

UNAMI Herald

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September—October 2024



Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI: Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan

Baghdad, 10 October 2024 — Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan of the Sultanate of Oman assumed his responsibilities as Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad on 10 October 2024.

Prior to his appointment as Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Al Hassan served as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary/Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations since 21 August 2019. While Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary/Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations, Dr. Al Hassan served as the Vice-President of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Vice-President of the Thirty-first Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Chairman of the 4th Committee of the 77th Session of



the United Nations General Assembly, Head of the Omani Delegation to the 67th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Head of the Omani Delegation to the 61st Session of the Commission for Social Development, Co-Facilitator of the

Summit of the Future on Our Common Agenda, Co-Facilitator of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism, in addition to presiding over the delegation of the Sultanate of Oman to the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly...

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Statement from the Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Ana Peyró Llopis, on the conclusion of the UNITAD mandate

Baghdad, 16 September 2024 - The mandate of the Investigative Team (UNITAD) will conclude on 17 September, at which point it will have ceased operations and no longer be present in Iraq.

Since I joined UNITAD as Acting Special Adviser, about six months ago, the Team has worked diligently to conclude the mandate in an orderly manner and on a positive note, in cooperation with the Iraqi authorities.

I think it is important to pause before we close to reflect on the past six years. There are several tangible results and achievements to highlight, which will hopefully continue to benefit Iraq and all stakeholders beyond the mandate in the wake of the work that has been done.

First, investigative results:



- The Team has produced 19 case assessments and analytical reports - hundreds of pages - covering specific acts that may amount to crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide, committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq, against the Christian, Kaka'i, Shabak, Shi'a, Turkmen, Sunni and Yazidi communities.
- These outputs have been

shared with the competent Iraqi authorities along with underlying evidence that UNITAD produced. A summary of their factual and legal findings was provided to the United Nations Security Council this past June in our 12th and final report. Many will be made available publicly soon on our new legacy website.

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Erbil, 17 October 2024 - Message from SRSG Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan on the Kurdistan Regional Parliamentary Elections:

“We came to witness an important day in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region where the people of this Region will be going to the polls on Friday and Sunday to exercise their right to elect their representatives in the new regional parliament.

More on page 8.

New Women’s Protection Centre in Anbar: a milestone for violence survivors

Anbar, 18 September 2024 – In a joint effort with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Anbar Governorate, UNFPA celebrates the launch of the first Women Protection Centre in Ramadi, Anbar. This initiative, made possible through French Government funding, and UN-Habitat’s support, addresses the urgent need for comprehensive services for women and girls who are survivors of violence.

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Advancing Women, Peace, and Security amid regional challenges: reflecting on achievements and shaping future strategies in Iraq

Baghdad, 22 October 2024 – In commemoration of the 24th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, a high-level event was held in Baghdad to emphasize the pivotal role of women in peace and security amidst regional challenges. Organized by the National Directorate for Iraqi Women (NDIW) with the support of UNAMI, IOM and UN Women, the event addressed the evolving role of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, both within Iraq and in the broader region.

More on page 22.

UNDP and Italy sign agreement for sustainable reintegration of returnees from Al-Hol Camp

Baghdad, 25 October 2024 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Italy are pleased to announce the signing of a €3 million agreement aimed at supporting the sustainable reintegration of Iraqi nationals returning from the Al-Hol Camp in Northeast Syria, primarily women and children who fled the conflict since 2013.

WFP is committed to maintain its ongoing cooperation with the Iraqi Government to benefit the resilient people of Iraq.

More on page 46.

National conference paves pathways to formalizing Iraq’s informal economy

Baghdad, 16 October 2024 - In the face of growing economic challenges, Iraq’s informal economy, which encompasses over half of the nation’s workforce, has come into sharper focus. As revealed by the 2021 Labour Force Survey, 5.73 million Iraqis—two-thirds of the country’s workers—are employed in informal jobs.

More on page 78.

Second phase of the PROSPECTS partnership launched in Iraq

Baghdad, 26 September 2024 – The Government of Iraq officially launched yesterday the second phase of the PROSPECTS partnership in Iraq, an initiative spearheaded and funded by the Government of the Netherlands. This four-year initiative, with a total investment of USD 46 million, aims to provide comprehensive critical support to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and vulnerable host communities across Iraq. The programme is being implemented by five organizations – UNHCR, UNICEF, ILO, IFC and the World Bank –in close collaboration with the Iraqi authorities.

More on page 53.

UNAMI publishes new analysis report on Climate, Peace and Security in Iraq

Baghdad, 13 September 2024 - Iraq is among the world’s most climate vulnerable countries because of its geographic location and existing environmental fragility which interact with socio-economic and institutional factors.

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

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI: Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan *(continued)*

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Prior to representing the Sultanate of Oman at the United Nations, Dr. Al Hassan served as Acting Under-Secretary for Diplomatic Affairs at the Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman. He was also Chief of Staff to the Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, from 2015 until 2019, and served as Head of the Minister's Department at the Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman between 2012 and 2015, and as Head of the Political Analysis Unit at the Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman in 2012.

Dr. Al Hassan represented his country in a number of foreign diplomatic posts, including as Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Russian Federation from 2009 to 2012, concurrently holding the position of Non-Resident Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Ukraine, the Republic of Armenia, and the Republic of Moldova. Between 1993-2005, he served at the Permanent Mission of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations in New York, and between 1990-1993 at the Permanent Mission of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations in Geneva. He also represented the Sultanate of Oman in the Conference on Disarmament, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in addition to holding the Vice-presidency of the Eighth Session of UNCTAD, held in Colombia in 1992.

Dr. Al Hassan participated in many regional and international forums, including the Islamic Summit Conference in Jeddah in 2005, the Manama Dialogue in Manama in 2005, the Forum for the Future Summit in the Dead Sea in 2006, the

USA and the Islamic World Forum in Doha in 2006, and the Sixth International Conference of New and Restored Democracies in Doha in 2006, the Eighteenth Arab League Summit in Khartoum in 2006, the Fourteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Havana in 2006, the Eighth Consultative Gulf Summit in Riyadh in 2006, the Nineteenth Gulf Summit in Riyadh in 2007, the Annapolis Peace Conference in Annapolis in 2007, the International Covenant with Iraq in Sharm Al Shaikh in 2007, the Seventeenth Gulf-European Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting in Riyadh in 2007, the Tenth Consultative Gulf Summit in Riyadh in 2008, the European-Arab Consultative Ministerial Conference in Malta in 2008, the Islamic Summit Conference in Dakar in 2008, the Second Summit of Arab and Latin American Countries in Doha in 2009, the Extraordinary Arab League Summit in Doha in 2009, the Ninth International Investment Forum in Sochi in 2010, the Arab League Summit in Cairo in 2012, the Arab Economic and Social Development Summits in Riyadh in 2013, the International Conference on Somalia in London in 2013, Facilitating the Negotiations Process between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the P5+1 Group of Countries in Muscat in 2014, the Twenty Fourth GCC-EU Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting in Doha in 2015, the Gulf-USA Summit at Camp David in 2015, the Clinton Global Initiative Meetings in Marrakesh in 2015, the International Syria Support Group in Vienna in 2015, the Gulf-US summit in Riyadh in 2016, the Ninth Bali Democracy Forum in Bali in 2016, the Gulf-US summit in Riyadh in 2017, the Eighteenth Extraordinary

Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Jeddah in 2018, the Extraordinary Islamic Summit in Istanbul in 2018, the Oslo Forum in 2018-2019, in addition to the Third Annual Security Symposium in Jeddah in 2023, the Omani-Switzerland Mediation Week in Muscat 2023, and the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned (NAM) and the Third South Summit in Kampala 2024.

Dr. Al Hassan is a member of a number of regional and international councils and committees, including the Board of Trustees of the United Nations International School (UNIS), the International Advisory Council of the International Peace Institute (IPI), the Board of Directors of the Non-Governmental Organizations Sustainability Organization (NGO Sustainability Inc.), the Oman's Diplomatic Club, in addition to his membership in the Network of International Gender Champions (IGC). Dr. Al Hassan holds a PhD in Economics from Moscow State University in Statistics and Informatics (MESI) and enrolled for the Doctorate programme at the New School for Social Research in New York between 1997-2005. In addition, he holds a Master's Degree in International Relations, as well as a Postgraduate degree in International Law from Saint John's University in New York, and a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Washington in Seattle.

Dr. Al Hassan is an "Honorary Member and Academician of the International Academy of Philanthropy" of the Russian Federation and an "Honorary Doctorate in Diplomacy" at the Cugs University. Moreover, he is an "Honorary Professor" of the Belgorod State Institute of Arts and Culture. Dr. Al Hassan is also a member of the Foreign Policy Association in New York. Throughout his career at the foreign service of the Sultanate of Oman, Dr. Al Hassan has published numerous papers and articles amongst which include "Approach to Disarmament in the Middle East", "Myths and Realities of the International Criminal Court", "Divergent Perspectives on Labor Localization in an Oil Rentier Society," and "Peculiarities of Labor Market Transformation in Building up a Science-Intensive Economy".

Dr. Al Hassan was born in Salalah, the Sultanate of Oman on 19 August 1963. He is married and has two daughters.



UNAMI looks forward to a peaceful and respectful electoral campaign in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Baghdad, 25 September 2024 - The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) welcomes the commencement today of the campaign period for the upcoming Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections scheduled for 20 October 2024, as announced by the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC).

UNAMI underscores the importance of ensuring a campaign environment free of violence and intimidation, with

participants focusing on the peaceful competition of visions and programs, to enable voters to make informed decisions at the ballot box.

UNAMI looks to all candidates, other political actors and the media to foster a climate of respect, inclusivity and open dialogue throughout the campaign. It is crucial for the credibility of these elections to establish a safe and welcoming environment for all candidates and

voters, particularly women who often face distinct challenges during electoral processes. Any disputes relating to the elections should be addressed through the available mechanisms including those established by IHEC.

UNAMI will continue to support a fair and transparent electoral process that will reflect the aspirations of all people in the Kurdistan Region.

UNAMI and Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections

In accordance with the Security Council resolution 2732 (2024) UNAMI continues to 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. This support includes national parliamentary elections and the Kurdistan Region's parliamentary

elections, through transparent and inclusive processes.

Here is an overview of UNAMI's activities related to the elections for the Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections during September-October 2024.

Dohuk, 26 September 2024 – UNAMI Office of the Electoral Assistance Security Advisor met with the Sub-Security Committee for the forthcoming Kurdistan Region Parliament elections. They discussed security aspects in the preparations for these elections in the Governorate.



Dohuk, 26 September 2024 – UNAMI Office of the Electoral Assistance Security Advisor met with the Manager of Duhok IHEC Governorate Office. They discussed security preparations for the 2024 Kurdistan Parliamentary Elections and visited IHEC warehouses.



Dohuk, 29 September 2024 – In preparation for the Kurdistan Parliamentary Elections, UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance participates in the first round of polling staff cascade training in Barkhudan, Rezan and Zivreen schools, in Dohuk.

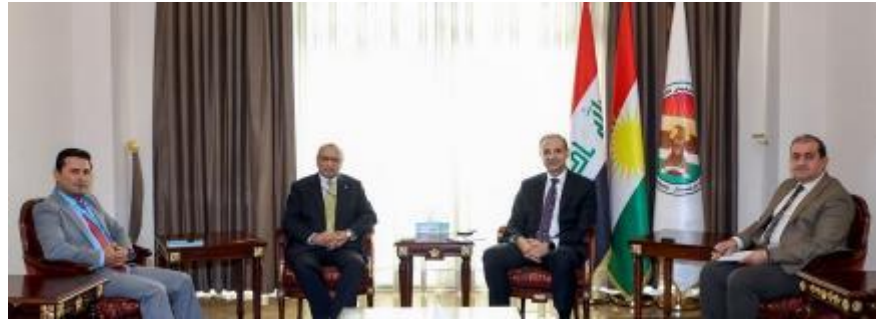


Dohuk, 30 September 2024 - UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance visited today Dohuk Governorate Electoral Office. They discussed overall preparations for the Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections planned for 20 October.



UNAMI and Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections *(continued)*

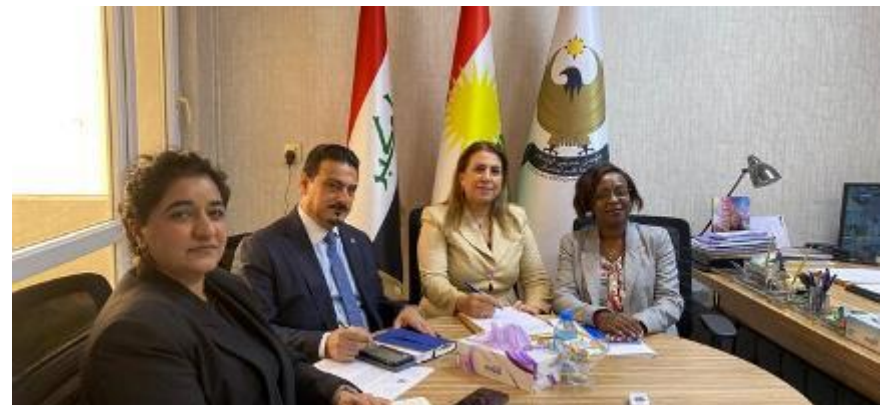
Erbil, 01 October 2024 - Dr. Aamir Arain, the UN's Principal Electoral Advisor, held a meeting with Mr. Dilshad Shahab, Senior Advisor to the President of the Kurdistan Region, to discuss the ongoing preparations for the upcoming Kurdistan parliamentary elections. During the meeting, both parties underscored the importance of ensuring that the electoral campaign is conducted peacefully and in a manner that upholds democratic principles.



Erbil, 1 October 2024 - A UNAMI delegation met with Ms. Fenik Shafiq Hamadamin, Director General, Directorate for Combating Violence Against Women and Family. They discussed the use of a 24/7 hotline (119) for receiving complaints from women candidates in the Kurdistan parliamentary elections during the ongoing campaign period.



Erbil, 01 October 2024 – A UNAMI delegation met today with the Secretary General of Kurdistan's High Council for Women and Development, Dr. Khanzad Ahmad. UNAMI welcomes and expresses its full support for the High Committee on Protection of Women Candidates in the forthcoming Kurdistan Parliamentary elections. The Committee has put in place measures to enhance protection of women candidates and receive complaints including through dedicated hotlines.



Photos courtesy of KR HCWD.

Erbil, 01 October 2024 - In the lead-up to the Kurdistan Region's Parliamentary elections, UNFPA Iraq brought together female candidates from different political parties to participate in a workshop on online safety, protection, and use of technology and social media for their campaigns and rights.

Rudaw.net and Event Media and research Organization, aimed to deliver vital training to empower women

candidates. Thanks to the American corner of Erbil for hosting this important workshop!

This workshop, supported by consulates of UK and US in Erbil, SEED Foundation Kurdistan,



Erbil, 02 October 2024 - UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance met today, in Erbil, with IHEC Chairman and the Central Committee. They discussed the preparations for the Kurdistan Region parliamentary election and international observation of the elections.



UNAMI and Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections *(continued)*

Erbil, 2 October 2024 - Dr. Aamir Arain, the UN's Principal Electoral Advisor, met with Mr. Rizgar Haji Hama, from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, to discuss peaceful electoral campaign.



Sulaymaniyah, 07 October 2024 - UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance participated in an IHEC training of polling staff on electoral procedures in preparation for the 20 October 2024 Kurdistan Region's parliamentary elections.



Sulaymaniyah, 07 October 2024 - UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance delegation and the Director of IHEC Sulaymanyiah Governorate Electoral Office, met today to discuss the preparations of the upcoming Kurdistan Region Parliamentary elections, as well as the importance of a safe environment for campaign.



Halabja, 08 October 2024 - The UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA) met separately in Halabja with the acting head of the security committee, and civil society organizations (CSOs). The purpose of the meetings was to discuss electoral security and preparations in Halabja constituency, as well as to discuss and share electoral voter education strategies and domestic electoral observations with CSOs.



Sulaymaniyah, 09 October 2024 - The UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA) organized a meeting in Sulaymaniyah with civil society organizations involved in voter education and electoral observation, with the presence of Sulaymanyiah IHEC GEO Manager, to discuss the role of CSOs in this electoral process. The meeting was also an opportunity to clarify some existing issues regarding electoral procedures and for OEA to explain its role in providing electoral assistance to the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC).



UNAMI and Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections *(continued)*

Erbil, 13 October 2024 - UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance delegation met with the IHEC Commissioner who heads the Committee on Electoral Observation Affairs, as well as the Head of IHEC Kurdistan Regional Electoral Office, to discuss the latest preparations for the upcoming Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections. The meeting focused on the status of observer registrations and updates for the observers regarding the electoral process.



Erbil, 13 October 2024 - UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance delegation and the Director of the IHEC Erbil Governorate Electoral Office met today to discuss the latest preparations for the upcoming Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections. The discussion emphasized ensuring that all operational, logistical, and security measures are fully in place to guarantee a free, fair, and technically sound electoral process.



Dohuk, 13 October 2024 - A delegation of UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA) advisors met with the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) GEO Manager, in Dohuk, to discuss the preparations for 20 October Kurdistan Region elections.



Dohuk, 14 October 2024 - As part of technical support and advice to Iraq's electoral institutions, UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance electoral staff visited the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) Audit Centre in Dohuk, the storage location for Polling Centre Optical Scanners (PCOS) and Voter Verification Devices (VVDs), witnessed preparation of polling materials for delivery, including ballot papers and ballot boxes, and met with a

number of polling centre officials, who expressed readiness for the upcoming

KR regional parliamentary election on 20 October 2024.



Erbil, 14 October 2024 - A UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance delegation met with the IHEC Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), who also heads the Central Committee for conducting Kurdistan Region Parliamentary Election, and IHEC Deputy CEO for Operations to discuss the latest preparations for the upcoming Kurdistan Region Parliamentary elections. The discussions focused on ensuring that all operational and logistical measures are in place.



Message from SRSG Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan on the Kurdistan Regional Parliamentary Elections



Erbil, 17 October 2024 - Message from SRSG Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan on the Kurdistan Regional Parliamentary Elections:

“We came to witness an important day in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region where the people of this Region will be going to the polls on Friday and Sunday to exercise their right to elect their representatives in the new regional parliament.

It is a political representation of the people of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for the coming four years.

It will reinvigorate democracy and inject new ideas into its institutions that will address the people’s concerns.

This is all too necessary. The Kurdistan Region has been without a parliament

for some times. This election is long overdue.

Elections are an important milestone in the Region’s journey.

I visited the Kurdistan Region for the first time after assuming my position as Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Iraq and Head of UNAMI.

The Kurdistan Region today is a different region from what it was decades ago.

I was very impressed by the development and the progress that I have witnessed so far.

I am certain many challenges might remain.

However, Kurdistan is on the right path towards a better future.

Now it is the opportunity to mark that path.

The election campaign concluded this week. Rallies by political parties and candidates were overall peaceful. This is a true spirit of a democratic process.

We encourage the nearly 3 million eligible voters in this part of Iraq, namely in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk and Halabja to go out and vote.

We cannot reiterate enough the importance of exercising this right, which so many fellow Kurds have paid the heavy price to ensure it is safeguarded for generations to come.

We would like to thank the Independent High Electoral Commission for all the preparatory work to make this election a free, fair and transparent one.

UNAMI is supporting IHEC through its electoral team’s technical expertise and advice.

IHEC has put in place measures and mechanisms to address complaints and any potential problem.

International and local partners are also participating in the observation process for the elections.

And we look forward to successful Election Days on the 18th and 20th October.

Make your voices heard and your opinions count. Vote!

Erbil, 18 October 2024 - UNAMI’s electoral team accompanies the IHEC Board of Commissioners during a visit to a voting station in Erbil today. KRI had a special voting today.



Erbil, 19 October 2024 - SRSG for Iraq and Head of UNAMI Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan was received today by the Governor of Erbil, Mr. Omed Khoshnaw, upon arrival in Erbil. The SRSG is in the Kurdistan Region to witness the regional parliamentary elections taking place on 20 October 2024.



Erbil, 19 October 2024 - A meeting convened in Erbil today in the presence of UNAMI’s electoral team, members of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), and elections observers from the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Discussion focused on relevant aspects of the Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections.



UNAMI and Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections *(continued)*

Erbil, 19 October 2024 - UNAMI's electoral team met today in Erbil with a delegation of election observers from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. They discussed the electoral environment in Kurdistan Region and the electoral process, highlighting the more relevant aspects for the observers.



