure environment for journalists but also underscores the crucial role of media in fostering informed dialogue on environmental challenges.

The workshop served as a platform for candid discussions, allowing participants to share insights and experiences regarding the unique challenges faced by journalists covering climate-related topics in Iraq. From navigating complex geopolitical landscapes to overcoming censorship barriers, attendees shed light on the multifaceted obstacles encountered in their pursuit of environmental journalism. Through this dialogue, it became evident that ensuring journalist safety is paramount in facilitating unbiased and accurate reporting on environmental issues.

Following the insightful discussions of the workshop, May 6th saw Iraq



celebrate World Press Freedom Day under the theme "Press for the Planet." This special occasion provided an opportunity to honor the unsung heroes of environmental journalism who tirelessly work to raise awareness about Iraq's ecological landscape. Journalists and media professionals were recognized for their unwavering dedication to shedding light on pressing environmental concerns, highlighting the crucial role of media in driving positive change.

In a unified show of support for journalistic integrity, participating

organizations issued a joint statement calling for enhanced resources and support for journalists reporting on environmental issues. This collective appeal emphasizes the importance of fostering an environment that empowers journalists to fulfill their vital role in promoting transparency and accountability.

As Iraq continues on its journey towards a sustainable future, it recognizes the indispensable role of journalism in shaping public discourse and driving positive environmental action.

UNAMI on X

Baghdad, 18 June 2024 - Hate speech lays the ground for discrimination and abuse. It undermines peace and hinders development.

On the International Day for Countering Hate Speech, marked annually on 18 June, UNAMI recommit to combating intolerance and prejudice. #NoToHate

Hate speech, both online and offline, violates human rights

Baghdad, 18 June 2024 - Hate speech, both online and offline, violates human rights and aims to stifle the potential of women and girls.

Online harassment remains a pervasive issue, with more than half of young women experiencing such abuse,

which can lead to real-world violence and discourage participation in public life.

Young people, as digital natives, have a unique role to play in promoting positive change and rejecting hate.

On this International Day of

Countering Hate Speech, join UNFPA in saying NO to hate, and YES to a future where everyone can participate in building a more peaceful and prosperous society.

Speicher Massacre Anniversary

A decade of grief: families of victims of Speicher massacre demand justice and memorialization

Baghdad, 12 June 2024 – “Every time I hear a knock on the door, I expect to see him returned to us,” shares 61-year-old Nidhal, mother of 22-year-old Hussein, a newly recruited cadet of the Iraqi Army, killed at the Martyr Majid Air Base or Speicher Camp in Tikrit, Iraq, a decade ago today.

Nidhal and countless families continue to grieve the loss of nearly 2,000 unarmed cadets, mostly young men in their twenties, who were captured and brutally executed by Daesh on the morning of June 12, 2014. Known as the Speicher Camp Massacre, it is the deadliest act of terrorism in the country, executing approximately 1,700 predominantly Shia cadets in a single day, with many more missing and unaccounted for.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq has been working with the families of the victims of the massacre, alongside the Iraqi victims Organization in Speicher 1700 (Speicher 1700) to demand justice and access to compensation and benefits, in addition to memorialization efforts to honor and immortalize the memory of an estimated 2,018 victims.

“The invasion and brutal occupation of Daesh has left unimaginable trauma in the lives of many Iraqis,” shares Giorgi Gigauri, Chief of Mission for IOM Iraq. “With support from our partners at the German Federal Foreign Office, we will continue to support the community in their demands for transitional justice, compensation and memorialization efforts so that they can take steps towards healing and recovery”.

“Remembrance culture plays a crucial role in the way Germany deals with

history,” shares Dr. Maximilian Rasch, the Charge d’ Affairs of the Embassy of Germany in Baghdad. “Dramatic incidents, such as the Speicher camp massacre, traumatize the whole society. Just like an individual suffering from trauma, it is important for every country to heal its traumas, and the remembrance and advocacy efforts around the Speicher camp massacre are pivotal for the healing of Iraq”.

A forthcoming report on the findings of consultation sessions with family members of victims of the massacre in Baghdad, Babylon and Basra, found that majority of the participants were not aware of the legal frameworks relevant to the rights and privileges specific to the massacre, ultimately limiting their access to reparations and other support services.

Additionally, many affected families experience profound grief and sorrow, especially in the case of missing persons and those unable to identify the remains of their loved ones to give them a dignified burial, as many mass graves are yet to be exhumed. Consultations with the families found that while most families have access to some form of compensation – despite lengthy bureaucratic procedures – the primary demand remains memorialization efforts and the guarantee of non-repetition.

“The massacre at Speicher must be officially declared as a genocide,” asserts Abd Mohamed, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Speicher 1700. “We need the creation of a memorial site and a symbolic cemetery for the victims, where people can mourn their loss. This is necessary to prevent such

crimes in the future”. Speicher 1700 is a community-led organization founded in 2016 with the primary objective of documenting the events of the massacre and advocating for transitional justice for the victims and rights for their families.

Hussein, who was an only child to his parents, would have been 32 this year. “He used to buy sweets for the children in the neighborhood and wanted us to buy a house, instead of renting,” continues Nidhal.

“I wished to see him married, to see his children playing in front of me”. Instead, today, Nidhal and her family will make the painful annual trip to the former Presidential Palace in Tikrit, the site of the massacre, to honor the life and untimely death of Hussein and his classmates.

IOM’s work with Speicher 1700 and the families of the victims of the massacre, supported by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), aims to consolidate the needs of the community and present recommendations to the Government of Iraq to support transitional justice in the form of reparations benefits, memorialization efforts, the search for missing persons and the return of exhumed remains to families for proper burials.



UNITAD hands over to the Iraqi Judiciary a milestone report on ISIL's crimes in and around the Tikrit Presidential Palace complex

Baghdad, 10 June 2024 - The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) handed over a milestone legal assessment report on ISIL's crimes in and around the Tikrit Presidential Palace Complex, known as the Camp Speicher massacre.

Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Ana Peyro Llopis, handed over the report alongside the package of underlying evidence referenced in the report to H.E. Chief Justice Faiq Zaidan, President of the Supreme Judicial Council at his office in Baghdad. This includes evidence originally collected and produced by the Team.

The report, titled "Camp Speicher: A Pattern of Mass Killing and Genocidal Intent-Legal Assessment of ISIL's crimes in and around the Tikrit Presidential Palace Complex" presents factual and preliminary legal findings on the massacre at the Tikrit Presidential Palaces Complex in Salah al-Din province, where some 1700 soldiers, cadets and volunteers, escaping from the Tikrit Air Academy (known as Camp Speicher), were mass-killed between 12 and at least 14 June 2014.



"The factual findings presented in the report, preliminary legal assessment of the crimes committed, as well as the provided underlying evidence can contribute to the Iraqi judiciary's efforts to advance accountability for the range of heinous international crime committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in this massacre," said Acting Special Adviser Peyro Llopis, adding: "the report concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the killing operation at the Presidential Palace Complex was undertaken with genocidal intent in the context of an ISIL genocidal policy against Shi'as in Iraq". She also referred to the continuous and outstanding support of the Iraqi judiciary, competent Iraqi

authorities and the families of the victims to UNITAD dedicated Field Investigative Unit over the past years. A public version of the report will be published as part of commemorating the tenth anniversary of Camp Speicher Massacre, to publicize more broadly the legal findings established by UNITAD. This comes in support of the quest by the families and relatives of the victims in their pursuit of justice and accountability.

The handover of this report come as UNITAD prepares for the conclusion of the Team's mandate in September, in line with its mandate and Terms of Reference, and in accordance with the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 2697 (2023).

Commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Camp Speicher Massacre UNITAD publishes milestone report on ISIL (Da'esh)'s crimes in and around the Tikrit Presidential Palace Complex

Baghdad, 12 June 2024 - Commemorating ten years on one of the most heinous crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq, UNITAD published a milestone legal assessment report titled: "Camp Speicher: A Pattern of Mass Killing and Genocidal Intent-Legal Assessment of ISIL (Da'esh)'s crimes in and around the Tikrit Presidential Palace Complex".

This report is the public version of the comprehensive legal analysis that was handed over to the Iraqi judiciary on June 10th, 2024, alongside the package of underlying evidence, which included evidence originally collected and produced by the Team. It presents factual and preliminary legal findings on the massacre at the Tikrit Presidential Palaces Complex in Salah al-Din province, where some 1700 soldiers, cadets and volunteers, escaping from the Tikrit Air Academy, were killed between 12 and at least 14 June 2014.

These milestone findings conclude that there are reasonable grounds to believe

that the killing operation at the Presidential Palace Complex was undertaken with genocidal intent in the context of an ISIL (Da'esh) genocidal policy against the Shi'a in Iraq. It also finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the same acts amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes.

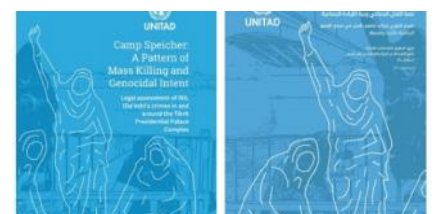
As one of the most gruesome mass killings committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq, the Tikrit Air Academy massacre formed one of UNITAD's core investigative priorities since the Team commenced its work in Iraq. This report is the fruit of close coordination and partnership between UNITAD's dedicated Field Investigative Unit and the Iraqi judiciary, competent Iraqi authorities, families of victims, and relevant civil society organizations, who all supported and facilitated this line of investigation over the past six years.

"While we mark this somber commemoration, ten years since ISIL (Da'esh) perpetrators committed this

horrific massacre, our Team presents, to the public, this report which details and analyzes what has been committed between the 12th and at least the 14th of June 2014. In this, we acknowledge the deep grief and scarring that remains in the hearts of many families, including mothers, fathers and wives. The Team is deeply grateful for their unwavering support to our investigations, and supports their continued calls for accountability," said Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Ana Peyro Llopis.

The full report can be accessed in English and in Arabic on UNITAD's website at

<https://www.unitad.un.org/content/publications>





Baghdad, 20 May 2024 - Since her arrival in Baghdad, Acting Special Adviser **Ana Peyro Llopis** has been grateful for Government of Iraq's continued support, in particular during her weekly engagements with the National Coordinating Committee, chaired by H.E. **Dr. Zaidan Khalaf Al-Atwani**, Advisor to H.E. Prime Minister of Iraq for Human Rights. Discussions have focused on the orderly closure of the Team and the completion of capacity building of national specialists over the coming weeks before 17 September 2024.

Baghdad, 21 May 2024 - In their first meeting since assuming her role as Acting Special Adviser, **Ms. Ana Peyro Llopis** discussed with H.E. **Chief Justice Faiq Zaidan**, President of Supreme Judicial Council's upcoming steps towards the conclusion of the Team's mandate, and the provision of evidence to the Iraqi Judiciary in line with UNITAD's ToRs. Ms. Peyro Llopis thanked Chief Justice Zaidan for the continued cooperation between the Team and the Iraqi Judiciary, which has been instrumental for UNITAD's investigations.

UNITAD provides a set of practical trainings for more than 30 participants from Civil Society Organizations

Baghdad, 23 May 2024 - UNITAD organized a 5-day workshop for more than 30 participants from Civil Society Organizations, providing a set of practical trainings as part of the Team's commitment to support national capacities in dealing with the magnitude of ISIL crimes. The trainings covered several areas relevant to accountability and justice efforts, including psycho-social support to victims and survivors, trauma-informed and victim centered approaches, as well as documentation and information management. The workshop brought together CSOs from across Iraq with UNITAD experts, members of the Iraqi judiciary and an international practitioner, providing a



venue to share experiences, best practices, and ideas to foster cooperation in investigating and prosecuting ISIL crimes.

UNITAD aims to intensify its capacity building initiatives in Iraq

Baghdad, 29 May 2024 - As it heads towards concluding its mandate on 17 September 2024, UNITAD aims to intensify its capacity building initiatives in Iraq, supporting national efforts to promote accountability for ISIL international crimes. Over the past weeks, UNITAD's Forensic Science Unit conducted comprehensive trainings to strengthen capabilities of Iraqi national specialists in cyber forensic techniques while maintaining chain of custody. 20 specialists took part in training sessions at Al Rusafa Central Investigation Court and Al Karkh Investigative Court in Baghdad, and the Presidency of the Nineveh Appeals



Court in Mosul. The Team also provided advanced software that enables implementing international best practices in forensics.

UNITAD and al-Alamain Institute organize a workshop titled “Cooperation between the UN and Iraq in Achieving Criminal Accountability- UNITAD’s Experience as a Model.”

Baghdad, 31 May 2024 - UNITAD and al-Alamain Institute for Graduate Studies organized a workshop titled “Cooperation between the UN and Iraq in Achieving Criminal Accountability-UNITAD’s Experience as a Model.”

This workshop concluded the joint legal lectures series, launched in 2023, as part of the program of cooperation with the Institute, which aimed to intensify exchanging expertise between UNITAD and the specialized academic community at the postgraduate level.

Bringing together senior Iraqi officials, academics, as well as community leaders, the workshop discussed several aspects of the Team’s work, including



UNITAD’s legal framework, joint case building, international cooperation for investigating international crimes, and

the use of modern technologies in investigating international crimes in Iraq.

UNITAD reflects on legacy and impact in the final phase of its mandate

Baghdad, 06 June 2024 – Acting Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh/ISIL (UNITAD) Ms. Ana Peyro Llopis briefed the United Nations Security Council on the 12th and final mandated report to the Council.

In her remarks, she emphasized ongoing cooperation with the Iraqi authorities for an orderly conclusion of the mandate by 17 September 2024, in line with Security Council resolution 2697 (2023).

Acting Special Adviser Peyro Llopis highlighted that the main priority of the Team in the final phase has been the preparation of evidence, other materials and analyses for delivery to the competent Iraqi authorities, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2379 (2017) and 2697 (2023) and the Terms of Reference, notably paragraphs 27 and 28.

To this end, Acting Special Adviser Peyro Llopis underscored the significant contribution made by the Iraqi authorities, notably the judiciary, to the evidence holdings of the Team, adding that a vast majority of this evidence was returned to the Iraqi judiciary and other Iraqi authorities in March and June, respectively. The Team continued to deliver its own materials and analyses during the reporting period, such as a new case assessment report on the Tikrit Air Academy massacre with underlying evidence, including evidence originally collected by the Team.

She also emphasized the Team’s focus



on capacity-building activities in support of the Iraqi authorities and civil society organizations in Iraq, particularly in the areas of mass grave excavations and victim identification, digitization and archiving of Da’esh-related records; digital forensics; and witness protection and support. She highlighted that “over the past six years, in cooperation with the competent Iraqi authorities, the Team has excavated 67 mass graves, digitized 18 million pages of ISIL-related paper records and extracted data from a significant number of seized ISIL digital devices”.

She also referred to the support provided by the Team, in line with its mandate, to national investigations and prosecutions in third States. She explained that this support has been conducted in cooperation with the Iraqi judiciary to address many of the 246 requests received overall by the Team from 20 third States.

Reflecting further on UNITAD’s legacy,

the Acting Special Adviser referred to the Team’s work to factually and legally assess that the acts committed by Da’esh/ISIL in Iraq between 2014 and 2017 may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. She also stressed that the evidence collected by the Team has been consolidated into one, centralized digital archive and organized in a manner that makes it easily searchable, with the chain of custody done to an international standard to maximize its possible use in judicial proceedings. She noted that these products will remain beyond the closure of the Team, and Member States, including Iraq, could consider them in the future to hold Da’esh/ISIL perpetrators accountable for the international crimes they committed in Iraq.

In relation to these holdings, Acting Special Adviser Peyro Llopis also recalled her discussions with the Iraqi authorities and the joint

UNITAD reflects on legacy and impact in the final phase of its mandate *(continued)*

acknowledgement that Iraq “would retain custody and preserve, store, and manage the original evidence in Iraq, which will have been delivered by the Team in line with the Terms of Reference”. As part of these discussions, it was also acknowledged that: “a copy of this original evidence would be kept by the United Nations Secretariat as part of its records and archives together with other evidence originally collected by the Team and other materials and analyses it has produced.”

She further noted that an integral part of the Team’s legacy has been the

personnel working with the Team, including Iraqi personnel who have been indispensable in the implementation of the mandated activities. She emphasized that “the Team has sought to develop their skillset, so that it can be utilized by Iraq going forward.”

In conclusion, Acting Special Adviser Peyro Llopis reiterated her gratitude to the competent Iraqi authorities for their support to the Team. She also referred to the work of the Team with survivors, victim families and impacted communities and acknowledged “the extent of their support, and the

contribution individuals from these communities have made by coming forward to give their account and share their horrific stories and painful memories. They are, in many ways, inseparable from the legacy of the Team, and represent the reason why accountability for the international crimes committed by Da’esh in Iraq must continue.”

Full text of the briefing of Acting Special Adviser Ana Peyro Llopis is available at

<https://www.unitad.un.org/content/statements-and-speeches>

UNITAD experts share lessons learned in establishing the Team’s witness protection models in line with international standards

Baghdad, 09 June 2024 - UNITAD’s Witness Protection and Support Unit experts conducted a 3-day training for Iraqi Ministry of Interior’s newly established national witness protection team, as part of UNITAD’s efforts to support national capacities, before the Team concludes its mandate this September.

The training focused on the fundamentals of individual threat, methods of carrying out a risk assessment, and developing a risk management plan. Iraqi counterparts actively participated in lively discussions incorporating national expertise and international best practices.

UNITAD experts shared lessons learned in establishing the Team’s witness protection models in line with international standards, and best practices from other models, reflecting on their adaption to the Iraqi context, and tools for effective implementation in Iraq.

UNITAD organizes a workshop on enhancing justice and accountability for ISIL (Da’esh)’s cultural heritage crimes

Baghdad, 11 June 2024 - Bringing together Iraqi international experts, UNITAD organized a 2-day hybrid workshop on enhancing justice and accountability for ISIL (Da’esh)’s cultural heritage crimes in Iraq; specifically ISIL (Da’esh)’s destruction of cultural heritage, its damage, misuse, confiscation and trafficking for profit.

UNITAD experts presented the Team’s work, and engaged in discussions with

university professors, Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH), in particular its Nineveh Department, Mosul Museum experts, as well as other cultural heritage experts, and Iraqi community leaders.

The Team also presented the findings of its thematic investigation into ISIL’s cultural heritage crimes, which targeted several Iraqi communities and was an attempt to destroy Iraq’s diverse cultural history.



International Day for the elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

Baghdad, 20 June 2024 - From the onset of its operation, UNITAD has been working to unravel the magnitude of sexual violence committed by ISIL (Da’esh) in Iraq, through our dedicated thematic unit investigating the sexual crimes against women, men, boys and girls. In late 2023, UNITAD published its report on the sexual violence committed by ISIL (Da’esh) in Iraq during the years 2014-2017. The report provides legal analysis of some of ISIL

(Da’esh)’s heinous crimes perpetrated against women, men, girls and boys, within the framework of international criminal law and international humanitarian law.

We take the opportunity today to express our gratitude to the victims and survivors of ISIL (Da’esh) and their fundamental support to our investigations, while highlighting the importance of victim-centered and trauma-informed approaches to

investigations, which have guided UNITAD’s work with victims and survivors.

UNITAD’s report on sexual violence committed by #ISIL (Da’esh) in Iraq can be accessed here https://www.unitad.un.org/.../scgb_report_e-report_en-.pdf



Baghdad, 14 June 2024 - Acting Special Adviser **Ana Peyro Llopis** was pleased to meet **H.E. Fuad Hussein**, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Iraq. They discussed the upcoming conclusion of the Team's mandate on 17 September 2024, in line with UNITAD's ToRs. Acting Special Adviser Peyro Llopis reiterated the Team's commitment to the implementation of relevant SC resolutions and thanked H.E. Hussein for the continued support of the Iraqi authorities. Photo courtesy of MoFA.

UNITAD provides additional equipment to the Iraqi Mass Graves Directorate

Baghdad, 23 June 2024 - To mark the completion of the second phase out of three in equipment support, UNITAD has provided additional equipment to the Iraqi Mass Graves Directorate. This equipment is crucial for supporting national experts in conducting forensic archaeology, recovering victims' remains and evidence from mass grave sites of #ISIL

(Da'esh) victims across Iraq. This support is part of UNITAD's ongoing efforts to assist Iraqi authorities by providing necessary equipment and technical expertise, as the Team concludes its mandate in close coordination with national stakeholders and the National Coordinating Committee.



UNITAD conducts the first training module for the Iraqi national team on development and utilization of modern legal technologies

Baghdad, 25 June 2024 - With a focus on capacity building of national specialists on evidence management, UNITAD conducted the first training module for the Iraqi national team on development and utilization of modern legal technologies.

This training gathered specialists from across Iraq, including KRG, who were designated by the National Coordinating Committee (NCC). It focused on evidence registration, evidence processing, open-source information, chain of custody, and legal

aspects. The second module of the training is planned to take place in the coming weeks, all in close coordination with the NCC, in accordance with UNITAD's steps towards orderly closure, and in line with its Terms of Reference.

UNITAD psychosocial experts conduct multiple training sessions for Iraqi Ministry of Health staff

Baghdad, 29 June 2024 - UNITAD Witness Protection and Support Unit's Psychosocial experts conducted multiple training sessions for Iraqi Ministry of Health staff, in the context of the program of cooperation and partnership with the Ministry, and UNITAD's commitment for an orderly conclusion of its mandate this September.

Topics of the trainings were tailored to the needs and responsibilities of the participants, ranging from generic themes of mental health to specialized trainings on cognitive behaviour therapy.

Participants included general and mental health professionals providing services in multiple Iraqi governorates, including Baghdad, Anbar, Nineveh, Salaheddine and Dohuk. National



specialists actively engaged in lively discussions incorporating national

expertise and international best practices.

Rising above distress: a mother's story of healing



Ninewa, 10 May 2024 - Nada Ahmad, a 42-year-old mother of six from Qayyarah district in Ninewa governorate, has faced tremendous challenges due to the conflict in her region. Displaced multiple times by ISIS and the subsequent liberation efforts, Nada found herself a single mother after her husband was killed during the conflict.

Reflecting on her journey, Nada shared, "We felt like outcasts! We were not accepted by the community and perceived to be associated with ISIS." This lack of support led Nada to seek refuge in the HassanSham U3 camp in Ninewa governorate, where she and her children struggled to adapt to their new reality.

"In those early days at the camp, fear and confusion clouded our daily life," Nada recalled. With two tents serving

as their shelter and food baskets for sustenance, she grappled with anger and isolation. "I was consumed by anger, haunted by past traumas and the struggle to make ends meet," she confided.

Motherhood Redefined

After learning about the parenting programme at the child protection center, Nada recognized an opportunity for change despite her struggles.

The parenting programme focuses on enhancing and strengthening parenting skills, providing psychosocial support to children, teaching coping, and healing strategies, fostering empathy and communication, and understanding children's psychosocial needs.

"I knew I needed to break free from the cycle of anger and violence that gripped our home," added Nada. Through the

programme's guidance, Nada underwent a profound transformation. "Each session brought me closer to inner peace, teaching me to communicate and engage better with my children, rather than control them," she reflected.

As Nada's understanding of parenthood evolved, it not only benefited her but also her children, reshaping her parenting skills. "Our children are like delicate blooms; with care and love, they flourish, adorning our lives with beauty," she mused. Buoyed by her own progress, Nada advocated for her children's well-being, seeking support from the center's social workers to address their emotional needs.

With the support of the child protection center, backed by UNICEF and funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, Nada and her children began to thrive. "Their laughter became the melody of our home once more, as they embraced life's joys with newfound vigour," added Nada. Through her journey, Nada embodies the transformative power of the parenting programme and the psychosocial counseling in healing people's wounds and rebuilding their shattered lives.

Note: In order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals mentioned in this story, some of the names have been altered.

By Shahad Butrus Bulbul, UNICEF Iraq

DSRSG/RC/HC Ghulam Isaczai meets with returnees in Salah al-Din

Salah al-Din, 22 May 2024 - The UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, Ghulam M. Isaczai, visited today Yathrib District in southern Salah al-Din Governorate and met with a group of the 35 internally displaced families who had recently returned from Ashti camp in Sulaymaniyah.

The families appreciated the cash assistance and other material support received from the Ministry of Migration and Displacement and local government. However, many of the returnees' families indicated that they would require more support to restart their normal lives after return. Some of them are still unable to return to their places of origin due to damaged houses and tribal issues and continue to live in tents after their return.

Mr. Isaczai acknowledged the efforts of the Government and the significant

progress made in ensuring the safe and dignified return of displaced persons and emphasized the need for more substantial support to find durable solution for the IDPs.

Mr. Isaczai also recognized the ongoing challenges that returnees face, including the need for shelters,

sustainable livelihoods, and access to essential services. The UN remains committed to supporting Iraq's efforts in overcoming these challenges and ensuring durable solutions for all IDPs through the development of a comprehensive roadmap.



Migration trends and facts in Iraq and beyond published in the World Migration Report 2024

Baghdad, 17 May 2024 - Did you know that Iraq hosts: 288,000 refugees and 1.1 million internally displaced people, making it one of the top 10 Asian countries by total refugees and asylum-seekers?

Learn more about migration trends and facts in Iraq and beyond from the World Migration Report 2024 - <https://tinyurl.com/yyfua87b>



IOM Iraq provides families a fresh start through voluntary, dignified and safe returns

Dohuk, 16 May 2024 - IOM Iraq continues to help IDPs find lasting solutions to their displacement.

Today, in collaboration with the KRG Directorate of Migration and Crisis Response in and the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement office in Duhok:

✓ 150 households in Duhok are registering to return to Sinjar.

✓ 4 facilitated return trips planned for May from Duhok camps & informal settlements.



Rania's path: turning pain into power

Ninewa, 18 May 2024 - Rania, a 14-year-old girl from Al-Baaj District in Nineveh Governorate, experienced a tumultuous period. At the age of 4, her life took a drastic turn when ISIS seized control of her region in 2014, plunging her into a frightening reality. Two years later, in 2016, she lost her father and two uncles during the conflict, bringing additional tragedy to her and the family. Subsequently, her mother left to start a new life, leaving Rania and her brother to navigate a precarious existence marked by uncertainty and upheaval.

Rania and her grandmother, aunt, brother, and six cousins, were displaced. The family's quest for safety led them to the HassanSham camp in Ninewa. All eight children, including Rania, were abandoned by their mothers. Despite the warmth that she received from her grandmother and aunt; the lingering scars of loss remained deeply embedded within Rania's heart.

"I was scared, always scared," Rania confided in a whisper memories continue to haunt her., "Even in the safety of the camp, fear lingered."

The sound of guns echoed in her mind, disrupting her sleep, and leaving her feeling perpetually isolated and anxious. Amidst the joyful chatter of other children surrounded by family, Rania remained on

the outskirts, a solitary figure observing lives filled with parents' love and warmth, which she longed for but had lost. With no friends to lean on, she found herself drifting further from her own family, seeking solace in the shadows of her own thoughts.

Healing with Psychosocial Support

One day, things changed. The Child Protection Center Mobile Team reached out to Rania's grandmother. They introduced a protection center and its programmes. Encouraged by her grandmother, Rania decided to give it a try. There, she joined the psychosocial support sessions including the recreational activities, supported by UNICEF, and funded by the USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance. Led by dedicated social workers, these sessions made her feel better. This marked the beginning of a transformative journey for Rania, as she found solace and friendship at the center, starting to smile more and participate in activities outside of her home.