Erbil, 19 October 2024 – Today, UNAMI's electoral team met in Erbil with representatives from civil society organization engaged in electoral observations. Discussion focused on acknowledging the importance of domestic electoral observation in the Kurdistan Region parliamentary electoral process.



Erbil, 20 October 2024 – UN Iraq SRSG and UNAMI Head Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan visited today some of the polling stations in Erbil, and viewed the eligible voters cast their ballots in the Kurdistan Region's parliamentary elections. "This is an important day for the Kurdistan Region and a good day for democracy. It is the way forward", he said, commending the regional authorities, including the security services and the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), for a smooth voting process.



Erbil, 20 October 2024 - Speaking to the media after visiting a polling center today, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, said: "This is an historic day in Kurdistan, and we congratulate the people of this beloved region on this democratic celebration. We hope that everything continues as we have witnessed, safe and peaceful. The United Nations is supportive of Iraq and supportive of Kurdistan. The people of Kurdistan deserve all the

best, and deserve security and peace. What is happening today is proof of the

bright future for Kurdistan and Iraq. We wish you success and prosperity."



Erbil, 20 October 2024 – SRSG for Iraq and UNAMI Head Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, met today with the Chairman and Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) at their offices in Erbil. The UNAMI delegation was briefed about the ongoing voting process for the regional parliamentary elections in the Kurdistan Region and UNAMI's technical assistance and advice. Dr. Al Hassan commended the



IHEC for its efforts to ensure a technically smooth process on Elections

Day, stressing the importance of this democratic achievement.

UNAMI and Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections *(continued)*

Duhok, 20 October 2024 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, visited a number of polling stations today to view the progress of the voting process in the Kurdistan Region's parliamentary election.



Duhok, 20 October 2024 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan was received today by the Governor of Duhok, Mr. Ali Tatar. The UN Special Representative is visiting Kurdistan



Sulaymaniyah, 20 October 2024 - Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Claudio Cordone, met with Haval Abubaker, Governor of Sulaymaniyah, on arrival in the city to visit polling stations. Mr. Cordone congratulated the authorities, especially the electoral and security institutions, as well as the voters, for the peaceful and smooth conduct of the voting operations.



The Secretary-General congratulates the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and its people on the holding of parliamentary elections on 20 October, which took place in a calm and peaceful manner

New York, 22 October 2024 – “The Secretary-General congratulates the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and its people on the holding of parliamentary elections on 20 October, which took place in a calm and peaceful manner. He further commends the efforts of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), supported by the United Nations Assistance Mission for

Iraq (UNAMI), in the preparations and conduct of these elections.

As the Kurdistan Region of Iraq awaits the final results, the Secretary-General encourages all political leaders and segments of society to continue to maintain a peaceful atmosphere and urges political actors to resolve any electoral disputes through established legal channels and to complete the

electoral process by forming an inclusive government as soon as possible. He reiterates the commitment of the United Nations to support Iraq's efforts to consolidate democratic gains and build a prosperous future for the people of Iraq.” - Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General

Dohuk, 23 October 2024 - UNAMI's electoral team was present at the audit center where a recount of a number of polling stations was being conducted. Throughout the electoral process of the Kurdistan Region's parliamentary elections that were held on 20 October, UNAMI has provided technical support and advice to Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) which organized the elections.



UNAMI and Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections *(continued)*

Baghdad, 22 October 2024 - Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, visited today the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) and met with the Chairman and the Board of Commissioners to congratulate the IHEC on the technically smooth and successful organization of the 20 October parliamentary election in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. He was also briefed about the announcement of the preliminary results and future steps involved until final results are announced.



Sulaymaniyah, 23 October 2024 - UNAMI's electoral team was present today at the audit center where a recount of a number of polling stations was being conducted. Throughout the electoral process of the Kurdistan Region's parliamentary elections that were held on 20 October, UNAMI has provided technical support and advice to Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) which organized the elections.



Erbil, 24 October 2024 - UNAMI's electoral team was present at the audit center where a recount of a number of polling stations was being conducted. Throughout the electoral process of the Kurdistan Region's parliamentary

elections that were held on 20 October, UNAMI has provided technical support and advice to Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) which organized the elections.



Sulaymaniyah, 24 October 2024 - UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA) met with representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs) involved in electoral observations, in Sulaymaniyah and Halabja. The meeting was an opportunity for OEA to listen to views and observations of the CSOs based on information gathered on Kurdistan Region's parliamentary elections day that was held on 20 October.



Erbil, 29 October 2024 – The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Claudio Cordone: “Met today in Erbil with IHEC Chair Judge Omar Mohammed and IHEC Board to congratulate them on the holding of the KRI parliamentary elections. Discussed various aspects of the electoral process, including appeals, and UNAMI support.”



UNAMI and Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections *(continued)*

Erbil, 30 October 2024 - Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Claudio Cordone: "Attending today's announcement by IHEC Chairman, Judge Omar Mohammed, of the uncertified results of the KRI parliamentary elections. The appeal phase is now open. UNAMI's support to IHEC continues."



Political Situation

UNAMI on X

Baghdad, 21 September 2024 - Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance and Officer-in-Charge of UNAMI: "In a region devastated by conflict, let us redouble efforts to achieve peace. With it comes development, human rights and prosperity. Iraq, long exposed to conflict, today is reaping the benefits of peace. On Peace Day, let us consolidate it and protect it for all generations."

Readout of the Secretary-General's meeting with H.E. Mr. Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq

New York, 26 September 2024 - The Secretary-General met with H.E. Mr. Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq. The Secretary-General and the Prime Minister exchanged views on peace and security issues in the region. They also discussed cooperation between Iraq and the United Nations. The Secretary-General reaffirmed that the United Nations remains fully committed to supporting the Government and the people of Iraq.



UNAMI on X

Baghdad, 10 October 2024 - UN Iraq SRSR Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan: Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani is a respected force of peace and stability in Iraq and the Middle East. Therefore, we deplore any threats or hints that could affect the safety and status of His Eminence.

SRSR Dr. Al Hassan participates in MERI Forum 2024

Erbil, 30 October 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, participated today in the Middle East Forum 2024 organized by the Middle East Research Institute (MERI) in Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, under the title "Towards Good Governance and Prosperity". In a dialogue session on UNAMI and the future of the relationship between the United Nations and Iraq, Dr. Al Hassan pointed to the Mission's contributions and sacrifices in Iraq over the past 20 years. He stressed that UNAMI does not exercise any guardianship role over the country, and

that it is deployed to Iraq to provide assistance at the request of the Iraqi government. He added that the United Nations will not abandon Iraq and will continue to support the country's development and humanitarian efforts after UNAMI's work ends at the end of 2025.

Other topics related to Iraq's relations with its neighbors, the surrounding region and other countries were also discussed. In this regard, the SRSR praised what has been achieved and looked forward to further bridge-building steps to enhance mutual trust and good neighborly relations.



UNAMI on X



Erbil, 29 October 2024 - "Iraq's future prosperity hinges on building a diversified, resilient economy that empowers its people and attracts sustainable investment." – UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai, at MERI Forum 2024 today, highlighting pathways to make Iraq investable through reform and strategic partnerships.

Baghdad, 31 October 2024 - Congratulations to the Council of Representatives and the Iraqi people on the election of Parliament Speaker. We wish the Speaker, Mr. Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, success in his functions to strengthen the legislative authority, ensuring Iraq's continued progress and prosperity.

Social Cohesion

Light against darkness, peace against war, hope against conflict



Baghdad, 20 September 2024 - Light is hope. It enlightens its surroundings, inspires people, and guides them through the path. In Mesopotamia, light has been the symbol of hope and knowledge. It is the power of the Sun God, Shamash, who divines insight, knowledge, and protection against chaos and darkness. It is peace against war.

Ninewa, Diyala, Salah Al-Din, Anbar, Kirkuk, and many other ancient Mesopotamian towns are places where the first civilizations flourished, and where centuries-old legends were passed down from generation to generation. In this region, Gilgamesh explored the mysteries of life and death, Hammurabi established the first legal code, and Ishtar, the ancient goddess of love, was revered. This land has witnessed many "firsts" in human history.

ISIL's invasion of these lands displaced

4.9 million people, shattered communities, and destroyed ancient towns, impacting millions of Iraqis. Since the liberation in 2017, life has been difficult, but slowly, the communities are recovering and wounds are healing.

A peaceful, just, and joyful life is what the people of these rich lands desire and deserve. Expressing this desire through light has been the aim of communities gathered in Erbil, Iraq.

Photography is a form of expression, and what better way to capture this desire than through light—a symbol of hope against darkness? Asia, Abdelrahman, Ayat, Nooraldin, Zaid, Hawra, and other young women and men came together. From Anbar, Diyala, Salahadin, Nainawa, and Kirkuk, they gathered to deliver a message on International Peace Day.

Ayat Abas from Kirkuk: No matter how small, every action we take contributes

to building a more peaceful society. We need to be kind, understanding, and cooperative with each other. This is the only way to co-exist and live happily together.

Abdelrahman Al Esawi: As communities affected by the recent war, we support empowering each other and hope to contribute to peace. But to overcome the darkness, everyone should have access to equal rights, opportunities, and security, regardless of who we are and where we come from. Asia Salam from Diyala: Through photography, painting, or talking, we need to build a dialogue with each other. Openness and empathy are key for understanding our differences and creating peaceful communities.

Nooraldin Al Hamdani from Anbar: 60% of this country is under the age of 30. Without meaningful participation of us, the youth, we can't talk about a peaceful future. Youth is the power; our creativity and talents will create a better and more peaceful world.

Zaid Al Wesi from Ninewa: Talking is not the only way of expression and dialogue. Photography can overcome some barriers we might have. It can convey collective emotion and stories, help build empathy and understanding, which are the essentials of building peace.

As community members affected by the past conflicts and the invasion of ISIL, their hope for the future is bright, their demand is solid. Together, they used light to write the word "peace," expressing their desire for a society free

Light against darkness, peace against war, hope against conflict *(continued)*

from conflict—one where everyone enjoys equal rights and opportunities. The Peace against War photography workshop was carried out with the participation of the Youth and Women Groups which were established by

UNDP to help women and young people take part in making their communities safer and stronger.

These groups are found in five areas of Iraq which were liberated from ISIL invasion: Anbar, Diyala, Salahadin,

Nainawa, and Kirkuk. Funded by the Government of Denmark, Government of Canada and Government of Germany, members of these groups work together to solve peace-related problems, helping people reintegrate into their communities, and even address climate change. They are trained in important skills like teamwork, leadership, and planning projects. After the training, the groups carry out projects to help their communities, such as teaching others about women’s rights or helping those in need. Since 2020, they have completed over 100 community based initiatives, helping more than 96,000 people, and they are still working on 40 more projects today.



Empowering youth for a peaceful future!

Baghdad, 15 October 2024 – UNDP is happy to support 26 dedicated volunteers from the liberated governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Salah-al-Din, Ninewa, and Kirkuk. Together, they are localizing the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda, paving the way for sustainable peace and positive change in their communities.

With funding from Denmark, these passionate individuals are committed to empowering their peers and fostering a brighter future for Iraq. Together, they’re not just discussing ideas, they’re creating a lasting impact!



UNDP implements social and economic reintegration initiatives as part of the social cohesion programme for returnees and community members

Anbar, 30 October 2024 - UNDP, in partnership with the WHH Iraq - Welthungerhilfe and generous support from the European Union, implemented social and economic reintegration initiatives as part of the social cohesion programme for returnees and community members. This was achieved in collaboration with the local partner, "AGO", and with the participation of several prominent figures from the community in Garma, west of Anbar Governorate.

The event was attended by the Garma District Mayor, the Chief of Police, and a number of tribal leaders and community dignitaries.

The initiative featured speeches delivered by the District Commissioner, the Chief of Police, and the Director of Health Department, all of whom emphasized the importance of



promoting social cohesion and the role of such initiatives in strengthening community bonds.

The event also highlighted success

stories of beneficiaries who participated in workshops held earlier, presenting their projects implemented after receiving grants.



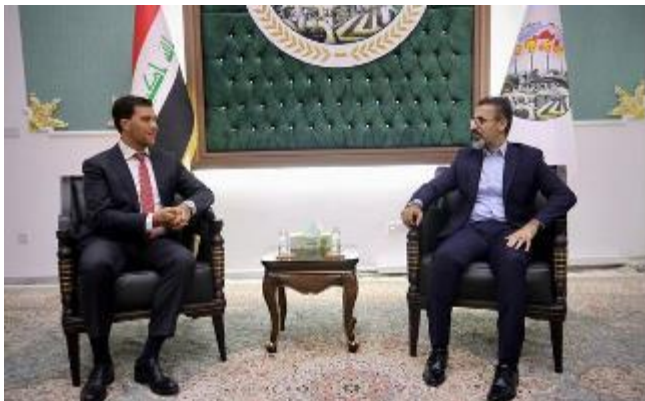
Baghdad, 01 September 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance and Officer-in-Charge of UNAMI, **Claudio Cordone**, met today with President of the Supreme Judicial Council, **Judge Faiq Zidan**. The discussion focused on human rights and legal issues, as well as areas of continuing cooperation with the Council.

Photo courtesy of SJC.



Baghdad, 01 September 2024 - The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance and Officer-in-Charge of UNAMI, **Claudio Cordone**, met today with His Eminence **Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim**. They discussed human rights and legislative issues, stressing the importance of constructive dialogue, as well as electoral issues and UNAMI's support role.

Photo courtesy of Al-Hikma Movement.

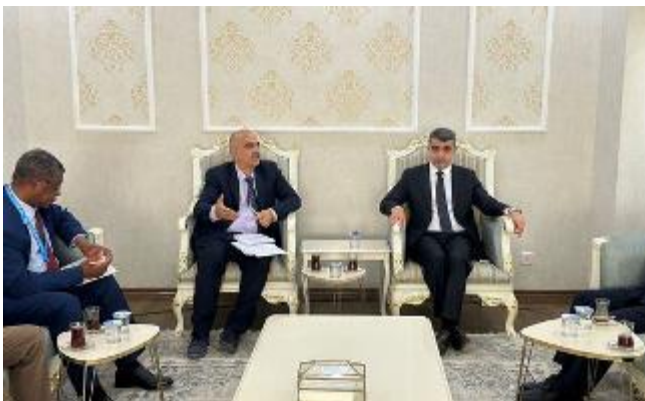


Kirkuk, 16 September 2024 - UNAMI head of the Kirkuk Office, **Beppe Lovoi**, was received today by the new Governor of Kirkuk. Mr. Lovoi outlined UNAMI's mandate since May 2024, including its transition phase with the Mission ending by the end of the mandate on 31 December 2025. He stressed UNAMI's continued cooperation with Iraqi authorities at the local and national levels during this transition phase, cooperation that will continue with the UN Country Team after UNAMI's departure.



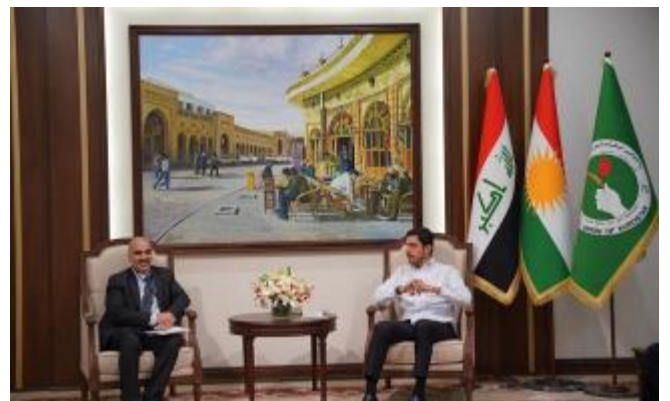
Erbil, 19 September 2024 - The Head of UNAMI Office in the Kurdistan Region, **Francesc Revuelto-Lanao**, met with **Dr. Hemn Hawrami**, a member of the KDP Politburo. They discussed current political situation in the Region, including forthcoming elections for the KR Parliament.

Photo courtesy of KDP.



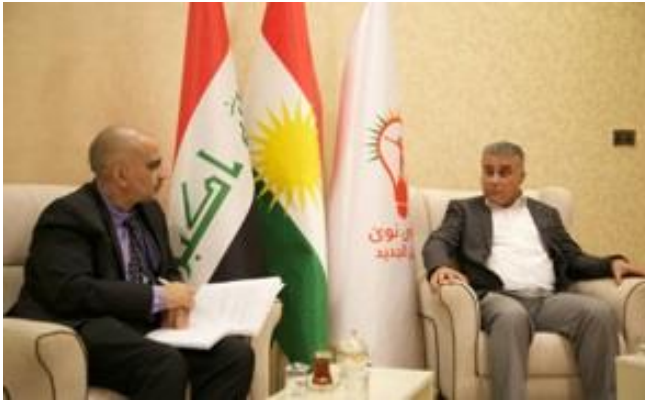
Erbil, 21 September 2024 - The Head of UNAMI Office in the Kurdistan Region, **Francesc Revuelto-Lanao**, met recently with the Head of the Stance Trend, **Mr Ali Hama Saleh**. They discussed current political situation in the Region, including forthcoming elections for the KR Parliament.

Photo courtesy of the Stance Trend.



Erbil, 26 September 2024 - The Head of UNAMI Office in the Kurdistan Region, **Francesc Revuelto-Lanao**, met today with the PUK Politburo member, **Darbaz Kosrat Rasul**. They discussed current political situation in the Region, including forthcoming elections for the KR Parliament.

Photo courtesy of PUK Media Office.



Sulaymaniyah, 01 October 2024 - The Head of UNAMI Office in the Kurdistan Region, **Francesc Revuelto-Lanao**, met today with the New Generation Movement Head of Sulaymaniyah's electoral office, **Mr. Rebwar Abderrahman**, and head of NGM public relations, **Mr. Badria Barzanji**. They discussed current political situation in the Region, including preparations for the forthcoming elections for the KR Parliament in the governorate.

Photo courtesy of NGM Media Office.



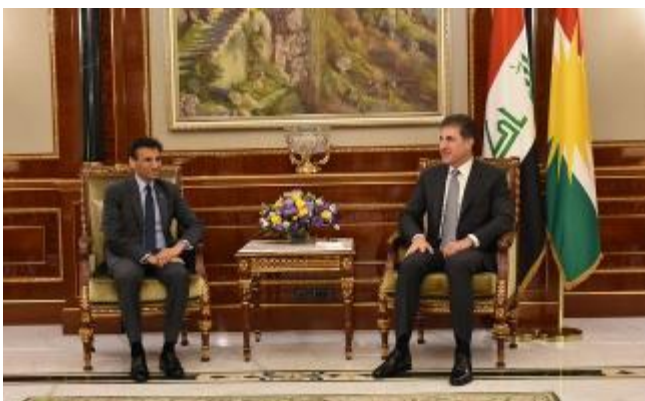
Baghdad, 13 October 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with Iraqi Prime Minister **Mr. Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani** on the occasion of assuming his new post in Baghdad. They discussed in their first meeting the situation in the region and Iraq's efforts for de-escalation as well as cooperation between the United Nations and the Government of Iraq in various fields for the benefit of the Iraqi people.



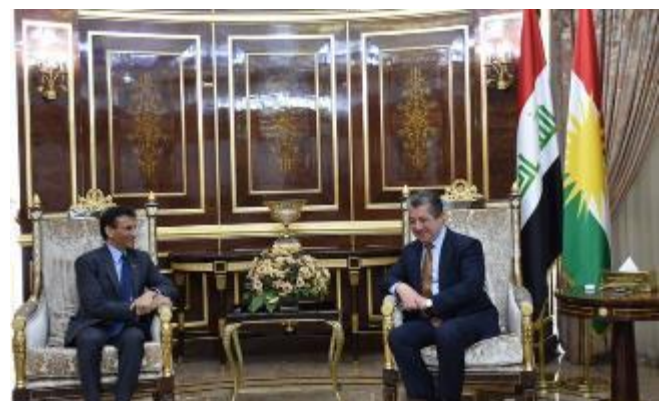
Baghdad, 14 October 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with the representatives of 23 UN agencies of the Iraq Country Team. He expressed his appreciation to them for their efforts in supporting Iraq's development. The meeting was an opportunity to listen to their insights on the opportunities and challenges in implementing the UNSDCF.



Baghdad, 14 October 2024 - Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs **Dr. Fuad Hussein**. They discussed the continuing cooperation between UNAMI and the Government of Iraq and ways to enhance it.



Erbil, 15 October 2024 - On his first visit to the Kurdistan Region, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, **Mr. Nechirvan Barzani**. They discussed the preparations for the regional parliamentary elections set for 20 October 2024 and UNAMI's technical assistance and advice to the electoral institutions to ensure a smooth, free and fair process.



Salaheddin, 15 October 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, **Mr. Masrour Barzani**, in the Salaheddin resort. Dr. Al Hassan used his first visit to the Kurdistan Region to discuss the situation in the Kurdistan Region, including the preparations for the 20 October 2024 regional parliamentary elections and UNAMI's supporting role to the electoral institutions.



Salaheddin, 15 October 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with the President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, **Mr. Masoud Barzani**. During this visit, the Special Representative's first to the Kurdistan Region, the situation in the Kurdistan Region, including the upcoming parliamentary elections, were discussed.



Erbil, 16 October 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with the Head of the Kurdistan Justice Group, **Mr. Ali Bapir**. The forthcoming regional parliamentary elections and UNAMI's technical support and advice to the electoral institutions to ensure a free, fair, transparent and credible process were among the topics discussed.



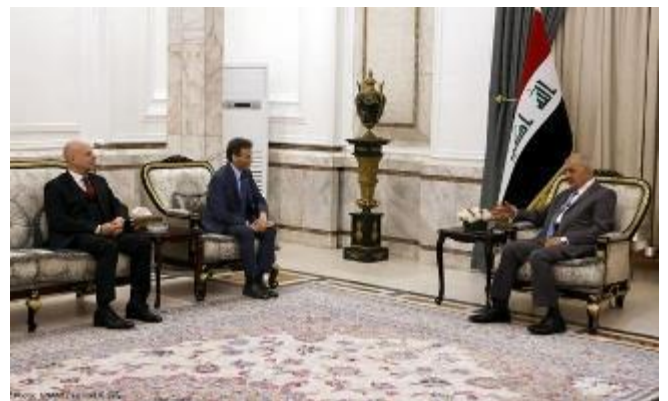
Erbil, 16 October 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with the Secretary-General of the Kurdistan Islamic Union (KIU), **Salahadeein M. Bahaoddin**. The forthcoming regional parliamentary elections and UNAMI's technical support and advice to the electoral institutions to ensure a free, fair, transparent and credible process were among the topics discussed.



Erbil, 16 October 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met today with **Mr. Qubad Talabani**, Deputy Prime Minister, Kurdistan Regional Government. It is the SRSG's first visit to Erbil, and he used the occasion to discuss the situation in the Kurdistan Region including forthcoming regional parliamentary elections and UNAMI's technical support and advice to the electoral institutions.



Baghdad, 22 October 2024 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**, met with the Foreign Ministry's Undersecretary for Bilateral Affairs, **Mr. Mohamed Hussain Bahr Al-Uloom**. They discussed the means to advance and bolster cooperation between the Republic of Iraq and the United Nations within the framework of cooperation that will be implemented in the next phase.



Baghdad, 23 October 2024 - The President of the Republic of Iraq, **Mr. Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid**, received today the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), **Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan**. After the President welcomed the UN Special Representative, they discussed the general situation in Iraq and the progress achieved in recent years, as well as the role of the United Nations and future partnership with the country.



Baghdad, 24 October 2024 - SRSR for Iraq and Head of UNAMI Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan met today with National Security Adviser Qassim al-Araji. They discussed a number of topics including the repatriation of Iraqi nationals from the Al-Hol camp in northeastern Syria and the continuing UN support on this file as well as other matters of mutual interest.



Baghdad, 24 October 2024 - SRSR for Iraq and Head of UNAMI Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan attended in Baghdad today a cultural event which included the opening of a library named in honor of the late Iraqi poet and writer Alfred Semaan. The ceremony was sponsored and attended by President of the Republic of Iraq Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid and many Iraqi poets and writers. Writing in the guest book, Dr. Al Hassan described the library as another landmark to be added to Iraq's cultural wealth.

Women Empowerment

Strengthening family bonds: couples in Anbar share their journey through UNDP's family values curriculum training



Baghdad, 12 September 2024 - In Iraq, many people face the risk of gender-based violence, with over 29.5% [1] of domestic violence victims being women and girls. Often, these cases go unreported due to the shame, fear, and stigma surrounding them. Gender-based violence in any form hinders equality, sustainable development, and lasting peace, creating significant barriers to progress, especially in countries like Iraq.

At UNDP, we work closely with couples to reduce intimate partner violence and address its root causes. During the 16 Days of Activism, we focused on couples from Anbar, particularly in Saqlawiya, who have benefited from our training programs designed to overcome violence and establish the foundations for modern, violence-free parenting. The aim is to raise a well-developed, peaceful generation.

Shatha, the Women's Section Officer at the Stabilization Program in Iraq, shared her insights on the training experience: "When we started these training courses three years ago, we weren't sure they would succeed, especially in a society like Iraq's. But we saw a strong and positive impact just a few days after the course began. This encouraged us to expand and develop the curriculum to include all segments of society. The simplified explanations and the way the materials were presented helped husbands and wives understand and accept these ideas."

After seeing the success of these courses, it became clear that expanding them to other regions would help address negative aspects of Iraqi society and promote positive change. Laith Al-Khatib, a family relations specialist at UNDP, emphasized the

importance of the training: "Our courses aim to equip trainees with the knowledge needed to better manage their family lives without violence or tension. Over 80% of participants were able to control domestic violence and create a healthier environment for raising children after the training. This education is crucial, especially with the high rates of violence in Iraq."

The success of these courses highlighted the need to expand them to other areas, addressing the negative aspects of Iraqi society and promoting positive change. For example, the training has had a transformative effect on couples like Alaa Kadhim and his wife Baraa Hadi. They learned how to manage tension in their discussions by taking a step back when things get heated, returning to the conversation once they had calmed down. This change has had a positive impact on their family, especially their son, who is happier and more at peace.

Another couple, Amer Mohammed and his wife Jihan, shared how the training helped them manage stress in their household. Jihan used to get angry over minor issues, especially with their three children. Now, she can control her temper better, creating a more peaceful environment at home. Amer added, "Our life was challenging, especially with my job as a worker. But now, I come home to a calm and peaceful environment, thanks to the changes my wife has made. I'm grateful

Strengthening family bonds: couples in Anbar share their journey through UNDP's family values curriculum training *(continued)*

for the training that has saved our family.”

Haider and Nada, another couple, explained how the training helped them understand the different forms of violence and their lasting impact. Nada learned how to deal with her teenage daughter better, improving their relationship and, in turn, the overall family dynamic. The positive change in their family has led to a calmer, less stressful home environment.

According to Haidar and Nada,

identifying violence between partners and taking the necessary steps to prevent it is essential. They believe that such training sessions will help reduce family violence, significantly benefiting their children.

This project is implemented through the UNDP Building Resilience Through Employment Promotion programme, with generous support from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, provided through the German Development Bank, these

couples have been able to transform their lives, leading their families toward a calmer, healthier future. The result is children who grow up in a supportive environment, ready to contribute positively to society and turn dreams into reality, through these courses, UNDP is helping families in Iraq break the cycle of violence, promoting healthier and more peaceful communities.

New Women's Protection Centre in Anbar: a milestone for violence survivors

Anbar, 18 September 2024 – In a joint effort with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Anbar Governorate, UNFPA celebrates the launch of the first Women Protection Centre in Ramadi, Anbar. This initiative, made possible through French Government funding, and UN-Habitat's support, addresses the urgent need for comprehensive services for women and girls who are survivors of violence.

The centre will provide support to all women and girls, including medical, psychosocial, and legal aid, job opportunities, and help with reintegrating them into society. The facility was handed over to the local authorities, who are responsible for its ongoing operation and meeting community needs.

Led by UN-Habitat, the construction phase generated 1,915 daily job opportunities for around 92 skilled and unskilled local workers from Anbar, highlighting the project's substantial economic impact on the community since its inception.

Attending the ceremony, Mr. Patrick Durel, France's Ambassador to Iraq, stated that: "France is proud to support the establishment of the third Women Protection Centre in Iraq and first in Ramadi, a vital initiative that addresses the critical needs of survivors of violence. This center symbolizes our shared commitment to human rights and the empowerment of women and girls, providing them with the resources, protection, and opportunities they need to rebuild their lives. By standing with Iraq in this effort, we contribute to fostering safer, more inclusive communities where every woman and girl can thrive."

"With the inauguration of the Women



Protection Center in Anbar, we are taking a crucial step toward fulfilling UNFPA's commitment to protecting and empowering survivors of violence. This center builds upon our efforts to establish and rehabilitate other protection facilities across Iraq, which are vital in our mission to empower women and girls everywhere. It will provide essential services that not only meet immediate needs but also lay the groundwork for long-term healing and empowerment, enabling survivors to heal, grow, and become agents of change in their communities. Furthermore, UNFPA is actively collaborating with the government to strengthen policy frameworks aimed at preventing all forms of violence against women and girls," stated Mr. Garik Hayrapetyan, UNFPA Acting Representative to Iraq.

"By establishing and equipping the Women Protection Centre in Anbar, UN-Habitat collaborates with the Governorate of Anbar towards creating a safer urban environments for all residents, specially the women population made vulnerable out of

violent episodes. The project exemplifies our commitment to promote safer cities and contribute to a broader vision of sustainable urban development, leaving no one and no place behind," said Mr. Ryosuke Teraoke, Head of the Kurdistan Region of UN-Habitat Iraq Office.

The building of the Women Protection Centre in Anbar was part of the project, "Protection and improvement of the living conditions of women and girls survivors of Violence through the establishment and equipment of Women Protection Centres," UNFPA currently supports four women's protection centres in Iraq, which serve as safe havens for women and girls. These centres aim to enhance the well-being and future prospects of survivors. With the opening of the Women Protection Center in Anbar, a future is envisioned where survivors of violence receive the care, support, and opportunities necessary for rebuilding their lives. This project highlights the vital role of establishing safe spaces that provide both protection and empowerment to women and girls.

Proposed amendments to Iraq's Personal Status Law risk eroding rights of women and children: UN experts

Geneva, 24 September 2024 – UN experts* have expressed grave concern about proposed amendments to the Personal Status law No 188 of 1959, which if enacted could undermine the country's obligation to ensure equal treatment of women and children.

"If these amendments are passed, they risk seriously eroding core human rights and protections of women and children, including girls, in Iraq," the experts said.

The amendments were passed in their second reading by the Parliament of Iraq on 16 September.

In a letter addressed to the Government of Iraq dated 10 September 2024, the experts raised concern that the amendments to Iraq's Personal Status Law No. 188 "would constitute a serious roll-back of rights in a number of key areas affecting

women and children, particularly in areas such as marriage, divorce, and child custody" and would "likely exacerbate the prevalence and forms of violence against Iraqi women and girls."

They warned that if the amendments are passed, the effects will be felt by wider society in Iraq and undermine its obligations towards ensuring the equal treatment of women and girls and upholding the rights of children.

"We call on all relevant stakeholders in Iraq to consider the significant negative ramifications of these proposed amendments," the experts said. "The Iraqi government must ensure that a full transparent and inclusive debate on these proposed amendments takes place, and that the interests of women and children in Iraq are placed at the centre of deliberations and the decision-making process."

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The experts: Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; and Mama Fatima Singhateh, Special Rapporteur on sale the and sexual exploitation of children.

The Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

Second annual conference to discuss local plans of action for the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 27 September 2024 - Local leaders and representatives of the National Committee to Countering Violent Extremism met for a second annual conference to discuss local plans of action for the prevention of violent extremism (PVE). IOM, in partnership with Strong Cities Network and Office of the National Security Advisor, is committed to supporting government PVE efforts and its expansion to the local level.

"District level implementation of the National Strategy is necessary to achieving community cohesion and stability," – said Ali Abdullah, Head of the National Committee to Combat Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism.

"The Committee for Countering Violent

Extremism represents is a crucial step forward, moving beyond discussions to facilitate action – coordinating projects that not only contribute to women's empowerment but also enable women

to actively participate in PVE efforts," said Dr Jowan Mustafa, Kurdistan Women's Council Representative and Women's Working Group on PVE member.



Iraqi women challenge violent extremism by empowering communities

Baghdad, 08 October 2024 - The inclusion of women in the discussions surrounding peace and security in Iraq marks a significant step toward building a more peaceful and resilient society. In a country that has endured years of conflict, women are increasingly stepping forward to advocate for their involvement in preventing violent extremism (PVE), offering unique perspectives shaped by their lived experiences. Despite



Iraqi women challenge violent extremism by empowering communities *(continued)*

Women Empowerment Organization (WEO) to carry out a national consultation project. This initiative involved 30 consultation sessions with nearly 300 Iraqi women across the country, gathering insights on violent extremism in their communities and their roles in prevention. To ensure broad participation and facilitate sensitive discussions, WEO partnered with three local civil society organizations (CSOs): Asuda Organization in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Al Firdaws Association in southern of Iraq, and Human Line Foundation in central Iraq.

As part of advocacy efforts, IOM and WEO held a final project event in Baghdad to launch a toolkit aimed at guiding stakeholders on how to involve women in the design and implementation of PVE policies and activities and encouraging its adoption by competent government and non-government institutions.

The event, that took place in August 2024, provided a platform for the voices of three women leaders who shared their stories. Despite coming from different backgrounds, they are united by the goal of empowering their communities and driving lasting change.

“As a woman, I wanted to find ways to make our voices heard and focus on making women strong and self-reliant,” shared Suzan Aref, one of the founders of WEO, created to raise women's voices against discrimination.

Aref, a mother of three, returned to work in the humanitarian field after raising her children. She explained that the wars and conflicts in Iraq marginalized women, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and

extremism, particularly during Daesh's occupation of certain provinces. “The role of women is important in countering extremism through their participation in decision-making, engaging them in awareness-raising and building the capacities of organizations so that we have effective advocacy tools.”

Aref believes civil society organizations play a significant role in influencing policymakers to implement laws and policies that protect women.

Women in the Iraqi government are also instrumental in shaping policies and advocating for greater equality across sectors. Despite societal barriers and underrepresentation, they continue to push for meaningful participation in governance structures.

“When women hold government positions, it positively impacts society,” said Enas Ismail, Director of the Women, Family and Child Affairs Department in the Basra local government.

The department regularly conducts educational workshops and advocacy campaigns to involve women in social, economic, and cultural programmes. “Our role is to empower women politically, socially, culturally and economically, whether in government or non-government institutions,” Ismail explained. She emphasized the importance of economic empowerment, noting that many women face financial struggles, which contributes to the pervasiveness of social issues like community tensions and family violence. By increasing women's economic participation, she believes community and family resilience can be achieved.

Ismail also shared key

recommendations for supporting Iraqi women, stressing the importance of women's roles in educating their communities on the dangers of drug abuse and electronic blackmail.

Civil society organizations in Iraq are critical in advocating for marginalized communities and shaping policies. They help build capacity, ensure accountability and promote social cohesion.

“Consultations and communication are the link between women and decision-makers, building trust and providing services,” said Taiba Al-Qaisi, head of the Taiba Relief and Development Organization, stressing the pivotal role of civil society in PVE by engaging young people in peacebuilding efforts.

Through advocacy tools, civil society organizations raise awareness, campaign for policy change and drive peacebuilding efforts. The advocacy toolkit created within the framework of the National Consultation Project is designed to amplify women's voices and provide alternative pro-social narratives, reinforcing community resilience.

With support by the United States Agency of International Development (USAID) and the Government of Canada, the National Consultation Project highlights the critical role that women play in peacebuilding, not as passive beneficiaries but as active contributors to long-term peace efforts. Through continued advocacy and collaboration, Iraq can move closer to a future where women's voices are integral to preventing violent extremism, promoting resilience, and fostering sustainable development.

By Rafal Abdulateef, IOM Senior Public Information Assistant

Empowering women for a brighter future in Iraq

Baghdad, 09 October 2024 - UN Women, in partnership with the National Directorate for Iraqi Women (NDIW) and the High Council for Women and Development (HCWD), hosted a high-level roundtable to advance the role of women in Iraq.

This important event brought together key stakeholders from the international community, all working towards a common goal: strengthening partnerships and enhancing coordination to ensure impactful, sustainable progress for women and girls across Iraq. As part of this collaborative effort, UN Women also

presented the first draft of its Strategic Note, outlining key priorities and actions to further support women's empowerment and their active roles in Iraq in the coming years.

With the steadfast support of UN Women, NDIW, and HCWD, incredible strides have been made in promoting women's roles at both the federal government level and in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Together, we're shaping policies and programs that directly address the needs of women across the nation.

Let's continue to work together, creating opportunities and building a

future where women thrive. Join us in our mission to empower women and foster lasting change!



Empowering women leaders for community development in Iraq

Baghdad, 09 October 2024 - Today, UNDP is proud to announce the successful conclusion of a series of training courses to strengthen women leaders' role in community development across Iraq. This initiative brought together 31 participants from the health sector directorates in five

liberated governorates, focusing on empowering women, enhancing leadership skills, and promoting sustainable development. These programs are shaping a new generation of empowered women, ready to lead Iraq into the future.



Empowering Iraqi women: a graduation approach to sustainable livelihoods

Mosul, 24 October 2024 - "My goal is to offer a safe space for women where they can not only improve their physical health but also access psychosocial support and learn new skills."

At 26, Ghufran Hassan is a proud founder of a women's physical training and wellness centre in Mosul, where she offers women physical training, psychosocial support, sewing classes, and childcare – helping them grow both personally and professionally.

Gufuran is one of 100 women, all heads of households, who launched their businesses – her wellness centre among them – through the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Graduation Approach (GA) Programme, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This unique initiative addresses multiple aspects of poverty and equips some of the most vulnerable families with the tools and resources to build sustainable livelihoods.

"The support I received helped me understand how to manage finances, market my services, and expand my business. I faced challenges, but with every setback, I took ten steps forward," shared Ghufran.

The GA programme has not only supported the families to gain financial stability, but has also helped them rebuild their confidence, develop business skills, and restore hope. For many of these women, the journey to self-sufficiency has been challenging, but their resilience has enabled them to overcome social and economic barriers. For Wassan Fowzi, a single mother of three, the programme was a turning point that allowed her to rebuild her life after displacement. Starting over, Wassan drew on her previous experience in the cosmetics industry to open her own shop. "This programme gave me more than just financial support; it gave me the confidence to rebuild my life and create a stable future for my children. It's not just

about starting a business; it's about building a foundation for lasting change."

Wassan's shop is now a thriving business, popular among women in her community. She plans to expand it to employ women who are in challenging situations and help them gain financial independence and confidence, just as she did.

Recently, the women gathered in Mosul to celebrate their successes in a graduation ceremony. It featured a bazaar-style event where graduates showcased their businesses – from tailoring services to small shops – giving visitors the chance to see the transformative impact of the GA programme firsthand.

As IOM's GA programme continues to expand, women like Ghufran and Wassan are proving that through sequenced and targeted individual support, vulnerable female-headed households can overcome obstacles, lead their families, and uplift their communities.

The GA programme is funded by the German Development Bank (KfW) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and operates in multiple governorates, including Ninawa, Duhok, Kirkuk, and Anbar, helping women meet their families' basic needs, create sustainable businesses, build resilience, and envision a future filled with possibilities.

By Ahmed Kaka, IOM Senior Communications Assistant



UNSCR 1325

Advancing Women, Peace, and Security amid regional challenges: reflecting on achievements and shaping future strategies in Iraq

Baghdad, 22 October 2024 – In commemoration of the 24th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, a high-level event was held in Baghdad to emphasize the pivotal role of women in peace and security amidst regional

challenges. Organized by the National Directorate for Iraqi Women (NDIW) with the support of UNAMI, IOM and UN Women, the event addressed the evolving role of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, both

within Iraq and in the broader region. Keynote speakers, including Dr. Yusra Karim Mohsen, Director General of the NDIW; Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Resident

Advancing Women, Peace, and Security amid regional challenges: reflecting on achievements and shaping future strategies in Iraq *(continued)*

Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq (DSRSG/RC/HC); and Mr. Ajay Madiwale, Representative for UN Women Iraq, highlighted Iraq's commitment to advancing the WPS agenda. Dr. Yusra emphasized the government's efforts to boost women's leadership and strengthen protection mechanisms. Mr. Isaczai underscored the importance of incorporating women's voices in peace and security efforts, stressing their essential role in building a stable and inclusive society. Mr. Madiwale recognized Iraq's leadership in implementing UNSCR 1325, noting that embedding WPS principles into national policies has been transformative for achieving sustainable peace and development. Other notable speakers included H.E. Ali al-Habhab, Lebanese Ambassador to Iraq; Ms. Donya Al-Shammari, Head of the Women Committee in Parliament; Dr. Khanzad Ahmed, Secretary General of the High Council for Women and Development in the Kurdistan Region; and a delegation from Palestine. They focused on regional tensions and their impact on the WPS agenda, highlighting the need for collaborative efforts to enhance women's roles in peace and security across the region.