Encouraged by the unwavering support of the social worker, Payman, and the center's team, she found her voice, her confidence, and her purpose. "I did not expect to reach this stage," she admitted, reflecting on the profound impact of the center on her life.



"Now, I'm in Grade 6, and those support sessions have transformed my life," Rania added. "I attend these sessions daily, even before or after school sometimes. They have helped me bond with friends, enabled me to overcome my trauma, and boosted my confidence. My grades have improved a lot as well. These sessions are my secret saviour, and made my life and school easier," added Rania with a smile. Rania's message to other girls like her was clear: "I advise all those who are going through difficult times to seek help and support... The sessions that I participate in can transform lives."

Note: To protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals mentioned in this story, some of the names have been altered.

By Shahad Butrus Bulbul, UNICEF Iraq

A family returns home after eight years of displacement



Baghdad, 22 May 2024 - Mohammad*, 37, sat in the salon of his modest home while his children, nieces, and nephews scurried about. With his brothers' families, elderly mother, and his own family under one roof, they total 15 people. The house, though in need of repairs and scant with possessions, is a blessing after eight years of displacement.

Mohammad and his family endured the throes of Daesh's invasion. Originally from Al-Ba'aj Governorate in West Ninewa, they had to flee their home, seeking safety from bombings and violence. After moving from village to village for some time, they finally settled in a displacement camp, which grew exponentially, making life unbearable for its residents.

Luckily, their life took a positive turn when they got an opportunity to return to Al-Ba'aj. While waiting for the

necessary procedures to be completed for their move, they received much-needed protection and health services from IOM while in the displacement camp. To ensure a smoother transition, IOM engaged Mohammad and his wife in livelihood workshops on sewing and welding, empowering them to earn an income and learn new skills.

"I was worried about my return – where and how would we live?" Mohammad questioned.

To help Mohammad's family cope with stress and worries, IOM offered them awareness and information sessions and further psychosocial counseling and legal assistance.

Upon returning, Mohammed moved his family into a small mud house in an informal settlement in Al-Ba'aj, where IOM met him and offered necessary services to him and his family to help them get back on their feet.

He sighed in relief as his family finally received essential civil and identity documents that allowed them to access various services, with IOM's assistance. They obtained marriage and paternity certificates, and a birth certificate for their daughter Najla* – all of which had been impossible to secure during Daesh's rule.

Now Mohammad and his family are rebuilding their lives. Relying on support from IOM's protection team, Mohammad applied for and received a government resettlement grant. It allowed him to rent a small house with his mother and cover essential expenses such as mattresses, a water tank, children's clothes, and electricity. IOM follows up monthly to ensure the family's needs are met.

"This support changed my life completely," Mohammad shared, feeling grateful for the help with civil documentation, which he couldn't afford. His daughters, including Najla, who missed school during displacement, have resumed their education with their new national ID cards.

"I am more comfortable now and no longer worried or afraid," Mohammad said.

Thanks to support from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, IOM is able to help families like Mohammad safely return or relocate from prolonged displacement. Between May 2023 and April 2024, IOM provided crucial protection and legal services to over 4,200 displaced individuals residing in informal settlements in West Ninewa, Mosul, and Kirkuk.

By Megan Giovannetti, Strategic Communications Officer, IOM

UN agencies and Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government entities participate in a workshop focused on implementing the Durable Solutions Road Map to address displacement in Iraq

Baghdad, 30 May 2024 - Representatives from UN agencies and 35 Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government entities participated in a two-day workshop focused on implementing the Durable Solutions Road Map to address displacement in Iraq. Together with the government, we are crafting #DurableSolutions to support ending displacement.



Conference on Migration Management in Iraq: challenges, opportunities and solutions

Baghdad, 8 June 2024 — Under the patronage of His Excellency Prime Minister Muhammad Shiaa Al-Sudani, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Ministry of Migration and Displaced, with support from the Government of Sweden, organized the Conference on Migration Management in Iraq: A Dialogue on Challenges, Opportunities, and Solutions.

This event brought together key stakeholders to address the complex dynamics of migration management and governance within and beyond Iraq, foster ongoing policy dialogue, and further promote whole-government and whole-society approaches to migration management.

"This conference serves as an important platform to review our progress on the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), identify challenges, and explore opportunities through enhanced cooperation between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders," Ms. Evan Faeq Jabro, the Minister of Migration and Displaced, highlighted.

The conference underscored the importance of evidence- and data-based migration management and addressed the challenges of irregular migration by, among other things, providing regular pathways for migrants. Other pillars of effective migration management policies, such as diaspora engagement and strengthened cooperation between governmental, international, and non-governmental actors, were also the focus of discussion.

"By working together, we can address the root causes of irregular migration and promote safe and orderly migration channels so that no one is left behind," said George Gigauri, IOM Iraq Chief of Mission, in his welcoming speech. "In achieving these goals, the engagement of local civil society organizations is crucial. Their inclusion in discussions and decision-making processes will ensure a more comprehensive and effective approach to migration governance."

UNAMI on X

Baghdad, 8 June 2024 - Today, at the Conference on Migration Management in Iraq, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam M. Isacgai, emphasized: "Together, we are making significant strides toward safe and orderly migration and dignified return and sustainable reintegration. Stressing collaboration between the United Nations in Iraq and the Government of Iraq under Global Compact for Migration."



"We, as the Government of Iraq and the Ministry of Migration and Displaced, have achieved many results in implementing the GCM in Iraq, and we seek more support from the international community to continue its implementation," Ms. Jabro added.

IOM commends Iraq for its dedication to improving migration management and implementing the GCM through the National Migration Management Strategy (NMMS). Since becoming a GCM Champion Country in 2021, Iraq has shown exemplary leadership, and IOM remains committed to supporting the government in achieving its migration management goals.

The Minister praised "all the support provided by the International Organization for Migration, other international communities and donors in implementing the NMMS in Iraq, which is considered the national framework for implementing the Global Compact for Migration."

The event has emphasized the collective commitment of all stakeholders to strengthen migration governance and implementation of the Global Compact. This collaborative effort will contribute significantly to the process of the regional review of the GCM in Cairo on 3-4 July 2024 and the International Migration Review Forum in 2026, shaping the regional framework for migration and the global discourse on migration governance.

The GCM, a landmark international agreement adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December

2018, known as the Marrakesh Compact on Migration, is a testament to the global commitment to facilitating safe, orderly, and regular migration while reducing the incidence of irregular migration and its negative impact through international cooperation and measures. It provides a framework for managing global migration in all dimensions, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to improving the overall benefits of migration while addressing the risks and challenges faced by individuals and communities in countries of origin, transit, and destination.

The GCM is not legally binding, but governments have a political and moral responsibility to demonstrate progress in achieving their goals. Starting in 2020, Member States are expected to report on their progress every four years at the regional level and again every four years at the global level at the International Migration Review Forum, which will be held at the UN General Assembly starting in 2022.





Baghdad, 12 June 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai**, met with Iraq Minister for Migration and Displacement (MoMD), **Ms. Evan Jabro**, to address the challenges facing IDPs as camps closure deadline looms. He acknowledged the Government's commitment to resolving protracted displacement through a roadmap focused on voluntary, safe, and dignified return and reintegration of IDP families within a practical timeframe.
Photo courtesy of MoMD.



Erbil, 13 June 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai**, met with **Mr. Alan Hama**, KRG Minister of Education. He emphasized the importance of ensuring no disruption to education for IDP children in camps, urging authorities to collaborate for sustainable solutions to uphold the right of every child to education.



Erbil, 13 June 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai**, met with **Mr. Reyber Ahmed**, KRG Minister of Interior, to follow up on the implementation of government plan for IDPs in camps. Emphasis was given to durable solutions roadmap for a voluntary, safe, and dignified return for IDPs.

Children who grew up hearing tales of Sinjar will now see it

Sinjar, 14 June 2024 - Children who grew up hearing tales of Sinjar will now see it.

Over 260 families from Kabarto, Essyan, Sheikhan, Mam-Rashan camps, and Seje site have returned home.

Ending a decade of displacement with IOM's Facilitated Voluntary Movement programme.

With funds provided by U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.



UNHCR celebrates World Refugee Day across Iraq

Baghdad, 26 June 2024 - Celebrating World Refugee Day across Iraq through the week alongside the local authorities, refugees, and partners. The events include art exhibitions, sport, cultural stage performances, food competitions, awareness sessions, and more.

Let's all show solidarity #WithRefugees for a world where they are welcomed and included.



Starting a new life is never easy

Baghdad, 21 June 2024 - Starting a new life is never easy.

Last week, thanks to U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 115 families left Khazir camp for a fresh start. Since 2020, IOM've helped 4,780 Iraqis to return home or relocate through its Facilitated Voluntary Movement Programme, ensuring their dignified and well-informed return.



IOM and U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration provide logistical support to the National Unified ID Card Directorates in Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 25 June 2024 - Yesterday, IOM and U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration provided logistical support to the National Unified ID Card Directorates in Al-Riyadh and Al-Abbasi sub-districts in Kirkuk.

It will help them issue more ID cards for displaced and returnee Iraqis, aiding the government's transition to electronic services.



A decade of resilience: Iraq's journey from conflict to recovery

Baghdad, 10 June 2024 – Daesh's genocidal campaign in 2014 in Iraq sent millions into displacement, destroyed tens of thousands of homes and vital infrastructure, and killed thousands. Ten years later, there are still challenges, but Iraq has made major strides towards full recovery. Nearly all camps for displaced persons have been closed and most of the displaced Iraqis have returned home; the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations agencies and other international NGOs has shifted to recovery and resilience support; and most recently the Iraqi Government requested an end to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI)'s mandate in Iraq by end of 2025 – a significant indicator of the progress Iraq has made towards recovery and the Iraqi Government's readiness to take full responsibility and ownership of its people.

I worked for nine of those ten years as a media and communications officer with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq; and have witnessed and documented the country's journey from active conflict to recovery. On this 10th anniversary of the invasion of the most horrific



terrorist organization in recent history, join me as I flip through my archives. Through various assignments, I photographed the magnitude of the conflict, the scale of the humanitarian response and the extent of Iraq's amazing recovery.

Among the Clouds: After Daesh attacked Sinjar in August 2014, about 50,000 Yazidis were trapped on Mount Sinjar for days without food or water before the Iraqi Army conducted airdrops by helicopter. Despite breaking the siege around mid-August 2014, thousands stayed on the mountain for years after – as pictured in this photo that I took three years into their displacement - because they

were too afraid to leave the mountain. Martyrs and Missing: Sinjar was retaken from Daesh in December the same year by Kurdish forces, but a little too late and at a very heavy price: The town was in ruins, and Daesh had committed a genocide against the Yazidi community. The faces in this photo are displayed in the school of Kocho which has been converted into a remembrance museum.

Sheep In Black: In April 2016, as the Iraqi forces built up numbers near Makhmour, south of Erbil, to launch a counteroffensive to retake Haj Ali village and Qayyarah town in preparation for the Mosul battle, Daesh set fire to all the oil wells in the area to

A decade of resilience: Iraq's journey from conflict to recovery (continued)

cover themselves from the aerial bombardments. The oilfields were aflame for months afterwards sending thick plumes of smoke into the sky that left its dark imprint on everything including these sheep. A sunny day felt like a gloomy winter afternoon. It was under these gloomy skies, after the liberation of Qayyarah, that IOM in Iraq worked night and day to set up Qayyarah camp, which received thousands of displaced persons in the following months. I could feel the air and the ground tremble and shake with every airstrike in the distance. One rocket fell within a few hundred meters from us during a needs assessment mission, where IOM's technical teams were determining the grounds for a the construction of a second camp, Haj Ali.

Racing Against the Clock: When the Iraqi forces launched the counteroffensive for Mosul in 2016, there was nowhere in the governorate to shelter the two million people that had been displaced by the fighting. IOM was tasked with the construction of Qayyara camp, which was only partially completed when the fighting reached Mosul's suburbs in Gogjali. I was at Qayyarah camp when thousands of IDPs arrived from the frontlines in dozens of buses. They looked exhausted, frightened, and malnourished after more than two years of living under the horrors of Daesh occupation. Every person that walked into the camp had a heartbreaking tragic story to tell. I heard so many horrific stories it was impossible to imagine how anyone put one step in front of the other to find refuge. It took a heavy emotional toll on me as well.

An Airstrip of People: Qayyarah camp was previously an abandoned military airstrip, and ran across one end of the camp to the other. It was used for the camp management offices and for daily distributions of humanitarian assistance. As far as the eye could see, there were rows and rows of tents, and a sea of people on the runway. I wanted to highlight the sheer scale of the camp, could not fly my drone to get the best shot. Flying drones over the camp was prohibited by the Iraqi authorities because Daesh had been using them to drop bombs on the Iraqi forces. Instead, I used the only possible solution available and climbed onto the roof of a nearby fuel tanker.



Subsequently, Qayyarah camp would become the largest in Iraq with 60,000 individuals at its peak.

Ghost Town: Months of intense fighting between Iraqi forces and Daesh in Mosul left the city in ruins. The first time I visited West Mosul after it's fall, the amount of destruction sent shivers down my spine; it looked like a ghost town. In early April 2017, a UN Habitat damage assessment reported that 1,140 housing sites were destroyed in West Mosul.

Fallen Comrades: Victory over Daesh came at the high cost of over 10,000 civilian deaths from the Mosul battle alone, with several thousand of the Iraqi and Kurdish forces dead.

Exposed to Elements: For years after the Daesh conflict, hundreds of thousands of people could not return to their homes due to destruction and security concerns. Making matters worse, there were not enough camps in the country to accommodate the six million people displaced due to the war. Many people such as these women in Tikrit, Salah al-Din Governorate, that I visited in 2018 during an assessment mission with IOM's shelter team, had to live in dangerous conditions in unfinished or damaged buildings; exposed to the heat of the summer, the cold of the winter and anything that could crawl through the windowless, and doorless crumbling buildings.

Resilience in Henna: Despite the atrocities that many internally displaced persons had seen, the resilience of the Iraqi people has always been inspiring. These little girls may not have seen a new set of clothes in years, but were excited for Eid celebrations in Haj Ali camp, applying henna on their hair for its red highlights. Some lucky others found love and tied the knot in the camp.

Turn of Events: As if living in the

camps was not difficult enough, heavy rainfalls in the winter of 2018 caused flooding in parts of Qayyarah and Jedda camps. I went to document the damage the following day and was walking in ankle-deep sediments from the floods. The families told me the flood level was more than knee-deep, which had damaged all their belongings completely. IOM deployed Rapid Assessment and Response Teams within hours after the floods to assess the situation and distribute new items such as blankets, mattresses, heaters, kitchenware, and clothing to the affected families.

Rising Again: Shortly after the announcement of victory over Daesh, Iraq took a significant step towards recovery by launching The National Development Plan 2018-2022, aspiring to become a developed country, both economically and politically. IOM Iraq launched the Enterprise Development Fund (EDF) in 2019, designed to support livelihoods and rapid job creation by revitalizing the private sector and contributing to economic development. Since then, the EDF has provided financing to over 2,400 small and medium enterprises across Iraq through helping to create over 11,000 new jobs.

Homecoming: By 2019, tens of thousands of displaced families, as seen in this photo from Haj Ali camp, had left the camp and returned home. By September of the same year, Haj Ali, Al Salamiya and some other camps were officially closed due to extensive returns. While excitement and joy took over the scene for the returning families, one man in Amriyat Al Fallujah camp who was choosing to stay in the camp summarized his family's situation for me, which would apply to thousands of others as well: They had no reason to return home because his home in west Anbar was destroyed,

A decade of resilience: Iraq's journey from conflict to recovery *(continued)*

infrastructure was destroyed, there was no public services, and his children would not be able to go to school.

Never Again: Violent extremism in Iraq had left tens of thousands of victims and extensive damage to the infrastructure across the country, as well as disruption of services. In 2019, Iraq launched the National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism to prevent violent extremism in the future. Many international and local NGOs joined hands towards this goal. In 2020, IOM launched Wasl Civil Society Fund that was set up to support 41 local civil society organizations to deliver 50 projects to catalyze community-ed initiatives that address drivers of instability, displacement, and violent extremism.



One of those NGOs is Young Messengers, who led the construction of a monument at the entrance of Shoura Town, south of Mosul. As seen in the background of this photo, young men are celebrating its unveiling in 2024, by which time Iraq had also designated 12th February as the International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism, approved by the UN General Council in December 2022.

The Landmark Law: Gulan survived the Daesh genocide because she was deemed too old to be kidnapped as a sex slave. Her two sons and husband were taken by Daesh and never heard of again. When I visited her in 2021 in Sharia camp, Duhok Governorate, she lived alone in her tent. She was quiet, spoke in hushed tones, and her eyes carried a deep sorrow. A few old mattresses and blankets, an old air cooler, and some plastic kitchenware was all she had. She held on to this broken sewing machine, sitting in the middle of her tent. Her son had bought it for her many years ago and she could not part from it, even

though it wasn't functional anymore. Gulan was one of thousands of survivors of Daesh genocide who had been waiting for reparations or some sort of support from the government for many years. In March 2021, the Iraqi parliament passed the Yazidi Survivors Law (YSL), which established a framework for the provision of financial support and other forms of reparations to survivors, including a monthly salary, a plot of land, access to health and mental health services. Survivors apply for the reparations through an online portal; applications are reviewed and approved by a panel at the Directorate General for Survivors Affairs (DGSA) set up by the Iraqi government specifically for that purpose. IOM Iraq provided technical support and capacity building

through the process from the review of the draft law to its implementation.

Heartbroken, But Healing: Over the years, many of the mass graves containing the victims of Daesh genocide have been unearthed, the exhumed remains are identified and returned to Sinjar, and laid to rest in Solagh Memorial Cemetery. I have been to two of these reburials over the years, and they are always emotionally overwhelming, but their homecoming provides closure for thousands of family members whether they knew of the fate of their loved ones or not. It is an important part in the collective healing of the Yazidi community, who have suffered incalculable losses during under the genocidal occupation of Daesh.

Towards Durable Solutions: An empty camp in Amriyat Al Fallujah - the last of camp of Anbar Governorate was closed in 2022. And as of 2023, through IOM's Facilitated Voluntary Movement (FVM) hundreds of families have registered, returned to their homes or relocated

to new areas. IOM provides transportation, and upon return shelter rehabilitation support, livelihoods support, and more to support durable solutions for the remaining displaced persons who were unable to return home in the previous years.

Good Tidings: In March 2023, the Iraqi society woke up to the news of survivors of Daesh genocide receiving their first batch of benefits under the Yazidi Survivors Law (YSL), which included a monthly salary paid to them by the DGSA through debit cards, displayed here by Sadam, a survivor, during a ceremony held at the DGSA in Mosul. Since then, the DGSA has worked to expand the reparations to include all survivors of genocide, including from the Christian, Shabak, and Turkmen communities. Sadam told me after the ceremony that receiving reparations makes them feel like the government is taking full ownership of them and is there to support them.

Memorializing the Genocide: In October 2023, the Yazidi Genocide Memorial was inaugurated to honor the Yazidi victims of genocide. The ceremony was a very emotional moment for the community: partly because it was the first time the Yazidis had a dedicated space to collectively mourn their dead; and partly because the memorial itself is built around a mass grave known as the "Mothers Grave". This is where Daesh executed and buried more than 90 elderly Yazidi women in an unfinished swimming pool that was meant to be for the community's youth center. There were many survivors whose mothers were killed and buried in that mass grave - now at the center of the memorial - including Nobel Laureate Nadia Murad's own mother. IOM constructed the memorial with support from Nadia's Initiative and USAID.

The Silent Enemy: In parallel to the Daesh conflict in Iraq, another silent enemy was also working in the background and contributing to displacement in Iraq: climate change. With the scale of the Daesh conflict, the Government of Iraq did not have the capacity to tackle this enemy. It was an eerie feeling watching Adnan, during an assignment in southern Iraq, walk through the graveyard of his palm trees in Al-Bihar district of Basra Governorate in southern Iraq.

A decade of resilience: Iraq's journey from conflict to recovery *(continued)*

Adnan told me many farmers in the region had to sell their land and relocate to other places because the salty seawater creeping up from the gulf had been destroying everything along its path. According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix more than 140,000 individuals have been displaced due to climate change since 2018.

Tackling the Silent Enemy: In recent years, the Government of Iraq has been working with UN agencies and international organizations, including IOM to implement programming to reverse the impact or develop mitigating measures and adapting mechanisms such as smart agriculture. Moreover, different local stakeholders including governmental sectors and

civil society organizations came together in 2023 to develop Iraq's first Annual Plan for Climate Change and Health and Migration, and the first Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Plan for Thi-Qar governorate.

By Raber Aziz, Media and Communications Officer, IOM Iraq

Humanitarian

2024 Humanitarian Transition Overview: Iraq's journey towards sustainable solutions

Baghdad, 30 June 2024 – On behalf of the Humanitarian Country Team, the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Iraq has published the Humanitarian Transition Overview (HTO) for 2024. The overview provides an in-depth summary of Iraq's humanitarian efforts throughout 2023, highlighting significant advancements in the country's journey towards sustainable solutions.

Under the leadership of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, the HTO was developed through extensive consultations with Humanitarian actors and the government of Iraq to identify critical humanitarian gaps and challenges that require continuing attention. It emphasizes achievements under the Durable Solutions framework, showcasing notable progress in enhancing local capacity and governance within humanitarian sectors.

In 2023, the focus shifted towards transferring humanitarian operations and coordination responsibilities to

Iraq's line ministries and the Kurdistan Regional Government. This transition began with the deactivation of the Humanitarian Cluster system in December 2022 and has since evolved into sector coordination and working groups jointly led with relevant ministries. At the sub-national level, Joint Coordination Forums have been established in five conflict affected governorates to facilitate interactions between humanitarian/development entities and local government.

"The transition underscores Iraq's increasing leadership in humanitarian sectors which is supported by UN technical guidance and NGO expertise—all geared towards finding durable solutions to humanitarian challenges," remarked Ghulam M. Isaczai, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq. The UN and partners reaffirm their commitment to addressing remaining humanitarian needs and ensuring dignified, safe, and voluntary solutions for displaced people.

For detailed insights into Iraq's



humanitarian transition progress, the Humanitarian Transition Overview is now accessible on ReliefWeb using this link:

<https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraq-humanitarian-transition-overview-2024-june-2024>

UN-Habitat supports relevant departments with capacity-building activities to ensure that local authorities are fully equipped to issue title deeds (tapoos)

Baghdad, 28 April 2024 - 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 formalise the Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights for the residents of Sinjar. With the support of Mr. Khalaf Sinjari, the Advisor to the Prime Minister for Yazidi Affairs, and Dr. Ali Fawzi, Head of the Legal Department in the Council of

Ministers, the Executive Committee discussed the progress of implementing the legal decree. In this journey to establishing security of tenure for the residents of Sinjar, UN-Habitat will support relevant departments at both central and local level with capacity-building activities to ensure that local authorities are fully equipped to issue title deeds (tapoos) across all 11 mujamaats in Sinjar.



Training of trainers on financial education to empower youth and entrepreneurs in Southern Iraq, with support from Italy



Erbil, 02 May 2024 - The training, held from April 21st to April 25th, 2024, in Erbil, Iraq, aims to equip future trainers with knowledge in financial management topics to enhance the financial skills of young people and entrepreneurs. Funded by Italy through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), this initiative falls under an ILO program to improve institutional and MSMEs capacities through the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) Programme and promote financial literacy in Iraq. The training is conducted in collaboration with the ILO's Social Finance Programme (SFP), utilizing financial education tools adapted for the Iraqi context.

Twenty trainers from various sectors, including the Central Bank of Iraq,

banking, microfinance institutions, the Iraqi Company for Banking Guarantee, NGOs, universities business development centers, private business service providers, as well as freelance trainers, attended the five-day training held in Erbil.

This training is linked to the upcoming Financial Inclusion Week, scheduled from 27 April to 2 May, with this year's slogan: 'Towards Encouraging Savings to Enhance Financial Inclusion', which the project is launching in the south of Iraq in collaboration with the Central Bank of Iraq.

The training introduces participants to various concepts aimed at enhancing knowledge and skills in financial management, including setting smart financial goals, managing money wisely, creating budgets to ensure

prudent debt management, choosing savings products, establishing good relationships with financial institutions, and understanding insurance products.

Participants will have the opportunity to become certified ILO trainers by fulfilling a series of criteria, including the rollout of pieces of training to target beneficiaries in the Governorates of Basra and Muthanna in southern Iraq. Subsequently, Training of Beneficiaries (ToBs) will target 500 youth and entrepreneurs referred through the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training and those interested in accessing financial services through partner financial institutions.

This initiative falls under the project "Towards more and better employment through enhanced support to private sectors in southern Iraq – with a focus on green business". Led by the ILO and supported by AICS, the project aims to enhance support for private sector development and decent job creation in Southern Iraq. This includes promoting sustainable green businesses and providing access to financial services for young women, men, and small businesses to start and develop their own ventures while improving private sector capacity to address the needs of youth and MSMEs.

Startups and inventors receive grants and technical support from IOM's Enterprise Development Fund to expand, fueling local economies

Baghdad, 03 May 2024 - 53 startups and inventors from Erbil, Dohuk, Mosul, Baghdad, Sulaymaniyah pitched ideas and built connections during networking events organized by IOM.



They will receive grants and technical support from IOM's Enterprise Development Fund to expand, fueling local economies.

Startup ecosystem, digital transformation and challenges of young entrepreneurs were in focus of discussions among partners and interested startups who attended the events.

IOM's Enterprise Development Fund (EDF) is an innovative programme that supports livelihoods at the community level through private sector revitalization and economic development by targeting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Iraq.

The EDF provides financial capital to SMEs in primary, secondary, and tertiary economic sectors with a high demand for labour, with the objective of post-conflict economic recovery and

inclusive economic development. Concurrently, targeting key sectors and businesses with the greatest potential to create jobs, the EDF encourages rapid and large-scale job creation.

SMEs are limited by a lack of access to finance in Iraq. War, economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic have all contributed to destruction and loss of infrastructure and economy, worsened by the fact that finances to rebuild and recover are severely restricted for the affected SMEs. The EDF addresses this critical gap which limits the capacity for businesses to expand and hire new workers. Considering that 60 per cent of jobs in Iraq are concentrated in the private sector and that the public sector is unable to absorb new entrants to the economy, a focus on SMEs remains critical for the development of Iraq.

This activity is supported by the German Embassy Baghdad.

Financial literacy for a sustainable future in Iraq

Al-Muthanna, 02 May 2024 – The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Central Bank of Iraq (CBI), with the support of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), are partnering to empower individuals and businesses in southern Iraq with financial literacy skills. A week-long initiative kicked off in Al-Muthanna governorate this week aligns with the CBI's broader Financial Inclusion Week activities for 2024, themed "Towards Encouraging Savings to Enhance Financial Inclusion."

The initiative builds upon the ongoing collaboration between the ILO, AICS and the government of Iraq to promote decent work, green jobs and a sustainable future in the south, under the ILO project "Towards More and Better Employment through Enhanced Support to Private Sectors in Southern Iraq – with a Focus on Green Business."

"Financial inclusion is essential for building a more sustainable and inclusive future for all," said Maha Kattaa ILO country coordinator in Iraq. "Through this collaboration with AICS and the CBI, we are empowering people in southern Iraq, particularly youth and women, with the financial literacy skills they need to save, invest, and grow green businesses, which contributes to enhancing economic development and creating decent job opportunities for all," Kattaa added.