The event gathered representatives from government institutions, international organizations, and civil society to discuss enhancing women's leadership and security in Iraq's stability and development agenda. The NDIW presented significant achievements within the WPS framework, highlighting increased female participation in decision-making and improved protection measures. Panel discussions featured experts who shared strategies for empowering women's leadership and grassroots involvement, aiming to develop actionable recommendations for Iraq's upcoming third National Action Plan and shape broader regional dialogues on women's roles in peacebuilding.

Here is the text of the opening remarks by DSRSG/HC/RC Ghulam Isaczai:

"Excellencies, Colleagues, and Friends
I am truly honored to be here with you today to commemorate the 24th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. Adopted in 2000, this landmark resolution was the first to acknowledge the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls,



as well as their vital role in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and recovery.

Over the past 24 years since its adoption, we have made undeniable strides in advancing women's rights, inclusion, and the amplification of women voices in peace and political processes. However, it is equally clear that much work still lies ahead. The ongoing events in Gaza and Lebanon starkly remind us that, as an international community, we still have significant work ahead.

This region, more than any other, has borne the brunt of conflict and violence, with women and girls disproportionately affected, enduring the greatest hardships of displacement, conflict, and loss. In Gaza and Lebanon, countless women and girls have lost their lives, while survivors endure repeated displacement under unbearable conditions. They face increased vulnerabilities, struggling not only to survive but also to protect and care for their children amid the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Despite these immense challenges, we have witnessed the rise of courageous women - women who, despite great personal risks, have taken on critical roles in humanitarian efforts within their communities.

Protecting women, especially during times of conflict, is intrinsically linked to their participation and inclusion in peace and political processes. These two pillars—protection and participation—are interdependent, and neither can succeed without the other. As the UN Secretary-General has underscored, “women’s participation must be the norm, not an afterthought”. Achieving this requires three key elements: strong political will, adequate financial resources, and decisive, sustained action.

Iraq has made significant strides in enhancing women's roles in peacebuilding, governance, and decision-making, setting a valuable

example for the region. With its first two National Action Plans and a third in development, Iraq has established a robust framework for women's rights and participation. Women's representation has expanded in security, the judiciary, and politics, notably exceeding the constitutional quota in the 2023 Provincial Council elections. Initiatives like the National Women's Peace Mediators Network and the Yazidi Survivors Law support women's recovery and reintegration. These achievements reflect the tireless advocacy of the National Directorate for Iraqi Women, which continues to drive women's leadership and empowerment in the country.

The UN will continue supporting the Government's efforts to enhance women's roles in peace and security, aligning with national priorities, international commitments, and UN Security Council Resolution 2732, which emphasizes the 'full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation of women' in political and electoral processes. Under the leadership of the new Special Representative, Dr. Mohammed Al-Hassan, these efforts will be further strengthened through the 2025-2029 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, the primary framework for collaboration between the UN and the Government of Iraq.

Finally, I want to reiterate the urgent need to end the violence in Gaza and Lebanon. The safety of civilians, especially women and girls, depends on it, but so does the future of our entire region.

Thank you once again for having me, and my sincere appreciation to everyone involved in today's event, especially the National Department for Iraqi Women, under the leadership of Dr. Yusra Mohsen. Your tireless efforts in supporting Iraqi women and girls and building a better future are beyond measure and cannot be thanked enough.”

UNAMI continues to promote accountability and the protection of human rights, and judicial and legal reform

In accordance with the Security Council resolution 2732 (2024) UNAMI preserved its role in the field of human rights and accountability. UNAMI continues to 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. Here is an overview of UNAMI's activities in this filed in September and October 2024.

Baghdad, 2-5 September 2024 - UNAMI's Human Rights Office, in coordination with the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR), and the Human Rights Directorate of the Popular Mobilization Commission (PMC), organized a four-day workshop on human rights. The workshop, which was attended by twenty-six staff from the PMF Human Rights Directorate, provided participants with an introduction to international human rights law,

international humanitarian law, the use of force, national and international

human rights mechanisms and human rights in counter terrorism.



Baghdad, 10 September 2024 - UNAMI human rights office conducted a two-day training for staff of the PMC Human Rights Directorate, focusing on child rights and child protection in armed conflict.



Baghdad, 19 September 2024 - From 16 to 18 September 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 Commission (PMC), organized a three-day human rights workshop for the PMC Operations Directorate. The workshop, attended by fifteen PMC officers 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.



Erbil, 28 October 2024 - The Human Rights Office of UNAMI organized a one-day training in Erbil entitled "Protecting Freedom of Expression and Countering Hate Speech" for civil society organizations and human rights defenders from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The event was attended by 21 representatives (13 Female and 8 Male) from civil society organizations and human rights defenders. The training aimed at empowering the participants with knowledge and skills to identify hate speech, available tools to monitor hate speech in social media, referring

hateful content to social media companies, and engagement with authorities to counter hate speech. The participants were also familiarized with fact-checking techniques to

accurately identify misinformation/disinformation, thereby contributing to the protection of freedom of expression and civic space both online and offline.



UNAMI continues to promote accountability and the protection of human rights, and judicial and legal reform *(continued)*

Baghdad, 21 October 2024 - The UNAMI Human Rights Office, in collaboration with Free Faily Kurd Association, held a workshop in Baghdad which was attended by 17 participants (7 women and 10 men), including members of Iraq's religious and ethnic component groups, faith leaders, and representatives of civil society.

This workshop forms part of a series of workshops which aim to raise public awareness and advocacy, and engagement with the Government of Iraq to support the implementation of the Concluding Observations on the combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic reports of Iraq on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Concluding Observations were issued on 23 August 2024 by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). The discussion at the workshop focused on the positive aspects of the report submitted by the

Government of Iraq to the Committee. Participants made recommendations on how to further strengthen engagement with the Government to ensure that the Committee's recommendations are fully implemented with the effective participation of minority groups.



Living with Disabilities

IOM's commitment to disability inclusion: empowering the deaf community and promoting sign language in Iraq



Baghdad, 23 September 2024 – Today, on International Day Of Sign Languages, we celebrate the power of Sign Language to connect and empower the deaf community around the world. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq has made significant strides in disability inclusion (DI) in recent years, ensuring individuals with disabilities, including the deaf community, have equitable access to services and opportunities. A key focus of these efforts has been promoting sign language (SL) as a bridge to greater inclusion.

Deaf-inclusive research to shape policies

IOM's Disability Inclusion Strategy (2022–2024) highlights the specific needs of Iraq's deaf community, who often face barriers to education, employment and social participation due to limited access to sign language.

IOM has addressed these challenges by facilitating deaf-led participatory research and consultations with deaf individuals, SL interpreters and deaf-led organizations. This approach identified gaps in SL services across Iraq and provided a roadmap for improving access and inclusion. The results were used to advocate for improved inclusion policies in both humanitarian and development programmes. Visual learning resources were also produced to share these findings across Iraq.

Promoting sign language awareness

To further advocate for disability inclusion, IOM produced several Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials to raise awareness about the deaf community and SL. These materials address the challenges faced by deaf individuals, the importance of SL as a

primary communication tool and how hearing communities can promote inclusion and respect for SL culture. By disseminating these materials widely in English, Arabic and Kurdish, IOM aims to raise public awareness about accessibility and the cultural identity of the deaf community.

Deaf-inclusive capacity building trainings

A significant development in IOM's DI efforts is the inclusion of the deaf community in a Bridge LMS training on the articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) – Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This initiative, designed to enhance the advocacy skills of persons with disabilities, had its first and second modules implemented in Iraq, with an emphasis on inclusion. The trainings provided a platform for deaf participants to learn about human rights-based approaches to disability and development, deepening their understanding of the CRPD and the SDGs. Deaf facilitators and participants played active roles, reinforcing IOM's commitment to ensuring deaf individuals contribute to shaping and advocating for their rights. Ethical interpretation and legal empowerment

IOM organized training for women SL interpreters in Iraq, focusing on confidentiality, impartiality and

IOM's commitment to disability inclusion: empowering the deaf community and promoting sign language in Iraq *(continued)*

accuracy to ensure high-quality communication between deaf participants and the hearing community. It also trained deaf-led organizations and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) on transitional justice and compensation laws, enabling them to advocate for their rights and navigate legal systems. Additionally, IOM made Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) trainings more inclusive by providing SL interpretation and addressing the needs of deaf women, empowering them to access critical information, report abuse, and advocate for their safety.

IOM has hosted various inclusive events that emphasize the abilities of the deaf community. One notable initiative, The Climate Chess Gambit, spotlights the strategic and intellectual prowess of deaf individuals through competitive chess tournaments. This

event offered a platform for the deaf community to participate in recreational activities while challenging societal stereotypes around disabilities. By focusing on what people can do, IOM fosters an environment where deaf individuals can showcase their talents and thrive.

Another example of IOM's inclusive approach is the Homebound Creativity: Exploring Art Amidst Adversity exhibition. This event celebrated the cultural richness within diaspora communities, including deaf participants, by displaying their artistic creations. With the provision of sign language interpretation, the exhibition was accessible to both deaf and hearing attendees, ensuring that everyone was able to appreciate the diverse perspectives and talents on display.

IOM also launched an inclusive Leadership and Empowerment Bootcamp for Women tailored for

Persons with disabilities and accessible for deaf women. The bootcamp combined personal and professional development with physical fitness, teamwork and leadership exercises. Through workshops on self-advocacy, legal rights and mental health, alongside recreational activities, it created a supportive environment for deaf women to grow. This initiative addressed both physical and mental well-being, enhancing participants' confidence and fostering social integration.

By prioritizing the needs of the deaf community, IOM is ensuring no one is left behind in its mission to promote equitable access for all. As these efforts progress, the focus remains on making disability inclusion a core component of IOM's programming, empowering deaf individuals to thrive in their communities.

By Haneen Mohammed, IOM Senior Disability Inclusion Assistant

Change through inclusivity!

Sinjar 23 September 2024 - IOM and USAID supported the People with Disabilities Network in an afforestation campaign to plant 250 trees in Sinjar. The initiative engages people with disabilities and aims to restore green spaces in schools and public areas affected by conflict.



Freedom of Expression

Training on mechanisms of reporting, monitoring, advocacy, and tracking indicators of freedom of expression and journalist safety held in Najaf

Najaf, 10 September 2024 - UNESCO Iraq Office organized a training workshop in Najaf, targeting a select group of journalists from various Iraqi provinces, including the Kurdistan region. The workshop aimed to train them on mechanisms of reporting, monitoring, advocacy, and tracking indicators of freedom of expression and journalist safety. This two-day workshop is part of the second phase of the "Breaking the Silence to Protect Journalists" project, funded by the Dutch Embassy in Iraq.

The training focused on enhancing journalists' abilities to handle the risks they face in their work. A new group of Najafi journalists was integrated into the monitoring, reporting, and advocacy team, which was established in early 2024. This team is responsible for monitoring journalist-related issues in Iraq and providing the necessary protection and support.

The Governor of Najaf, Mr. Yousef Kanawi, visited the trainees during the workshop and expressed the governorate's readiness to support



UNESCO's activities related to press freedom. He also emphasized the importance of supporting the journalistic community in Najaf and

Training on mechanisms of reporting, monitoring, advocacy, and tracking indicators of freedom of expression ... (continued)

other provinces. Judicial authorities and the police leadership in Najaf participated in the training, marking the first such collaboration for these activities in the governorates. The workshop concluded with a set of recommendations presented by the

Head of the Najaf Journalists' Syndicate, Mr. Iyad Al-Jubouri, and several press organizations to UNESCO. These included a call for joint training workshops focusing on using artificial intelligence tools to enhance freedom of expression and

journalist safety, similar to what has been conducted in Baghdad and Erbil in recent months. UNESCO Iraq reaffirms its commitment to supporting journalists and continuing its efforts to promote freedom of expression in Iraq.

An open dialogue session held between distinguished journalists from the city of Mosul and UNESCO Iraq Office

Mosul, 14 September 2024 - Bytna Foundation for Culture, Arts, and Heritage hosted an open dialogue session between distinguished journalists from the city of Mosul and UNESCO Iraq Office. The session centered on enhancing collaboration between UNESCO and local media, highlighting UNESCO's ongoing efforts in Iraq, and exploring future opportunities to strengthen partnerships in support of cultural heritage preservation. Participants also discussed the vital role of media in promoting UNESCO's initiatives and fostering greater community engagement.



UNESCO establishing a comprehensive guiding mechanisms for protecting journalists in Iraq

Baghdad, 19 September 2024 - UNESCO experts, in collaboration with a consultative team of journalists, are developing a comprehensive guiding manual. This manual will aim to strike a balance between freedom of expression and the safety of journalists and will be adopted by courts, law enforcement agencies, and media institutions to ensure the protection and promotion of freedom of expression in Iraq. To develop the guiding manual UNESCO Iraq has successfully concluded an intensive three-day training program in Sulaymaniyah, targeting over 30 journalists, 25 female and 5 male, from the Kurdistan Region

and various Iraqi provinces. The training focused on safety and protection protocols for journalists operating in high-risk environments. As part of its ongoing efforts to build specialized teams capable of supporting international reporting and monitoring cases of at-risk journalists, UNESCO will continue to conduct a series of training sessions in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Region. This initiative is part of a program funded by the Dutch Embassy in Iraq, aimed at enhancing the integration of components within the Iraqi National Mechanism for the Protection of Journalists. The guiding manual will enable the journalists to adopt international

standards for monitoring and documentation, utilizing official reporting channels linked to initiatives by the Iraqi judiciary, including the Council of Judges for Freedom of Expression and specialized media and publishing courts, as well as relevant international platforms.



UNFPA thrilled to bring The Stevie Awards home with Rudaw Media Network

Baghdad, 12 October 2024 - UNFPA thrilled to bring The Stevie Awards home with Rudaw Media Network for UNFPA and the 186 participants of the Women in Media project in Iraq. UNFPA thanks the Government of the UK in Iraq, SEED Foundation - a local NGO in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Google News Initiative, and UNFPA partners for making this happen.

The Stevie Awards ceremony was held on 11 October in Istanbul, Türkiye. UNFPA Iraq was present to receive an award for their partnership with Rudaw Media Network for the Women in Media project. The project is awarded as the best corporate social responsibility (CSR) project in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. UNFPA Iraq thanks the

Government of the UK for supporting this project.



From Al-Waeli Cultural Center: UNESCO and Baghdad Municipality discuss media and information literacy week in Baghdad



Baghdad, 26 September 2024 - UNESCO held a working meeting and discussion session today at the Al-Waeli Cultural Center in Baghdad, in collaboration with the Baghdad Municipality. The event was part of preparations for the International Week of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and is aligned with the UNESCO MIL Cities initiative. The goal is to enhance digital culture and awareness among internet and information technology users in Iraq, in

line with UNESCO standards and recommendations.

The meeting focused on the frameworks for cooperation between UNESCO and the Baghdad Municipality, which will transform its cultural centers and facilities into international and local hubs for media and information literacy. These centers will contribute to raising digital awareness and literacy levels, aiming to create more inclusive and informed communities, particularly regarding safe internet

usage and adherence to humanitarian principles and human rights.

During the meeting, UNESCO provided an overview of its global MIL program, designed to improve digital knowledge and offer training to users, journalists, and youth, with a special focus on women. The discussion also touched on key themes for the upcoming International Week of Media and Information Literacy, set to take place in mid-October, coinciding with UNESCO's global celebrations, including a regional event in Jordan for Arab and North African countries.

The program seeks to equip various groups with essential standards related to media and information literacy. This includes training digital content creators to adopt fairer and more equitable practices, while raising awareness about the challenges posed by the online and communications landscape. The meeting also highlighted the importance of enhancing digital literacy to mitigate risks and threats associated with unsafe technology use.

UNESCO organizes a series of workshops and trainings to promote press freedom as part of the joint funding project MDP

Baghdad, 27 September 2024 - UNESCO Iraq Office organized a series of workshops and trainings in Baghdad during July, August, and September 2024, as part of the Multi-Donor Program (MDP) aimed at protecting journalists and promoting freedom of expression. These sessions, which saw broad participation from female journalists, focused on safety and security protocols, as well as governmental and judicial procedures aimed at combating impunity and reducing the risks faced by journalists in Iraq.

The national mechanism for protecting journalists in Iraq, developed by UNESCO since 2016, has witnessed significant progress, culminating in 2024 with the establishment of the "Freedom of Expression Judges

Council." Members of this council recently underwent special training on judicial follow-ups concerning cases involving journalists. Additionally, activities were carried out in the Kurdistan Region, specifically in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, encouraging Kurdish authorities to follow the central government's steps in promoting press freedom and ensuring

fair trials in publishing and journalism cases.

This program is part of UNESCO's ongoing efforts to support press freedom and expression throughout Iraq, with active contributions from the international community, aiming to create a safe media environment that respects the rights of journalists and protects them from potential risks.



UNESCO conducts intensive training for law enforcement in the Kurdistan Region

Erbil, 09 October 2024 - From 6-8 October, UNESCO Iraq Office delivered an intensive training program for 30 officers from various law enforcement agencies in the Kurdistan Region. The training aimed to strengthen

mechanisms and protocols to ensure the safety of journalists during public event coverage, such as protests, demonstrations, and elections. This initiative is part of the "Breaking the Silence" project, which seeks to

promote journalist safety and combat impunity, funded by the Dutch Embassy in Iraq.

Key topics included international standards for freedom of expression and journalist safety. Officers were

UNESCO conducts intensive training for law enforcement in the Kurdistan Region *(continued)*



trained on global guarantees for freedom of expression and the protection of journalists in conflict zones and during demonstrations. This was based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 79 of the Geneva Conventions, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as Articles 38 and 46 of the Iraqi Constitution, which enshrine these fundamental rights.

The training also covered guidelines for digital governance, online freedom of expression, and the role of security agencies in managing these platforms. Global standards for information space management and the government's role in protecting journalists working in

digital spaces were discussed.

Additional focus was placed on media coverage guidelines and crowd control, with an emphasis on effective cooperation between law enforcement and journalists during public events, in alignment with international standards for journalist safety.

The training responded to an urgent need for better collaboration between journalists and law enforcement in the Kurdistan Region. The Ministry of Interior in Erbil welcomed the initiative, acknowledging the importance of raising awareness among its officers about how to work with journalists and respect their role. Dhea Subhee, Communications and

Information Officer at UNESCO Iraq Office, emphasized that this training is a significant step toward promoting democracy and human rights, particularly freedom of expression. He noted that it marks a "pivotal moment" in strengthening cooperation between the Kurdistan Regional Government and UNESCO. By increasing law enforcement officers' understanding of journalists' rights, the training aims to build a more balanced and respectful relationship, especially during sensitive media coverage.

Notably, the training incorporated artificial intelligence as part of the curriculum, utilizing advanced technology to enhance participants' ability to address modern challenges in journalist protection. This is part of a broader UNESCO initiative in Iraq, which focuses on training journalists, judicial bodies, and law enforcement agencies to advance freedom of expression and media safety.

This training aligns with UNESCO's long-term strategy in Iraq, which includes various programs to improve working conditions for journalists and foster cooperation with official entities. It underscores UNESCO's commitment to promoting press freedom and ensuring the safety of journalists, especially in the challenging conditions they face while fulfilling their duties.

UNESCO launches workshop on elections, media, and journalist safety in Baghdad

Baghdad, 24 October 2024 - UNESCO Iraq office, in collaboration with local partners, launched a specialized workshop on elections, media in the digital transformation era, and the safety of journalists. The workshop addressed the principles and guidelines for media coverage of electoral processes. Participants included representatives from the Election Commission, the Human Rights Commission, as well as a group

of journalism and media experts, bloggers, and government officials.