AICS, Italy's development cooperation agency, attaches great importance to financial inclusion for building a sustainable and inclusive future. Its support allows the programme to equip individuals and businesses with the knowledge and tools needed to fully participate in the financial system. This financial literacy empowers them to save, invest, and foster innovation, particularly for green businesses critical for a sustainable future in southern Iraq. The Central Bank of Iraq works to empower individuals and businesses to access banking services through a variety of channels, including digital applications and online services, to facilitate daily financial transactions smoothly and efficiently. The bank also encourages the use of electronic payment tools, such as bank cards and electronic wallets, to achieve rapid and effective financial integration.

Hussein Abdul Amir Jabbar, Director of the Financial Inclusion Department



at the Central Bank of Iraq, said: "The bank is committed to expanding financial inclusion across Iraq, aiming to reach different segments of society. He emphasized that the Central Bank of Iraq focuses during the Arab Financial Inclusion Week activities on raising awareness about financial banking services and educating individuals on how to manage their money effectively, including access to banking services and how to use them."

He added: "This awareness of the optimal use of banking services contributes to achieving individual financial empowerment and enhancing economic growth at the level of the Iraqi economy as a whole. The ILO initiative in the southern provinces aligns with the Central Bank of Iraq's goals of strengthening financial culture and empowering individuals and businesses to manage their financial affairs efficiently and effectively. This year's slogan reaffirms the bank's commitment to building a sustainable and strong financial system in Iraq, enabling everyone to participate in economic activity and benefit from it."

The Financial Inclusion Week in the south of Iraq featured a variety of activities, including:

- **Training of Trainers:** Local experts will be equipped to deliver financial literacy workshops with a focus on green business practices using the ILO's Financial Education Tool.

- **Awareness Sessions:** University students, graduates, small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) owners, youth involved with the Ministry of Youth, and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and men and women interested in starting or owning businesses will benefit from sessions highlighting the importance of financial inclusion, savings,

responsible financial management, and sustainable business practices.

- **Online Session:** Young Iraqi representatives who participated in the COP28 conference will gain valuable insights on integrating financial literacy with green business practices through a dedicated online session, who can also reach out their peers with this information on FI and green business.

- **Project Activities Information:** Participants can access information about project activities, which encompass training on ILO tools such as SIYB (Start and Improve Your Business), green business practices, financial education, and assistance with accessing finance. During the Financial Inclusion Week, attendees can learn more about these activities and register their interest.

More than 500 young men and women took part in the events of Financial Inclusion Week in southern Iraq. The activities spanned eight sessions across the Basra and Muthanna governorates in collaboration with the University of Basra, the University of Muthanna, the Southern Technical University, the Chambers of Industry in Basra and Muthanna, the Directorate of Youth and Sports in Basra and Muthanna, the Vocational Training Center in Basra, and Siraj Al-Maarifa Company., where these activities contributed to:

- Increased awareness of the benefits of financial inclusion and green business practices.

- Improved financial literacy and knowledge among target groups, particularly regarding sustainable finance.

- Increased savings and investment in southern Iraq, with a focus on green businesses.

- Growth of small businesses and green entrepreneurship in the region.

A push to start recovery in Latifiya, Baghdad



Baghdad, 05 May 2024 - After years of conflict and displacement, the residents of Latifiya, 35 kilometers south of Baghdad, are scripting tales of resilience and determination. Through the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq, individuals like Omer Jamal Ubaid, Salam Khadum Mehana, and Ali Abbas Talib are forging brighter futures for themselves and their families. Through a grant provided by IOM's Individual Livelihoods Assistance program (ILA), combined with a tailored approach to provide individuals with the skills and resources they need to succeed, their lives have been transformed.

Omer Jamal Ubaid, a former construction worker and a father of five, was displaced from his village during the 2014 attack by Daesh. Upon his return to Latifiya in 2017, he seized the opportunity provided by IOM's grant to embark on a new venture. With the support of his family and a \$2000 grant, Omer bought a motorbike and now works transporting goods for shops and assisting families with their shopping needs. Reflecting on his journey, Omer shares, "the financial

assistance not only brings happiness to my family but also fulfills and satisfies me".

Supported by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), IOM's Individual Livelihoods Assistance programme (ILA) has been a lifesaver for many Iraqis trying to restart their lives after many years of displacement and unemployment.

"As a long-standing partner of IOM, KOICA's vision is to realize universal values and create mutual prosperity for the people of Iraq" shares Mr. Lee Sunghoon, Country Director, KOICA Iraq. "The Individual Livelihoods Assistance programme is one such investment by the Government of Korea that is revolutionizing the lives of everyday Iraqis".

Salam Khadum Mehana, a father of four, decided to leverage his entrepreneurial spirit by expanding his grocery store. With the aid of the IOM grant, as well as trainings in business development, Salam learned finances and accounting to manage his business. He also purchased freezers and refrigerators to extend the shelf life of his produce and dairy products.

Ali Abbas Talib, the sole-breadwinner

of his family, was also displaced in 2014, limiting his access to education. With IOM's grant, Ali opened a grocery store, in line with the high demand for household products, basic necessities, and food items within Latifiya's Shakha 3 community. The program takes into consideration the skills of all participants at the application stage to ensure success of their businesses. As Ali and others navigate the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction, ILA comes as a boost in the journey of their recovery.

"Omer, Salam and Ali are just three of over 18,000 individuals in Iraq that have benefitted from the transformative support of ILA grants," shares Giorgi Gigauri, Chief of Mission, IOM Iraq. "Nearly 90 per cent of the households that benefitted from the grants have reported an increase in their monthly income, giving them some financial stability and a much-needed breather after years of displacement".

Collaborating since 2021, IOM and KOICA support economic recovery and job creation programmes in Iraq, with an special focus on access to livelihoods, employment and durable solutions for IDPs. KOICA's support focuses on two flagship interventions implemented by IOM in the country: the Individual Livelihoods Assistance (ILA), which provides beneficiaries with vocational trainings and grants for the creation of microbusinesses, as well as the Enterprise Development Fund (EDF), which facilitates seed funding to businesses across Iraq to encourage job creation.

By Saad Meriwani, Senior communication assistant, IOM

UN-Habitat with the Government of Iraq supports the acceleration of the new law that will improve, include, and sustainably transform informal settlements in Iraq

Baghdad, 08 May 2024 - UN-Habitat is collaborating with the Government of

Iraq to support the acceleration of the new law that will improve, include, and

sustainably transform informal settlements in Iraq.



A workshop held on 8th May 2024 in Baghdad, funded by the European Union, brought together several ministries and relevant institutions to enhance the policy dialogue on the law instrument on informal settlements.

This activity will be followed by a series of policy dialogues, designed to increase knowledge-based decisions to effectively address the key challenges related to the new law and promote inclusive urban development, thereby enhancing people's lives.



Salah al-Din, 22 May 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, and Salah al-Din Governor, **Mr. Badr Mahmoud Al-Jubouri**, launched the Salah al-Din Joint Coordination Forum. This platform aims to improve coordination between local government and development partners.



Salah al-Din, 22 May 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), **Mr. Ghulam Isaczai**, met with Salah al-Din Governor, **Mr. Badr Mahmoud Al-Jubouri**, today and congratulated him on his appointment as Governor. Their discussions focused on enhancing cooperation on provision of immediate support and services to newly returned IDPs in the Governorate.

UN-Habitat representatives discuss with the Governor of Ninewa new social housing project



Mosul, 24 May 2024 - During a visit to Mosul, Muslim Qazimi, Head of UN-

Habitat Iraq, and Ryosuke Teraoka, Head of the UN-Habitat Kurdistan

Region of Iraq Office, met with Mr. Abdul Qader Al-Dakhil, Governor of Ninewa, to discuss the ongoing collaboration and the new social housing project, Japan Village, in Rajm Hadeed, Mosul.

Funded by the Government of Japan, the project is attracting unprecedented partnerships such as UN-Habitat, Japanese private sector and Ninewa governorate to provide essential infrastructure and green spaces.

This initiative aims to provide housing, improve living conditions and support sustainable return for vulnerable people of Mosul, after prolonged hardship.

The power of small businesses in Iraq

Baghdad, 30 May 2024 - In Iraq, where the national poverty rate can reach up to 50 per cent in some governorates, and unemployment rates hover around 15 per cent, small and medium-sized businesses are a key component of economic development.

Years of conflict have left many families in dire straits, with financial struggles threatening their food security and overall well-being.

Saliha, a resident of Mosul and a participant of the Individual Livelihoods Assistance (ILA) programme managed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq, shares her experience: "There were times when if we had lunch, we wouldn't have dinner that same day".

Saliha is like many women in Iraq who have been driven into poverty by the Daesh conflict.

Having lost her husband and son

during the Daesh conflict, she is now responsible for caring for the rest of her family, including her son's family.

Saliha learned about IOM's ILA



The power of small businesses in Iraq *(continued)*



programme from other participants and decided to apply. The programme aims to equip participants with necessary skills and provides a small grant to launch or expand business and other income-generating activities, fostering sustainable livelihoods.

After participating in livelihoods trainings on how to start, develop and manage a business, Saliha opened a small shop in her neighborhood in Mosul. This shop now provides for her and her family, helping them move away from the hardships of the past. Saliha also joined mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) sessions, which helped her in navigating past difficulties and build resilience. Saliha's story is one of 20,000 other success stories of determined Iraqis who have received a push-start to their businesses through ILA across Iraq since 2018.

Similarly, Zikrah from Mosul lost her husband during the conflict and faced severe financial challenges. Struggling with extreme poverty, she had to work at a local shop for a long time, earning less than the minimum wage. It was during this period when she first enrolled in IOM's Graduation Approach (GA) programme.

GA is a sequenced and time-bound programme that addresses the

multidimensional nature of poverty. To help people like Zikrah battle extreme poverty and build sustainable livelihoods, the programme provides holistic support based on four pillars: livelihoods promotion, financial inclusion, social protection and social empowerment.

The GA programme marked a turning point in Zikrah's life. With the GA's consumption grant she met her family's basic needs, being able to focus on learning new skills to build a more resilient future. Equipped with insights from various livelihood and financial literacy trainings, Zikrah gained essential skills to manage her own business. She also joined MHPSS peer-support group sessions and individual counseling to improve her mental health. Throughout her one-year GA journey, Zikrah has received continuous guidance through monthly coaching sessions and individual business mentoring.

"I knew a lot of the basics of the business," shares Zikrah, "but working with the mentor helped me build skills in new areas." said Zikrah.

After a year of participation, Zikrah received a business support grant that allowed her to open her own home-based sweets factory. She now crafts a variety of sweets, supplying local shops and catering for events such as birthday parties and weddings.

Economic development and recovery can also be addressed at a higher level by supporting the expansion of small and medium businesses (SMEs).

Former engineer Marwa is a young entrepreneur from Baghdad, running an innovative business that turns food waste into potting soil for plant

nurseries across Iraq. To expand her green business and promote sustainability, she applied for IOM's Enterprise Development Fund (EDF) Green, aimed at creating new jobs and expanding businesses.

"It's not food waste; it's wasted valuable currency," Marwa says confidently. With the grant, Marwa plans to expand her business, open four new jobs, improve irrigation in her recently opened plant nursery and expand packaging.

The other programs under EDF are EDF-Agriculture, EDF-Culture, EDF-Women, and EDF-Innovation. Thus, EDF supports businesses in different areas, helping create more jobs, ensuring a stable income and building a stronger, more resilient economy.

Since 2018, EDF has supported over 2,600 businesses across Iraq, resulting in the creation of nearly 12,000 new jobs and the improvement of nearly 14,000 existing jobs. Additionally, the EDF program has supported more than 600 women-owned businesses and a total of over 4,100 women in 15 governorates across various sectors. This support includes the creation of more than 2,300 new jobs and the enhancement of more than 1,800 existing jobs.

On all the different stages of creating new jobs, starting a small business, and behind every job opportunity is a story of a family taking steps towards financial sustainability, securing food, and education for their children. Many Iraqis face financial hardships, struggling to find gainful employment. However, with the right support and approach, it can be resolved.

By IOM Iraq Public Info.

UN-Habitat holds a workshop in Sinjar on the legal framework on HLP rights

Sinjar, 26 May 2024 - Access to Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights and the compensation

mechanism is key to achieving durable solutions for IDPs and returnees.

UN-Habitat held a workshop in Sinuni,

Sinjar, where participants enhanced their knowledge of the legal framework on HLP rights, guided by both international and Iraqi laws. Key stakeholders, including local government officials, NGOs, and community leaders, exchanged information and discussed mechanisms to improve HLP rights for IDPs and returnees in the Sinjar area.

This activity was part of the "Policy Dialogue on Legislative Reform to Improve Land Governance and Secure Tenure Rights" project, funded by the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands through LAND-at-Scale, to build resilience and ensure justice for all Iraqis.



The Head of UN-Habitat Iraq Programme meets with Basra's First Deputy Governor, discuss affordable housing

Basra, 03 June 2024 - The Head of UN-Habitat Iraq Programme recently met with Basra's First Deputy Governor, Mr. Zaid Moa'yad Al Emara, to discuss the ongoing progress of the work on upgrading informal settlements and also the potential collaboration on the affordable housing, and promoting sustainable urban principles in Basra Governorate.



Basra Urban Geoportal fully operational

Basra, 10 June 2024 - UN-Habitat held the final workshop for Basra's Governorate and Municipality officials, marking the full operationalization of the Basra Urban Geoportal.

Developed with the European Union's support, the geoportal enhances urban governance by integrating geospatial data on land use, infrastructure, environment, and demographics.

This tool is essential for addressing complex urban issues, especially in informal settlements, improving living conditions, and promoting sustainable development.



Government of Iraq and UN Iraq convene second Joint Steering Committee meeting

Baghdad, 06 June 2024 - The Government of Iraq and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Iraq convened the annual meeting of the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) of the UN Cooperation Framework (2020-2024) at the Ministry of Planning in Baghdad today. The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Mohammed Tamim, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning, and Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq.

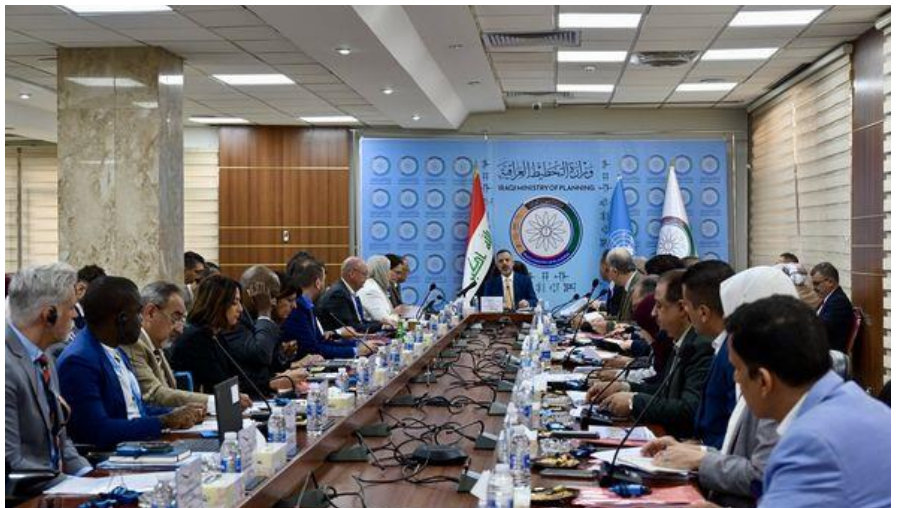
The Joint Steering Committee which provides strategic oversight and direction for the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), brought together over 50 representatives from the UN agencies, funds and programmes as well as senior government officials from relevant ministries and national institutions. The purpose was to reflect on collective achievements, challenges, and lessons learned during the implementation of the UN Cooperation

Framework in 2023.

The UN Annual Results Report for 2023 was also presented at the meeting. Reflecting on a recent independent evaluation of the current Framework and findings, participants further discussed the results and lessons learned to inform the design of

the new UNSDCF 2025-2029.

Addressing the session, H.E. Mohammed Tamim expressed appreciation to the UNCT for their work in preparing the Cooperation Framework and expressed gratitude to the Government offices and other stakeholders for their contributions for



Government of Iraq and UN Iraq convene second Joint Steering Committee meeting *(continued)*

the collective achievements. He emphasized the importance of national ownership of the Framework to reflect the priorities and aspirations of the Government.

In his part, Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai thanked the Government for its

support and engagement in the implementation process. He further highlighted the importance of partnership with government institutions as well as international development partners which have generously funded implementation of

the Cooperation Framework responding to national development priorities and achievement of the SDGs.

The text of the opening remarks by DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai at this event is available at <https://bit.ly/4e7i3P5>

UNDP delivers a GIS training course for the Iraq Ministry of Electricity

Baghdad, 11 June 2024 - Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are tools for analyzing spatial data and making informed decisions. As part of our support to the energy transition of Iraq, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recently delivered a GIS training course for the Iraq Ministry of Electricity, with the Embassy of the UK in Iraq and the Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RCREEE).



UNAMI Development Support Office conducts consultations on the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2025-2029

Baghdad, 12 June 2024 - In June 2024, the Development Support Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) conducted consultations on the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2025-2029. This framework serves as the partnership agreement between the UN system and the Government of Iraq, specifically tailored to meet the unique developmental needs and priorities. In Erbil, Basra, Kirkuk and Mosul, regional and local government officials, UN agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Civil Society had an opportunity to contribute their insights, underscoring the importance of local input in refining the UN's strategic direction in Iraq.



Erbil, 13 June 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai, met with Mr. Dara Rashid, KRG Minister of Planning. They discussed KRG's engagement with the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework process and the support provided by the UN in Iraq for the upcoming census.

The "By Iraqi Hands" label is already in Iraqi supermarkets

Baghdad, 14 June 2024 - The "By Iraqi Hands" label, launched at the second Iraq National Trade Forum in Baghdad, is already in Iraqi supermarkets. This label is dedicated to promoting locally-made products and supporting hardworking local producers. Very soon, "By Iraqi Hands" will be in major supermarkets, markets, and retailers across Iraq. The "By Iraqi Hands" label is more than just a logo; it's a symbol of pride, quality, and heritage. The label represents a commitment to celebrating the best of Iraqi-made products, encouraging consumers to choose locally sourced products, and supporting the country's food industry. At its core, the label embodies:

✔Promoting local products: It is a call to support local farmers, producers, and manufacturers, thus contributing to the growth of the Iraqi economy.

✔Quality and authenticity: With the "By Iraqi Hands" label, consumers can have confidence in the quality and authenticity of the products they buy. It is a mark of excellence that reassures buyers about the origin of items and compliance with the strictest standards.

✔Preservation of cultural heritage: Iraqi cuisine reflects the country's history and culture. This label preserves and promotes the local traditions, enabling them to be passed down from generation to generation.



“By Iraqi Hands” label in Geneva!

Geneva, 27 June 2024 - Yesterday, members of the Joint Advisory Group (JAG) had the chance to taste high-quality dates from the “By Iraqi Hands” label at the 58th annual session held at the World Trade Organization in Geneva, reports ITC.

“By Iraqi Hands” is a label dedicated to promoting and supporting Iraqi-made products, empowering local producers, artisans, and farmers. And you, are you supporting local producers?

Read more about the label: <https://intracen.org/news-and-events/news/celebrating-iraqs-finest-food-the-by-iraqi-hands-label>

This initiative is proudly funded by the European Union.



Together for a more beautiful and cleaner Anbar!

Anbar, 19 June 2024 - UNDP Iraq is thrilled to announce the provision of 7 street-cleaning sweeper trucks to the Anbar Governorate. These trucks will significantly enhance the provision of municipality services for over 300,000 Iraqis across 6 directorates in Anbar: Anah, Al-Qaim, Al-Karabla, Al-Obaidi, Barwanah, and Haditha.

Through this USAID Iraq-funded initiative, we are making strides in Anbar's development and responding to the urgent needs of the municipality sector, especially during the summer months.

This initiative supports the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG11 for inclusive, resilient cities.

Let's build a sustainable future for Iraqis together!



The Embassy of Japan in Iraq, Ninewa Governorate, and UN-Habitat have laid the foundation stone for a new social housing project for returnees in Mosul



Mosul, 25 June 2024 – Following the high-level Round Table Meeting with key stakeholders, including Ambassador Futoshi Matsumoto and Governor Abdulqadir al-Dakhil, the foundation stone for the Japan Village Project was laid in Mosul. The project will provide housing for around 50 households with approximately 350 beneficiaries, focusing on the most vulnerable returnees, particularly female-led households and people with disabilities. Additionally, the project will build capacity on the construction skills and work experience of 100 unemployed youths, including more than 40 females, and enhance the capacity of up to 1,000 individuals to address climate-related challenges.

Mr. Futoshi Matsumoto, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq said “Japan has been standing by all the people of Mosul (Moslaween). We have been strongly

supporting IDPs in their most difficult time in inveh Governorate. Providing low-cost housings through UN-Habitat to more than 3,300 IDP families since 2014 is a clear demonstration of the goodwill by the people of Japan toward them. Today, all Japanese partners including TOYOTA Iraq, Sumitomo Corporation, Al Sardar Group (TOTO and KOMATSU), MEENAR (Nippon Paint), and Peace Winds Japan gathered together in Mosul to express their further support to the people in need, wishing for the early recovery of Mosul and Ninewa.”

The Ninewa Governorate will support this initiative by facilitating access to essential infrastructure services such as electricity, water, sewage, irrigation, green areas, roads, and parking lots, thereby improving living conditions for the entire Rajm Hadeed neighborhood. Governor Abdulqadir al-Dakhil, during

the ceremony, expressed his optimism about the project's outcomes, drawing from the excellent example of the Bab Sinjar Housing Complex, a previous collaboration funded by the Government of Japan and executed by UN-Habitat. “There is still a dire need of houses for the returnees in Mosul, and we are committed to supporting and investing in this project to improve living conditions in the Rajm Hadeed neighborhood, confident that Mosul residents and returnees will benefit greatly from it.”

Muslim Qazimi, Head of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme, used the opportunity to share the broader vision behind the project related to adequate housing. He elucidated, “UN-Habitat's role transcends the provision of housing; we are dedicated to fostering sustainable urban development and ensuring the well-being of human settlements. By expanding this project to accommodate 3,000 returnees in the coming years, we are working towards our broader goal of ensuring access to adequate, safe, and affordable housing for all by 2030, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals.”

The “Japan Village Project” is a significant step towards providing safe and sustainable housing and better living conditions for returnees, contributing to the ongoing development and durable solutions in the region and beyond.

Marking a milestone in boosting foreign investments: Iraq signs the Singapore Convention

Baghdad, 26 June 2024 — In a landmark move to attract foreign investors to Iraq, the country celebrated its signing of the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation (“Singapore Convention”). Under the patronage of H.E. Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Investment Commission (NIC) of Iraq hosted a high-profile conference on mediation today.

Creating an environment for global investors

Kick-starting the conference on behalf of H.E. the Prime Minister Mohammed Shia` Al-Sudani, the Advisor to the Prime Minister, Nasser Saleh

Abdulnabi Al-Asadi reiterated the government's unwavering focus on foreign investment.

“We are steadfast in our progressive reforms, striving to transform Iraq into an inviting and secure investment destination. Iraq's accession to the Singapore Convention is a significant milestone, fortifying our efforts to build a robust business sector. We will persist in our endeavours to bolster investment, combat corruption, and generate employment opportunities for our youth,” he said.

On April 17, 2024, Iraq took a significant step by signing the Singapore Convention, as the Convention eases enforcement of mediated settlement agreements, paving the way for enhanced

international trade and commerce between countries.

“Iraq is ready to strengthen its collaboration with countries across the globe to foster investment as well as diversify and increase its trade, and the Convention is an important tool for us to operationalize this,” said Dr. Hayder Makiya, Chairman of the National Investment Commission.

Iraq enters its new chapter

The conference, generously backed by the European Union, was joined by the European Union Ambassador to Iraq, Thomas Seiler.

“We are working hand in hand with the government and UNDP to support the government's ambition to make Iraq a secure and attractive destination for foreign investments, including from the

Marking a milestone in boosting foreign investments: Iraq signs the Singapore Convention *(continued)*



27 EU Member States. Effective mediation opens a new door for Iraq's international trade and business." Through its Anti-Corruption and Commercial Dispute Resolution Initiatives funded by the European Union, UNDP has also been working with Iraqi universities to build the capacities of law students in commercial dispute resolution, including mediation. "With the signing of the Singapore Convention, Iraq is committed to transforming the landscape of commercial cross-border dispute resolution which will significantly impact businesses engaged in

international trade and commerce. We will continue supporting the Government in legislation and building the necessary institutional and human capacity to make mediation work." said Auke Lootsma, Resident Representative of UNDP. The hope is that Iraq's signing of the Singapore Convention is the foundational beginning the country needs in order to attract and instill confidence in investors who wish to do business there – creating a climate that is conducive and safe for foreign investment.

About the Singapore Convention

The Singapore Convention is a

multilateral treaty that provides a uniform and efficient framework for the enforcement of international settlement agreements resulting from mediation. It applies to agreements concluded by parties to resolve commercial disputes and facilitates international trade by enabling easy cross-border enforcement of these settlements. As of 11 June 2024, the Convention has 57 signatories and 14 parties. Iraq is the most recent signatory of the convention.

About UNDP's Commercial Dispute Resolution Initiative

To create an inclusive ecosystem for investors and boost foreign investment, UNDP has been strengthening commercial dispute resolution legislation and practices in Iraq. In addition to the support for mediation, the initiative includes technical support for drafting new law on arbitration in compliance with the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration and international best practices. By facilitating consultations, workshops, and discussions with a broad range of stakeholders, UNDP aims to enhance capacity building and mainstream efficient commercial dispute resolution practices across the country.

ILO, the Central Bank of Iraq, Italy, and their partners concluded the first green business camp in southern Iraq, "Rafidain"

Basra, 26 June 2024 - Activities of the International Day of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, the ILO, the Central Bank of Iraq, Italy, and their partners concluded the first green business camp in southern Iraq, "Rafidain."

Twenty-six male and female entrepreneurs from the Basra and Muthanna governorates successfully completed the three intense days programme of learning, innovation, and cooperation. They developed green ideas and integrated them into their business models, with technical support from specialized trainers.

These entrepreneurs presented their green business models to a jury composed of the programme's partners, including the Iraqi Company for Bank Guarantees, the First Finance Company, the Iraqi Finance Company, Siraj Al-Ma'rifa Company, Basra Chamber of Industry, and the Central Bank of Iraq. The models were

evaluated based on criteria related to the green economy and sustainable practices that positively impact the environment.

The partners presented awards to the eight best green business models to support their continuity and sustainability.

This initiative is part of the project "Towards More and Better Employment through Enhanced Support to the Private Sector in Southern Iraq – Focusing on Green Business," led by the ILO with support from Italy IT through AICS Amman Facebook.



Pioneering projects that shape the future of Iraq

Baghdad, 27 June 2024 - In a land where history whispers from every corner, Mesopotamia has been always considered a land of opportunities and work since ancient times. Today, a new chapter of resilience and entrepreneurship is being written amid the challenges of post-conflict recovery, and these three business owners are a testament to this.

Land of civilization sewing factory: weaving the past into the future

Salam is an electromechanical engineer by training, and a successful businessman by devotion who runs a sewing factory. When Salam was a student, he worked at the same time in a clothing store in the Karrada area in central Baghdad. Clothes and fashion were his passions, which prompted him to work on establishing his own clothing sewing project after graduation.

"I started my sewing project in 2018 when I was still working as an engineer after graduation. My dream has always been to open my own business, and I have worked hard to achieve it," said Salam

Salam was focusing on creating a distinctive Iraqi industry. At the beginning of his career, he used to send his designs to sewing factories in Türkiye, and once he received the ready products, he sold them in Iraq. However, the production process was time-consuming and expensive. Costly shipment and long production time made Salam to think of his own project.



Salam started establishing his own clothing sewing factory, but he didn't have enough resources to finally make his dream come true. In 2020, he learned about IOM's Enterprise Development Fund and received a grant. With the help of the grant, Salam set up a proper factory, allowing him to create new designs and produce more and better quality, meeting the growing demand.

Salam is happy that he managed to move the production to Iraq: "I love my homeland and the Iraqi identity in clothing manufacturing. Before

receiving the grant, I had ten workers, and now I have 19 workers. It helped speed up the processing of orders.

Salam is now in the process of establishing cooperation with Amazon's branch in the United Kingdom to proudly display his goods labeled "Made in Iraq" and familiarize people living in different countries with Iraqi products.

Kawthar Al-Rahman kindergarten: developing the potential in every child

Kawthar Al-Rahman kindergarten is now a safe place for children with autism spectrum disorder where they are taught to succeed.



Not long time ago, it was a regular kindergarten in a remote area. Driven by her commitment to inclusive education, Samira, the kindergarten owner, decided to make her dream come true.

She has created a space where differences are celebrated, and every child's potential is nurtured. Thanks to IOM's Enterprise Development Fund, she has established a nurturing environment that promotes growth, learning, and acceptance.

Samira's initiative managed to fulfill wishes of many parents who wanted to have a section for children with autism within the kindergarten, especially since the presence of such sections is in areas very far from the families' residence, in addition to the high transportation costs. In consideration of this, Samira received every child who needed special care and made an exception by not receiving institute allocations from families who do not have the financial ability to pay.

Samira says, "The autism department needs special curricula, male and female trainers specializing in psychology and sociology, in addition to their own educational means and specific amenities such as furniture, chairs, illustrations, and toys. These are very expensive because these children are not like any other children, as they need great attention and special care,

which also means that caregivers should have different and higher wages."

The kindergarten was established in 2000, which makes establishing a section for children with autism inside the kindergarten a great challenge. The kindergarten needs efforts, renovations, and special arrangements to create an environment suitable for children with autism.

Samira sees daily that autistic children feel happy in her kindergarten and interact positively with the rest of their classmates. Thanks to the IOM Enterprise Development Fund grant, which was supported by the Korea International Cooperation Agency, the department was equipped with all the necessary materials to provide a child-friendly environment.

"I was optimistic from the beginning when I received the grant, which allowed me to hire 7 new employees while the department. The grant also contributed to my participation in a workshop to improve marketing, which helped expand the work further, as my humanitarian duty will continue to help children who have autism," Samira concluded.

Dar Al-Saffar for printing and publishing: expanding children's imagination

Fawaz, a forty-eight-old visionary behind Dar Al-Saffar for Printing and Publishing and editor-in-chief of My Friends Magazine, has dedicated his expertise to a magazine that cares about Iraqi children. These magazines serve as portals to worlds of wonders and promote the love of reading and learning among Iraqi children.



"This is the family's profession, as my father was one of the pioneers of journalism and worked in many local newspapers. He had a publishing house called (Al-Safir) and it was interested in children's culture. After that, I decided to change the name in 2018 to the family name (Al-Saffar)." "The magazine was named (My Friends) after childhood friends

Pioneering projects that shape the future of Iraq *(continued)*

whom we are still friends with, even though most of them live outside Iraq. Our friendship continues, and, proudly, I decided to name the magazine by this name." Fawaz continued

Dar Al-Saffar for Printing and Publishing used to print materials outside Iraq, but after receiving IOM's Enterprise Development Fund, supported by the KfW Development Bank, it became possible to print magazines inside Iraq. This helped reduce the expenses that Fawaz had to bear for printing and shipping from outside Iraq. The number of employees also increased from four to ten, which saved a lot of effort. Publishing became faster, and the printing quality was high so that children could enjoy reading the magazine.

Fawaz added, "Through the "Improve Your Business" course, I will develop the publishing and distribution process to reach every child. One of these plans is to deliver these publications to Iraqi communities living abroad in the United States of America and Europe. There are many Iraqi children who live abroad and need to practice their

mother language.

The support provided by IOM's Enterprise Development Fund and the strategic insights he gained from the training designed by the International Labor Organization (ILO) has enabled Fawaz to expand his outreach, ensuring that the seeds of knowledge he sows today will flourish into children's leaders of tomorrow.

The support provided by IOM does not end with the Enterprise Development Fund grant, but rather aims to develop the capabilities of the supported businesses to be ready for investment in the future. This is done by enhancing their project management skills through banking awareness sessions and training sessions on work standards that include various topics, such as business registration, labor law, and occupational safety. In addition, it offers project improvement courses on various topics, such as marketing, record keeping and accounting, business planning, in addition to mentoring and other project development services.

Salam, Samira and Fawaz took part in the Improve Your Business (Marketing)

course, which aims to enhance their entrepreneurship skills and increase sales by attracting and retaining customers. They learned the importance of corporate marketing and gained insights into strategically positioning their products in the market. Furthermore, they had a deep dive into marketing key elements and got guidance on identifying and finding new markets for their products and services.

Participation in IOM activities, including training and workshops, not only enhances participants' knowledge and develops their skills, but also strengthens business relationships with other business owners. These activities help in communicating with companies at different stages of their value chain which Salam, Samira and Fawaz know firsthand. For female entrepreneurs, who often have fewer market opportunities, these activities help create communication channels and networks between them.

By Rafal Abdulateef, IOM Senior Public Information Assistant

UNICEF revitalizes Sarta Spring in Erbil

Erbil, 25 June 2024 - Under the leadership of the General Directorate of Water Resources in KRI, in partnership with the local community and funding from the German Government through the German Development Bank – KfW, UNICEF revitalized Sarta Spring in Erbil, Iraq.

Through this innovative initiative, more than 16,000 people across 12 villages, including Basirma Refugee Camp, gained access to sustainable clean water.



IOM supports Iraqi projects that build resilience and contribute to the revolution of the local economy

Baghdad, 26 June 2026 - On the Day of Small and Medium Enterprises, the International Organization of Migration reiterates its commitment to supporting Iraqi projects in building resilience and contributing to the revolution of the local economy.

Lamb is growing its continuous work with the development box of green projects of Koch International Organization.

Together with House of Coexistence HOC and Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq, IOM helped 30 women find stable jobs in Sinuni!

They now work at a greenhouse, contributing to the recovery of the local economy.

Since 2022, IOM's livelihoods programmes have created nearly 4,000 agricultural jobs!



At the University of Basra UNV highlights the vital role of volunteerism in advancing the SDGs

Basra, 02 May 2024 - The United Nations Volunteers, UN Resident Coordinator Office and UNDP in Iraq collaborated with the University of Basra for sessions to highlight the vital role of volunteerism in advancing the SDGs. Volunteering empowers students and fresh graduates with valuable skills and confidence.



UNDP launches the Iraq Sustainable Development Goals Investor Map

Baghdad, 12 May 2024 - Today, and in partnership with Iraq's Ministry of Planning, we've launched the Iraq Sustainable Development Goals Investor Map. This innovative tool aims to enhance the role of the private sector, and guide both local and international investors in discovering impactful opportunities across sectors like health, education, and clean energy in #Iraq.

This is only a step in the road towards sustainable development and economic growth aligned with the National Development Plan and Iraq's Vision 2030.



Agriculture

FAO in Iraq strengthens government capacity to monitor and report on the Sustainable Development Goals under FAO's custody

Baghdad, 23 May 2024 – On 05 May, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) kicked off the Inception Workshop of FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) aimed at strengthening government capacity to monitor and report on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under FAO's custody. The workshop was launched by Deputy Minister of Technical Affairs at the Iraq Ministry of Planning, Dr. Maher Johan, FAO Iraq Deputy Representative, Ms. Veronica Quattrola, and Director of S&GISA Dr Dhyaa Awad Khadum.

Officials and participants from several ministries have also attended this workshop. Strengthening cooperation is key! The workshop focused on Strengthening capacity development and data provision for calculating, monitoring and reporting on 7 SDG indicators in Iraq. Next steps: Conducting the first Steering Committee meeting, forming a



technical committee and four technical working teams to calculate the seven indicators. Together, we are committed to advancing SDGs for a more sustainable future.

FAO hosted a national workshop on SDG indicators 2.1.1 "Prevalence of Undernourishment" and 2.1.2 "Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity, based on the Food

Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)" in Baghdad (Iraq) from May 19 to May 23. As the custodian agency for SDG indicators 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, FAO supports the efforts of the countries in monitoring target 2.1 "by 2030 end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food

FAO in Iraq strengthens government capacity to monitor and report on the Sustainable Development Goals under FAO's custody *(continued)*

all year round". The workshop aims to provide technical support to the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office (KRSO) and other national institutions related to food security indicators in Iraq in applying FAO's standard statistical methods, as the custodian agency for indicators 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. The support will also include deriving estimates for both indicators based on the data that have been still collecting through the Iraq Household and Social

Economic Survey 2023.

Expected outcomes are to strengthen the capacity of CSO, KRSO and other related stakeholders in Iraq in analyzing food security and nutrition data and produce meaningful and reliable indicators to inform SDG monitoring frameworks, policy decision making and to guide food security policies and interventions.

15 participants from 4 institutions are attending the workshop.



FAO hosts a workshop on irrigation performance assessment

Baghdad, 09 May 2024 - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq, in partnership with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), recently

hosted a groundbreaking job-training workshop on irrigation performance assessment using the WaPOR, remote sensing for water productivity, tool to enhance agricultural water

management by harnessing the power of data-driven from remote sensing through the WaPOR tool.

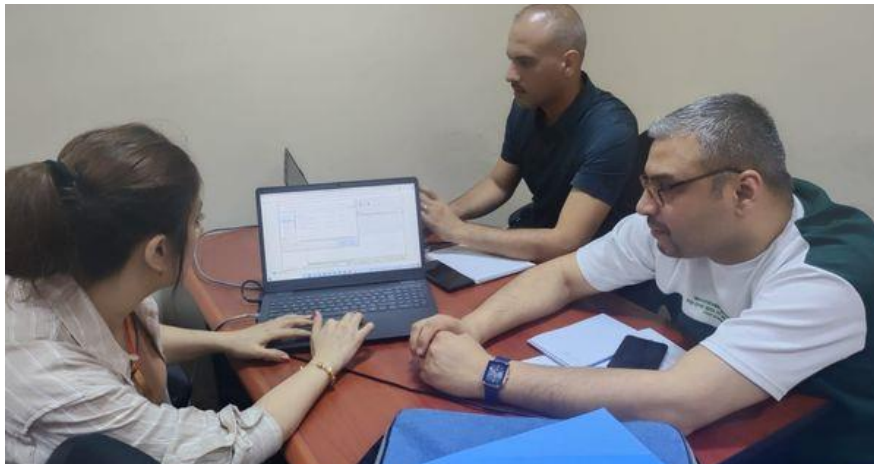
WaPOR tool tasks:

- ✓ Assess irrigation system performance
- ✓ Identify causes for improvement
- ✓ Enhance service provision and productivity

Traditional assessment focuses on water balance, water service, maintenance, and on the environment and economic indicators, while performance assessment by remote sensing (RS) focuses on production and actual water consumption.

The West-Gharraf Irrigation Scheme WaPOR Tool features three modules:

- ✓ Data processing
- ✓ Seasonal aggregation
- ✓ Deriving indicators for effective irrigation management.



FAO Iraq conducts a workshop for Farmer Field Schools (FFS) facilitators from 7 governorates in central and southern Iraq

Baghdad, 13 May 2024 - The FAO Iraq team, led by representative Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, is currently conducting a workshop for Farmer Field Schools (FFS) facilitators from 7 governorates in central and southern Iraq. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is following up on the implementation of Farmer Field Schools for major production commodities under projects funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Government of Canada. Farmer Field Schools initiatives with local farmers are already underway. These pioneers are embracing Climate

Smart practices, promising a sustainable future for Iraqi agriculture. As the workshop progresses, FAO is

also preparing for the upcoming season to ensure a seamless and inclusive implementation of our projects.



FAO Iraq launches a training workshop to empower agriculture graduates and enhance their skills in business development



Baghdad, 13 May 2024 - Today, FAO Iraq, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Engineers Syndicate in Baghdad, launched a training workshop under

the Technical Cooperation Program (TCP) funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to empower agriculture graduates and enhance their skills in

business development. The workshop was opened in presence of FAO Iraq Representative, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, Technical Ministry of Agriculture Deputy, Dr. Mithaq Al-Khafaji, and Head of the Agricultural Engineers Syndicate, Engineer Sadiq Jaafar. They emphasized the importance of the workshop in empowering job seekers to develop their skills in agricultural business management. The workshop aims to enhance individual knowledge and skills, and understand the basics of business management and agricultural investments, to enable participants to smoothly integrate into the job market. Developing human resources capabilities in the agriculture sector plays a crucial role in enhancing sustainability and economic development of local communities.

WFP celebrates the completion of WFP's Financial Inclusion project in the Karbala governorate that enables their access to better livelihoods

Karbala, 13 May 2024 - The World Food Programme (WFP) attended a ceremony hosted in Karbala by Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture, representatives from the local government and smallholder farmers. The ceremony celebrated the completion of WFP's Financial Inclusion project in the governorate that enables their access to better livelihoods. The World Food Programme handed over agricultural kits to more than 20 vulnerable female and male farmers, in addition to

improved business training that will enable them to sustain their own small

businesses and provide for themselves and their families.



The Legislative Drafting Committee (LDC) for animal health services and disease surveillance kicks off with its first in-person meeting in Baghdad

Baghdad, 13 May 2024 - Today, the Legislative Drafting Committee (LDC) for animal health services and disease surveillance kicked off with its first in-person meeting in Baghdad led by FAO Iraq Representative, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, and Ministry of Agriculture technical Deputy, Dr. Mithaq Al Khafaji. Representatives from FAO Iraq, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Environment, the Kurdistan Region-Iraq, as well as parliament and the veterinary syndicate are joining hands to design a one-year workplan and set

clear actions for the coming months. This will allow us to collaborate to align

Iraqi legislation with international standards.



Dr. El Hajj Hassan's underscores Iraq's urgent need for action as climate change and severe drought are reshaping landscapes and causing severe water challenges

Erbil, 13 May 2024 - FAO Iraq representative, Dr Salah El hajj Hassan, represented the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq - UNAMI and UN family in Iraq at the symposium on "Drought and Impact of Climate Change on the Political, Economic, and Demographical Situation of Iraq" organized by the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH), CFRI - Centre Français de Recherche sur l'Irak.

Dr. El Hajj Hassan's intervention underscored Iraq's urgent need for action as Climate change and severe drought are reshaping landscapes and causing severe water challenges.

He outlined ongoing UN actions and efforts to tackle climate change in Iraq including mitigation and adaptation, emphasizing the importance of future enhancements.

His insights reflected on UN efforts to



tackle climate challenges shaping the path forward for more sustainable future.

He also reaffirmed the UN in Iraq family commitment to supporting Iraq in addressing climate challenges.

Through robust environmental management, climate adaptation, and investment in green infrastructure, we

stand together for a sustainable future. Together with Government of Iraq, and partners, the UN family is dedicated to fostering awareness, building resilience, and implementing innovative solutions to combat climate change.

Our collaborative efforts aim to ensure a better, greener future for all.

FAO launches a training workshop to introduce water accounting concepts and approaches

Basra, 14 May 2024 - Experts from FAO Iraq, in the presence of FAO Iraq Representative Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, jointly with the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), launched a training workshop on 14 May in Basra to introduce water accounting concepts and approaches under the Swedish

International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) funded project implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment.

Participants in this workshop are representatives from the Ministry of

Water Resources from Maysan, Baghdad, and Thi-Qar governorates.

Workshop's objective is to discuss urgent data needs for Rapid Water Accounting (RWA) at the Abu-Bashut irrigation project in Maysan. A RWA exercises will be launched at the closing of the workshop.

FAO Iraq takes strides towards preserving agricultural biodiversity and conservation of plant genetic material in Iraq



Baghdad, 19 May 2024 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq, in collaboration with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), is making strides towards preserving agricultural biodiversity and conservation of plant genetic material in Iraq through the Gene Bank (Seed Bank) component. This initiative is a component of the FAO- European Union (EU) funded

project titled "Restoration and Strengthening the Resilience of Agricultural Food Systems."

The Seed Bank component of this project holds paramount importance as it addresses the challenges faced by Iraq's agricultural sector due to the challenges that the country has experienced. The main objectives are the rehabilitation of the Abu Gharib seed bank in Baghdad, which has been operational since 1977 but has suffered

from infrastructural damage. Additionally, the project aims to establish a new seed bank in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in Sulaymaniyah Governorate.

This week, a team of experts from FAO and ICARDA conducted field visits and held meetings with Iraqi officials to advance these efforts.

In Baghdad, the experts team inspected the gene bank infrastructure and research station, emphasizing the meticulous assessment of equipment and staff capacity. Subsequently, fruitful meetings were held with senior officials at the Ministry of Agriculture, focusing on the current status, challenges, opportunities and the importance of the gene bank rehabilitation.

FAO Iraq Representative, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan affirmed: "The restoration and establishment of gene banks are

FAO Iraq takes strides towards preserving agricultural biodiversity

... (continued)

crucial steps towards safeguarding Iraq's agricultural biodiversity and ensuring food security for future generations. FAO remains committed to working closely with Iraqi authorities and partners to achieve these objectives." He also acknowledged the cooperation with the Iraqi government and the EU, underscoring the importance of collaborative efforts in advancing agricultural sustainability and resilience.

In Erbil, FAO Iraq and ICARDA teams met with Her Excellency the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), Ms. Begard Talabni, and her team to

discuss the construction of the first gene bank in the Kurdistan Region. This meeting marks the beginning of a joint effort to conserve crop plant genetic resources in Iraq.

In this regard, HE the Minister stated: "Our collaboration with FAO signifies a significant milestone in our efforts to strengthen agricultural resilience in Iraq. Establishing seed or gene banks will play a pivotal role in preserving our agricultural heritage and adapting to future challenges."

Continuing their efforts in Sulaymaniyah, FAO Iraq and ICARDA teams engaged with key counterparts to discuss infrastructure,

procurements, and site assessments for the gene bank. A site visit at Hawari-Shar Park was conducted to evaluate facilities for smooth implementation.

Two respective working groups have been established to coordinate efforts between local stakeholders and to facilitate a speedy implementation of the project component.

This initiative aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 2: Zero Hunger and Goal 15: Life on Land, by ensuring the conservation of genetic resources essential for food security and sustainable agriculture.

Empowering southern Iraqi dairy producers: FAO-EU initiative delivers vital equipment in Southern Iraq

Basra, 19 May 2024 - Implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the "Restoration and Strengthening the Resilience of Agri-Food Systems in Southern Iraq" project enters a new phase with the launch of the first batch of dairy equipment distribution in Basra, Thi Qar, and Missan, targeting 5000 beneficiaries (50 % of whom are women).

This transformative initiative aims to uplift dairy production standards and improve the livelihoods of rural communities in Southern Iraq. By developing the milk production chain, the initiative empowers rural women's groups in the marshes to improve their livelihoods through increased productivity and marketing potential of local dairy products. Additionally, modern machinery is introduced to further strengthen the resilience of these communities.

Led by FAO representative in Iraq, Dr.

Salah El Hajj Hassan, and the technical Deputy of MoA, Dr. Mithaq El Khafaji, these two distribution ceremonies held respectively at the agricultural training and extension centers in Basra and Thi Qar saw the presence of key dignitaries including representatives from the ministries of Agriculture, Planning, Environment and Water Resources, the National Department for Iraqi Women as well as representatives of local government, farmers' association and beneficiaries.

Officials attending the ceremonies expressed gratitude for FAO's efforts amidst challenging conditions, highlighting the transformative impact of modern equipment in fostering resilience and sustainable agriculture in Southern Iraq. They reaffirmed their commitment to supporting ongoing initiatives, recognizing the importance of sustained collaboration in advancing agricultural resilience in the region.

The distributed equipment included essential dairy tools to enhance milk hygiene standards and production

efficiency.

This initiative signifies a substantial step forward in promoting sustainable agriculture, empowering local communities, and enhancing livelihoods, and those two ceremonies represent the kick-off of a wider equipment distribution campaign that will cover the three southern governorates during the upcoming month.

Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "Today marks a crucial moment in our efforts to empower rural communities and promote sustainable agriculture in Southern Iraq. The distribution of dairy equipment underscores our commitment to improving milk hygiene standards and enhancing the livelihoods of dairy producers, particularly women. We also extend our thanks to partners at the European Unions as well as national and local partners who contributed to the success of this initiative, recognizing the collaborative efforts that have made this endeavor possible."

Dr. Mithaq Al Khafaji, emphasized the project's significance, saying, "This initiative aligns with our vision to strengthen the resilience of rural communities and promote sustainable agriculture. By providing essential dairy equipment, we aim to improve the quality of milk production and contribute to the economic empowerment of rural households. The government is committed to providing further support to buffalo producers and farmers in the South, underscoring our dedication to fostering agricultural



Empowering southern Iraqi dairy producers ... (continued)

development and prosperity in the region."

Alongside with the distribution ceremony, officials took part in a field visit to marshlands to follow up on the situation of buffalo producers and witness positive developments thanks to the sustainable interventions and support provided by FAO Iraq and the EU.

Additionally, the FAO team organized a workshop for Date Palm and Tomato Farmers Field School (FFS) facilitators from southern Iraq. This workshop ensured the development of date palm

and tomato value chains. Ongoing activities were tracked, and plans were made for the upcoming crop season, focusing on production, processing, and marketing.

Under the broader umbrella of the EU Agri-Food Business Development Programme, the project, aims to improve governance and job creation along several agri-food value chains in Iraq. This initiative represents a major stride in fostering sustainable agriculture, empowering women, and strengthening agri-food systems in Southern Iraq.

Furthermore, this initiative aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). By promoting economic empowerment, food security, and gender inclusivity within rural communities, it not only addresses immediate challenges but also contributes to the overall sustainable development agenda. This holistic approach underscores the continuous commitment of FAO and its partners in supporting and sustaining the Southern rural communities.

FAO Iraq and Ministry of Agriculture co-host workshop for graduate agricultural engineers



Baghdad, 21 May 2024 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Iraq, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), and the Agricultural Engineers Association, is proud to announce a significant stride forward in enabling access to employment and loan opportunities for graduate agricultural engineers. This initiative is part of FAO's ongoing project to enhance business development skills for agricultural graduates.

Under the esteemed patronage of H.E. Minister of Agriculture Dr. Abbas Jabr Al Maliki and following the training specialized courses aimed at enhancing agricultural engineers' capacities, a joint workshop was convened, aimed at identifying opportunities for agriculture engineers to access loans and grants, enabling them to initiate their own projects.

The workshop was attended by the Technical Deputy, Dr. Mithaq Al Khafaji, FAO Iraq representative Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan, Member of Prime Minister's Advisory Council (PMAC) Dr. Ibraheem Satar, Head of

the Agricultural Engineers Association, Eng. Sadiq Jaafar, officials from MoA and over 60 agricultural engineers who had already received specialized training in the agricultural sector and business development.

This workshop focused on empowering participating agricultural engineers with the necessary information regarding available opportunities and the procedures for accessing loans and grants. Moreover, it facilitated collecting feedback on additional support needed for further follow-up and assistance.

Discussions centered on the potential for trained agricultural engineers to make substantial contributions to the growth of the agricultural sector and the indispensable role of MoA in facilitating their seamless integration into the workforce. Attendees delved into the intricacies of loan mechanisms and eligibility criteria, with the aim of equipping them with the necessary tools to initiate agricultural ventures confidently.

H.E. Minister of Agriculture reminded the ministries' commitment to support and following up with agricultural

engineers, recognizing their important role in advancing agricultural capacities. He also emphasized FAO's crucial role in enhancing the capabilities of agriculture graduates, particularly within the private sector facilitating employment opportunities, and fostering their contributions to agricultural development.

He added: " Through coordinated efforts and training programs, we aim to harness their expertise to elevate our agricultural sector. This initiative aligns with the ministry's vision to strengthen the national economy and achieve self-sufficiency."

"We are steadfast in our commitment to fostering an environment conducive to the flourishing of agricultural engineers within the agricultural sector through our collaborative efforts with MoA and Agricultural Engineers Association," remarked Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Iraq Representative. FAO, along with its partners, continues to support agricultural engineers to enable them to gain a better understanding of investment opportunities and overcome difficulties and challenges. The workshop emphasized the vital role played by the organization in this regard. We also urge stakeholders and partners to join these efforts to further empower agricultural engineers and advance the agricultural sector.



Unlocking agricultural potential: resilient fodder production in Southern Iraq

Basra, 28 May 2024 - In the challenging landscape conditions of southern Iraq's, where the adversities of climate change effects loom large beside other impacts on biodiversity a beacon of hope shines brightly. Led by the pioneering efforts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), funded by EU and implemented in partnership with Ministry of Agriculture and local partners, an impactful introduction of agricultural innovation is sweeping across the region, driven by the cultivation of resilient fodder crop varieties.

Navigating adversity: livelihoods challenges in Southern Iraq's marshlands

Before the dawn of FAO's transformative interventions, farmers and buffalo producers of southern Iraq grappled with a landscape fraught with challenges. Faced with dwindling water resources and variation soil and water salinity, high feed costs, they used to rely on traditional feeding practices that often fell short of meeting the minimum nutritional needs of their livestock. Cereals, predominantly wheat and barley, formed the backbone of livestock diets, supplemented by meager portions of locally available forage such as reeds and papyrus. However, these practices proved inadequate in sustaining livestock health and productivity, exacerbating the vulnerability of communities already on the brink of livelihood insecurity.

Cultivating resilience: FAO's innovations in Southern Iraq's

In response to the pressing challenges faced by those communities, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) embarked on a multifaceted initiative aimed at bolstering the resilience of rural communities and ecosystems. At the heart of FAO's intervention strategy lay a comprehensive approach that encompassed capacity-building, the provision of resilient fodder crops varieties, and the introduction of climate-smart irrigation practices tailored to the region's unique environmental constraints in addition to increasing local feed production.

Central to FAO's transformative efforts was the introduction of resilient fodder crop varieties, carefully selected and adapted to



thrive in the harsh climatic conditions prevalent in southern Iraq. Among these pioneering crops was rye grass, a seasonal fodder crop renowned for its rapid growth and exceptional yield potential. Sown in late summer to early autumn and using drip irrigation to thrive, rye grass offered farmers a reliable source of nutrition for their livestock. With several cuts per season and yields ranging reaching 25 to 30 tons of green fodder per donum (100 to 120 t/ha), rye grass proved instrumental in improving livestock health and productivity.

The significance of rye grass as a superior feed source cannot be overstated. Not only does it provide essential nourishment to livestock during critical periods such as lactation, but it also promotes growth, enhances animal health, and improves fertility—all at a minimal cost to farmers. By harnessing the power of rye grass, farmers are witnessing a tangible increase in milk production (37% for buffalo and cows) and quality, resulting in and profitability in cheese and dairy processing.

One striking example of the productivity of rye grass under optimal cultivation practices is evidenced by one of the farmer's Mr. Abdul Amir Salman Aissa, from Nahr Alsabe Village, (Midaina District, Basra governorate) remarkable success story who is cultivating for the first-time rye grass. With a first-cut yield of 2,730 kilograms per square meter, this farmer achieved an average of five cuts, resulting in a total production of 34 tons of green fodder, using drip irrigation system which allows him to conserve water efficiently without causing any adverse environmental impacts.