This activity falls within the framework of the Multi-Donor Programme (MDP) on Freedom of Expression and the Safety of Journalists, implemented globally by UNESCO. The workshop reviewed the main rules and standards for media coverage, both traditional and digital, of electoral processes. It also discussed the safety of journalists during the coverage of public events,

including elections, drawing on leading international experiences.

Participants also discussed mechanisms to ensure the safety of journalists during traditional media coverage and in the digital space, including the role of influencers and users on digital platforms. Ideas were exchanged, inspired by past electoral experiences in Iraq, along with the accumulated expertise of journalists and representatives of the Election Commission.

In light of the recent elections in the Kurdistan Region and the upcoming central Iraqi elections scheduled for next year, participants agreed on the need to prepare a guidebook and form a specialized task force to support elections, with a focus on combating misinformation, deepfakes, and fake news. Attention was also drawn to the support of women, who are often the most affected by fabricated and misleading campaigns during electoral periods.



Baghdad hosts a content creator training workshop as part of Global Media and Information Literacy Week activities



Baghdad, 27 October 2024 - UNESCO Iraq Office, in partnership with Baghdad Municipality, organized an intensive training workshop for digital content creators from October 22 to 24, as part of the Global Media and Information Literacy Week activities aimed at promoting digital literacy. The three-day workshop, held at the Dr. Ahmad Al-Waeli Cultural Center and Museum in Baghdad, brought together thirty male and female participants. It focused on practical applications of key creative techniques in content creation, processing, verification, and alignment, in addition

to using AI tools in this field. A distinguished group of journalists and media professionals from several Iraqi provinces, including the Kurdistan region, participated, exchanging knowledge and skills and establishing a team of ethical content creators. In this context, UNESCO Iraq's CI Officer, Dhea Subhee stated, "UNESCO supports the development of media, information literacy, and digital competencies for everyone to enable people to engage critically with information, navigate the online environment safely and responsibly, and build trust in our information and

digital technology ecosystems." He added, "Media and information literacy provides essential skills to confront the challenges of the 21st century, including misinformation, disinformation, hate speech, and declining trust in media and digital innovations, especially artificial intelligence."

For her part, Khawla Moussa, Director of the Al-Waeli Center and Museum, emphasized that Baghdad Municipality aims to include Baghdad among UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Cities by hosting activities related to this topic in its cultural houses and museums.

Content creator Youssef Salman highlighted that the workshop offered an abundance of information, digital tools, and practical applications presented by UNESCO experts over the three days, enabling participants to handle digital content smoothly and innovatively while supporting ethical standards in the digital space.

The participants requested UNESCO to implement similar training workshops, as they enhance digital literacy and help young people achieve significant benefits, such as engaging in the digital economy and entering the job market alongside global content creators.

Yazidis Genocide

Honoring the past, building the future: Kocho Martyr's Cemetery and new Kocho Village bricklaying ceremony

Kocho, Sinjar, 05 September 2024 - Today, the community of Kocho, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq, and Nadia's Initiative, hosted a significant event to both honor the memory of the past and lay the foundation for the future. The event began with the solemn opening ceremony of the Kocho Martyr's Cemetery, followed by the bricklaying ceremony for New Kocho Village.

Honoring the lost

The Kocho Martyr's Cemetery has been constructed as a final resting place for the Yazidis from Kocho village who tragically lost their lives during the Daesh occupation.

"Growing up in Kocho, this was not the future I envisioned for my village. I had imagined a Kocho where I could follow in the footsteps of the village's women,

like my mother, to raise a family and grow old alongside my friends and neighbors. The 2014 massacre changed everything. However, with this new village, we must continue to tell the story of Kocho and build a strong, vibrant community," said Nadia Murad, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Nadia's Initiative founder.

This cemetery, built in response to the

requests of survivors, marks 518 graves for the men, women, boys, and girls who were brutally murdered on August 15, 2014. Though only 153 remains have been returned to their families and buried here, the effort to exhume and return the remains of martyrs from mass graves across the region continues.

"The Kocho cemetery is not only the



Honoring the past, building the future: Kocho Martyr's Cemetery and new Kocho Village bricklaying ceremony *(continued)*

final resting place for the 518 innocent lives taken away too soon, but also a testament to the resilience and the courage of the Yazidi community, who have been waiting over a decade to bring their loved ones home," said Giorgi Gigauri, Chief of Mission for IOM Iraq.

This tragic chapter in Kocho's history, where over 500 men and boys were killed and around 1,500 women and children were taken captive by Daesh militants, stands as a painful reminder of the atrocities committed against the Yazidi community. The opening of this cemetery is a step towards healing and seeking justice for the Yazidi people, who endured unimaginable suffering during this genocidal campaign.

New Kocho village – A new chapter

On the same day, the community witnessed the bricklaying ceremony of New Kocho Village, a symbol of hope and resilience. This new village, supported by IOM Iraq, Nadia's Initiative, UNDP Iraq, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), will provide a home for over 130 families who survived the massacre.

"The establishment of New Kocho

Village, alongside the newly created Kocho cemetery, reminds us of the unimaginable suffering endured by the Yazidi community during the ISIS occupation. This sacred ground and the new village symbolize not only a place of rest for the souls of those who were taken brutally from us, but also a powerful testament to resilience and hope. USAID is honored to support the creation of the New Kocho Village, which will provide a home for over 130 families who survived the massacre. Through USAID and IOM's assistance, the creation of the new cemetery stands as a lasting tribute to the courage and strength of the Yazidi people," said Erin-Mone Marquez, USAID Iraq's Acting Mission Director.

The construction of New Kocho Village is not just a reconstruction of physical structures, but a crucial component of the broader effort to deliver justice and reparations for the Kocho community.

"The rebuilding of New Kocho Village is not just a construction project; it is a powerful act of restoration and healing for the Yazidi community. This village will provide more than just homes; it will offer a renewed sense of hope, security, and dignity to those who have

endured unimaginable suffering. For the Yazidis, New Kocho symbolizes the strength to reclaim their identity, rebuild their lives, and preserve their cultural heritage. It is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and a crucial step towards justice, reconciliation, and a brighter future for the generations to come. UNDP along with its partners is honored to be a part of this project," said Auke Lootsma, UNDP Resident Representative for Iraq.

The event included speeches and opportunities for interviews with representatives from IOM Iraq, Nadia's Initiative, UNDP Iraq, and other key stakeholders. The ceremony was attended by diplomatic representatives, UN agencies, local and international NGOs, and members of the local community.

This dual ceremony served as a poignant reminder of the resilience and strength of the Yazidi community and both the Kocho Martyr's Cemetery and New Kocho Village stand as enduring symbols of justice, remembrance, and the unyielding spirit of a community determined to rebuild and thrive despite the horrors of the past.

IOM brings government and community together, supports families of victims of Daesh



Baghdad, 07 October 2024 - The inequitable application of Iraq's Compensation Law 20, passed by the Iraqi Parliament in 2009, has emerged as a primary concern among victims' families in conflict-affected areas, where the lack of timely and fair compensation continues to exacerbate their suffering.

The law aims to compensate those who lost a family member or property and to provide remedial measures and privileges for those for those who lost or had their jobs or studies disrupted due

to war, military errors and terrorist operations. However, many families, already grappling with loss and trauma inflicted by Daesh, face bureaucratic hurdles and delays in accessing the compensation they are entitled to under the law.

This concern, among others, came to light during a series of workshops involving over 80 communities in Al-Anbar, Salah al-Din, Ninewa and Kirkuk hosted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq, in an effort to find solutions to the

challenge of returnee reintegration. The return of displaced persons continues to pose a significant challenge in Iraq, particularly for those with perceived affiliations to Daesh. At the same time, host communities victimized by Daesh still grapple with the trauma of violence and loss, and feel they are not getting the support they need to recover.

"We have taken up arms against terrorism since 2005. Today, our regions are safe, thanks to the people who believe in the unity of the country," said Sheikh Abdul Wahab Sarhan from the Khalidiya district in Al-Anbar. "We need support to help families who are victims of terrorism," he stated, advocating for the rights of the people still trying to recover and for a stronger relationship between communities, government agencies and international organizations.

"The lack of representation is a loss of rights for the group that sacrificed, the group that fought, the group that struggled, and the group that achieved security and stability," Sheikh Abdul Wahab stressed. Without proper

IOM brings government and community together, supports families of victims of Daesh *(continued)*

representation, these families felt unheard, unable to influence decisions that impact their lives directly.

"This meeting is a fundamental success," he noted. "I believe today is the beginning of openness to the international community and IOM."

"I welcome the process of integration, peaceful coexistence and the return of the displaced. This is the first challenge. I allowed myself to be part of this programme for the return of the displaced," Amer Tayyab Saeed Al-Ani, an imam in Al-Qaim district in Al-Anbar, who lost his brother in the battle to retake Al-Anbar from Daesh, echoed the sentiments.

He highlighted the significant role international organizations play in ensuring justice for the victims. "The truth is that the victims of terrorism are not an insignificant group. In the

city of Al-Qaim, they represent a quarter of the population." He urged these organizations to focus their efforts on the rehabilitation of victims' families that require development programmes, psychological rehabilitation and compensation for their losses. Both leaders raised concerns about the inequitable application of the Compensation Law 20 and agreed that solving the compensation issue is key to achieve peaceful coexistence.

In the end, Sheikh Abdul Wahab and Al-Ani both stressed that for peace and security to take root in Al-Anbar and beyond, representation and support for victims must be a priority. Their call for a stronger connection between the government, local communities and international organizations is a message of hope—one that IOM Iraq is

working to foster through its tribal engagement efforts.

The workshops provided a platform for the victims' families to voice their concerns. Through the creation of a victims' families representatives working group following the workshops, this initiative aims to address the pressing needs of both returnees and host communities. As a next step, IOM will host a capacity-building workshop in Erbil for the working group elected to represent the victims' families from Ninewa, Al-Anbar, Salah al-Din and Kirkuk.

This effort was supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM).

By Megan Giovannetti, IOM Strategic Communications Officer

Outrage over the crimes committed against the Yazidi must not be allowed to diminish

New York, 25 October 2024 – Today, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to UN Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, visited "The Women Who Beat ISIS" exhibit by Farida Global Organization, which opened at UN Headquarters in New York. Portraits of Yazidi survivors from Sinjar, Iraq, tell stories of unimaginable suffering of their community and remind of their tireless and continued pursuit of justice.

"Outrage over the crimes committed against the Yazidi must not be allowed to diminish. Resilience remains necessary, as does international attention, because the risks still exist", writes Special Adviser Alice Wairimu Nderitu in her latest op-ed.

Here is the text of the op-ed:

"This month, the United Nations Headquarters is hosting the exhibition 'The Women Who Beat ISIS'.

This exhibition features the testimony of Yazidi women who survived the vicious violence committed by Da'esh in Iraq in August 2023. Their voices speak both of the terrible tragedy they experienced and of their tireless advocacy for memory and prevention. In May 2022, I had the opportunity of conducting an official visit to Iraq, which allowed me to meet many other victims, including in internally displaced camps in the Kurdistan region. There, too, eyes filled with sadness displayed a level of resilience



that continue defying the fate of destruction that perpetrators put in motion with their vicious actions.

Resilience remains necessary, as does international attention, because the risk still exists. Great effort and resources have gone into attempts to stop the horrific crimes committed against the Yazidi by the Da'esh in the past decade. Unfortunately, these efforts have not gone far enough to end the suffering of this minority religious and ethnic group in the Sinjar Mountains on the Iraq-Syria border. In August, the world marked the tenth anniversary of the horrific crimes committed against the Yazidi, who were targeted because of who they were, and our sense of outrage should not be diminished by the passage of time. The outrage that galvanized the global community to band together to provide help is still needed.

Today, some 2,700 Yazidi hostages -- mostly women and girls -- are still in captivity. They must not recede from our consciousness and our conscience, especially because of the horror of their continued daily existence.

Ten years ago, the unspeakable violence began with the systematic gunning down of men and boys, burying others alive and killing old women. Boys were forced to change their religion and become fighters. Hundreds of women and girls were enslaved, to be trafficked for use as sex slaves.

Testimonies from those who have been rescued from captivity detail continuing sexual violence against hostages that ranges from systematic rape and sex slavery to forced pregnancy, forced abortions and other forms of reproductive violence that has driven many to commit suicide by throwing

Outrage over the crimes committed against the Yazidi must not be allowed to diminish *(continued)*

themselves off the mountains.

But the violence that manifested in the most vicious way ten years ago was preceded by violence that was expressed in words. Over the years, the Yazidi have borne the brunt of baleful stereotypes and hate speech, which have been normalised in some parts of society and which, ten years ago, fed the narratives of those who sought to wipe them out.

Even this year, the week of ten-year commemoration of the crimes committed against the Yazidi was accompanied by over 1,000,000 documented hate speech messages against this group. Hate speech fueled this violence ten years ago. It can fuel it again today.

In the aftermath of the 2013 events, Iraq requested the assistance of the international community to bring the perpetrators of these serious crimes to account. The UN team to promote accountability for crimes committed by Da'esh (UNITAD) was thus established. During its years of operations, dozens of mass graves were discovered in areas previously controlled by Da'esh, but a great deal of work remains to be done, even now that the team has wended down its operations.

Thousands of Yazidi who fled their homes during attacks are still in camps for the internally displaced, and could be forced to return to their homes without any guarantees of safety. UNITAD has now concluded its mandate.

If history has taught us anything, it is that there are serious risks of genocide and related crimes when missions like UNITAD end. Doubtless, there will be transitional arrangements in place as the UN investigations and peace teams leave, but their departure is a source of great concern when justice, accountability and prevention questions have yet to be fully

addressed.

The Yazidi Survivors Law, passed two years ago, three years since its first draft was tabled, is a significant step forward in acknowledging what has happened to the community. So are other initiatives undertaken by the Government of Iraq in supporting victims and their needs in Sinjar, as well as the official marking of 3 August as the day of countrywide commemoration. At the same time, there are still important gaps in addressing the future protection and accountability needs of this community. Iraq signed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1959, however there is need to fully domesticate international crimes in national legislation. Failure to do so leaves vulnerable groups without explicit guarantees of national legal protection. The justice and accountability gap created by the absence of comprehensive legislation to address allegations of commission of such crimes in Iraq is one of the reasons for the continued

suffering of the Yazidi and other minority communities in the country – Christians, Shabak, Kaka'I and others – and presents a risk of genocide and related crimes recurring.

Supporting Iraq in addressing these challenges must continue being a priority for the international community. Reparations, such as those proposed in the Yazidi Survivors Law, are most effective when delivered as part of a wider transitional justice programme that includes the obligation to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of crimes that took place, if the people are to truly move forward with their lives. This requires a comprehensive reform of Iraqi criminal law to provide for punishment for genocide and related crimes.

A ray of hope shone from a court in

Germany, early last year, when judges confirmed the conviction of a member of Da'esh for genocide against the Yazidi after he purchased a woman and her daughter, enslaved and tortured them. The judgment provides a positive example of judicial leadership on the use of international jurisdiction to deliver justice that has remained out of reach for the Yazidi for the past 10 years. Judicial proceedings in a number of countries against members of Da'esh have ensured and continue.

During my official visit to Iraq in May 2022, I joined the Yazidi at their shrine in Lalish. There, I expressed a wish -- that the more than 2,700 persons from the community believed to be in captivity of Da'esh would return to their loved ones. The Yazidi are waiting on the community of nations to affirm its commitment to the values that guarantee them the full enjoyment of their human rights, which is sacred, irrespective of their minority status or where they live.

The persistent vulnerability of minority populations and the insufficient steps being taken to guarantee their protection constitutes a stark reminder to the global community that acting to prevent genocide and related crimes is at least as important as pursuing accountability in the aftermath. In fact, when the crimes have been committed, one cannot go without the other.

We must continue honoring the victims of serious international crimes, while also acknowledging the fact that many of the risk factors that once led to the events of ten years ago still persist in Iraq, including widespread stigmatization and hate speech against members of specific and vulnerable communities. The international community needs to renew its commitment to protect them so that their existence may never again be threatened because of their identity."

International Democracy Day

UNAMI on X

Baghdad, 15 September 2024 - "Democracy embodies inclusion, participation, and respect for human rights. In Iraq, strengthening governance by harnessing technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), advances democracy, which is key to sustainable development. On Democracy Day, let us commit to democracy today and every day." - Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance and Officer-in-Charge of UNAMI



UNESCO Iraq celebrates International Democracy Day, highlighting its connection to artificial intelligence

Baghdad, 15 September 2024 - UNESCO Iraq celebrated International Democracy Day by focusing on the intersection of democracy and artificial intelligence. Highlighting the crucial role of journalism as a cornerstone of democracies worldwide, UNESCO underscored its significance in safeguarding democratic values.

In a publication titled "Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Journalism," UNESCO underscored the potential risks AI poses to democracy through its impact on journalism. The report, released by UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector, identified trends and indicators suggesting that AI is increasingly becoming a threat to the free press, which may place democracy on a dangerous trajectory.

In another publication, "Artificial Intelligence and Democracy," UNESCO's Human Sciences Sector examined AI's significant potential to affect electoral processes and political participation—both positively and



negatively. The report urged global readiness for the sweeping changes brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4.0).

UNESCO Iraq is organizing a specialized training course in Sulaymaniyah from 15 to 17 September for a group of Iraqi journalists focusing on journalists' rights and the influence

of artificial intelligence.

Through its programs in Iraq, UNESCO continues to promote the principles of press and media freedom, advocating for the use of modern technologies, including ethical AI, to monitor media development indicators and ensure the safety and security of journalists.

UNITAD

UNITAD shares findings of international crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) against residents of Tikrit, al Dour, al-Alam and al-Dhuluiya (Salah al-Din)

Baghdad, 02 September 2024 - As part of the completion of its activities prior to its closure on 17 September 2024, UNITAD delivered, among others, a report on international crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) against residents of four localities in Salah al-Din governorate to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) on 26 August 2024. The report and its underlying evidence have been shared in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 2379 (2017) and UNITAD's Terms of Reference, including the informed consent of information providers.

The report concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that, between June 2014 and March 2015, ISIL (Da'esh) committed war crimes and crimes against humanity against the predominantly Sunni population of Tikrit, al Dour, al Alam and al Dhuluiya. In particular, the report finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that, among others, imprisonment, torture and other

inhumane acts, murder and forcible transfer as crimes against humanity were committed against residents of Tikrit, al Alam and al Dour, while persecution as a crime against humanity was committed against individual residents of Tikrit and al-Dour, and against all residents, predominantly belonging to the al-Jubouri tribe, in al Alam and al Dhuluiya. The report also finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that, on or about 14 September 2014,

the use of poisonous weapons and/or the use of asphyxiating weapons as war crimes were committed against residents of al-Dhuluiya.

The findings of the report were also presented by UNITAD in a meeting held on 29 August 2024 with the deputy administrative governor of Salah al-Din, the mayors of Tikrit and al Alam and other local leaders and dignitaries.

A public version of the report is available at <https://bit.ly/3X2jDda>



UNITAD and Iraq: working cooperatively to build a modern forensic capacity in Iraq

Baghdad, 08 September 2024 - As the mandate of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) concludes later this month, the Team has finalized the significant financial and technical support it has provided to relevant forensic institutions across Iraq, including the Mass Graves Directorate (MGD), Medico-Legal Directorate (MLD), and several Iraqi criminal courts. This support has been pivotal in advancing efforts towards ensuring justice and accountability for the victims of ISIL (Da'esh) crimes.

Since its establishment, the Team has worked closely with the competent Iraqi authorities to modernize its forensic analysis processes related to ISIL (Da'esh) crimes. Through this collaboration, a comprehensive strategy was implemented, focusing on enhancing the capacity of these authorities by equipping them with state-of-the-art tools and expertise.

This support, which amounted to over USD 2.4 million, included the provision of advanced analytical equipment, digital forensic laboratories, and specialized tools, equipment and consumables for the documentation and analysis of mass graves, digital devices, and other forensic evidence.

Part of this cooperation resulted in the excavation of 68 mass graves, the recovery of more than 900 victims, and the collection of physical evidence from these sites crucial to supporting accountability efforts. The contribution of the Team included the provision of



some of the most advanced forensic software, hardware and training available to MGD and MLD, including a customized Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) solution with the capability to enable DNA sample matching, and a FARO ScanArm digitizing solution to capture complex forensic anthropological data in 3D.

Implementation of the strategy jointly also resulted in digital forensic laboratories being established at four Iraqi criminal courts, facilitated by the donation of equipment and software including all-in-one digital forensic software designed to extract, decode, and analyze data. This enabled the capacity of Iraqi experts trained by the Team to acquire, manage and verify digital evidence from a significant number of digital devices seized from ISIL (Da'esh) by these authorities and beyond.

During the conduct of these activities,

forensic specialists on the Team provided technical assistance, including the provision of expert advice and analysis, to their Iraqi counterparts in fields such as forensic archaeology, forensic anthropology, satellite image analysis, geo-spatial analysis, open-source intelligence, and digital forensics. This assistance has facilitated the ability of these counterparts to employ modern forensic methodologies when undertaking evidence analysis, victim recovery, and victim identification.

Over the last number of months, the Team has focused on ensuring that its contribution and the progress made by these counterparts will be sustained beyond the mandate. Yet, their work is not complete. Support from the international community will remain critical going forward, so that accountability for the crimes of ISIL (Da'esh) and hopes of survivors and victim families can be realized.

UNITAD publishes detailed findings of international crimes, including genocide, committed by ISIL (Da'esh) against the Yazidi Community in Iraq

Baghdad, 11 September 2024 - As part of the completion of its activities prior to its closure, UNITAD has published a report that details the international crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) against the Yazidi community, ten years after the brutal attack in Sinjar. The report concludes that UNITAD has reasonable grounds to believe that war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide were committed.

“Thousands of Yazidi victims and survivors suffered untold horrors at the hands of ISIL (Da'esh) perpetrators”, said Acting Special Advisor Ana Peyró Llopis. “UNITAD had previously announced that it had reasonable

grounds to believe, based on clear and convincing evidence, that genocide was committed against the Yazidis as a religious group, among other international crimes. Through the public version of this report, the world, and in particular survivors, can know on what basis this milestone finding was made. This is a critical step on the path to accountability and establishing the truth of what ISIL (Da'esh) did in Iraq, hopefully to prevent such atrocities from happening again.”

A version of this report was shared with the Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq on 10 September 2024, in accordance with UNITAD's Terms of

Reference.

The public version of the report is available at <https://bit.ly/3MHnxDF>



Acting Special Adviser Peyró Llopis delivers eight reports on crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) during her final meeting with the President of the Supreme Judicial Council



Baghdad, 10 September 2024 - During their final meeting prior to UNITAD's closure, Acting Special Adviser Ana Peyró Llopis delivered eight reports and packages of underlying evidence, including evidence originally collected by UNITAD, to H.E. Faiq Zaidan, President of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC). The reports present findings of acts committed by ISIL (Da'esh) between 2014 and 2017 against victims from wide-ranging communities of Iraqi society, which UNITAD has reasonable grounds to believe amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and, in some cases, genocide.

Six of the reports present factual and

legal findings on atrocities committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in the following geographic regions and / or against the following communities of Iraq: The Abu Nimr tribe of Anbar; the Yazidis of Sinjar; predominantly Shi'a victims from Badush Prison; and members of the minority Kaka'i, Shabak and Turkmen communities. In addition, two reports analyzing the contextual elements of crimes against humanity and the legal characterization of the armed conflict against ISIL (Da'esh) were also shared.

"Today marks the single biggest delivery of the results of UNITAD's investigations to Iraq, in accordance with our mandate and our Terms of

Reference", said the Acting Special Adviser. "In sharing these eight reports and underlying evidence, I would like to highlight the strong support from H.E. Faiq Zaidan, the SJC and all members of the Iraqi judiciary who have made instrumental contributions to UNITAD's work, including by sharing information of immense value for our investigations. For this, I speak on behalf of the whole Investigative Team in expressing our heartfelt thanks. As a result of this excellent cooperation, by 17 September 2024, UNITAD will have delivered to the SJC 19 case assessments and analytical reports, together with materials originally produced and collected by the Team. Over the past three months, 14 reports were delivered."

"It is also the time to recall that our work ultimately serves the interest of the victims, survivors and communities impacted by the crimes of ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq; women, men and children who endured the horrendous cruelty of ISIL (Da'esh), which is described in the reports. What happened should be remembered, and never happen again. We remain hopeful that the information UNITAD has analyzed and enhanced in a processed and structured archive, and the findings it has delivered to the Iraqi authorities will contribute to accountability for ISIL's (Da'esh) crimes in Iraq and globally. There are still stories to be told, survivors to be heard, and perpetrators to be held accountable."

UNITAD and Iraq strengthen justice through groundbreaking digitization and preservation of Da'esh-related materials

Baghdad, 11 September 2024 - In relation to the closure of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Daesh/ISIL (UNITAD) on 17 September 2024, UNITAD has finalized its project on the Digitization and Preservation of Da'esh-related materials, in close partnership with relevant Iraqi authorities. It has made significant strides in preserving, organizing, and archiving critical documentary records and evidentiary material related to ISIL (Da'esh). This initiative, supported by the European Union with USD 7 million over four years, has safeguarded large volumes of documentary materials that were at

risk of being lost or destroyed due to inadequate storage conditions.

Since 2020, UNITAD has worked with 15 national authorities to preserve over 20 million pages, representing 445,000 case files, and extracted data from hundreds of digital devices formerly used by ISIL (Da'esh). To support the work of its Iraqi counterparts, UNITAD recruited over 100 Iraqi consultants – of whom more than half are women – and trained them to prepare, digitize, and archive documents. These collaborative efforts have culminated in the creation of the world's largest centralized database of ISIL (Da'esh)-related court files and original documents, hosted by Iraq's Supreme

Judicial Council (SJC).

Through a dedicated team of digital forensic scientists, information management specialists, and international criminal law experts, UNITAD has contributed to organizing and digitizing this crucial material. The project has also established two state-of-the-art storage facilities, and digital forensic laboratories at four Iraqi criminal courts and at the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service.

Impact of the Digitization Project

The creation of a centralized database has marked a milestone in Iraq's judicial efforts to modernize its court system and improve service delivery to citizens. The joint collaborative efforts

UNITAD and Iraq strengthen justice through groundbreaking digitization and preservation of Da'esh-related materials *(continued)*

of UNITAD and their Iraqi partners will make information more easily accessible to judges, potentially reducing the time needed to retrieve case-related evidence and information. UNITAD has also supported the recovery and analysis of millions of documents recovered from digital devices, which improves the categorization and bibliographic coding of its court records.

Judge Raed al-Mosleh, President of the Nineveh Appeals Court, Mosul remarked that “the storage of files and their preservation from damage and fire has greatly improved. It has become easier for employees to handle requests from citizens and lawyers, whereas previously the process took a long time due to the difficulty of searching for cases in a scattered, unorganized storage room. Now, the work takes much less time, and the courts are more efficient.”

“The Digitization and Archiving Project represents a critical step in safeguarding the historical record of crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq, bolstering efforts toward accountability and justice” said the office of Dr. Dindar Zebari, the Coordinator for International Advocacy in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

Quotes from Key Project Stakeholders:

• Al-Anbar Al-Anbar Court of Appeal:

“Our court has witnessed a significant transformation thanks to the digitization project. It has accelerated search and retrieval processes, reduced errors caused by manual work and strengthened the public's trust in the judicial system.”

— Zaid Salah Awad, Chief Programmer, Al-Anbar Court of Appeal
“This project has been a pivotal effort to digitize and safeguard court records, and the dedication of the team—supported by the provision of state-of-the-art equipment—has been key to its success.”

— Dr. Sameeh Al-Qasim, Archiving Project Manager / Al-Anbar Criminal Court

• Salah al-Din Court of Appeal:
“This project has provided a safeguard for documents, protecting them from damage or loss, and ensuring their easy transfer during emergencies. It represents a major step forward for our judicial system.”

— Maha Taha Hussein, Supervisor of the Digitization Project, Salah al-Din Court of Appeal

• Al-Rusafa Criminal Court:
“The digitization system has allowed for easier access to case-related information and improved document preservation, eliminating the need for large physical storage spaces and reducing the risk of environmental damage to critical files.”

— Dhiaa Kadhum Al-Kinani, President, Al-Rusafa Criminal Court



UNITAD shares findings of international crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) against members of the Albu Nimr Tribe (al-Anbar governorate)

Baghdad, 14 September 2024 - On 10 September 2024, as part of the completion of its activities prior to its closure on 17 September 2024, UNITAD delivered to the Supreme Judicial Council, among other documents, the report on international crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) against members of the Albu Nimr tribe in al-Anbar governorate. The report and its underlying evidence have been shared in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 2379 (2017) and UNITAD's Terms of Reference, including the informed consent of information providers.

The report concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that, between 2014 and 2016, ISIL (Da'esh) committed war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Sunni community in certain areas of al-Anbar governorate, and specifically against members of the Albu Nimr tribe. The

report covers crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) against this community in the areas between the town of Hiit, the Euphrates River and Lake Tharthar in the al Jazeera desert. In particular, the report finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that, among others, imprisonment, torture, murder, forcible transfer and persecution as crimes against humanity and murder, torture and outrages upon personal dignity as war crimes were committed against members of the Albu Nimr tribe.

In a meeting held on 8 September 2024 with Sheikh Yusef Faysal Najras al-Ga'oud, prominent leader of the Albu Nimr tribe, Acting Special Adviser Ana Peyró Llopis thanked victims and survivors of the Albu Nimr tribe for coming forward and sharing their information with the Investigative Team. Ms Peyró Llopis also expressed her gratitude to all stakeholders who supported the investigation and in

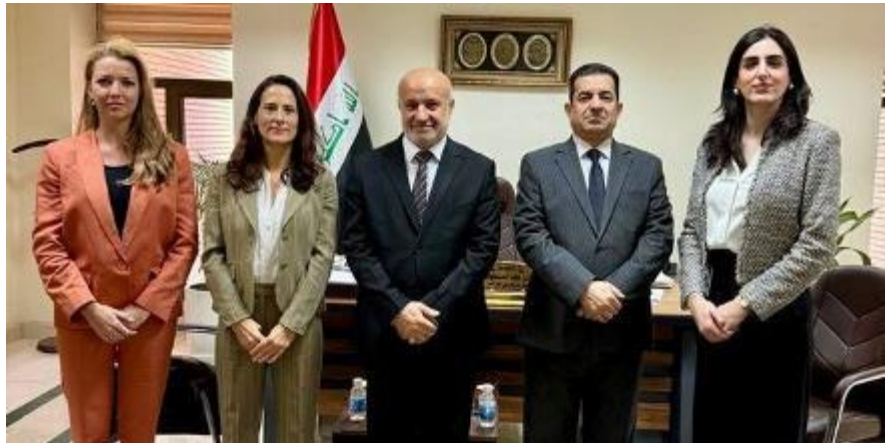
particular to Sheikh Yusef for his significant contribution in advancing the Investigative Team's collection of evidence on these international crimes.

A public summary of the factual and preliminary legal findings of the report is available at <https://bit.ly/4hKKvrE>



Acting Special Adviser Peyró Llopis holds final meeting with Chair of the National Coordinating Committee, Dr. Zeidan Khalaf

Baghdad, 13 September 2024 - Acting Special Adviser Ana Peyró Llopis held her final meeting prior to the conclusion of UNITAD's mandate with Dr. Zeidan Khalaf, Chair of the National Coordinating Committee (NCC), on 12 September 2024. During the meeting, the Acting Special Adviser and the NCC Chair took stock of joint activities and recent results delivered by UNITAD. The Acting Special Adviser expressed her profound thanks for the support and cooperation extended by the Government of Iraq to UNITAD since it started its operations in 2018.



UNITAD publishes findings on international crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) against predominantly Shi'a Inmates of Badush Prison

Baghdad, 14 September 2024 - As part of the completion of its activities prior to its closure, UNITAD has published a report setting out detailed findings on international crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) during its attack on Badush Central Prison near Mosul on 10 June 2014. It is estimated that 1,000 male prisoners – predominantly Shi'a, but also a few Sunni, Yazidi and Christian – were executed by ISIL (Da'esh) members in at least six locations on this day. With the support of UNITAD, and as of the date of the report, the remains of over 600 victims have been excavated as part of these investigations, in co-operation with the Mass Graves Directorate and Medico-Legal Directorate of Iraq.

Consistent with UNITAD's findings in other lines of investigation (e.g. the report "Camp Speicher: A Pattern of Mass Killing and Genocidal Intent"), the report concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the killing operation at Badush Prison was undertaken with genocidal intent in the

context of an ISIL (Da'esh) genocidal policy against the Shi'a in Iraq.

With the support of SITU, UNITAD prepared a video providing an overview of the attack on Badush Prison and the findings of the Team as to international crimes committed against the inmates. This is the third such collaboration between SITU and UNITAD that aims to visualize notable attacks perpetrated by ISIL (Da'esh) using information collected by the Team.

A version of this report was shared

with the Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq on 10 September 2024, and elements of the underlying investigations have previously been shared with competent authorities of third States, in accordance with UNITAD's Terms of Reference and its broader mandate to promote accountability globally for ISIL (Da'esh) international crimes.

The public version of the report is available at <https://bit.ly/3XGrOO3>



UNITAD publishes findings on the damage and destruction of Iraq's cultural heritage by ISIL (Da'esh) between June 2014 and August 2017

Baghdad, 15 September 2024 - As part of the completion of its activities prior to its closure, UNITAD has published a report on the damage and destruction by ISIL (Da'esh) of cultural heritage sites belonging to all communities in Iraq.

The report finds that ISIL (Da'esh) systematically targeted cultural heritage sites it perceived as being non-

compliant with its interpretation of Islam. At least between June 2014 and August 2017, ISIL (Da'esh) damaged and/or destroyed at minimum several dozens of Shi'a and Sunni Muslim mosques, husayniyyat (congregation halls), and shrines; Yazidi shrines and temples; Christian monasteries and churches; and Kaka'i shrines and jamkhana (ritual halls); as well as

tombs and cemeteries across northern Iraq. The report concludes that UNITAD has reasonable grounds to believe that the damage and destruction of these sites amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The public version of the report is available at <https://bit.ly/3CnT0ZP>

UNITAD and Iraq: cooperation with third states

Baghdad, 15 September 2024 - As UNITAD concludes its mandate on 17 September 2024, the Team highlights the crucial role it played in promoting global accountability efforts for atrocity crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) and advancing justice for the victims of ISIL (Da'esh) crimes throughout the world, notably through the support of domestic efforts in third States.

Since its establishment, UNITAD, in close cooperation with Iraq, played a pivotal role in supporting domestic efforts relating to the investigation of crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq to ensure justice is also served in third States. The Team received some

300 requests for assistance from twenty-one (21) third States, aiding many ISIL (Da'esh)-related national investigations and prosecutions. At least eighteen (18) cases under investigation supported by the Team led to indictments, and at least fifteen (15) cases ultimately ended up in convictions. UNITAD's support resulted in landmark convictions for international crimes committed in Iraq, including by Iraqi nationals.

UNITAD's support of domestic efforts in third States materialized through the identification and interview of relevant witnesses, the use of UNITAD's archive, in particular for the

identification and analysis of key ISIL (Da'esh) internal documents uploaded onto UNITAD's e-discovery platforms, and the provision of expert testimonies by UNITAD staff members in national criminal proceedings in four countries. UNITAD also cooperated with Iraqi investigative judges in building joint casefiles on ISIL (Da'esh) persons of interest residing in third States, including Iraqi nationals, contributing to global accountability efforts in ensuring there are no safe havens for those having committed in Iraq acts that may amount to crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide.

UNITAD shares detailed findings of international crimes committed against Christians by ISIL (Da'esh)

Baghdad, 16 September 2024 - As part of the completion of its activities prior to its closure on 17 September 2024, UNITAD delivered, among others, a report on crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) against the Christian community of Iraq to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) on 26 August 2024. The report, which focuses on Christians located in or around Mosul and the Nineveh Plains, concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that international crimes were committed against members of this community between 2014 and 2017.

Commenting on these findings, Acting Special Adviser Ana Peyró Llopis noted that "the evidence collected and analyzed by UNITAD reveals horrific suffering endured by Christian victims and survivors at the hands of ISIL (Da'esh) cruelty. This includes criminal acts which UNITAD has reasonable grounds to believe amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity,

including crimes of sexual violence, outrages upon personal dignity, damage or destruction of cultural property, pillage, spreading terror amongst the civilian population, and forcible transfer, among many other instances of cruel conduct."

"UNITAD benefitted from extensive cooperation with key partners and stakeholders in the course of these investigations. We are most grateful to our Iraqi counterparts for their instrumental support for the collection of evidence. In addition, I would like to emphasize my heartfelt gratitude, in particular, to Christian civil society organizations and survivors who came forward to share their horrific stories and painful memories. They have made a courageous and invaluable contribution to establishing the truth about ISIL crimes committed during its brutal take over and control of territory in Iraq."

The report and its underlying evidence

have been shared in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 2379 (2017) and UNITAD's Terms of Reference, including the informed consent of information providers.

A summary of the outcome of these investigations is available at <https://bit.ly/40GhEyU>



Statement from the Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Ana Peyró Llopis, on the conclusion of the UNITAD mandate (continued)

Continued from page 1.

- Guidelines in areas relating to the use of technology and trauma-informed investigations were developed and published online as well, as were the results of certain investigative lines of inquiry, including a report on the destruction of cultural heritage and a report on sexual violence.

- The result of this investigative work draws from millions of pieces of information that the Team collected

and produced over the years, in particular information provided by the Iraqi authorities, and notably by the Iraqi judiciary.

Second result, the collection and preservation of materials:

- Those millions of pieces of information are another significant achievement of the Team, which has consolidated an archive of ISIL (Da'esh)-related material. An archive managed and analyzed by the Team, using cutting-edge systems and tools, which

contains information that could be used as evidence in future criminal proceedings.

- This archive includes, most importantly, interviews taken directly by the Team from survivors and witnesses, who stepped forward to give their account, from across Iraq. It also includes other information collected from a diverse range of sources and also produced by the Team, such as forensic reports.

- UNITAD has delivered an

Statement from the Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Ana Peyró Llopis, on the conclusion of the UNITAD mandate

important part of this archive to the Iraqi authorities, in accordance with its Terms of Reference. The most comprehensive archive, which contains all the records of the Team is now safely stored within the United Nations Headquarters with the hope that it will be made accessible in the future for accountability purposes.

- I wish to stress this point: the archive of the Team contains relevant information for accountability purposes, information that links the acts committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq to the commission of international crimes and the individuals responsible for these crimes.

Third result, building capacity:

- Much of the information has been collected by the Team in cooperation with the Iraqi authorities, and often for the purpose of building their capacity, in areas such as mass grave excavations, digitization and archiving, and digital forensics.

- Results from this cooperation include the excavation of 68 ISIL-related mass graves and the return of identified victim remains from these excavations to their families, the digitization and archiving of twenty (20) million ISIL-related paper records; and the acquisition of data from a significant number of digital devices (e.g. hard drives, mobile phones) seized from ISIL (Da'esh) by the Iraqi authorities.

Fourth result, support to national investigations and prosecutions in third States:

- During its mandate, the Team

supported some three hundred (300) requests for assistance received from twenty-one (21) third States, aiding their ISIL-related national investigations and prosecutions. At least eighteen (18) cases under investigation supported by the Team led to indictments; and at least fifteen (15) cases ultimately resulted in convictions.

Fifth result, supporting victims:

- All of our work was victim-centric, driven by an expert witness protection and psychosocial support capacity. This capacity has served our investigative and evidence collection efforts. It has also helped to build capacity in this area among the competent Iraqi authorities and other counterparts in Iraq, through the delivery of workshops and trainings.

Let me add that none of the results and achievements mentioned would have been possible without the tireless support from the security, finance, human resource, language service, mission support, and programme management components within the Team, including those working to secure our premises, drive the vehicles; serve the food; and keep us healthy and our offices safe and clean.

This would not have been possible without our Iraqi colleagues either, who brought to the Team fundamental expertise and the domestic perspective. Ultimately, one half of all staff members were national personnel prior to the drawdown and liquidation of the Team.

Finally, there is also the excellent

cooperation from the Iraqi authorities, in particular their security forces who facilitated our movements, as well as the support from other United Nations entities in Iraq and abroad.