This abundant harvest allows him not only to feed his animals (35 buffalos, and 4 cows) but also to sell extra quantities securing revenues of about \$2,000 USD / season —an impressive return on investment that underscores the transformative potential of resilient fodder crops.

Equally impressive is the example of Mrs. Doulah Abdul Amir Saeed a farmer from Alsimadh village (Karmit Bensaid directorate, Thi Qar governorate), who discovered the potentials and productivity of Sudanese Sorghum, another climate resilient fodder crop that thrives in the challenging conditions of southern Iraq.

Known for its dense growth and high yield potential, Sudanese Sorghum offers farmers an abundant source of green fodder with over four to seven cuts with a production of 300 tons / hectare. Resilient to soil salinity and using low irrigations water quantities, it is rich in energy and fiber, making it an invaluable asset in sustaining livestock populations and bolstering agricultural resilience. Additionally, her animals (8 buffalos, and 4 cows) milk production increased by 13 % and due to using sorghum in their feeding system. The high produced quantities of Sorghum allowed her to sell the extra around 275 \$ during the last season.

Through strategic capacity-building initiatives and knowledge transfer programs, FAO equipped large number of southern Iraqi farmers with the requisite tools and techniques to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climatic stressors. The adoption of climate smart agricultural practices, including efficient irrigation methods and crop rotation techniques, further enhanced agricultural productivity and

Unlocking agricultural potential: resilient fodder production in Southern Iraq *(continued)*

resilience in the face of adversity.

As southern farmers and buffaloes' producers embraced innovative agricultural practices and harnessed the potential of resilient crop varieties, they witnessed a tangible increase in milk production, enhanced cheese processing, and improved livestock health. Moreover, the cultivation of resilient fodder crops not only secured sustainable livelihoods for marshland communities but also help conserve ecosystem health and biodiversity in the region.

In collaboration with local stakeholders and partners, FAO continues to spearhead efforts to restore and

strengthen the resilience of agri-food systems in southern Iraq's. By empowering communities with knowledge and resources, FAO remains steadfast in its commitment to building a brighter, more resilient future for all. Recognizing the important impact of FAO interventions on local fodder and feed production, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) was inspired to establish a program aimed at promoting local seed and feed production. This partnership underscores the enduring legacy of FAO's initiatives, which not only transform livelihoods at the grassroots level but also catalyze broader systemic

changes in agricultural practices and policies.

With FAO's continued support and the commitment of local stakeholders, the journey towards agricultural resilience in southern Iraq is marked by hope, innovation, and sustainable progress. Together, we stride towards a future where communities thrive in harmony with their environment, safeguarding both livelihoods and ecosystems for generations to come.

Written by Khawla Ben Aicha, FAO Iraq International Communications Specialist

WFP supports more than 400 rural micro-entrepreneurs, to strengthen the beekeeping value chain development in Iraq

Baghdad, 24 May 2024 - Maryam seized the chance to participate in the WFP Beekeeping Program in Iraq. Now, honey produced by Maryam's bees is in high demand in local shops. Haider, a resilient beekeeper from Iraq. His passion for beekeeping reignited through the WFP beekeeping program

despite climate challenges. The World Food Programme (WFP) is supporting more than 400 rural micro-entrepreneurs, to strengthen the beekeeping value chain development in Iraq.

20 May is globally observed as the World Bee Day.



FAO Iraq strengthens capacity of beekeeper's women and youth

Sulaymaniyah, 30 May 2024 - Continuing the World Bee Day celebrations, on 27 May, FAO Iraq kicked-off a training on modern beekeeping techniques and pest management for youth and women beekeepers, in presence of FAO Iraq Representative, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, Deputy Director-General of Agriculture in Sulaymaniyah and Head of Iraqi Beekeepers Association.

The three-day workshop, part of FAO Iraq funded project strengthening capacity of beekeeper's women and youth, on business management and marketing, aims to empower participants with advanced skills and strategic insights for sustainable and profitable beekeeping enterprises. The importance of this initiative cannot be overstated. Beekeeping plays a crucial role in environmental sustainability, while also providing a vital source of income and empowerment for women and youth. FAO Iraq is committed to enhancing both environment and livelihoods across Iraq.

On the second day of the FAO Iraq workshop on modern beekeeping techniques and pest management for women and youth beekeepers FAO



team and participants visited the beautiful mountain apiaries in Kylaspi village, Sulaymaniyah. They discovered modern bee keeping techniques, pest management, criteria for selecting Queen bees, and effective apiary management.

On the third day of the workshop, participants were introduced to the artificial insemination device for queen bees, the impact of pesticides, and pest control methods. They also observed a demonstration on the practical use of the artificial insemination device. This

hands-on experience provided valuable insights into advanced beekeeping techniques.

The workshop concluded with an evaluation of the knowledge gained, followed by a certificate distribution ceremony in the presence of FAO Iraq Representative, Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan. Participants acquired essential skills to enhance their beekeeping practices, contributing to improved environment and livelihoods. FAO remains committed to empowering communities for a sustainable future.

International Day of Potato observed in Iraq

Baghdad, 30 May 2024 - FAO: The potato is a crop of enormous global significance. Through its widespread cultivation and consumption, the crop contributes to key objectives of the SDGs, such as achieving zero hunger, promoting sustainable agriculture and advancing economic opportunities.

<https://www.fao.org/international-potato-day/en>

International Trade Centre: The potato sector holds untapped potential for growth as potatoes are expected to have

the second highest future demand in the Iraqi horticulture sector after tomatoes. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) is leading the preparation of the strategy with the technical support of the International Trade Centre (ITC) within the framework of the European Union-funded project, "Strengthening the agriculture and agri-food value chain and improving trade policy in Iraq" (SAAVI).

<https://bit.ly/3VmL0nQ>



FAO Iraq concludes a Farmer Field School (FFS) training program on conservation agriculture practices aimed at Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in degraded areas of Iraq

Baghdad, 02 June 2024 - Delighted to share that FAO Iraq concluded a Farmer Field School (FFS) training program on Conservation Agriculture practices aimed at Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Degraded Areas of Iraq with key Iraqi partner ministries and local governments under Global Environment Facility funded project.

With our partners, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Water Resources, we work on reversing land degradation processes, conserving and sustainably managing land and water resources in degraded ecosystems for greater access to services from resilient ecosystems and improved livelihoods.

Training sessions took place in Al Muthanna and Thi-Qar governorates from February to May 2024, targeting 1500 participants (21 % women).

The workshops covered soil conservation, crop management, pest control, climate resilience, & improved agronomic practices.



Unlocking Iraqi talent in the agricultural sector

Erbil, 5 June 2024 - The Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), proudly announces the graduation of 200 women from a training program for doing business in the agriculture food industry.

"The agriculture food industry holds immense potential for economic growth and sustainable development in the Kurdistan Region," said H.E. Mr. Qubad Talabani, Deputy Prime Minister, KRG. "Through our partnership with UNDP and USAID, we have taken a significant step towards harnessing these women's potential by equipping them with the necessary skills to thrive in this sector" added Talabani.

Participants across 9 locations in IKR,



including Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk, Halabja, Garmian, Soran, Rapareen, Zakho, and Akre, were trained on cultivating various agricultural products, marketing strategies, and entrepreneurship skills tailored to the

specific needs of each location. "This collaboration exemplifies our commitment to supporting inclusive and sustainable development in Iraq. By investing in the capacity and untapped potential of Iraqi women, we

Unlocking Iraqi talent in the agricultural sector *(continued)*

are not only fostering equitable economic empowerment, but also contributing to the overall advancement of the agriculture sector in Iraq's Kurdistan Region. This wouldn't have been possible without the generous contribution of our steadfast partner, USAID" said Mr. Auke Lootsma, Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq.

"The successful completion of this training underscores the importance of partnerships in driving positive change. By working together, we can

create opportunities for every Iraqi to play a transformative role in the agriculture food industry, ultimately contributing to food security and economic prosperity in Iraq" said Ms. Elise Jensen, USAID/Iraq's Mission Director.

The program's emphasis on producing diverse food products, tailored to local market demands, reflects a holistic approach to strengthening the agriculture food industry. Participants were trained in various skills, including pickling

olives and vegetables, making jams and sauces, preparing natural sweets, producing vinegar and juices, creating tomato paste, drying fruits and vegetables, and handling frozen products.

Through this training, the KRG, UNDP, and USAID aim to enable today's graduates to not only enter the agriculture food industry, but to establish their own businesses, thereby fostering sustainable livelihoods and contributing to Iraq's economic growth.

Muhammed's journey of resilience

Ninewa, 05 June 2024 - Muhammed, a 17-year-old from Tal Afar district in Ninewa governorate, exemplifies resilience and determination. Although he never attended formal school, Muhammed, who can read and write a little, has faced and overcome numerous challenges. He belongs to the Turkmen community and lives in Mosul with his extended family, including his mother, brother, three sisters, and two uncles with their families—18 people in total.

In 2016, Muhammed's life changed when his father disappeared during the conflict in their region. With no news of his father, Muhammed and his family fled to Syria, seeking refuge in Al Hol camp. At the camp, they spent seven years facing immense hardship and fear.

"We faced many challenges in Al Hol camp," Muhammed recalls. "Tents were burnt and other forms of violence were practiced. We were afraid all the time. Also, we had no money and often we couldn't afford to eat."

In 2023, Muhammed and his family returned to Iraq and settled in Al Jadaa 1 Rehabilitation Center in Ninewa governorate. Conditions there were much better than in Al Hol.

"Jadaa 1 was so different from Al Hol," Muhammed says. "We received more support, including materials, food, and cash distribution."

Despite these improvements, life remained challenging. Muhammed, the sole breadwinner for his family, works as a waiter in a restaurant, earning Iraqi dinars 150,000-200,000 (\$100 - \$150) per month. Yet, his perseverance never waned. "I remember some days we didn't have anything to eat, and we were eating rotten bread," he recounts. A family's fight for a better future

During their time in Al Jadaa 1 Center, Muhammed like most received various



supports from UNICEF, including mental health and psychosocial training, and learning opportunities. After moving out of the camp, he experienced a particularly transformative 20-day vocational training on farming from UNICEF and his partner. "I learned a lot from this training, such as how to farm, level the ground, and take care of the plants," Muhammed explains. "I want to start working in farming, rather than working 12 hours a day in the restaurant."

"The training wasn't just about learning practical skills; it significantly changed my social life," reflects Muhammed. "Before joining, I felt isolated and struggled to connect with others because of people's lack of acceptance, which made me feel marginalized. However, during the training, I had the opportunity to meet new people, form friendships, and become part of the community."

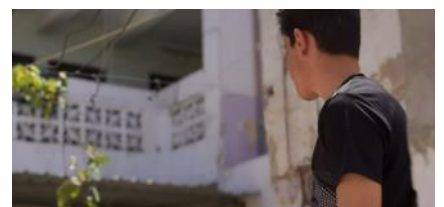
Inspired by Muhammed's progress, his mother has also enrolled in the farming vocational training. The family is eagerly anticipating the arrival of farming toolkits to kickstart their new

venture. Additionally, Muhammed's sister has participated in sewing vocational training, which she enjoys. She will soon receive her own sewing machine and tools to further pursue her skills in sewing.

This story of resilience and renewal has been made possible through the support of UNICEF and the generous funds from Canada, which aim to help returnees reintegrate into their communities. Muhammed's journey from displacement and despair to learning and growth shows the power of support and the human spirit's resilience.

Note: To protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals mentioned in this story, some of the names have been altered.

By Shahad Butrus Bulbul, UNICEF Iraq



FAO Iraq is providing irrigation equipment and materials to support date and tomato farmers in Basra implementing smart technologies



Basra, 06 June 2024 - FAO Iraq is providing irrigation equipment and materials to support date and tomato farmers in Basra implementing smart,

climate-resilient technologies under the European Union in Iraq funded project in the south in presence of local officials.

"Following an intense 2023/2024 crop season, we've gained valuable insights and refined agricultural technologies and practices. Thanks to FAO Iraq's FFS Facilitators and leading farmers, these advancements have proven to increase yields quantity and value" reported a project partner.

In the 2024/2025 crop season, 380 farms will implement new climate-smart practices and technologies through FFS and model farms.

This will enhance resilience to climate change, boosting productivity and income.

FAO prioritizes people, ensuring no one is left behind by providing tools to build sustainable businesses within communities.

Agriculture innovation hackathon held in Iraq



Mosul, 7 June 2024 (ITC News) - Perfectly meeting the criteria of innovation, relevance, and an actionable roadmap, three proud winners emerged at the Agriculture Innovation Hackathon that was held in the Nineveh region in Iraq.

Nineveh-based SMEs Nabu, BSF and Aero Plant stood out with their exceptional ideas for addressing the significant challenges of water scarcity and sustainable agriculture due to decreasing water levels in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and an outdated irrigation system.

Nabu: Focused on transforming excess tomato crops into valuable products, increasing farmers' income, and reducing food waste.

BSF: Utilized black soldier fly larvae for organic waste disposal and production of organic fertilizer and animal feed, offering a sustainable solution to waste management and agriculture.

Aero Plant: Introduced a vertical aeroponics farming method that significantly reduces water usage, providing a sustainable solution for

water scarcity and enhancing food security.

How can grants help?

Each of the winners was awarded a seed grant, approximately \$350. The grants boost recipients with financial support and confidence to further develop their ideas. Once a prototype was produced, the three entrepreneurs had an opportunity to pitch again for \$1750 large grant to implement one solution.

"The hackathon helped us develop a deeper understanding of the agricultural issues that exist in Nineveh Governorate, and the technical and logistical support had an impact on the success of the training we received from the Mosul Space Foundation. We were able to get to know other entrepreneurs, benefit from previous experiences and meet with international organizations and benefit from the available investment opportunities," said Zaid Jaber, from the Nabu team who won the large grant.

Enabling a collaborative environment
Bringing together 43 participants that

included farmers, entrepreneurs, and technologists, the hackathon was a success.

Teams were formed to exchange ideas and implement them on projects under two main themes: Agri-product value chain in Iraq, and Water scarcity and management.

Facilitated by workshops and presentations, the atmosphere enabled the development of several innovative solutions at the hackathon. Among the ideas developed, a mobile application for crop health monitoring using artificial intelligence and satellite imagery, and an IoT-based irrigation system to optimize water usage resonated with all.

"The hackathon had a great impact on developing our network. We benefited from the ideas that were presented, additionally, we met with professionals and academics who provided us with training that serves us, helps us develop our projects and trains us on strategies aimed at project growth," said Karam Saad from Aero Plant.

The hackathon also demonstrated the potential of technology to address critical issues in agriculture, making a significant step towards sustainability and resilience in the face of environmental challenges.

This was a collaborative event implemented by Mosul Space and funded by the European Union through the International Trade Centre's SAAVI project. This initiative aimed to harness innovative solutions to address local challenges, fostering a spirit of creativity and problem-solving among participants.

WFP is helping to rehabilitate the Sarchanar tree nursery in the hopes of supporting the sustainable forest conservation

Erbil, 08 June 2024 - The Sarchanar tree nursery is one of the largest in the Kurdistan Region and one of the oldest in Iraq. Here, the World Food Programme (WFP) is helping to rehabilitate this important facility in the hopes of supporting the sustainable forest conservation with local community and the Kurdistan Regional Government. Over 2.5 million donums of forests were lost in the Kurdistan Region in the past 70 years. Since 2023, WFP's efforts in this nursery have enabled bringing the sapling production from 250,000 to 1.5 million saplings per year.



200 women graduate from a training program for doing business in the agriculture food industry

Erbil, 14 June 2024 - The Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme in Iraq and the United States Agency for International Development, proudly announces the graduation of 200 women from a training program for doing business in the agriculture food industry.



MENA Policy Incubator launches in Amman to boost social security for agricultural workers

Amman, Jordan, 27 June 2024 - The International Labour Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization launched the MENA Policy Incubator in Amman to boost social security for agricultural workers! Policymakers and experts from Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Oman, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia joined the event.



Labour Issues

Workshop on social security for members of trade unions in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Beirut, 02 May 2024 - The International Labor Organization in Iraq, in cooperation with the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) in the regional office in Beirut, held a workshop on ways to enhance social security coverage in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq from 24 to 25 April 2024. Twenty participants from the

Kurdistan United Workers Unions from various sectors, including union representatives in joint labour inspection committees with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, participated in the workshop. The participants received training on international labour standards for social security, especially the Social

Security Convention (Minimum Standards), 1952. They also learned how to comprehensively analyse the institutional structure of trade union organizations and the factors that impact trade union activity, both internally and externally. The participants examined the violations observed by them in different sectors of

Workshop on social security for members of trade unions in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq *(continued)*



work in the region, along with the mechanisms for addressing these violations and the challenges that impede the implementation of the Retirement and Social Security Law No. 39 of 1971, which remains in effect

in the region. Specifically, they discussed work-related injuries and health insurance. The guarantees stipulated in Law (4) of 2012 amending the application of Retirement and Social Security Law for Workers No. 39

of 1971 for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, particularly unemployment and maternity insurance.

The workshop activities enabled the participants to develop a form to follow up on implementing the retirement and social security law according to enterprise level and how to conduct a geographical and sectoral analysis of projects covered by social security according to each governorate and follow-up mechanisms. At the conclusion of the workshop, the participants expressed the importance of local follow-up on workers' registration in social security.

This workshop is part of the ILO Social Protection Programme for Iraq: Leveraging Effective Response and Accelerating Reform" which is funded by the European Union.

Expanding social security coverage in Iraq



Basra, 04 May 2024 - On Monday, April 22, 2024, the International Labor Organization held a workshop in Basra Governorate on ways to extend the scope of social security coverage, with the participation of representatives of the Basra local government, the Department of Retirement and Social Security, workers' organizations, the Chamber of Basra Industry that affiliated to Iraqi Federation of Industries IFI, and some civil society organizations in Basra. The international labour standards on social security were presented, specifically focusing on the Social Security Convention (Minimum Standards), 1952, as well as the notable updates introduced by the Retirement and Social Security Law No. 18 of 2023, which include unemployment insurance, maternity insurance, and voluntary retirement insurance. The participants touched on the importance of implementing the law and issuing instructions to facilitate

the implementation of the provisions of the law, as well as creating precise, quick, and effective mechanisms for registering workers with social security by employers and creating a cooperation mechanism between the local government, the Department of Retirement and Social Security, workers' organizations and employers' organizations that contribute to developing work plans at sectoral and geographical level to extend the of social security coverage.

Participants from IFI stressed the importance of providing technical support from the International Labor Organization to the IFI in developing strategies for employers' compliance with the social security law and enabling them to access it through several means, with the importance of the government adopting steps that encourage employers to register their workers with social security, including, for example, tax exemptions, and granting industrial loans. As for

representatives of trade unions, they confirmed their monitoring of many enterprises and employers that did not register large percentages of workers in social security and that there were successes in registering dozens of workers during March in social security through cooperation with several employers in several locations in the oil and services and transportation sectors.

The International Labor Organization works to strengthen social dialogue between governmental institutions, workers' organizations, and employers' organizations to develop plans and strategies to extend social security coverage and provide the guarantees and services the law guarantees to the beneficiaries of its provisions.

This workshop is part of the ILO Social Protection Programme for Iraq: Leveraging Effective Response and Accelerating Reform" which is funded by the European Union.



ILO strengthens capacities of social security institutions to extend coverage to informal workers in Iraq

Erbil, 09 May 2024 - Twenty mid-career officials and technical specialists from the Social Security Department across the Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq gathered on 6-9 May 2024 in Erbil for a four-day training on the extension of social security to workers in the informal economy.

The course, organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in cooperation with its International Training Centre (ITC-ILO) and with the support of the European Union, aimed to bolster the ongoing efforts to implement a comprehensive social security reform in accordance with the ILO Convention on Social Security (Minimum Standards), 1952 (No. 102) ratified by Iraq in 2023. The training also became an important milestone in developing a national roadmap of formalization, aligned with the ILO Recommendation on Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy, 2015 (No. 204).



Building on the foundations of social security, the training sought to boost participants' knowledge and skills on identifying and developing policy, design and administrative solutions for extending coverage to workers in the informal economy in Iraq, as well as supporting their formalization. A particular focus was paid to informal workers in agriculture, construction and manufacturing – the three priority sectors with high level of informality and inadequate coverage with social

security.

The course combined classroom learning with practical exercises, providing hands-on experience in identifying and developing practical solution for extension. Recognizing that the extension of coverage to workers in the informal economy, and especially in the priority sectors, was central to the reform agenda in Iraq, the training initiated the development of sectoral roadmaps for the Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

An agreement to initiate a tripartite social dialogue on expanding social security in Muthanna

Al-Muthanna, 14 May 2024 – Today, the International Labor Organization held a tripartite meeting in Al-Muthanna Governorate, in which representatives of the Pension and Social Security Department in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, workers' organizations and employers' organizations in Muthanna participated to discuss ways of joint cooperation between the parties of the social dialogue in the governorate, in the presence of Dr. Zainab AlJayashi, member of the Labor and Civil Society Organizations Committee in the Iraqi Parliament.

The meeting included a review of the international labor standards for social security and the updates contained in the new Pension and Social Security Law in Iraq No. 18 of 2023 compared to the previous Law No. 39 of 1971. The attendees discussed opportunities for implementing the new law, the challenges facing the implementation, as well as the opportunities to expand the scope of social security at the local level in Muthanna Governorate, through the establishment of a joint framework between the aforementioned parties to initiate a tripartite social dialogue and expand the scope of social security.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the



participants announced their commitment to initiate a tripartite social dialogue for the purpose of promoting the social guarantees for workers in the governorate. AlJayashi, for her part, expressed the intention of the Parliamentarian Labor Committee to actively contribute to following up on the implementation of the law and supporting the parties to launch an effective social dialogue at the level of

Muthanna Governorate.

The International Labor Organization continues to provide the necessary technical support to national partners to expand the coverage of social security in Iraq through tripartite social dialogue as part of the activities of the Social Protection Programme for Iraq: Leveraging Effective Response and Accelerating Reform, funded by the European Union.

Discussion on opportunities and challenges facing the implementation of the Pension and Social Security Law for workers in Karbala



Karbala, 15 May 2024 - With the participation of a wide range of personnel from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Provincial Council, workers' organizations, employers' organizations, academics, and civil society organizations in Karbala Governorate, the International

Labor Organization held a workshop on Wednesday, May 15, 2024 in Karbala to discuss ways to expand the scope of social security in accordance with the Pension and Social Security Law for Workers No.18 of 2023 in Karbala. Views were exchanged between the parties participating in the workshop

about the opportunities available for implementing the Pension and Social Security Law and the challenges facing its implementation. Among the many challenges that were discussed was the need to create incentives for workers to register for Social Security, especially workers in the informal economy who serves in casual works. The participants agreed on the importance of intensifying joint efforts at the local level to develop programs to enhancing social security and include new labor categories that were not included in previous legislation or implementation. This workshop comes as part of the activities of the Social Protection Programme for Iraq: Leveraging Effective Response and Accelerating Reform, funded by the European Union.

Integrating decent work and affordable green housing is an important step towards supporting developmental programs in Iraq

Baghdad, 21 May 2024 - The BEIT program aims, among other things, to increase affordable green housing, provide decent job opportunities in Iraq, improve the business environment, and engage local micro, small, and medium enterprises, and investors in the construction sector. It will also provide an avenue for establishing and implementing a national public works programme in Iraq.

On Sunday, May 19th, 2024, representatives from the Ministry of

Planning, the European Union Delegation to Iraq, and the United Nations agencies partnering in implementing the project convened a joint meeting to discuss the project objectives, coordination and implementation mechanisms, the roles of government institutions, social partners, and the private sector benefiting from the project activities, and the duties of each United Nations agency partnering in implementation.

Mr. Lennart Deridder, Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the

European Union to Iraq, outlined how the project interventions would provide affordable green housing, decent job opportunities and promote good practices by dealing with the needs of vulnerable groups in Iraq. It was further noted that the European Union has worked hard with its partners in Iraq, to develop a strategic vision, with continued commitment to support Iraqi efforts as the BEIT project provides great opportunities for a model of collaboration with national partners in provision of affordable housing, decent work, improving the construction sector business enabling environment and stimulating medium and large projects. Representatives of the United Nations organizations partnering in implementing the BEIT project presented the programme and key action items. In ensuing discussions, officials of the Ministry of Planning revealed that there is a real housing crisis in Iraq, with a demand for approximately 3.5 million housing units. The BEIT project provides an opportunity to link employment, housing in line with the government program and regional and local development plans, revealing that it is possible to provide Iraq with meaningful experiences that can be used to achieve this integration between decent work for most vulnerable groups or youth and the housing sector.



ILO, UNICEF and WFP conclude a workshop focused on developing a strategic framework for social protection in KRI

Erbil, 30 May 2024 - Under the leadership of the Ministry of Planning in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), ILO, UNICEF and WFP have successfully concluded a two-and-a-half-day workshop focused on developing a strategic framework for social protection in KRI. With the support of EU International Partnerships, this strategy aims to establish key priorities for social protection, ensuring integration and inclusiveness #ForEveryChild.



ILO conducts a workshop to validate the preliminary results of research on the extension of social security to informal workers

Erbil, 3 June 2024 - Today, the International Labor Organization (ILO), in collaboration with ODI, conducted a workshop to validate the preliminary results of research on the extension of social security to informal workers in the agricultural, construction, manufacturing sectors in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The event held in Erbil brought together more than 30 representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of trade and Industry, Chamber of Commerce, trade unions, contractors union, and academia, a few representatives of the government, worker' and employers' organizations from Federal Iraq also attended the event to explore synergies between Federal Iraq and the KRI.

Extension of social security coverage to workers constitutes one among other types of measures to formalize labour relationships and improve working conditions. Participants engaged in



depth discussions and shared their views on identifying practical and innovative policy options to extend social security coverage to informal workers in the construction, manufacturing and agriculture sectors. Key topics raised and discussed included the barriers faces by informal workers in the selected sectors to access social security, current coverage gaps, review of proposed policy options,

technology innovation and integration, implementation strategies, financial sustainability, regulatory and legal framework, stakeholder collaboration, capacity building, awareness raising and impacts on decent work and economic growth.

This workshop is part of a series of activities and events carried out by ILO funded by the European Union.

IOM Iraq meets with government representatives to improve conditions for migrant workers

Baghdad, 04 June 2024 - According to the International Labour Organization, over 50.000 migrant workers lived and worked in Iraq in 2021, of which:

- 74 % worked in the informal sector
- 89 % had informal employment.

The risk of labor exploitation is high in the informal sector and stresses the need for ethical recruitment measures. Addressing these emerging trends, IOM Iraq met with government representatives to improve conditions for migrant workers by promoting ethical recruitment practices, leaving no one behind.

This project was supported by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq.

**Labour rights
are human rights**

Child labor has severe consequences on children

Baghdad, 12 June 2024 – UNICEF reports that child labor has severe consequences on children with ripple effects that can last a lifetime.

It robs their childhood, undermines their rights to education and limits their future opportunities, deepening cycles of poverty.

Under the leadership of the Government of Iraq, EU International Partnerships funded UN Social Protection Programme is key to

reducing the vulnerabilities that make child labor the only option.

Let us continue to work together to build better #ForEveryChild in Iraq.