On a more personal note, I wish to reiterate my appreciation for the commitment of UNITAD colleagues in ensuring an orderly conclusion of our mandated activities, and the drawdown and liquidation of the Team. These are challenging times for many, both professionally and personally. It is during challenging times that we often show our best selves, where our professionalism shines through. And it is during challenging times when our human values become fundamental. Those at UNITAD have shown that they were up to the challenge.

I want to thank you all for what we have achieved, and for how we have achieved it, that is in a professional, humble, and honest manner, leaving hopefully behind us a positive legacy.

The results and accomplishments I have described ultimately serve the interests of those who have been most deeply impacted by the crimes of ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq. To the victims, survivors and affected communities, it is truth and justice that matter. We should be proud that our efforts have made a significant contribution to both, while remembering that the work will only be completed when the last victim, the last survivor and all impacted families and communities, receive the truth and justice they deserve.

Humanitarian

Syrian refugee turns beekeeping passion into business with cash assistance

Baghdad, 11 August 2024 - When Zaem fled violence and conflict in his hometown of Al-Hassakah in northeast Syria in 2019, he did not imagine that, a few years later, he would find peace – and a livelihood opportunity – in raising bees and harvesting honey in Iraq.

“I used to trade wheat, barley and cotton in Syria...the economic situation was stable. But after the war broke out, everything collapsed,” he recalls.

With his wife and four children, they left everything behind and made their way to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, using all their savings. With no

financial means, the family struggled to make ends meet.

But amidst this hardship, Zaem picked

up an unusual hobby of beekeeping. “I always wanted to do beekeeping. I wouldn't be successful now if I hadn't



Syrian refugee turns beekeeping passion into business with cash assistance *(continued)*

liked it," he says. It all started when Zaem started receiving cash assistance from UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency, in 2023. Once he covered his family's most basic needs, he used the small amount that was left over to turn his passion into something more. "I wanted to be self-dependent. I did not want to rely on humanitarian assistance. That life is meaningless...." At first, he invested in two beehives. Very quickly, he started producing and selling honey. With his profit, he bought more beehives and expanded his beekeeping business. Every day now, the 61-year-old puts on his beekeeping suit before starting work on the 15 hives that are scattered on the fields surrounding his small home in the Qushtapa sub-district of Erbil. With a smoker in hand, he carefully puffs out thin streams of cool smoke to calm the bees, so that he can inspect the

honeycombs.

Last year's harvest was successful and Zaem can now rely on his beekeeping business to provide for his family. "I could not have uplifted my family's living standards without the cash support. Now that I don't need it anymore, I hope it will continue to support other vulnerable people," says Zaem.

In Iraq, many refugees rely on irregular daily labour in the informal sector, earning an average of USD 350 per month, which is below the national poverty line. This inadequate income means they cannot afford basic necessities, let alone improve their living conditions or save for the future. UNHCR estimates that 98 per cent of refugee families in Iraq are in debt just to afford food, send their children to school and pay rent.

Cash assistance is given to the most

vulnerable refugees, so they can cover their most basic needs like rent and food. Thanks to support from donors like the United States of America, UNHCR's cash assistance programme has had a profound impact on the lives of refugees in Iraq. In 2023, 58,000 vulnerable refugees received assistance of USD 230 per month for 12 months. Of them, 79 per cent said they were able to meet half of their basic needs, which helped reduce their feeling of stress and improve their living conditions, 43 per cent reported an improvement in their food security and 15 per cent reported being able to enroll their children in school.

In 2024, UNHCR needs USD 91,000,000 to provide cash assistance to 33,100 refugee households identified as most at risk in Iraq.

By Rasheed Hussein in Erbil and Karlo Jeelo in Baghdad, UNHCR

Back to life in Al-Zawiya Village: a success story in resettling displaced communities

Haditha, 26 August 2024 - In a green area west of Haditha, between the villages of Al-Khasfa and Al-Maadheed, you can see Al-Zawiya village, a thriving community, that was left in ruins after the brutal conflict with ISIL, destroying more than 80% of the village. This devastation forced its residents, including Muhanad Hamid, a 49-year-old teacher and his family, to flee for safety.

Muhanad remembers the difficult times before support is provided by UNDP, with funding from USAID: "The war forced us to leave home. I fled with my family to several places until we were able to reach the north of Iraq. After ISIL entered, no one stayed in the village. All the people were left homeless." With the village in shambles, basic services like electricity and water were destroyed. The destruction of the water treatment station, crucial for supplying the entire village, meant that residents had to travel long distances daily to fetch water. Even when the plant partially resumed operation, it couldn't meet the daily needs of the villagers. "Water was scarce and difficult to obtain," Muhanad explains. "We only got water every two days for two hours, and the water was not clean at all." All of this led to a financial burden on the people, as well as the spread of diseases.

Returning to Al-Zawiya, he was faced with a scene of utter devastation. The



once-vibrant village was now a ghost town. Overwhelmed by the destruction, he and his neighbors faced the daunting task of rebuilding their homes. Despite the immense challenges, a glimmer of hope emerged with the support of UNDP, funded by USAID.

The rehabilitation of the Al-Zawiya water station marked a turning point. This project enabled over 1,000 people to benefit from the restored water supply, reviving basic services and breathing life back into the village. Beyond repairing the station, the program addressed the fluctuating water levels near Haditha Dam, which had posed significant challenges. By rehabilitating the intake station and installing three pipeline stations, the program ensured a steady and uninterrupted water supply to Al-

Zawiya.

Eng. Ahmed Akram, assistant to the water Director, of Haditha Directorate, sheds light on the situation: "The people did not accept to return to their areas considering the lack of basic services. After the destruction of the station, we were working partially with less than 30% of the station's capacity. Today, after its rehabilitation with the support of UNDP, funded by USAID, the station operates at its full capacity of 200 M3 (cubic meters) per hour, and we have also increased production capacity with additional tanks holding approximately 600 M3."

The return of water proved to be a pivotal factor in encouraging families to return, ensuring access to safe drinking water, and creating a stable environment for resettlement. Muhanad says, "I am happy to see the

Back to life in Al-Zawiya Village: a success story in resettling displaced communities *(continued)*

services renovated and restored. We hope that this work will assure people that we can return to pre-war life.”

Muhanad concludes with gratitude and hope: “We are grateful for what we have achieved today after liberating the

city, and we hope to receive more support to help us rebuild our village.”

With the support of the UNDP’s Funding Facility for Stabilization in Iraq (FFS) and the United States Agency for International Development

(USAID), Al-Zawiya water treatment station has been rehabilitated. Today, the water station produces more than 200 M3 of water daily and stores over 600 M3, serving a village of more than 1,000 residents.

The future of displaced Iraqis needs a robust and inclusive Human Rights Action Plan

Erbil, 03 September 2024 - The future of displaced Iraqis needs a robust and inclusive Human Rights Action Plan - IOM, UN Iraq Human Rights, UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, are supporting the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the Government of Iraq to realize a brighter future for all.



Reconnecting with land after displacement

Sinjar, 24 September 2024 - A once-bustling village is now a scene of destruction: electrical wires hang from fractured pillars, the wells have run dry, the buzzing alleyways are now eerily silent, and not even a bird takes flight. This is the grim reality faced by the returning residents of the villages of Ger-Zerek (Adnaniyah) and Sikiniya in Sinjar, in northern Iraq.

Both villages were deserted due to the widespread damage inflicted by Daesh, cutting of basic services. The scale of destruction has been preventing its residents from returning for years. Yet, with the poor and often difficult living conditions in the camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) for nearly a decade, some families cannot resist the call of home, determined to rebuild on the land of their ancestors. Suleyman, a father of nine, from the village of Ger-Zerek (Adnaniyah), used to travel to other cities for daily work to support his family until 2014 when the conflict broke out.

“Ger-Zerek was home to all my family and relatives; we lived united,” says Suleyman. “We shared our happiness and grief, helping one another in times of duress. Muslims, Christians, and Yazidis lived together in harmony.”

When Daesh stormed his village in 2014, he was away in Sulaymaniyah, working. In the dead of night, he received a frantic call from his son—Daesh had taken over, and they were fleeing to Sinjar Mountain.

After enduring nine days with little food or water and under constant threat from Daesh, they reunited and crossed into Iraqi Kurdistan to seek



refuge in different camps.

When northern Sinjar was partially liberated, Suleyman moved to Sinune, hoping to get closer to his village. Soon after its full liberation, he went to Sinjar city. Many parts of Sinjar city became uninhabitable due to destroyed housing and infrastructure and lack of basic services, a far cry from the once thriving and busy center of the Yazidi community in Iraq.

“It was incredibly hard to provide for ten people. I visited my ruined village from time to time until I decided to set up a tent next to my destroyed house and moved there with several family members.”

That’s when he first learned about the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Suleyman qualified for IOM’s owner-driven housing assistance programme. The programme encourages homeowners, whose houses have sustained medium or severe damage or have been completely

destroyed, to take the lead in rebuilding. They receive guidance and quality control support from IOM’s engineers, who help develop an adaptable construction plan with key milestones. Upon completion of each milestone, homeowners receive installments of the grant to move on to the next stage of rebuilding.

After obtaining the prerequisite documents to formalize ownership of the land, Suleyman embarked on the reconstruction journey, laying the foundation for a brighter future.

“Before the invasion of Daesh, we were doing well with fertile land for farming and herding our goats. This was sustaining our life,” recalls Kori Hasan, a 49-year-old mother of four from Sikiniya village. Like Suleyman, she and her family spent years in displacement, faced with many challenges and lacked stability.

Kori’s situation took a turn for the worse when her husband, who had

Reconnecting with land after displacement *(continued)*

heart disease, passed away, leaving her with the responsibility of supporting the entire family on her own. Despite these hardships, Kori didn't give up. After nine years of displacement in one of the camps in Duhok, she made the courageous decision to return and rebuild their lives where they feel at home.

For the first several months after their return to Sikniya, Kori and her family lived with her relatives, sharing their resources. They supported her in beginning the construction of her home, helping her to make the first step towards a new start. Luckily, Kori, like Suleyman, qualified for IOM's owner-driven shelter assistance and agreed to participate in the programme, which allowed her to finish the rehabilitation and move into her own house.

"We now have three rooms and a

kitchen. The restoration of electricity and access to a nearby well improved our lives," sighs in relief Kori's son Hamid.

Hamid, who has spent half his life living in camps, reflects, "Though we lack many things here, this is my home. Even the best camp could not ever compare to the sense of belonging and pride that comes from living in your own home, that you built by your own hands."

As they rebuild their house, step by step Kori and her family are also re-establishing their daily routine: "While our lives are not what they once were, we find happiness in our resilience. My children are back in school and work. We regularly travel to nearby villages to buy what we need".

Thanks to the efforts of IOM, generously supported by the United

States Agency for International Development (USAID) to restore houses, along with support from the Government of the Netherlands and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) to restore essential services, 192 families have returned to the villages of Ger-Zerek (119 families) and Sikiniya (73 families), breathing new life into these communities.

IOM remains committed to providing necessary support to the returning residents of these villages, from housing and improving or restoring access to essential services like water and electricity to advocating with the relevant authorities to re-open schools and health care facilities and addressing livelihoods needs.

European Union ECHO delegation visits Kirkuk Governorate, observes WFP project

Kirkuk, 25 September 2024 - European Union ECHO delegation visited Kirkuk Governorate, where WFP is providing cash assistance to more than 900 displaced Iraqis lacking basic documents, with support from the European Union. Multi-purpose cash assistance enhances resilience through enrolment in social safety nets and access to basic services.



Joint Coordination Forum in Anbar addresses humanitarian and development challenges

Ramadi, 30 September 2024 - The Joint Coordination Forum in Anbar, co-chaired by the Deputy Governor and IOM Iraq, convened in Ramadi with representatives from UN agencies, NGOs, and Joint Coordination and Monitoring Centre (JCMC) of the Council of Ministers. The forum addressed humanitarian and development challenges, including IDPs' voluntary return and reintegration in Anbar.



Legal assistance is necessary to help refugees access their rights

Baghdad, 12 October 2024 - At the UN High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR), our specialized legal teams are available 24 hours a day to support refugees and asylum seekers and help them navigate the national legal system.

Together, we can make a difference.

"Registration is important to ensure we as a family have protection and access to public services like schools," says Yahya, a Syrian refugee, who recently completed registering his family with the UNHCR through its community center in Baghdad.

"Registering is essential to ensure that,

as a family, we receive humanitarian protection and access to services such as schools," says Yahya, a Syrian refugee, who recently conducted the registration of his family at UNHCR through our social center in Baghdad. In 2024, UNHCR has supported registration of 11,000 refugees.

Over 233,000 civil documents were issued as a direct result of legal aid services provided by UNHCR and its partners



Baghdad, 06 October 2024 - Civil documents are not just papers; they

open many doors for citizens to access public services like seeing a doctor or

registering in school.

Thanks to EU Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid, since the beginning of 2024, UNHCR, in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, has supported more than 14,000 Iraqis in obtaining civil documents!

After years of displacement, Kawe and her family struggled to secure national identity documents.

Through support from UNHCR, she now holds up her new National Certificate with pride

In the past five years, 244,000 individuals received legal assistance and over 233,000 civil documents were issued as a direct result of legal aid services provided by UNHCR and its partners.

The Humanitarian Coordinator commends humanitarian assistance provided by the Government of Iraq and religious endowments to the Lebanese guests and expresses UN support in this regard

Baghdad, 11 October 2024 - The UN Humanitarian Coordinator Ghulam Isaczai, and UN agencies attended a briefing by the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) and religious endowment representatives and Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS) about the situation of Lebanese citizens arriving in Iraq due to the ongoing crisis in Lebanon. The Humanitarian Coordinator commended humanitarian assistance provided by the Government of Iraq and religious endowments to the Lebanese guests and expressed UN support in this regard.



SRSG Al Hassan meets with the minister of Migration and Displaced Ms. Faiq Jabro

Baghdad, 17 October 2024 – SRSG Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, accompanied by DSRSG/RC/HC Ghulam Isaczai, met with the minister of Migration and Displaced, Ms. Ivan Faiq Jabro. They discussed the issue of the internally displaced persons in Iraq and the efforts of the Iraqi government to ensure their voluntary, safe and dignified return to their places of origin. They also discussed the repatriation of Iraqi nationals from the Al-Hol camp in northeastern Syria, with the SRSG and Head of UNAMI commending the efforts made by the Iraqi government in this regard. UN support and partnership with the Ministry of Migration and Displaced in a number of issues of common interest were also highlighted.





Duhok, 21 October 2024 - UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai**, visited **Domiz 1 Refugee Camp**, home to nearly 30,000 refugees, to meet with residents and hear firsthand about their challenges and aspirations.

Duhok, 21 October 2024 - Today, UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, **Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai**, met with representatives of **UN agencies, NGOs, and partners in Duhok** to discuss ongoing collaboration and strengthen joint efforts to support displaced communities. Together, we are working toward durable solutions.

Forty women from returnee and host communities showcase their crafts at a bazaar in Mosul

Mosul, 15 October 2024 - Forty women from returnee and host communities showcased their crafts at a bazaar in Mosul, organized by Make it more beautiful, supported by IOM's WASL fund and U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

Joined by the Minister of Migration and Displacement Evan Faeq Gabro, the bazaar became a source of inspiration, helping the women reintegrate better.



UNHCR - Providing cash assistance to vulnerable refugees in Iraq

Baghdad, 22 October 2024 - Refugees in Iraq spend their cash assistance on: buying food, paying rent, buying medicine.

In addition, most refugees rely on irregular daily labour opportunities in the informal sector to help meet their family's basic needs. Last year, UNHCR provided cash assistance for a year to more than 58,000+ vulnerable refugees across Iraq, 34% were single women heading a family.

The Iraqi economy remains fragile, with the price of basic items like rice and flour having increased by 14.5% in February 2024 compared to the mid-way point in 2023. As a result, according to a UNHCR survey in Iraq, 98% of refugee families are in debt just to afford food, send their children to school and pay rent.

Even if most refugees are well accepted by the host community, can access public services such as healthcare and



education and can pursue livelihood opportunities, particularly in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), others – especially women heading a family, persons with disability or elderly persons – struggle to make ends meet and live in dire poverty.

Most refugees rely on irregular daily labour opportunities in the informal sector. On average, refugee households

in Iraq make IQD 455,000 (USD 350) per month, less than the national poverty line of approximately IQD 554,405 (USD 423) for a typical household that does not benefit from other social support. This means that refugees do not have enough to afford basic necessities, let alone to improve their current situation or save for the future.

UNHCR - Providing cash assistance to vulnerable refugees in Iraq *(continued)*

In 2024, UNHCR needs USD 73,000,000 to provide cash assistance to 26,500 refugee households identified as most at risk in Iraq. Refugee households will receive IQD 300,000 per month (USD 230) over 12 months,

to meet their most basic needs. Your support is urgently needed. Otherwise, refugees may be forced to resort to desperate coping measures such as reducing their food intake, early and forced marriages and

entering into a spiralling cycle of debt. A smaller number even reported sending children under 12 to work in factories, sell items in the streets or as cleaners in restaurants.

UNDP Resident Representative addresses a seminar on social cohesion

Baghdad, 26 October 2024 - Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq, Auke Lootsma, recently spoke at Catholic Relief Services (CRS) seminar "Unlocking Potential: Advancing Social Cohesion & Justice in Development Programming" about reintegration in Iraq. Highlights included UNDP's commitment to prepare the ground for community readiness, return, and reintegration of vulnerable and marginalized families - including shelter rehabilitation, psychosocial, and livelihood development.



UNDP and Italy sign agreement for sustainable reintegration of returnees from Al-Hol Camp



Baghdad, 25 October 2024 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Italy are pleased to announce the signing of a €3 million agreement aimed at supporting the sustainable reintegration of Iraqi nationals returning from the Al-Hol Camp in Northeast Syria, primarily women and children who fled the conflict since 2013. These returnees, many of whom have lived in closed camps and detention facilities, face a multitude of urgent humanitarian and security challenges, including lack of access to basic services such as healthcare and education, and exposure to trauma and violence.

This project will address the immediate and long-term needs of these

vulnerable returnees by focusing on their reintegration. Key areas of support include economic empowerment and livelihood opportunities, mental health and trauma recovery, and the creation of a supportive environment that facilitates their acceptance within local communities. A critical component of the project is its emphasis on engaging community leaders to foster social cohesion, trust-building, and reconciliation efforts, ensuring the reintegration process is inclusive and sustainable.

The signing ceremony, attended by H.E. the Minister of Migration and Displaced Ms. Ivan Faiq Jabro, the Chargée d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy

of Italy, Ms. Chiara Franchini, with the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation and UNDP's Deputy Resident Representative Mr. Sascha Graumann, highlighted the joint commitment to a comprehensive reintegration strategy. This strategy combines social, psychological, economic, and physical services essential to the success of the returnees' reintegration.

The Government of Iraq has already initiated the repatriation process from Al-Hol Camp for Iraqi nationals through an intensive screening and risk assessment process aimed at ensuring the safety and security of both returnees and the communities they join. While many have successfully reintegrated, numerous others continue to await assistance, making this new agreement a timely intervention.

The partnership's objective is to implement a multi-sectoral, community-based reintegration approach. By working closely with local peace committees, civil society organizations, and community groups, the project will foster a sense of belonging among returnees, while promoting peace, stability, and social cohesion.

"This partnership represents an important step forward in addressing

UNDP and Italy sign agreement for sustainable reintegration of returnees from Al-Hol Camp *(continued)*

the complex challenges faced by returnees and their communities,” said Mr. Sascha Graumann, UNDP’s Deputy Resident Representative. “By working together, we can ensure that reintegration is both successful and sustainable, enabling returnees and host communities to rebuild their lives.”

Ms. Chiara Franchini, Chargée d’Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Italy, remarked that “this project’s goal is to rebuild trust and social cohesion in Iraq. It is also a new opportunity to continue the cooperation between Italy and Iraq based on the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom of choice and the right to a safe and

peaceful return.”

UNDP and the Government of Italy are committed to foster their collaboration with the Government of Iraq to ensure the successful implementation of this significant project, paving the way for a brighter future for the returnees from Al-Hol Camp.

Stabilization and Development

Mosul is full of invisible innovators!

Mosul, 29 August 2024 - From reusing materials to preserving heritage, the people of Mosul have always found creative ways to live sustainably. However, balancing the needs of heritage preservation and modern engineering is not always easy!