Heat stress is a significant concern worldwide, particularly in the Arab region and Iraq

Baghdad, 23 June 2024 - From the International Labour Organization in Iraq:

Heat stress is a significant concern worldwide, particularly in the Arab region and Iraq, due to its severe health impacts on workers. During the summer months, temperatures can soar to 50 degrees Celsius. The most groups at risk include outdoor workers, especially those in construction, agriculture, infrastructure, and the service sector.

The current Iraqi Labour Law No. 37 of 2015 and the Occupational Safety and Health Requirements Instructions No.12 of 2016 provide the legal framework for protecting workers from occupational hazards in general. This includes the government's responsibility, through the National Center for Occupational Health and Safety associated with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, to develop a national policy of occupational health and safety in consultation with social partners. The government is also tasked with identifying and evaluating emerging occupational risks in the workplace, monitoring factors that affect workers' health and safety, monitoring workers' health, and recording work injuries and occupational diseases.

The Labour Law outlines the responsibilities of employers towards workers in terms of providing healthy workplace conditions and necessary precautions to protect workers during their duties.

Workers have the right to work in safe conditions and a healthy work environment. Employers are obligated to take necessary measures to protect workers from occupational hazards, work-related risks, and machinery that could harm their health. Additionally, employers are responsible for ensuring the safety and health of workers in all

aspects related to their work and taking preventive measures to reduce workers' exposure to high temperatures. Some countries have prioritized heat-related risks in their national occupational health and safety policies and strategies, recognizing the urgent need to protect workers and workplaces from these increasing risks. These policies include specific preventive measures, such as acclimatization programs in Singapore and South Africa, hydration in Austria, Benin, Cameroon, Chile, Pakistan, India, Samoa, and Saudi Arabia, ventilation in Argentina, Barbados, India, Morocco, and Senegal, rest breaks in the shade or air conditioning in Cameroon and Saudi Arabia, training in Bahrain, Oman, and South Africa, and the supply of PPE and other safety equipment in Bahrain, Bolivia, Fiji, and Italy.

Other countries have adopted more detailed provisions, defining a set of actions to be taken in the workplace, including risk assessment procedures and adequate prevention and mitigation measures.

In addition, several measures can be taken under such conditions, such as adjusting work schedules and times for outdoor workers, imposing mandatory rest periods during the hottest periods of the day, using PPE and clothing to reduce heat stress, ensuring adequate water intake, allowing workers access to rooms equipped with cooling systems, and permitting work stoppages when temperatures exceed permissible limits suitable for each profession and its performance requirements.

As occupational Safety and health is one of the fundamental principles and rights at work, according to the 2022 International Labour Conference's resolution that included "a safe and healthy working environment" in the



Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of 1998, and with the adoption of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) of 1981 and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention No. 187 of 2006 as core ILO conventions, and given that Iraq is one of the countries most affected by climate change in the Arab region, the International Labour Organization urges the Iraqi government, workers' organizations, and employers' organizations to work together to update the legal frameworks on occupational safety and health. They should develop the necessary procedural frameworks to mitigate the severe heat during the summer months on workers by regulating working hours, organizing awareness campaigns on heat stress, disseminating information about the risks associated with heat stress, and emphasizing the importance of preventive measures. We also encourage employers to provide training for workers on managing and addressing heat stress, and we urge employers to modify workplaces to reduce heat exposure, including providing shaded rest areas, improving ventilation, and installing appropriate cooling systems.

Towards developing a national action plan to promote green business and create better and more job opportunities in Iraq: International MSMEs Day Event

Baghdad, 27 June 2024 – In a successful collaboration, the Iraqi Ministry of Environment (MOEN), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) co-organized an interactive event titled "Towards developing a national action plan to promote green business in Iraq and create better and more job opportunities" on June 27, 2024, in recognition of International MSMEs Day.

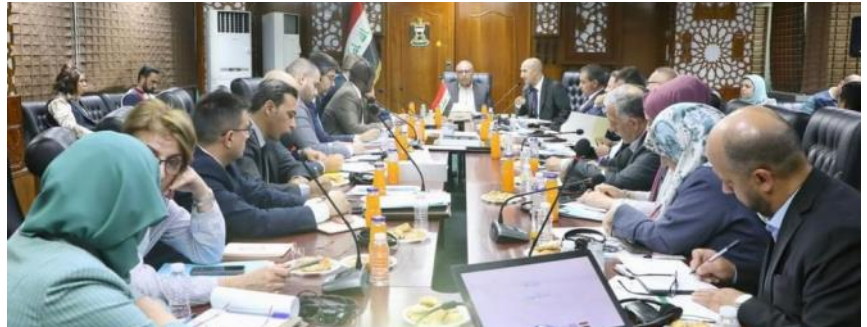
The event brought together over 60 participants, including government representatives, industry leaders, civil society organizations, green MSME entrepreneurs, and young climate change advocates. This diverse group engaged in fruitful exchange of ideas, paving the way for a national action plan to support green businesses in Iraq, with a particular focus on empowering women entrepreneurs.

The event featured two discussion panels. The first panel included key government stakeholders, focusing on policy frameworks and regulatory support for green business initiatives. The second panel comprised representatives from the private sector, employer organizations, and financial institutions, who discussed strategies, opportunities, and financial mechanisms to advance green business practices in Iraq.

The event was inaugurated by the Prime Minister's Advisor for Investment and the CEO of the Development Fund of Iraq, who stated "The Iraqi Fund for Development was created to address a number of economic and environmental challenges facing Iraq and transform them into investment opportunities. The Fund also seeks to create incentives to support small and medium-sized companies by focusing on green businesses, as these projects have great potential for progress and development."

Spearheading Iraq's transition to a greener future, the MOEN actively promotes sustainable practices and empowers stakeholders to contribute to environmental well-being. Recognizing the critical role of green businesses and women's leadership, MOEN played a pivotal role in co-organising the World MSME Day event.

"The MOEN's participation in this event is an important step in promoting and supporting green



projects in Iraq. These projects contribute to preserving the environment, creating job opportunities, and stimulating economic growth. Furthermore, The MOEN enhances efforts in both the governmental and private sectors, particularly the project to promote green business in southern Iraq. In this project, the Ministry cooperates with the ILO and the AICS, reflecting a significant direction in supporting such initiatives". said Dr. Iktfaa Al-Hassnawi, Administrative and Financial Deputy for MOEN.

The ILO plays a vital role in promoting decent work opportunities in Iraq through its Decent Work Country Programme. Recognizing the potential of the green economy to create sustainable and well-paying jobs, the ILO has made green job creation a significant focus. This commitment extends to supporting training programs, fostering worker rights within the green sector, and advocating for policies that incentivize green business development.

"Currently, the International Labor Organization is implementing several projects across various governorates in Iraq, aimed at supporting small and medium enterprises and helping them access financing by enhancing the efficiency of entrepreneurs. Special importance is given to women, youth, and people with disabilities. We are also working to evaluate the business environment to implement thoughtful initiatives that will facilitate the development of a sustainable business environment. Additionally, we are building the capabilities of banks and financial institutions to design financial green products suitable for different groups and sectors. We train and certify trainers from various backgrounds on the well-established International Labor Organization tools for business management and financial education, so that they, in

turn, can train potential entrepreneurs to ensure the continuity of programs even after the projects are completed".

The International MSMEs Day event yielded a significant outcome: the initial framework for a national action plan to support green businesses in Iraq. This plan tackles challenges head-on by identifying bottlenecks like access to finance and expertise through collaborative workshops. It fosters open communication between workers, employers, and government to develop cost-effective green policies that incentivize private sector investment. Finally, the plan will be refined based on stakeholder consultations to create a supportive environment. This includes streamlining regulations, promoting public awareness about green products and services, and fostering stronger collaboration between government, private sector, and civil society, paving the way for a greener future in Iraq.

The event concluded with a sense of shared purpose and a commitment to continued collaboration. The Ministry of Environment, ILO, AICS, and other stakeholders are determined to build upon this momentum to empower green MSMEs, with a special focus on women entrepreneurs. Together, they aim to pave the way for a more sustainable and inclusive future for Iraq.

This initiative falls under the "Towards more and better employment through enhanced support to private sectors in southern Iraq – with a focus on green business" project, implemented by the ILO with the support of Italy. The project is part of broader efforts under the Iraq Decent Work Country Programme signed by the Government, employers' and workers' organizations and the ILO to promote employment opportunities and decent work.

IOM Iraq and partners conclude a series of workshops with the aim to develop a Community Policing Strategic Plan based on the MoI's strategic plan (2024-2026)

Baghdad, 12 May 2024 - IOM Iraq recently concluded a series of workshops collaboratively with Iraq's Ministry of Interior (MoI), National Security Advisory, Judicial Council and Civil Society Organizations to develop a Community Policing Strategic Plan based on the MoI's strategic plan (2024-2026).

The Community Policing Strategic Plan will contribute to improving the Community Police's interventions in three strategic domains:

1. Crime prevention.
2. Crime response
3. Non-criminal case referrals to relevant specialized institutions.



Prosecutor General of Kurdistan Region of Iraq visits UNDP financial investigation workshop

Baghdad, 22 May 2024 — The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq welcomed the Public Prosecutor General of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), Judge Kawa Fathi Masoum, to one of its ongoing Financial Investigation workshops in Baghdad at the Judicial Development Institute, earlier this week.

During his visit, the Public Prosecutor General praised the longstanding partnership between UNDP and the national justice system, highlighting the importance of these collective efforts to combat financial crime and corruption across Iraq. He awarded UNDP's training team including Dr Mohammed Almosly, James May and Jafar Nema for their dedication, excellence and promoting interactive training approach.

Judge Masoum's visit provided an opportunity to recognize the achievements of UNDP Iraq's ongoing efforts in strengthening the capacity of

judicial and law enforcement officials across Iraq. Since 2021, UNDP Iraq, with the support of the U.S. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, has trained over 2,000 officials, including more than 700 judges, in investigating, prosecuting, and adjudicating complex and organized crimes including corruption, illicit enrichment and money laundering cases.

Judge Kawa Fathi Masoum, said that "during our attendance at the Judicial Workshop on 17-18 May 2024, we awarded the Public Prosecution Shield to the members of the UNDP team of the Financial Investigation Project in recognition of their exceptional efforts in training our judges on financial investigation techniques. This training will enhance the capabilities of public prosecutors in monitoring and protecting public funds, uncovering crimes of corruption and money laundering, and holding perpetrators

accountable. The dedication and expertise of the UNDP team also led to the drafting and launching of a Financial Investigation Handbook, which has been adopted by our Iraqi institutions to unify our procedures and efforts in this field. The UNDP experts played a significant role in the success of the program."

UNDP Resident Representative in Iraq, Auke Lootsma, added, "We are honored to have had the Prosecutor General of KRI with us. His presence reinforces the important role of partnerships in achieving our shared goal of reducing corruption and enhancing justice in Iraq."

Dr. Mohamed Almosly, a national and international trainer and UNDP Expert on Financial Investigations, emphasized the significance of the workshops. "Our training sessions are designed to be highly interactive and tailored to the participants' needs. They promote collaborative approaches and equip officials with the necessary tools to conduct thorough financial investigations. The success of these workshops is reflected in the strong network and shared knowledge among the judiciary and other agencies."

A notable achievement of this project is the launch of the Handbook for Enhancing Financial Investigations and Upholding the Rule of Law in November 2023. This comprehensive guide was co-created by 12 institutions, providing a valuable resource for practitioners involved in financial investigations.



Together against financial crime



Baghdad, 30 May 2024 - Since 2021, UNDP has trained more than 2,000 officials on investigating and prosecuting and adjudicating complex and organized financial crimes including corruption, illicit enrichment, and money laundering crimes across Iraq. More than 700 Judges benefited from interactive workshops led by UNDP experts in which practical case examples were discussed. All of the workshops are interactive and tailored to the needs of the participants; they promote collaborative approaches where participants jointly solve real case examples. What began as an initiative to conduct Financial Investigations workshops has evolved into a viable networking hub for judges and prosecutors from across Iraq and we are proud to see the popularity of the workshops.

The efforts of UNDP's trainers were officially recognized in an award ceremony by Public Prosecutor General of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Judge Kawa Fathi Masoum, who joined our

workshop in Baghdad.

UNDP's signature trainings the Judicial Workshops, stand out for their vivid debate on practical approaches to trying complex criminal cases, driving meaningful change and improvement in financial crime investigations. The impact of these workshops has been far-reaching, creating a community of practice that supports and strengthens the judiciary's role in combating corruption and anti-money laundering. Some of those positive results have been shared and documented personally by judges and prosecutors across Iraq.

These Financial Investigation workshops and training sessions are instrumental in shaping the future of financial crime enforcement in Iraq. They provide judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers with the necessary tools and knowledge to conduct thorough financial investigations, tracing the origins of assets, identifying beneficiaries, documenting the movement of assets

associated with criminal activities, and ultimately forfeit the assets for the benefit of the citizens. This holistic approach is crucial for building a comprehensive framework, potentially digital, that can effectively combat money laundering and illegal financing. Another example of the project's achievement has been the Handbook for Enhancing Financial Investigations and Upholding the Rule of Law, which was launched in November 2023. It has been co-created by 11 institutions collaborating on financial crimes cases.

The success of the project and its knowledge products is also a testament to the strong partnership between the UNDP and the Iraqi agencies, which are the Supreme Judicial Council, the Judicial Council of the KRI, the Ministry of Justice/Public Prosecution Agency of the KRI, the Federal Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Interior of the KRI, the Federal Commission of Integrity, the Commission of Integrity of the KRI, the Federal Board of Supreme Audit, the Board of Supreme Audit of the KRI, the National Security Service, the Assayish Agency of the KRI and the AML-CFT Office of the Central Bank of Iraq, with the invaluable support of the US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. This collaborative effort underscores the importance of a united front in addressing financial crime and enhancing the capacity of the Iraqi judicial system.

Our work on building robust justice and law enforcement in Iraq for more integrity will continue.

UNDP launches Trial Monitoring Report spotlighting progress in Iraq's anti-corruption efforts



Baghdad, 02 June 2024 - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with funding from the European Union, today launched the Trial Monitoring Report in collaboration with Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

(UNAMI) Human Rights Office.

"The findings of this report underscore the Government of Iraq's commitment to curbing corruption and creating a more transparent and equitable society," said Auke Lootsma, UNDP Iraq's Resident Representative. "UNDP remains steadfast in our partnership

with the Supreme Judicial Council to support critical judicial reforms that will help attract much-needed foreign investment to Iraq."

The report, a key component of UNDP's Anti-Corruption and Commercial Dispute Resolution initiatives, highlights significant progress in the Iraqi judiciary's handling of high-level corruption cases. Through comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis, the report offers tailored recommendations to further strengthen Iraq's anti-corruption efforts and promote the rule of law. "Iraq is committed to continue taking steps to curb corruption, build a transparent society and strengthen the citizen trust. We will follow up on the findings and the recommendations of

UNDP launches Trial Monitoring Report ... (continued)



the report” said Najem Abdullah Ahmed Mohammed, The Head of Public Prosecution, Supreme Judicial Council. “Moving forward, the European Union, along with UNDP and UNAMI will continue to work closely with the Supreme Judicial Council to implement the report's recommendations and provide targeted assistance where necessary. We are proud to say that these collaborative efforts are aligned with the Government of Iraq's broader priorities in addressing corruption and bolstering the country's economic development,” said Thomas Seiler, European Union Ambassador to Iraq. Positive developments in the fight against corruption

The report, covering August 2022 to July 2023, examined significant anti-corruption progress in Iraq, with a focus on the work of the country's Central Anti-Corruption Criminal Court. The report analyzed 184 monitored cases and 173 verdicts issued between 2019 and 2022, particularly high-profile corruption cases involving large sums of money,

senior government officials, and cases of public interest or against whistleblowers. The monitoring found the specialized court to be effective at focusing efforts on prosecuting high-level corruption cases. There was an observable increase in the number of resolved cases between the review and monitoring periods. Additionally, it noted a rise in convictions, including of senior government officials, as well as a decrease in the number of cases returned to the pre-trial stage. However, there was also an uptick in trials conducted in absentia. Most importantly, the report raised genuine concerns that inconsistent penalties and the existing amnesty regime could have a negative effect on the deterrent role of anti-corruption criminal offenses.

The report found that over half (55%) of the monitored corruption cases were concentrated in the Baghdad governorate. In terms of sectors, graft was most prevalent at the governorate and municipal levels, as well as within the Ministries of Finance and Industry.

Despite ongoing limitations in civil society engagement with anti-corruption adjudication and investigations, the UNDP program observed positive developments in the implementation of fair trial rights, in accordance with international and Iraqi legal standards.

Improving transparency and accountability in Iraq's anti-corruption efforts

The report recommends a range of measures to improve transparency and accountability in Iraq's anti-corruption efforts, involving the government, judiciary, civil society, and international community. Key proposed actions include enhancing investigative capabilities, amending the Penal Code and other legislation to exclude major corruption cases from amnesty, developing unified sentencing policies, and strengthening oversight mechanisms. Additionally, the report emphasizes the need for better legal representation, capacity building for civil society, cross-border cooperation for asset recovery, and the creation of a court information management system.

Access to Report :
https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgkge326/files/2024-06/UNDP_IQ_TM_First_Report_English.pdf

Access to Infographics :
https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgkge326/files/2024-06/UNDP_IQ_Infographic_Summary_English.pdf

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNDP Iraq support Iraq in strengthening integrity and countering crime

Baghdad, 03 June 2024 - UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNDP Iraq support Iraq in strengthening integrity and countering crime: building a robust anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing system is a key step in

strengthening the investment climate in Iraq.

Iraq's engagement in the MENA Financial Action Task Force's Mutual Evaluation process and the report thereof that has been discussed during the 38th plenary session can act as a

catalyst for reforms.

UNODC and UNDP stand ready to further support Iraq in implementing any recommendations of the final report.



UNODC organizes a key workshop alongside the Iraqi Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) on the misuse of NPMs in money laundering and financing terrorism

Baghdad, 05 June 2024 - From mobile wallets to virtual currencies, new payment technologies (NPMs) have opened new avenues for illicit activities, posing unprecedented challenges to global security. In Baghdad, Iraq, UNODC - United

Nations Office on Drugs and Crime organized a key workshop alongside the Iraqi Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) on the Misuse of NPMs in Money Laundering and Financing Terrorism. Throughout the workshop, participants explored the means and tools to counter

financial crimes, including identifying suspicious cases through open-source intelligence, analyzing transaction data, and detecting possible misuse associated with NPMs like payment cards and electronic transfers.



Explosive ordnance incident at Tal Kaif near Mosul kills one

Mosul, 30 April 2024 – One Iraqi member of a team working for a United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) implementing partner was killed in an incident at an explosive ordnance clearance site in Batnaia, Tal Kaif area, near Mosul.

The incident occurred in the early morning at the site managed by Health and Social Care Organization in Iraq (IHSCO), which is one of UNMAS

Iraq's implementing partners.

UNMAS Iraq and the entire UN family in Iraq convey their deepest condolences to the families of the deceased.

UNMAS is working closely with the Iraqi Directorate for Mine Action to investigate and review the incident to understand if any conditions can be addressed and precautions implemented to reduce the risk of such

incidents in the future.

IHSCO has been a partner of UNMAS for the last four years and cleared hundreds of items of explosive ordnance in the liberated areas from ISIL. The clearance operations are essential for the safety of impacted communities and safe access to land for agricultural activities and development.

Third meeting of the Local Mine Action Support Group (LMASG) held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 13 May 2024 - Following the second meeting of the Local Mine Action Support Group (LMASG) in late 2023, the third LMASG meeting was held on 12 May at the Embassy of Germany in Iraq. The meeting was jointly organized by the Embassy of Germany who is the largest donor to the UNMAS Iraq programme since programme inception. The meeting was attended by H.E. Dr. Iktifaa AL-Hasnawi, Deputy Minister of Environment and Mr. Shawkat Taieh, Director-General of the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA), representatives from the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), and 16 diplomats from 12 countries.

H.E Ms. Christiane Hohmann, the German Ambassador to Iraq, welcomed all participants and emphasized the importance of continued support to the Iraqi mine action section during her opening remarks. Pehr Lodhammar,

UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, delivered a presentation on UNMAS Iraq operations and activities, main achievements, as well as various mine action challenges.

UNMAS would like to thank the Embassy of Germany for jointly conducting the third LMASG and looks forward to further cooperation with the international community.



Baghdad, 13 May 2024 - Pehr Lodhammar, Chief Mine Action Programme for UNMAS Iraq met with Her Excellency Ambassador Anu Saarela, Ambassador of Finland to Iraq, and Ms. Liisa Maunula, the Deputy Head of Mission at the Finland Embassy in Baghdad. Lodhammar briefed on UNMAS Iraq operations and sectoral challenges as well as discussed future cooperation between UNMAS Iraq and the Government of Finland. Lodhammar expressed his gratitude to the Government of Finland for their cooperation and interest in supporting the Government of Iraq to maintain development and livelihood efforts.



Baghdad, 16 May 2024 - Recently, Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, met with His Excellency Choi Sung-soo, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Iraq and provided an update on UNMAS Iraq operations in addition to various joint advocacy initiatives. Korea is one of the reliable supporters of mine action in Iraq. The generous contribution from the Government of the Republic of Korea has enabled UNMAS Iraq to enhance the capacity of the national implementing partners. Capacity enhancement of the national operators is indispensable for sustainable mine action operations in Iraq.

A representative from the Government of Denmark visits UNMAS Iraq's national implementing partner Shareteah Humanitarian Organization in Mosul

Mosul, 23 May 2024 - A representative from the Government of Denmark visited UNMAS Iraq's national implementing partner, Shareteah Humanitarian Organization (SHO), in Mosul. During the visit SHO presented their mine action operations, the progress made to date, and support provided to the local communities in Sinjar district. SHO has been a national partner organization of UNMAS Iraq since 2021. In early 2024, UNMAS Iraq awarded a direct grant to SHO to autonomously operate in Sinjar district.

UNMAS Iraq appreciates the consistent assistance from the Government of Denmark in reducing

the risk of explosive ordnance (EO). Denmark's generous and continued support enables UNMAS Iraq to

contribute to peace and stability in the affected areas from ISIL, especially remote areas such as Sinjar.



UNMAS completes an “Ammunition Classification” training course provided to the Ministry of Interior (MoI) police officers

Baghdad, 23 May 2024 - An “Ammunition Classification” training course provided to the Ministry of Interior (MoI) police officers was successfully completed at the Ministry of Interior Salman Pak Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Training Center, Baghdad. The course was designed and delivered for Level-3 EOD certified MoI police officers to advance their disposal skills and knowledge. A total of 16 police officers participated and successfully graduated from the two-week course.

Major General Sabah Hoshi, Head of Training and Qualification Directorate

at MoI, expressed his gratitude toward UNMAS Iraq for the continuous support. Johan Smith, UNMAS Iraq

Head of Project Unit, attended the ceremony and delivered a speech to congratulate the graduates.



Explosive ordnance and war remnants are one of the major barriers for safe and dignified returns of IDPs

Baghdad, 06 June 2024 - In May, UNMAS Iraq participated in a two-day workshop on “Developing Action Plan for the Durable Solutions Roadmap” in Baghdad. The workshop focused on developing action plans that will serve as the operational framework for the endorsed Durable Solutions Roadmap to end prolonged displacement triggered by the ISIL conflict. Explosive ordnance (EO) and war remnants are one of the major barriers for safe and dignified returns for IDPs.

UNMAS Iraq will continue to engage and coordinate with the Government of Iraq to ensure the safe and dignified return of IDPs to their places of origin. UNMAS Iraq appreciates the generous

contributions from multiple donors to ensure the safety of the affected

communities and to enhance stability efforts in Iraq.



UNMAS Iraq delivers Advanced Life Support (ALS), and Emergency Trauma Bag (ETB) training to medical staff

Baghdad, 08 June 2024 - In May, UNMAS Iraq delivered Advanced Life Support (ALS), and Emergency Trauma Bag (ETB) training to medical staff, including four women and seven men, with the two national implementing partners, Health and Social Care Organization in Iraq (IHSCO) and Shareteah Humanitarian Organization

(SHO). The training covered the principles of on-site medical support to demining operations and pre-hospital care in case of accidents. The training is part of UNMAS Iraq's capability enhancement plan for national partners to support localization efforts and ensure sustainable national mine action capacity.

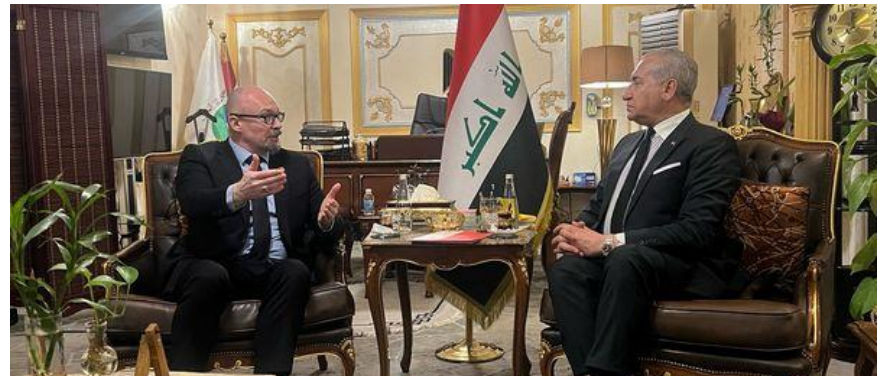


The UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme meets with the Deputy Minister of Environment

Baghdad, 10 June 2024 - The UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, Pehr Lodhammar, met with the Deputy Minister of Environment, his Excellency Dr. Jasim Al-Falahi. Discussions covered the continuous support to national implementing partners to ensure smoother implementation of mine action projects as well as the various mine action challenges faced in Iraq. Al-Falahi praised UNMAS Iraq's coordination efforts with Iraqi Government mine action entities and emphasized the importance of continued collaboration to meet the various mine action obligations as a State Party to several conventions.

The UNMAS Iraq programme aligns with, and supports, the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs, and in particular SDG17 Partnerships.

UNMAS Iraq would like to seize this opportunity to extend its compliments to the Government of Iraq for the support to the Iraqi mine action sector.



Healthcare

The important milestone to expand the health data digitization project

Baghdad, 04 May 2024 - World Health Organization Health Information Management System team convened a meeting with the Statistics and Geographic Information Systems Dept at the Iraqi Ministry of Health to discuss the important milestone to expand the health data digitization

project through application of the District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2) Platform.

During the meeting, WHO team discussed and showcased the DHIS2 Platform progress implementation in different programmes, such as Immunization, TB, and nutrition. At

the same time presented the digital format of the developed DHIS2 monthly Iraq's statistical forms. An agreement and consensus reached on the implementation plan and a pilot phase directorate of health was identified.

As teams prepare for the system's launch, they are diligently uploading historical data from the piloted DOH for 2023 to ensure a seamless transition. They are also gearing up for a series of capacity-building workshops slated for the end of the second quarter of this year.

The meeting was productive, lasting approximately an hour and a half. The positive atmosphere paved the way for fruitful discussions, leading to an agreement to hold a following coordination meeting between MOH planning and public health teams, alongside our organization, to align efforts for the Iraqi Ministry of Health's data digitization project.



On their special day, Iraq’s nurses celebrate their dedication and heroic humanitarian contributions

Baghdad, 12 May 2024 - On 12 May every year, we celebrate the remarkable contributions of nurses in Iraq and worldwide. Among them is Mushtaq Najm Addin, a paediatric nurse at Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Centre at Childre’s Welfare Teaching Hospital, Medical City, Baghdad.

Mushtaq lives in a small district about 30 km south of Baghdad. His early mornings involve a 2-hour commute to work, often on crowded roads and with occasional traffic jams. Despite these difficulties, he arrives at the hospital each day with a beaming smile, ready to care for the young patients in need of specialized attention. “I want to see hope reflected in their smiles when they look at me,” said Mushtaq. “Yes, I may arrive tired, but part of my job is to show them that recovery is possible.” Mushtaq’s work at Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Centre at Childre’s Welfare Teaching Hospital, Medical City, Baghdad is not without its challenges. He faces the psychological and physical strains of his profession, enduring long, unpredictable hours and seeing children in pain and discomfort. “I sometimes feel frustrated and stressed but the support of the medical team I work with gives me the strength and resolve to fulfil my duties,” Mushtaq said.

“I arrived at the office this morning and immediately checked on little Sara, a 6-



year-old girl battling leukaemia. I had left her sleeping late last night after examining her condition and administering her medication,” he said with a voice heavy with sorrow. “I couldn’t stop thinking about her all

night; I have a daughter her age.”

Mushtaq, who holds a PhD in paediatric nursing, believes that continuous learning is crucial for success in the medical field. His daily experiences reinforce his pride in being a university-educated nurse, his skills allowing him to send families home with healed sons and daughters. He takes comfort in witnessing the joy of families as they see their children recover to laugh and talk with them in comfort once more.

To mark World Nursing Day, WHO Iraq highlights Mushtaq’s story, which emphasizes his unwavering dedication to his profession and his young patients. His experiences resonate with those of many university-educated nurses in Iraq who face similar challenges. “My profession requires resilience, strength and patience to support families during difficult times,” Mushtaq remarked.

Dr Georges Ki-Zerbo, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq, stressed the crucial role of nurses like Mushtaq in the health system. He praised their unwavering dedication and teamwork, recognizing their significant contributions in supporting families through both joyful and difficult times. “WHO takes pride in supporting nursing services in Iraq, recognizing their essential role in safeguarding the health and well-being of future generations,” remarked Dr Ki-Zerbo.

Access to essential medical care is a critical need for communities rebuilding after conflict

Fallujah, 16 May 2024 - Access to essential medical care is a critical need for communities rebuilding after conflict.

IOM Iraq Community Resource Centre, in partnership with the Iraq Health

Access Organization (IHAO), provide vital services in Fallujah through:

- ✔ A mobile medical clinic with specialists and medical equipment on board
- ✔ Free consultations, examinations,

basic treatments & supplies

✔ Support for disabilities & other needs to ensure equal access for everyone.

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

UNHCR and WHO in Iraq start the establishment of a brand-new Primary Health Centre in Qushtapa Sub district of Erbil

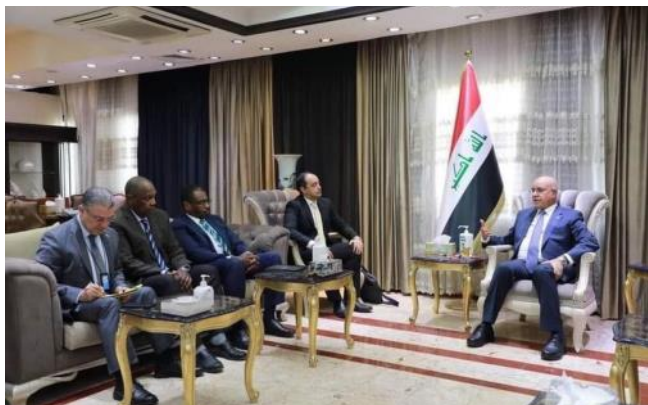
Erbil, 23 May 2024 - The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) jointly with the World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq have recently started the establishment of a brand-new Primary Health Centre in Qushtapa Sub district of Erbil. This health centre will soon become ready to serve the displaced and host populations alike in the area.



Strengthening immunization services in Sulaymaniyah

Sulaymaniyah, 25 May 2024 - World Health Organization in Iraq, UNICEF Iraq, and Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network are joining forces with the Iraqi Ministry of Health and Kurdistan Regional Ministry of Health to develop an Integrated Immunization Supply Chain Management Information System in Sulaymaniyah.

This cutting-edge system will revolutionize vaccine delivery, ensuring healthier communities for all!



Baghdad, 23 May 2024 - WHO Iraq Representative **Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo**: "UNODC and WHO Iraq representatives engage with the Iraqi Minister of Health, **Dr. Salih al-Hasnawi**, on substance abuse prevention and harm reduction with a focus on evidence".



Baghdad, 29 May 2024 - **Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo**, Representative, World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq: "Honored to meet **Dr. Fadel Al-Rahim**, Head of International Organizations and Conferences, Iraq Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We shared actionable updates on the WHO and UN cooperation with the Government of Iraq".

The World Health Organization in Iraq delivers a shipment of medical supplies to the Ministry of Health in Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Erbil, 02 June 2024 - The World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq has recently delivered a shipment to the Ministry of Health in Kurdistan Region

of Iraq. This shipment, totaling 45 pallets weighing 15 tons, contains significant amount of essential Pharmaceuticals and Medical supplies.

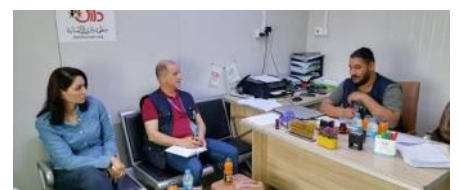
This lifesaving delivery was made possible through the generous support of our donors: BHA for medical supplies and PRM for Pharmaceuticals. This support reflects WHO's commitment to strengthening health systems and ensuring access to quality healthcare especially for the vulnerable communities of IDPs and refugees in KR-I. WHO Iraq extends its sincere gratitude to our donors and partners for their continued support in advancing health outcomes in Iraq.

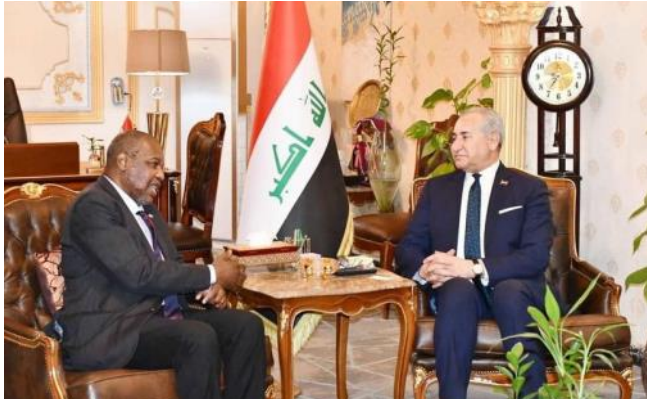


Ensuring health and safety in Jadaa 1 Camp, Ninawa

Ninawa, 27 May 2024 - World Health Organization in Iraq team recently visited Jadaa 1 camp to closely monitor the health services provided by the Implementing Partner Dary. This camp is home to many, and ensuring top-notch care is crucial.

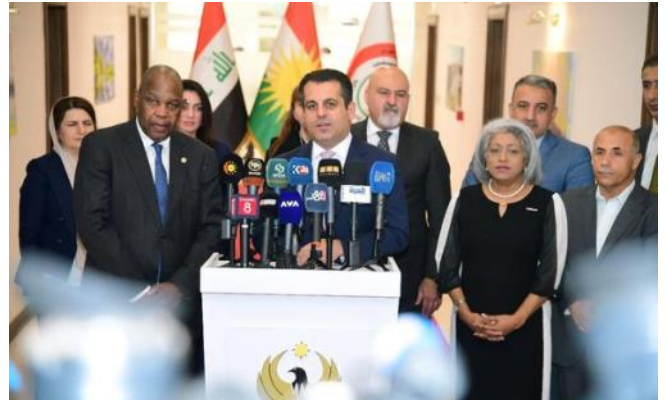
Following this, WHO conducted an important session on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) at Al-Qayara Hospital. This hospital plays a vital role in serving referrals from Jadaa camp, making it essential to promote a safe environment for all.





Baghdad, 04 June 2024 - WHO Iraq Representative, **Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo**: "Grateful to Iraq Deputy Minister of Environment for Technical Affairs, **Mr. Jasim Abdul Aziz Humadi**, for a forward-looking conversation." Strengthening Iraq's health systems in the face of climate change is crucial. The World Health Organization's recent efforts on environment safety and climate change include:

- Establishing a national steering committee for climate change and health.
- Developing a national roadmap for vulnerability assessment mitigation and adaptation planning.
- Joining the global Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH) initiative to build health resilient systems.
- Strengthening climate resilient health systems including for preparedness to emergencies.



Erbil, 12 June 2024 - Strengthening partnerships, **Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo**, WHO Iraq Representative, and **Dr. Gaya Gamhewage**, leading the World Health Organization's work on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment, met with **Mr. Saman Hussein Muhammad**, Minister of Health in the Kurdistan Region-Iraq, to reaffirm commitments towards a resilient health system and enhanced engagement with communities.

Strengthening public awareness on CCHF!

Ninawa, 06 June 2024 - Under a joint initiative with the ministries of Health and Agriculture, FAO Iraq and World Health Organization in Iraq experts conducted an awareness session on Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) for officers of the Directorate of Health in Ninawa. Valuable insights on this epidemic disease and its implications for public health and veterinary sectors were given to participants. The experts led various sessions

covering: Epidemiology, disease status, veterinary insights, risk communication, and infodemic

management. Together, we're building a safer, more informed community.



Mental Healthcare

WHO in Iraq attends the Duhok monthly Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Working Group meeting

Duhok, 06 May 2024 - The World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq recently attended the Duhok monthly

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Working Group meeting, held at the Duhok Directorate

of Health (DOH) meeting hall. During the meeting, WHO Iraq team engaged with partners to discuss the current Mental Health and Psychosocial situation at IDP camps PHCCs, highlighting the challenges and gaps faced, particularly in light of the current funding constraints. The discussions were insightful, shedding light on the urgent need to address these issues to ensure the well-being of those in IDP camps. WHO Iraq remains committed to working closely with our partners to find sustainable solutions for MHPSS services in vulnerable settings.



Noor's return home: from displacement to resilience



Ninewa, 10 May 2024 – On a rainy, early spring day, Noor* sat in the camp management centre at Hassan Sham U2 camp for internally displaced persons (IDP) in Ninewa Governorate, waiting to see her mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) counsellor. One could notice a glimmer of hopeful anticipation behind her weathered face... In less than one week, Noor and her family were to return to their home in southern Ninewa after seven years spent in the camp.

“We had to leave out of fear,” Noor said, recalling what brought her to the camp when the conflict broke out. “We had no money and there was no place for us to go. Our house was destroyed. What else were we left to do? We had nothing.” For seven years, he lived in a tent with her three children, mother and siblings. Her father passed away from cancer shortly after the whole family finally settled in the camp.

The loss of her father and the subsequent years of displacement took a major toll on Noor. She felt like her life was out of her control, unable to suppress negative thoughts, and she found it difficult to carry on. At times, Noor projected those difficulties onto her children, which affected their relationships.

While preparing for their departure, Noor sought mental health assistance from the International Organization for Migration (IOM). After several individual counselling sessions and medications prescribed by a psychiatrist, she began noticing improvements in her mood, thinking patterns and overall well-being. “[My counsellor] helped me take ownership of my life,” she shared. “She helped me gain confidence to make my own decisions because before I didn’t have that power. I was always afraid. She helped me believe in myself, rely on myself, and reimagine the future. Now, I am more optimistic for my future.”

Yet, the biggest and the most rewarding achievement for Noor was reconnecting with her children: “They changed when they saw my own change.” Thanks to IOM’s MHPSS sessions, Noor learned coping mechanisms and was more prepared for her return.

“Anything is better than being in this camp,” she exclaimed. “I feel comfortable going back even if I don’t have a house.” Noor and her family plan to set up a tent on their family-owned land until they rebuild their house. Now, her biggest dream is for her children to have their own room.

“When I go back, at least I will be living on something I own.”

Noor will continue seeing a counsellor and psychiatrist in her hometown to ensure a smooth transition and reintegration after the return.

Noor’s family is one of 243 households who relocated or returned to areas of their origin around Ninewa and Salah al-Din in the first cohort of people with the support of IOM’s facilitated voluntary movement (FVM) programme. To mitigate possible re-experiencing of difficult events or distressing memories from this process and ensure the safety and security of all families, IOM supports returnees throughout the whole process, from registration to resettlement and beyond, integrating MHPSS services at every stage. Thanks to support from the United States Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), IOM provides services such as stress management, individual and group support sessions, psychoeducation sessions, family visits and referrals to other modalities, based on individual needs.

Since 2020, IOM Iraq has supported more than 4,350 IDPs to find durable solutions through informed and voluntary returns to areas of origin and relocation under FVM. IOM Iraq’s efforts to promote voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable solutions to displacement are supported by several international partners including the Government of Japan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United States Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM).

*Name is changed to protect identity

UNFPA team with support from the U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, reaches 207 women at the Al Hayat Centre

Baghdad, 20 June 2024 - When women prioritize their mental health and gain opportunities for earning an income, the entire family and community benefit. Empowered women bring positivity and stability home, creating a nurturing environment where children can thrive.

Recently, UNFPA team with support from the U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, reached 207 women at the Al Hayat Centre, providing essential

services such as psychosocial support, awareness sessions, and recreational activities to combat violence against women.

Women’s mental well-being is crucial for the well-being of families and communities. Let’s continue to support their journey towards empowerment and resilience.



Iraqi Delegation visits DRC and Jordan to improve mental health support for genocide survivors

Amman, Bukavu, Baghdad, 25 June 2024 - From 25 April to 4 May, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq organized a study visit for Government of Iraq representatives to Jordan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to exchange best practices and lessons learned on the recovery and reintegration of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and other human rights violations. The Iraqi delegation included the Prime Minister's Advisor for Human Rights, the Director General for Survivors Affairs, the Head of Women the Empowerment Department in the Ministry of Health, the National Advisor for Mental Health, a Ministry of Finance representative, and IOM representatives.

The visit began with a two-day exchange at the Center for Victims of Torture in Amman, which supports 3,700 survivors annually. It was focused on how the centre's supports survivors of human rights violations to overcome trauma from conflict and violence.

In Bukavu, eastern DRC, the delegation met with Congolese counterparts at Panzi Hospital with the Panzi Foundation, a globally renowned institution for holistic treatment of survivors established by Dr Dennis Mukwege, a 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.

Ms Christine Schuler Deschryver, Vice President of the Panzi Foundation, highlighted the importance of cooperation: "Today, the path of recovery and healing is bringing us together and we have a duty to survivors to work together, and learn from each other".

The Iraqi delegation had a first-hand opportunity to see the work of the Foundation and how it helps survivors to heal and overcome their traumas, in the context of prolonged conflict in DRC and how the



organization provides support to more than 80,000 survivors since its establishment in 1999.

"The objective of these exchanges is to support Iraqi partners in ongoing deliberations on establishing a holistic centre for the care of survivors in Sinjar," said Giorgi Gigauri, Chief of Mission of IOM Iraq. "IOM's role in this process is the role of a facilitator, to make best practices in the rehabilitation of survivors available to our Iraqi partners, who will then assess what is the best modality for the Iraqi context, based on resources and survivors' needs."

The visit concluded with a meeting with 90 young women survivors at 'The City of Joy' compound to learn about their transformative journey. It is a community project established by the Panzi Foundation and V-Day -- a global activist movement to end violence against all women and girls and Earth -- aimed to empower survivors of CRSV through therapy, art, and learning life skills.

"Even though the contexts between our countries are different, we have witnessed precious experience and expertise in good planning, needs assessment, and professional care of survivors," said M. Zedan Khalaf, Prime Minister Advisor for Human Rights in Iraq. "We are eager to

adapt and apply these practices within the future centres for treating Yazidi and survivors from other components covered by the Yazidi Survivors Law."

The visit was organized within IOM's framework of support to the Government of Iraq's implementation of the Yazidi Survivors Law (YSL), adopted in 2021. The Law stipulates a wide range of measures for survivors of CRSV and genocide perpetrated by Daesh against Yazidi, Turkmen, Shabak, and Christian communities in Iraq starting in 2014. The Law foresees reparations for survivors of Daesh.

Since the application process began in September 2022, around 2,000 survivors have been verified by the YSL Committee for Verification. They have benefitted from financial support and improved access to health care, civil documentation, and basic rehabilitation services through a referral system with local organizations.

This visit was facilitated by IOM Iraq's Transitional Justice Programme, with financial support from the Kingdom of Netherlands' Ministry for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

30 healthcare providers from Duhok and Erbil trained to improve mental health for women

Duhok, 29 June 2024 – WHO Iraq and Ministry of Health of the Kurdistan Region conduct a 4-day workshop at Duhok Child and Adolescent Mental Health Centre. 30 healthcare providers from Duhok

and Erbil trained to improve mental health for women during prenatal, birth and postnatal periods.



UNICEF and the Ministry of Environment officially launch the Climate Landscape Analysis for Children and Young People (CLAC) report

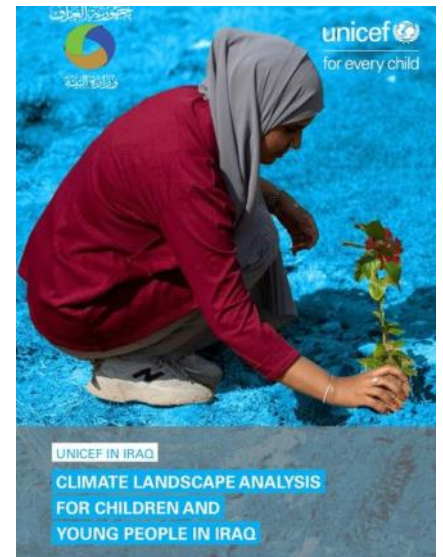
Baghdad, 28 April 2024 - "This conference reflects the strong commitment of the Government of Iraq to prioritizing the water agenda and accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals," said Sandra Lattouf, UNICEF representative in Iraq, during the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference.

To support Iraq's efforts in mitigating and adapting to climate change, 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.

Iraq is ranked 61st out of 163 countries on UNICEF's Children's Climate Risk Index, and the United Nations Global Environment Outlook 6 (GEO-6) ranks it the fifth most vulnerable country to water and food shortages and extreme temperatures. These rankings reflect the significant climate change risks faced by children in Iraq.

With nearly 60 percent of Iraqis under the age of 25, it is imperative for all stakeholders to work to mitigate the impact of climate change on children and young people's health, education and protection, and empower them as agents of change to secure a prosperous future for the country.

Access the report at [EN/AR]: <https://tinyurl.com/4ajy4nw9>



DSRSG/RC/HC Isaczai meets with Iraq's Minister of Water Resources Diab to discuss the outcomes of the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference

Baghdad, 02 May 2024 - Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC), Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, met today in Baghdad with Iraq's Minister of Water Resources, Mr. Aun Diab, to discuss the outcomes of the 4th Baghdad International Water Conference. Emphasis was on water as a priority in the UNSDCF (2025-2029) and initiating National Water Dialogue within the framework of the Water Convention.



National Youth Coalition for Climate Action launched in Baghdad

Baghdad, 06 May 2024 - The launch of the National Youth Coalition for Climate Action was announced today in Baghdad, in cooperation between the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Environment, and UNICEF, with support from the Netherlands and the German government through the German Development Bank. This coalition aims to provide effective opportunities for youth participation in decision-making on climate change.

"Your role is crucial in helping us make informed decisions on climate action as well as raising awareness in your communities," said Dr. Ahmed Al-Mubarqa, Minister of Youth and

Sports.

"The launch of the National Youth Coalition will enable young people to effectively participate in the 2024

Future Summit and make clear commitments to meet the challenges of the future," said Sandra Lattouf, UNICEF representative in Iraq.



A crucial climate change forum held in Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 08 May 2024 – Today, representatives from Kirkuk's local government, UNAMI's Development Support Office (DSO), academia, and NGOs gathered in Kirkuk for a crucial climate change forum. Together, we're forging sustainable solutions for Iraq's climate future.



The solar energy project in Basra aims to address climate change impacts

Basra, 15 May 2024 – “After installing the Solar Panel on the roof of our school, the teacher talked to us about the importance of this initiative and how it will affect reserving our planet.” Said Suhaila, 8 years old girl, while standing inside her class in Al-Safa Primary School in Basra.

The solar energy project in Basra, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNICEF in collaboration with the Directorate of Education (DOE), aimed to address climate change impacts by harnessing clean energy for schools in the region.



ITC and KESK join efforts to promote climate smart solutions and innovative construction technology in Iraq

Erbil, 21 May 2024 - International Trade Centre (ITC), joint agency of UN and World Trade Organization fully dedicated to supporting small businesses of developing countries to trade, and KESK, Iraq's pioneering green tech company announced their partnership for making smart green solutions trustable, accessible, and affordable.

This partnership is part of ITC's recently launched European Union (EU) funded Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT) project, jointly implemented with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

BEIT aims to generate quality jobs through the development of affordable and sustainable housing in Iraq. Specifically, ITC will bolster the capabilities of local businesses, particularly micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the sector, with a focus on young entrepreneurs, enabling them to integrate green and innovative practices into their operations, as established in the United Nations' 2030



Agenda for Sustainable Development. Eric Buchot, Representative, Head of ITC Country Programme in Iraq, and Basima Abdulrahman, Founder and CEO KESK signed the letter of intent. Emphasizing the strategic importance of the collaboration, Eric Buchot said, "Working together with KESK, we aim to promote climate-smart solutions and housing retrofits for middle income households in Iraq, reinforcing the capabilities of local businesses, especially young entrepreneurs." "We are thrilled to partner with the International Trade Centre, a collaboration that will empower Iraqi businesses, especially our youth and

small enterprises, to embrace sustainable and innovative construction technologies. This partnership aligns perfectly with our mission at KESK to build a greener future for Iraq. Together, we are setting a foundation for resilience and prosperity through environmentally conscious solutions that are critical for our country's development," said Basima Abdulrahman, Founder and CEO of KESK.

This collaboration marks a significant step towards supporting Iraqi youth through training, mentorship and resources in the housing and construction sector.

Iraq announces inception of a five-year Climate Investment Plan



Baghdad, 23 May 2024 - Iraq's first Climate Investment Plan was announced on May 16, 2024. The goal of the CIP is to offer viable options for public and private investments to fulfill the climate commitments of Iraq into the investment strategies for the period 2025-2030. This initiative aims to drive Climate Action and attract investments, while creating a safe and secure environment for both foreign and local investors.

Two announcement events occurred:

On May 16, 2024, the National Investment Commission (NIC) hosted a federal level event attended by several ministries, including the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Planning. The second event occurred on May 19, 2024, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) attended by the President of the Board of Investment (BoI), Mr. Mohammed Shukrey Saeed, and the advisor to the PM-KRG on Climate

Change, Ms. Bayan Sami Abdulrahman. The Climate Investment Plan, developed with technical support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), aligns with Iraq's vision to promote Climate Action through a broader investment strategy.

The President of the NIC, Dr. Haider Muhammad Makiya, stated, "Today, we announced the Climate Investment Plan, along with UNDP and USAID. Technical teams from all ministries will be formed to work on the five-year plan and establish a united vision to reduce the burden on the country's operational budget."

The President of the BoI, Dr. Mohammed Shukrey, stated, "Our Climate Investment Plan in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, launched in collaboration with the Environmental

Protection and Improvement Board, the Ministry of Planning, and UNDP extends to the year 2030. This initiative aims to encourage climate investment in the region. We have formed a technical team from all sectoral bodies, and from the Prime Minister Council to develop a comprehensive and realistic strategy that integrates climate considerations into our investment plans."

USAID Iraq's Mission Director, Ms. Elise Jensen, stated, "We are dedicated to helping Iraq move its economy forward and reduce the impacts of climate change. The Climate Investment Plan is a significant step towards the country's financial independence, and USAID is eager to support Iraq in creating the right environment where investors can see the true potential and opportunities this country's private sector offers."

UNDP Iraq Resident Representative, Auke Lootsma, added, "We believe in Iraq's vision and are ready to support all efforts facilitating climate investment and Climate Action in the country. This plan signifies a strong commitment to sustainable development and to secure a better future for Iraq."

The CIP identifies priority areas such as agriculture, water security, ecosystems, low-emission transport, energy, and circular urban economy. By addressing these key sectors, Iraq aims to enhance resilience, reduce emissions, and foster a safe environment for investment.

Stocktaking of security sector roles in climate and environmental security - Report on Iraq

Baghdad, 24 May 2024 - Iraq is facing a range of climate and environmental risks, whose impacts on security are becoming increasingly apparent.

From rising temperatures and water scarcity to widespread pollution and biodiversity loss, the combined effects of climate change and human pressures on the environment are contributing to local unrest, tensions and increasing different dimensions of fragility.

This stocktaking study explores the significant potential in the Iraqi reform process to improve service delivery of security institutions regarding mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate and environmental risks on communities and the environment, as well as strengthening social cohesion and contributing to sustainable peace.

"Conflicts around the distribution and

management of natural resources are frequently linked to pollution and degradation of critical ecosystems. What is needed is a focus on protecting the ecosystems communities depend on

for their livelihoods."

This report was produced in partnership of UNDP with DCAF.

Download report at : <https://bit.ly/3V5QwpG>



Iraq will meet only 15 percent of its water needs by 2035: UN official

Erbil, 03 June 2024 - By 2035, Iraq will only be able to meet 15 percent of its water needs, a United Nations official warned, pointing to a growing population and worsening climate conditions. "If Iraq does not prioritize, or if Iraq does not address the water issue by 2035, Iraq would only be able to meet 15 percent of its water needs," Ghulam Mohammed Isaczai, the UN

Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, told Rudaw's Nwenar Fatih in April. Whole interview with Mr. Isaczai is available at <https://www.rudaw.net/english/interview/02062024>



WFP representatives visit Sulaymaniyah

Sulaymaniyah, 04 June 2024 - The World Food Programme (WFP) was honored to meet H.E. Deputy Prime Minister of Kurdistan Regional Government, Mr. Qubad Talabani, and H.E. Iraqi Minister of Environment, Mr. Nazar Amedi, in Sulaymaniyah to discuss environmental challenges and WFP's efforts in building environmental resilience. The World Food Programme hopes for further cooperation for sustainability. During the day, WFP and the University of Sulaimani visited a wastewater treatment project, aiming to utilize nature-based solutions to treat wastewater into sustainable, affordable and environmentally friendly irrigation solutions for farmers.



Celebrating World Environment Day in Iraq with the Ministry of Environment and its partners

Baghdad, 05 June 2024 - On this Environment Day, UNDP Iraq proudly joined the Ministry of Environment and local partners in celebrating the Ministry's achievements and partnerships. Organized by the Ministry, Save the Children organization and Bring Hope organization, this event offered a valuable opportunity to reflect on our progress and reaffirm our shared commitment to environmental sustainability in Iraq.

The Minister of Environment, Mr. Nizar Mohammed Saeed Amidi, highlighted the remarkable achievements that have been made since last year, saying, "Among our most significant milestones was our impactful presence at COP28 in Dubai. For the first time, Iraq had its own pavilion, and in collaboration with UNDP and other UN agencies, we presented over 30 important sessions, with impressive attendance. Looking ahead, we are focused on COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, where we plan to build on our previous success with



UNDP."

Mr. Amidi added, "Our work extends beyond COP28. Together with UNDP, preparations are underway for the Desertification Conference in Riyadh. This conference addresses one of Iraq's most pressing environmental challenges and offers an opportunity to present our case to the global community, seeking partnerships and innovative solutions. This conference will be a step towards the

establishment of a permanent negotiation team for desertification, the same way we did for climate change."

On the ground, our partnership with UNDP continues to tackle environmental pollution, a top priority for Iraq. We are dedicated to finding ways to reduce pollution across the country and implementing strategies to manage Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs).

DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq Isaczai statement on World Environment Day

Baghdad, 05 June 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for Iraq, Ghulam Mohammed Isaczai, on World Environment Day : "Drought and desertification are major challenges buffeting Iraq today. Only by determined planning and sustainable

action we can combat this threat and restore green space. On World Environment Day, we all should pledge to do our part. It is our shared responsibility. Every small step counts. We owe it to our families and to future generations. The UN remains committed to supporting Iraqi efforts for a greener future."



World Environment Day
5 June 2024



Drought and desertification are major challenges buffeting Iraq today. Only by determined planning and sustainable action we can combat this threat and restore green space. On World Environment Day, we all should pledge to do our part. It is our shared responsibility. Every small step counts. We owe it to our families and to the future generations. The UN remains committed to supporting Iraqi efforts for a greener future.

Ghulam M. Isaczai
UN DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq

Iraq selected to represent Arab Group in key climate negotiation areas

Baghdad, 10 June 2024 - Iraq has been elected to represent the Arab Group in the technical negotiations at the Bonn Climate Change Conference. During the preparatory meetings for the upcoming COP29, the Arab Group for Climate Change Negotiations selected two members of Iraq's permanent climate negotiating delegation as official representatives for two key negotiation topics: Ms. Raghda Talal Al-Daoudi from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was chosen to represent the Arab negotiators on Climate Change and Gender issues, while Dr. Mohammed Jabbar Ajrash from the Ministry of Oil was selected to represent the Arab negotiators on Bunker Fuel and Maritime Transport. This decision marks a significant technical, political, and diplomatic achievement for Iraq, allowing it to effectively present its national issues regarding climate change at one of the



most important international forums. Given that Iraq is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, this recognition has critical environmental, economic, and political implications both nationally and internationally. UNDP has played an important role in supporting Iraq in these efforts. Through technical assistance to the

negotiation team and on-the-ground support to the Ministry of Environment, UNDP has facilitated Iraq's active participation in COP27, COP28, and the upcoming COP29 in Baku. This support has empowered Iraq to address its climate challenges and advocate for its needs on the global stage.

UN-Habitat launches an environmental protection campaign in Basra, focusing on waste prevention, sorting, reuse, and recycling

Basra, 03 June 2024 - Marking the World Environment Day (June 5th), UN-Habitat launched an environmental protection campaign in Basra, focusing on waste prevention, sorting, reuse, and recycling.

The initiative began with a two-day Solid Waste Management training, supported by UN-Habitat and conducted by the NGO E.A.D.E, for Basra Governorate and Municipality officials, enhancing their waste management skills. Additional training and awareness activities will continue throughout the year.

This effort is part of the European Union-funded project "Increasing Access to Employment Opportunities for Vulnerable Urban Population in Basra City in Response to the COVID-

19 Crisis," reinforcing UN-Habitat's commitment to sustainable urban

development by reducing waste and increasing recycling rates in Iraq.



Discussing transboundary adaptation at the UNEP West Asia

Amman, Jordan, 15 June 2024 - Transboundary adaptation was the focus of discussions on 9 and 10 June at the United Nations Environmental program (UNEP) West Asia, Royal Scientific Society - Jordan, and the Walker Institute of International and Area Studies workshop in Amman, Jordan.

Participants from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria discussed challenges and opportunities including heat waves, sand and dust storms and flooding.



Culture

Closing event celebrates achievements of UNESCO/EU Project “Empowering Syrian Refugees and Host Communities through Cultural Heritage Enhancement”

Brussels, Belgium, 31 May 2024 - On May 22nd, UNESCO, the European Union and their partners gathered to mark the conclusion of the project Support to livelihoods through cultural heritage development.

This project, aimed at providing dignified and sustainable livelihoods to Syrian refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and host communities in Jordan and Iraq, has been funded by the the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis (European Commission, DG NEAR) MADAD Fund. Over recent years, this initiative has directed its efforts towards six heritage sites in the northern Governorates of Mafraq and Irbid in Jordan, along with eight heritage sites in Dohuk and Erbil Governorates, which notably include the esteemed World Heritage site of Erbil Citadel in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Through the innovative use of culture as a tool for resilience-building and job creation, this collaborative endeavour has empowered local communities to actively participate in maintenance, rehabilitation, conservation and promotional activities at heritage sites throughout the region. In doing so, the project has not only contributed to safeguarding invaluable historical assets but has also cultivated a profound sense of ownership and pride among its participants.

The closing event, held on May 22nd, served as a platform to showcase the achievements of the initiative. Following opening remarks from the UNESCO Representative to the European Union Louise Haxthausen



and the Trust Fund Manager for the EU Regional Trust Fund Alberto Cortezón Gómez, the project was presented by implementing partners and beneficiaries. Attendees were then treated to a stirring musical performance, underscoring the rich cultural heritage of the region and the importance of preserving it for future generations. Additionally, a captivating photo exhibition provided a visual journey through the restoration efforts undertaken at various heritage sites, highlighting the dedication and craftsmanship of the participating individuals.

Following the exhibition and musical performance, guests convened for a reception where they had the opportunity to reflect on the impact of the initiative and celebrate the partnerships that made it possible. Representatives from UNESCO, the European Union, governmental authorities, civil society organizations, ILO, and local communities shared their insights and experiences, emphasizing the transformative power

of cultural conservation in promoting social cohesion and resilience.

As the curtains close on this phase of the initiative, UNESCO and its partners reaffirm their commitment to continuing efforts to harness the potential of culture for sustainable development and peacebuilding in the region. By investing in the preservation of cultural heritage and engaging communities as active stakeholders, they aim to create a future where cultural diversity is celebrated, and individuals are empowered to thrive.



UNESCO is set to complete the reconstruction of the Al-Tahera Syriac Catholic Church in Mosul

Mosul, 24 May 2024 - UNESCO is set to complete the reconstruction of the Al-Tahera Syriac Catholic Church in Mosul, funded by the United Arab Emirates. The recent installation of the new bells cast in Italy in one of the oldest foundries in the world marks a pivotal moment in our collective efforts to restore not only an architectural landmark but a living place that is part of city's cultural diversity.

UNESCO's dedicated historic preservation efforts with SBAH's determination, have successfully restored, piece by piece, the historic western altar in Mosul's Al-Tahera Church. Through UNESCO's on-the-job

conservation training, decades of painted layers were carefully removed, revealing the Altar's 160-year-old

glorious colored motifs, a testament to the enduring spirit of Mosul's cultural heritage.



UNESCO launches a capacity building workshop on "Enhancing preservation and sustainable management of World Heritage sites"

Erbil, 25 June 2024 - UNESCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Iraq, has launched a 4-days capacity building workshop on "Enhancing preservation and sustainable management of World Heritage sites", in Erbil. The workshop brings together 60 experts and technicians from all Iraq for intensive training sessions, exercises, and discussions to equip participants with essential skills in heritage conservation and sustainable management.



Education

UNHCR initiates the construction of an 18-classroom school in Faida

Dohuk, 06 May 2024 - We are proud to announce a significant milestone in our efforts to support refugees and find long-lasting solutions in the region. Together with the local authorities of the Kurdistan Regional Government, we have initiated the construction of an 18-classroom school in Faida sub-district of #Dohuk governorate.

Dr. Ali Tatar, the Governor of Dohuk, commended UNHCR for our commitment to ensuring that refugee children have equal access to quality education alongside Kurdish Iraqi children. This initiative reflects our shared goal of supporting the government in finding long-term solutions that benefit refugees and the local communities that generously host them. Stay tuned for more updates on our progress as we continue to work hand in hand with local partners to create a better future for all.



UNAMI on X

Kirkuk, 30 April 2024 - Productive discussions at today's Kirkuk Joint Coordination Forum, co-chaired by local authorities and IRC. Representatives from government departments, UN agencies, and NGOs gathered to address the education sector's priorities, needs, and solutions in Kirkuk. They also explored critical social care challenges.

UNICEF inaugurates two Early Childhood Education classrooms in Salman Al-Mohammadi and 17 Athar primary schools

Baghdad, 07 May 2024 - "Now that Kindergarten is over, I can't wait to start school and share everything I know with my new friends," said 5 years old Zainab, who celebrated her graduation from the ECE class today with her friends in Salman Al-Mohammadi Primary School.

With the support of the Korean Committee DAEWOO E&C, UNICEF

has inaugurated two Early Childhood Education classrooms in Salman Al-Mohammadi and 17 Athar primary schools. This initiative aims to boost pre-primary enrollment in alignment with the Ministry of Education's national strategy. Over the next three years, 750 children will be able to access early learning opportunities.



UNESCO's underscores ongoing commitment to bolstering the educational landscape in Nineveh Governorate

Mosul, 11 May 2024 - Under the umbrella of #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul Initiative, this training programme is 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.

UNESCO has initiated the second round of competency-based training! From April 21 to 25, 2024, 30 teachers and administrators (17 women and 13 men) from the General Directorate of Education in Nineveh Governorate were trained. This training aimed to enhance their proficiency in competency-based training methodologies.

UNESCO's underscores ongoing commitment to bolstering the educational landscape in Nineveh Governorate. By equipping educational professionals with advanced training opportunities, UNESCO aims to foster skill development and elevate teaching standards.

This training aims to holistic competence development for the teachers and guarantee the alignment with industry standards and workplace needs and eventually produce competent, adaptable, and job-ready graduates while fostering a collaborative and outcome-driven educational environment.



Iraqi Youth: learn, gain, and transform!

Baghdad, 21 May 2024 - SAAVI Tadreeb, the e-learning platform, was launched to empower Iraqi young entrepreneurs to drive sustainable change in Iraq's agri-food landscape.

With 10 comprehensive modules, the platform offers mentoring, coaching sessions, and access to business development training. So far, 4,000 young entrepreneurs have graduated from the SAAVI Tadreeb e-learning platform and 160 entrepreneurs have received grants to support their businesses.

Interested or want to participate? Check out the platform: <https://www.saavitadreeb.org/local/itcac/academy/page.php?id=55>

The initiative is funded by the

European Union and implemented by the International Trade Centre in

collaboration with the NRC - Norwegian Refugee Council.



The Ministry of Education, the European Union, UNESCO, and UNICEF launch ITALEEM - equitable quality education in Iraq



Baghdad, 22 May 2024 - The Ministry of Education, the European Union (EU), UNESCO and UNICEF launched the ITALEEM equitable quality education programme today. This programme will strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education, reaching over 100,000 teachers and 30,000 schools.

We appreciate the efforts of our partners the EU, UNESCO and UNICEF in ensuring that all learners in Iraq have access to quality equitable education," said Mr. Ibrahim Al Juboori, Minister of Education. "This education programme will support the ministry to advance the quality of education reaching more than 10 million students."

"I-TALEEM is more than just an education programme; it's an investment in the future of Iraq. By harnessing data, empowering communities, and supporting educators, we're building a foundation for a more equitable and impactful

learning experience for all Iraqi students." Said Mr. Thomas Seiler, the European Union Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq.

Also, H.E the European Union Ambassador said "We are thrilled to announce the launch of I-TALEEM, a groundbreaking education programme designed to empower learners and educators in Iraq. This programme rests on four key pillars: leveraging technology for data-driven decision-making, fostering school-community partnerships, equipping teachers for success, and strengthening civil society engagement. Through I-TALEEM, we aim to unlock the full potential of Iraq's education system and empower future generations to thrive". Said Mr. Thomas Seiler, the European Union Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq.

This joint EU, UNESCO and UNICEF education programme will strengthen the ministry's governance by enhancing policies, planning and management; will improve school capacity to provide

quality inclusive education; will build the capacity of teachers for quality teaching and learning; and enable civil society organizations' engagement in the education system.

"As educational access improves, Iraq needs to invest in improving the quality of teaching and learning guided by evidence based educational planning, continuous professional development and support for teachers and integration of educational technologies," said Paolo Fontani, UNESCO Representative in Iraq. "UNESCO is dedicated to supporting the nationwide implementation of the education management information system, executing the ministry's Capacity Development Plan and in-service training for teachers in partnership with the Government, development partners and civil society organizations to realize the objectives outlined in Iraq National Education Strategy 2022-2031."

The concerted efforts underscore a commitment to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all students, especially the most vulnerable across Iraq. At the heart of this initiative lies the implementation of the innovative programme, Equitable Quality Education in Iraq: Improved Teaching and Learning and Enhanced Educational Management (ITALEEM).

"As Iraq is transitioning from humanitarian to long-term development, strengthening the education system has never been more important," said Sandra Lattouf, UNICEF Representative in Iraq. "Investing in quality inclusive education will accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 and will ensure a brighter future for every child in Iraq."

Making a difference together!

Baghdad, 24 May 2024 - Making a difference together! This week, UNFPA equipped Ministry of Culture and Youth's youth centers staff with the knowledge and tools to create positive change in their communities.

The training focused on integrating life skills education, family planning, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) & rights, and addressing the negative consequences of early marriage.

This project was done with the funding by British Embassy Iraq.



Grand Opening of AUIB's UNESCO Chair on Education for Health and Well-Being

Baghdad, 23 May 2024 - With the participation of Members of Parliament, representatives of the Prime Ministry and of several Ministries of Iraq, as well as foreign ambassadors and diplomats, the DSRSG Ghulam Izacsai and officials of United Nations agencies, the American University of Iraq-Baghdad (AUIB) celebrated the grand opening of its UNESCO Chair on Education for Health and Well-Being, officially awarded to the University in January of this year.

AUIB President, Dr. Michael Mulnix, welcomed the crowd of dignitaries and members of AUIB faculty and staff, proclaiming that the “young, dynamic, growing, and ambitious” University is well-positioned to be part of UNESCO’s strategy of building an international network of cultural and academic partnerships that contribute to the development of host countries, and affirming that the new Chair will mark a milestone in promoting education, health, and the overall well-being of Iraq’s population. Dr. Allison Webster-Giddings, Dean of Education and Human Development, Chair, and Dr. Zouhair Atieh, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Co-Chair, will lead the new UNESCO Chair, which will be closely aligned with AUIB’s College of Education and Human Development, itself a partner of Vanderbilt University’s Peabody College of Education and Human Development. President Mulnix explained AUIB’s ongoing efforts at expanding its network of partner institutions of higher education in this context. These partnerships and collaborations, in



tandem with the celebrated Chair, serve to “mobilize expertise in higher education and research to address the increasing challenges” facing Iraq, through the advancement of teaching, research, and training in the targeted fields, said President Mulnix.

Advisor to the Iraqi Prime Minister for Health Affairs, Dr. Saleh Dhumad, conveyed the salutations of Prime Minister Al-Sudani, wishing the new enterprise success. Dr. Dhumad considered the establishment of the Chair at AUIB “a significant step” towards “enhancing networking with the global cultural and academic society,” one which will increase the exchange of knowledge within the scope of the Chair. Dr. Dhumad saw that Iraq, after living in isolation for decades, is now open to the world, and is in great need for intensified efforts at modernizing its educational curricula such that they keep abreast of the latest in the field of education, scientific research, and innovation.

AUIB Vice President of Corporate Engagement, Dr. Hassan Nadhem,

briefed the audience on the founding of three UNESCO Chairs in Iraq in the past few years, with the presently celebrated Chair being the fourth in the country, maintaining that these Chairs play an “essential role in addressing any country’s challenges,” and that they have “a significant impact on social progress.” The first Chair in Iraq, on inter-religious dialogue in the Islamic World, was established at the University of Kufa. The second, established at the University of Baghdad, is on genocide prevention and peacebuilding, while the third, established at the University of Mosul, is on preventing violence and extremism.

The newest UNESCO Chair at AUIB represents a move forward, said UNESCO Representative in Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani, focusing on the “physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health” of Iraqi youth: pupils who receive quality education are more likely to lead a healthy life, in a broader sense, as well as have better educational attainment.

Siba Youth Center: small group, big impact

Ninevah, 28 May 2024 - Siba Sheikh Khidir, a small village located in the Sinjar district of northwest Iraq, has faced significant challenges since it was attacked by Daesh in 2014. Ten years later, on a breezy day in March, a group of volunteers from the community decided to be part of the recovery process and are encouraging more displaced persons return to their village.

To mark their return home after a decade of displacement in camps, the Siba Youth Group opened a center in Siba, where the youth and other community members can gather, socialize, celebrate and plan their futures.

Proudly standing at the podium was Dakhil Micho Elyas, one of the volunteers who after five years of living in the camp in Duhok Governorate, decided to return to his village in 2019. Unfortunately, due to the scale of destruction and years of abandonment, the village was not habitable, forcing him to temporarily settle in the nearby village of Khanasor. That, to Dakhil, highlighted the need for rehabilitation of the village and sparked the idea for a volunteer group that would do exactly that to support other displaced persons returning home to rebuild their lives. Thus, Siba Youth group was born in 2021.

“We started the group with 12

members: nine boys and three girls. Our shared goal was to contribute to the revitalization of our hometown. We created a WhatsApp group to stay in touch,” Dakhil recalled.

The need for rebuilding Siba was clear not just to Dakhil, but everyone who had visited the village to check on their homes, including Jalila.

Jalila, 19, recalls their return to Siba was marred with many challenges: “It was scary at first. There were bones of the dead everywhere; there wasn’t clean water; the wells were contaminated; no shops; no school; and our house, like many others, was destroyed.”

“My younger siblings had to live with

Siba Youth Center: small group, big impact *(continued)*



my older sister in another village to attend school, and my brother had to travel to the town of Sinuni for work to support us," Jalila continues.

Once more families began returning, and once IOM began its activities in the region, Jalila and her peers formed a community volunteer group, similar to that of Dakhil's.

"We formed our group to be the link between IOM and the residents," Jalila shares. "With IOM's basic training we were able to help the newcomers. We helped with everything, from registering their names to clearing the rubble from their homes."

When Dakhil's and Jalila's groups met in Siba, one thing was immediately clear: a merger, to concentrate efforts for greater reach and impact.

But there was a problem: they did not even have a space to come together and discuss their ideas and community projects.

"We turned an old market store into an office and a base for their meetings. In the beginning, we didn't even have any chairs," said Dakhil.

"Pooling our money together, we purchased chairs and desks and

transformed a store into a center." Dakhil recalled.

The first community project born out of that shared space was a campaign to clean up the village and remove the traces of war, with a focus on "the streets, the health centers, and other community service offices." Dakhil said. "Eventually, we started helping the community with their healing through dignified burials in neighboring villages, like Kocho," he adds.

As time passed, their actions caught the attention of the IOM team in early 2023, who met with them on multiple occasions to understand their needs and to explore potential opportunities to provide support.

The group emphasized the importance of having a suitable venue for events and socializing, considering that after such a long period of displacement the community's social connections had been disrupted. IOM worked with the youth group to identify a community space that could be repurposed as a center. By the end of December 2023, the space was successfully renovated to meet the group's needs.

IOM's technical team also created a

comprehensive capacity building plan to equip them with skills to address areas of need such as general protection, safe referrals, service and stakeholder mapping, community mobilization techniques, conflict resolution, inter-community communication, proposal writing, budgeting, information management, and data protection.

The opening of the youth center marked a milestone in the group's progress towards their goal. With increased resources, their new center now boasts a library, a meeting room, a collection of musical instruments, and a kindergarten playground.

"Our journey began when we felt that our people are in desperate need to bring an end to their displacement, to return home, and rebuild their lives," he says on opening day. "Today, we are able to turn our vision into reality".

Jalila has begun teaching at the center's kindergarten, with three other volunteers. "I am proud that I was able to help my people return and get back to normal life," shares Jalila at the center. "Siba has improved a lot, but there is still a long way to go".

The center has now expanded its activities to offer recreational activities such as music courses for the youth.

Thoraya, 18, one of the participants of the course said: "It's like a dream for me as I have always had a passion for singing and playing an instrument like a guitar and Tanbur."

IOM's support to the volunteer groups and the opening of the Siba Youth Center was made possible through the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

By Seivan Abdulgafur, IOM Iraq

The graduation ceremony of Jousour Programme's 271 participants from the University of Technology (UoT) in Baghdad

Baghdad, 07 June 2024 - The graduation ceremony of Jousour Programme's 271 participants from the University of Technology (UoT) in Baghdad, was held in Baghdad on 5 June. The ceremony was attended by Dr Naim al-Aboodi, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR), Dr Ahmed al-Ghabban, President of the University of Technology, representatives from the German Embassy in Iraq, the Embassy of the United Kingdom in Iraq, and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. The ceremony is part of 6 others in Iraq celebrating 2,750

graduates from 6 governorates. Jousour equips Iraqi youth with the skills necessary to compete in a rapidly

advancing digital world by training them in English, IT, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and life skills.



Hundreds of undocumented students in Salah Al-Din to resume education next school year



Salah-al Din, 6 June 2024 - In the small town of Shirqat in the Governorate of Salah al-Din in Iraq, 10-year-old Mina clutches her school notebook, her bright eyes clouded with worry. A shadow of fear crept into her voice as she recounts the words of her teachers: "They said that if I didn't have an ID, my education would probably stop". The identity card in question is a simple civil document that many take for granted, and yet hold the key to Mina's future.

Unfortunately, Mina's challenges go far beyond the threat of losing her education. The lack of civil and identity documentation limits her access to basic public and social services such as health care, the ability to secure a job, or to even get married in the future.

Mina's situation is not unique. Across Iraq, many children born between 2014 and 2017, during the Daesh conflict, were not registered, and never receiving a government birth certificate that would enable them to obtain other crucial civil documents. Many others lost or damaged their civil or identity documents during conflict or displacement, while some families simply cannot access or afford the process to replace them.

Such was the case for Salma's three children, who should have been going to the same school as Mina but couldn't

without identity documents.

"Our situation was very difficult," shares Salma. "My children were jealous of the other students who could go to school," she adds as she recalls the hardships the family endured while trying to enroll all children.

Realizing the urgency of the situation in Salah al-Din, IOM's legal team worked with the Iraqi Ministry of Education's local directorate to find an interim solution: children like Mina and Salma's daughters would be allowed to continue their studies in the next school year without the prerequisite civil IDs. Meanwhile, their families will continue to process to obtain the necessary documents for their children.

With IOM's support, Salma was able to obtain unified cards for herself and her three children, secured custody of her three children, and a residency card in her name. She also started to receive social protection salary under Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

In addition to crucial advocacy efforts and cooperation with government partners, IOM Iraq's legal assistance programme, with teams operating on the ground in six governorates, offers awareness-raising sessions, legal counselling, and legal representation to help families navigate the legal system and obtain necessary civil, identity

and/or housing, land, and property documents.

Through cooperation between IOM and the Directorate of Education in Salah al-Din, 50 primary school students received civil documentation through the IOM's direct legal assistance.

Ibrahim Al-Murad, the Director of Al-Ebdaa School for Girls in Shirqat, is also acutely aware of the emotional toll it takes on children that are left out or feel left behind.

"Students who did not have their IDs often feel neglected and despondent, because they were not able to complete their studies," he shares with IOM Iraq. "But we have been working with them to raise their morale and encourage them to keep studying on their own as well, so that they can compete with their peers," adds Al-Murad, underlining the importance of access to education, and is optimistic about the future for all undocumented children.

2024 is the third year in a row IOM has cooperated with the Ministry of Education in Salah al-Din to secure access to education for hundreds of primary-level students.

"When I grow up, I want to become a doctor," says Mina. "I will open a clinic in my village and treat all the children," she adds as she plays with children from the neighborhood.

Whenever you are ready Mina, we will be there to make the first appointment at your clinic.

This assistance has become possible thanks to the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) generously supporting return and reintegration assistance for internally displaced persons and returnees in Iraq and helping Mina and her peers access formal education and build a brighter future.

*The names were changed to protect the privacy of individuals

By IOM Iraq Public Info

The World Food Program is supporting millions of area children with essential school meals to continue their education

Baghdad, 26 June 2024 - Another school year has come to an end for many students in the Middle East and North Africa region, but yet many children in the region have been denied their basic right to learn and thrive for many reasons.

Hunger, in addition to conflicts, disasters and rising food prices, threatens school children's ability to learn.

The World Food Program is supporting millions of area children with essential school meals to continue their education. School lunches usually consist of sandwiches, fruits and vegetables.

Ensuring a nutritious and healthy meal for children ensures that their enrolment in school increases by 9%. These school meals are also important for the community to succeed in

employing more ladies as well as for preparing meals as stimulating the local economy to depend on the program on local production.

School meals remain one of the most important programs supported by the World Food Program and without generous funding we can't continue to do so which puts the future of millions at risk.

Stories of resilience

Baghdad, 16 June 2024 - Meet Kawthar, a resilient 17-year-old from Iraq.

In 2019, Kawthar was displaced to Hassan Sham camp. She faced many challenges after losing her brothers. But with the support of Terre des Hommes (TDH) social worker, who visited her regularly offering vital support and awareness raising sessions, Kawthar found a ray of hope. After having participated in educational and life skills courses, Kawthar's academic performance improved, and so did her self-confidence. She became more at ease and eager to improve her life.

With USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance funding,

Kawthar's story is a testament to the power of support and education in rebuilding lives.

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Meet Rabee, a resilient young boy who was displaced at the age of 8.

"I want to become a dentist when I grow up," said Rabee with hope in his glittery eyes.

Rabee has faced multiple challenges undermining his right to education. However, thanks to the support he received at Hassansham camp in Mosul, Rabee's life was transformed.

Funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance Rabee received counseling from a social worker, who helped him to overcome his anxiety and enhance his academic

performance. Today, he embodies positivity and self-confidence, making his parents and teachers very proud.

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Meet Hind, a mother of five

"I am grateful for being part of this training. As a female headed household, my goal is to start my small business to support my 5 children," said Hind from Mosul.

With funding from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance UNICEF supported a 12-day vocational training in glass painting and staining art for 17 girls and women. The training strengthened their resilience and provided them with entrepreneurship opportunities.

Paiwand Subhi represents UNFPA Iraq at the ICPD30 Global Youth Dialogue in Benin

Baghdad, 08 May 2024 - We are proud to celebrate Paiwand Subhi, one of the passionate young delegates representing UNFPA Iraq at the ICPD30 Global Youth Dialogue in Benin. Joining forces with over 160 peers from across the globe, Paiwand played a pivotal role in elevating youth perspectives and tackling pressing challenges with vigor and insight.

Paiwand, passionately advocates for the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of young people in Iraq, focusing on enhancing access to education and healthcare amidst



ongoing conflicts.

His enthusiasm and commitment have greatly contributed to the discussions,

pushing forward the agenda for better health, rights, and opportunities for all young people.

Timeline

International Day of Yoga celebrated in Baghdad

Baghdad, 21 June 2024 - Marking the 10th International Day of Yoga with the theme "Yoga for Self and Society. Meet Fatima - an Iraqi pharmacist and yoga trainer who speaks about her experience with yoga.

Video produced by UNAMI Strategic Communications and Public Information Office.

Access it at <https://youtu.be/IA0l7dHGehc>

Yoga, a transformative practice, represents the harmony of mind and body, the balance between thought and action, and the unity of restraint and fulfillment. It integrates the body, mind, spirit, and soul, offering a holistic approach to health and well-being that brings peace to our hectic lives.

United Nations family in Iraq, in



cooperation with the Embassy of India in Baghdad, marked the 10th

International Yoga Day with a special yoga session with Dr. Dheeraj P. Joshi.