This was one of the key insights from International Trade Center’s (ITC) recent Sustainable Construction Meetup at Mosul Space, where 25 amazing participants—from government officials to entrepreneurs—came together to explore sustainable solutions for Mosul’s housing sector.

Lots of great ideas and recommendations were shared, from creating awareness about sustainability to designing training materials for youth and women!

Through the Building Equitable and



Inclusive Transformation (BEIT) project, funded by the EU, ITC is

working to create affordable housing and new job opportunities.

Iraq is developing a Green Growth Strategy facilitated by the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Environment, in partnership with UNDP

Erbil, 04 September 2024 - The Green Growth Strategy (GGS) is a crucial framework for Iraq’s development transition, designed to help the country achieve sustainable growth by balancing economic expansion with social development and environmental sustainability.

For the first time, Iraq is developing a GGS in close consultation with various ministries, facilitated by the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Environment, in partnership with UNDP.

This strategy will guide Iraq’s economic diversification, focusing on optimizing resource efficiency (#water, #energy, and #food) and creating decent jobs for its youthful population. By aligning the efforts of both public and private sectors, the GGS aims to ensure that every economic sector contributes to

high-quality growth, incorporating environmental and equity considerations.

The Ministry of Planning and the

Ministry of Environment organized a consultation workshop on 30-31 August 2024 in Erbil to discuss the first draft of the GGS.



Iraq workshop highlights anticipatory action as key to building disaster resilience



Baghdad, 04 September 2024 – The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction - Regional Office for Arab States (UNDRR ROAS), in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment in Iraq, FAO, WFP, and IOM organized a significant workshop titled "Building Resilience: Anticipatory Action Planning for Disaster Risk Reduction in Iraq," aimed at enhancing disaster preparedness and response strategies across the country.

Anticipatory action constitutes an integral part of disaster risk management and complements humanitarian assistance, mitigates the impacts of disasters, and protects development gains in support of wider disaster risk reduction efforts. "The global context for anticipatory action is

evolving at an unprecedented pace, and we have compelling evidence highlighting its benefits," said Nora Achkar, Chief of UNDRR ROAS in her opening remarks. "However, despite its significant advantages, anticipatory action faces formidable barriers and is currently underutilized, particularly by governments who struggle to access established sources of anticipatory financing," she added.

The first day of the workshop featured a high-level panel discussion on the current challenges and opportunities related to anticipatory action and disaster risk reduction in Iraq. The discussion focused on Iraq's climate vulnerability, adaptation strategies, and the integration of anticipatory measures into national planning.

Day two began with a recap of the previous day's discussions, followed by an in-depth exploration of Iraq's climate vulnerability context. This session included assessments of hazards and risks and discussions on adaptation options.

The focus then shifted to climate information systems for early warning and actions, with UNDRR, UNDP, and WFP presenting strategies to improve early warning systems and identify gaps in Iraq's preparedness. Group exercises further enriched participants' understanding of early warning and action systems.

On the final day, the workshop delved into the nexus between climate migration and security, with insights from IOM. The session on "Mapping Anticipatory Action and Finance for Disaster Risk Reduction" highlighted the need for national finance mechanisms for DRR, including budget tracking and financial landscape surveys. Discussions centered on integrating anticipatory action into financial planning for pre-disaster activities.

The workshop concluded with a focus on outcomes and next steps, emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration among UN actors, ministries, and other stakeholders. The event highlighted the transformative potential of anticipatory action in enhancing Iraq's resilience to disasters.

Ali Younes' success story in Sinuni: a journey from displacement to entrepreneurship

Ninewa, 08 September 2024 - Meet Ali Younes from Sinuni in Ninewa Governorate, an entrepreneur who transformed adversity into opportunity. Before ISIL's invasion, Ali ran a thriving mobile phone repair shop, serving his community with pride. But when ISIL seized control of the region, everything changed. Ali and his family were forced to flee their home, seeking refuge in different areas, far from the life they once knew.

During their displacement, Ali continued to work in various phone repair shops, honing his skills and holding onto the hope of one day rebuilding his own business. Despite the hardships, Ali never lost sight of his dream, determined to turn his family's struggle into a story of resilience and renewal.

Turning Challenges into Opportunities



Ali didn't let these challenges defeat him. Instead, he viewed them as opportunities for learning and growth. When the region was liberated and stability returned, Ali seized the chance to rebuild his life. He enrolled in a business development training course

offered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The seven-day course provided him with essential business management skills, laying the foundation for his next steps. With newfound knowledge and a financial grant from UNDP, Ali made a

Ali Younes' success story in Sinuni: a journey from displacement to entrepreneurship *(continued)*

bold investment in advanced laser equipment, becoming the first in the region to own such technology. This cutting-edge tool enabled him to repair phones with unparalleled precision and speed, setting his shop apart from others in the area. Ali's determination to innovate not only revived his business but also positioned him as a leader in his community, turning his adversity into a story of triumph.

Ali's shop: a story of success and distinction

With the precision and advanced services his shop offered, Ali quickly earned a reputation for excellence. The growing demand for his expertise led him to hire an additional worker to help manage the influx of customers. In a short period, Ali built a loyal customer base and significantly increased his family's income.

"Today, my shop is a special place for phone repairs. Through my profits, I can now cover all my family's expenses, including rent," says Ali. His shop now enjoys a monthly income of approximately 1,500,000 Iraqi dinars

(around \$1,000), surpassing what he earned before ISIS took control.

Ali continues to look towards the future, striving to develop his shop further by investing in more advanced equipment. His commitment to excellence not only supports his family but also benefits the community by providing efficient and high-quality phone repair services, making his shop a cornerstone of local commerce.

Future Aspirations

With the support and training he received, Ali is now looking forward to a bright future. He plans to expand his shop and invest in more advanced equipment, believing that hard work and continuous development are the keys to lasting success. Ali aspires to provide the best possible services to the people of his region, aiming to solidify his position as one of the most prominent entrepreneurs in Sinuni.

Ali Younes' journey from displacement to entrepreneurship is a powerful testament to resilience and the transformative impact of support programs in rebuilding lives and

communities. His story is an inspiration to many, both in the region and beyond.

About the Project: Supporting Community Revival

This project emerged after the liberation of areas from ISIL control, as displaced people began returning to their homes, often to communities with limited facilities and job opportunities. The program focuses on supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs), offering returning families the opportunity to earn income, produce, and empower individuals.

To date, over 1,181 small and medium enterprises have been supported with training, coaching, in-kind assistance, or grants, like those received by Ali, this project is implemented by UNDP's Building Resilience through Employment Promotion (BREP) project, in collaboration with Welthungerhilfe (WHH) in Iraq, and funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through KfW Development Bank.

The Second Arab Forum on Enhancing Transparency and Good Governance was launched in Baghdad

Baghdad, 10 September 2024 – Today, the Second Arab Forum on Enhancing Transparency and Good Governance was launched in Baghdad with representatives of the governments, civil society, media and private sector from across the Arab region.

Co-organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Arab League, Transparency International, hosted by the Federal Commission of Integrity with the support of the European Union, the Forum commenced under the theme of "Integrity: An Essential Ingredient of Complexity and Opportunity". Launched by the remarks of the representatives of the co-organizers, the Forum hosted dialogues in diverse topics focusing on ending

corruption and promoting transparency and integrity.

Here is the text of the remarks by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai, at this event:

"His Excellency Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' Al-Sudani, Honorable Ministers,

Head of the Federal Commission of Integrity Judge Haidar Hanoun Director of the Arab Administrative Development Organization, Dr. Nasser Al Hatlan Al Qahtani

H.E Thomas Seiler, EU Ambassador

Distinguished guests,

Al-Salamu Alikum and Good morning.

On behalf of the United Nations in Iraq, it

is my pleasure to welcome you to the Second Arab Forum on Enhancing Transparency and Good Governance. We are honored to have you here in Baghdad, following the success of the first edition of the Forum in Cairo. Your presence underscores our collective resolve to combat corruption, promote transparency, and enhance accountability in our region.

I extend my thanks to the Arab Administrative Development Organization and Transparency International for selecting Iraq as this year's host. I also appreciate the efforts of the Commission of Integrity in Iraq, along with UNDP and the European Union, for co-organizing this crucial event.

This Forum represents a significant milestone in Iraq's journey toward stability and sustainable development. Under H.E. the Prime Minister and his government, Iraq has made the fight against corruption along with economic diversification and service delivery a top policy priority.

As the UN Secretary General aptly said, "Corruption is the ultimate betrayal of public trust". It is essential that we build this trust and ensure equal rights and services for everyone.

This year's theme, "Integrity: An Essential Ingredient in the Era of Complexity and Opportunities," is timely.



The Second Arab Forum on Enhancing Transparency and Good Governance was launched in Baghdad *(continued)*

Our region faces unprecedented challenges—wars, conflicts, and violence create a cycle of corruption that is hard to break.

The 2023 Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) regional analysis highlights that corruption continues to be a significant barrier to achieving a just and prosperous future across the Arab region.

Additionally, the UNDP Trends Report for 2023 also highlights that our region's vulnerability to conflicts, disasters, and the digital divide exacerbates inequalities and complicates the fight against corruption.

Without addressing corruption, sustainable development is unattainable.

I am proud of the partnership between the UN and the Iraqi government in this fight. Through UNDP and UNODC's initiatives, we have made significant progress in judicial reforms, anti-money laundering efforts, and empowering civil society and media to expose corruption.

UNDP has supported the drafting of the Access to Information Law endorsed by the Council of Ministers. The draft law is currently with the parliament for consideration. When enacted, the law will promote citizens' right to access information. This will foster public transparency and have an impact on Iraq's global positioning in this matter.

This Forum is not only a celebration of Iraq's achievements but also an essential

opportunity for regional dialogue. We must unite to develop innovative solutions that foster peace, prosperity, and democratic gains while improving public services and climate resilience.

We need the diverse expertise and perspectives of governments, the private sector, civil society, women's groups, youth, media, and academia to move forward effectively.

Over the next three days, let us exchange ideas, learn from our successes, and strengthen our commitment to overcoming challenges. Let's return to our communities as ambassadors of change, ready to make a difference.

Thank you."

How rebuilding sewage networks transformed lives in Sinjar

Sinjar, 15 September 2024 - In 2014, Luqman Sabri Khalaf and his family were forced to flee their home in Sinjar, Iraq, when ISIS invaded their city.

For six long years, Luqman, his wife, and their seven children lived in displacement, holding onto the hope that one day they could return home. In 2020, that day finally came. But what they found upon their return was a city in ruins.

"The place we once called home was barely recognizable," Luqman recalls. "Everything was destroyed — the houses, the sewage systems, the water pipes, the electricity." But the family remained determined to rebuild their lives in Sinjar.

Steady recovery

International organizations such as the United Nations worked tirelessly to restore essential services. Slowly, Luqman and his family began to see signs of recovery. "I saw an improvement in the availability of essential necessities day by day," Luqman remembers. But the city's infrastructure had been devastated, and the lack of proper Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities heightened the risk of disease and possibility of further displacement. Without a functional drainage network, Sinjar's streets flooded every rainy season, turning them into stagnant ponds that emitted foul smells and attracted disease-carrying insects. "It was a real tragedy," Luqman shares. The situation became so dire that during one particularly heavy rainstorm, Luqman's house flooded, forcing his family to seek refuge on the roof. "We had to rush to the roof for fear



of drowning," he recalls. "I often had to block the door with concrete pieces to prevent water from entering at night while we slept."

A turning point

A turning point came when UN-Habitat, funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), launched a project to rehabilitate Sinjar's sewage drainage network. In collaboration with local authorities, contractors, and the community, they set out to rebuild the city's critical infrastructure. The impact was immediate.

"This network absorbed rainwater and prevented flooding, creating safe conditions for us and our children to engage in public activities like education, healthcare, and play," Luqman says with relief. "It also helped prevent the spread of communicable diseases."

"My seven children, who were eager to go to school, often hesitated because the street next to our house was completely filled with water," he says. "Now, they can go to school without fear."

Building foundations for a safer future
Thanks to the project, which improved sanitation conditions for nearly 19,800 residents, including returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), hope began to return to Sinjar. "We are very grateful for the support provided by UN-Habitat," Luqman says. "It had a significant positive impact on my family and hundreds of families facing similar challenges."

Through these efforts, UN-Habitat aims to restore living conditions and create a foundation for a sustainable future by leveraging the transformative power of its interventions, rebuilding communities even in the most challenging post-conflict environments.



Small grant revives the social and cultural life of Iraqi cafe

Diyala, 17 September 2024 - In the heart of the old Baqubah market in Diyala, Iraq, Mohammad's Café stands as a relic of the past. Its cracked walls, worn furniture, and dim lighting tell a story of hardship and resilience. Mohammad Jalil, 27, who has struggled with hearing loss and speech difficulties since birth, inherited the café from his father, a war-disabled veteran. Now Mohammad shoulders the responsibility of supporting his entire family, including his mother, brothers, wife, and children, through the modest income the café provides.

In the past, Mohammad's Café served only hot drinks, and barely met the family's basic needs. After his father's passing, the situation grew even more dire. Mohammad was forced to take on several daily-wage jobs to make ends meet, as the income from the café was insufficient.

"Those were difficult days. I didn't know what to do. I couldn't provide for my family's basic needs, and our debts kept piling up. It felt like I was living in an inescapable nightmare." - Mohammad Jalil

Amid the overwhelming darkness, a

glimmer of hope emerged. Mohammad's Café became part of the UNDP SME Grant Programme, which allowed him to fully renovate the café and equip it with modern juice and simple cooking equipment. These grants aim to support Iraqi young people like Mohammad in establishing and sustaining their businesses, offering them a chance to rebuild their lives and communities.

The transformation extended beyond just the appearance of the café. It also brought a fresh and diverse menu. Mohammad's Café now offers a wide variety of delicious Iraqi breakfasts, refreshing drinks, and traditional dishes like spiced mince kibbeh, makhlama with eggs, and hearty soups. This revitalized menu has attracted new customers, turning the café into a bustling hub of local flavours and community.

Mohammad's Café has rapidly transformed into an oasis in the heart of the market, attracting intellectuals from across Diyala. It has become a gathering place for seminars and cultural discussions, where minds meet and ideas flourish. The café is now a

beloved destination for Diyala's intellectual community and youth, offering a unique space to connect, engage, and enjoy meaningful conversations.

Mohammad's earnings increased significantly, allowing him to support his family and provide them with a decent life, with a daily income of around 30,000 Iraqi dinars, about US\$23. His ambition didn't stop there; he hired another worker, creating a job opportunity for someone else facing difficult circumstances.

Mohammad's story is a remarkable example of the human spirit's ability to overcome adversity and achieve success. Through his determination and with the support of the UNDP's Building Resilience through Employment Promotion programme, in partnership with the Humanitarian Relief Foundation and with generous backing from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW Development Bank, Mohammad transformed his dream into reality.

This initiative not only helped Mohammad rebuild his life but also revitalized his community. The café, once a humble establishment, has become a cultural hub and a beloved gathering place, breathing new life into the market and making it more vibrant than ever.

More than 1,181 small and medium enterprises have been supported through training, coaching, in-kind assistance, or grants, inspiring many others to pursue their dreams, no matter the obstacles.



UNDP and partners are actively working to develop and amend Iraq's Private Sector Strategy (2014-2030)

Baghdad, 19 September 2024 - UNDP, in partnership with the Iraqi Ministry of Planning, the Istanbul International Center for Private Sector Development, and with generous support from USAID, is actively working to develop and amend Iraq's Private Sector Strategy (2014-2030).

This initiative aims to tackle key challenges, capitalize on emerging opportunities, and enhance the business environment. By fostering stronger public-private dialogue, we are supporting the Ministry of Planning in shaping a strategy that promotes sustainable economic growth and builds a resilient private sector in Iraq.



SDG-Day marked in Ninewa

Ninewa, 25 September 2024 - Today, UNAMI's Development Support Office in Ninewa marked SDG-Day alongside local gov, NGOs and community groups, discussing how SDGs are guiding our efforts. Ninewa is among the first governorates in Iraq to align its strategic vision with 2030 Agenda.



United Nations Country Team in Iraq releases 2023 Annual Results Report

Baghdad, 26 September 2024 - The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is pleased to announce the publication of its 2023 Annual Results Report. This report showcases the collective activities of 23 UN entities achieved in partnership with the Government of Iraq, local communities, and international partners under the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, 2020-2024.

In 2023, the UNCT in Iraq focused on five strategic priorities, making substantial progress in each area:

In the area of social protection, significant strides were made in enhancing access to education and essential services for vulnerable children and individuals. Efforts expanded social safety nets and provided cash assistance to vulnerable populations, particularly internally displaced persons (IDPs).

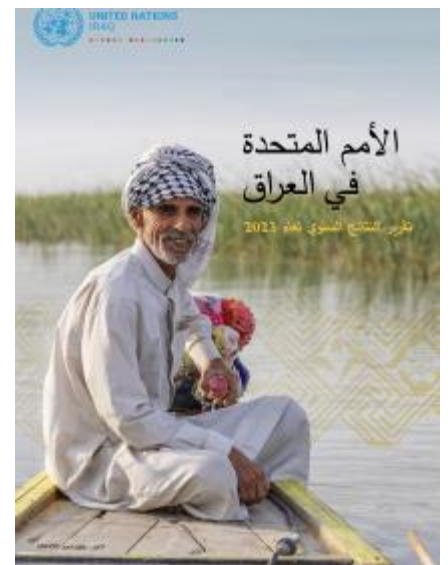
To support economic growth, the Employment-Intensive Investment Programme created numerous jobs, benefiting IDPs and refugees. The launch of the Iraq National Education Strategy addressed challenges in the education sector, paving the way for improved learning outcomes.

Contributing to sustainable environmental actions, the UNCT supported the revision of Iraq's Renewable Energy Law and the establishment of the Energy Transition Framework, underscoring Iraq's commitment to climate action. UN efforts also provided access to safe drinking water to local population in Basra.

Moreover, the implementation of the Educational Management Information System enhanced educational planning and resource allocation. Collaborative efforts with the Government of Iraq cleared contaminated land of landmines, ensuring safe returns of displaced families.

Ghulam Isaczai, the UN Resident Coordinator in Iraq expressed his deep appreciation to the Government of Iraq and all partners for their unwavering support and collaboration to realize the above results. "The achievements documented in this report underscore our commitment to supporting national priorities and plans and Iraq's journey towards a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable future," said Mr. Isaczai.

Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond, the UNCT in Iraq remains dedicated to



help the Government of Iraq fast-track achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The focus will continue to be on fostering economic growth, enhancing social inclusion, and promoting environmental sustainability.

For more information and to read the full 2023 Annual Results Report, please visit iraq.un.org.

Solar power installation brings clean water to over 700 families in western Ninewa

Ninewa, 26 September 2024 - IOM and USAID - US Agency for International Development -supported solar power installation brings clean water to over 700 families in western Ninewa!

This solar-powered project is more than just a well—it's transforming lives, reducing tensions, and creating a sustainable future. It helps enhance community resilience against climate change-induced water shortages.



Second phase of the PROSPECTS partnership launched in Iraq



Baghdad, 26 September 2024 – The Government of Iraq officially launched yesterday the second phase of the PROSPECTS partnership in Iraq, an initiative spearheaded and funded by the Government of the Netherlands. This four-year initiative, with a total investment of USD 46 million, aims to provide comprehensive critical support to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and vulnerable host communities across Iraq. The programme is being implemented by five organizations – UNHCR, UNICEF, ILO, IFC and the World Bank – in close collaboration with the Iraqi authorities.

The launch event in Baghdad was attended by senior representatives from the Government of Iraq, including the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), the Netherlands Embassy, PROSPECTS partners, and youth representatives from both refugee and Iraqi host communities. "The PROSPECTS programme is a crucial initiative for empowering Iraq's young people and the most vulnerable population by equipping them with the skills and opportunities they need to succeed. By working together with our partners, we are building a brighter, more sustainable future where every young person can contribute to the country's development." said the Minister of Youth and Sports, H.E. Dr. Ahmed Saad.

The Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs in KRG Ms. Zakya Salih Abdulkhaleq emphasized the programme's impact in creating jobs and vocational training for youth. Stating, "The PROSPECTS Partnership in KRI created job opportunities and provided vocational training for youth, which had a positive impact on reducing unemployment in the region". Her Excellency also emphasized "KRG considers the Cash Transfer Project under PROSPECTS for poor and

vulnerable households and individuals in Duhok governorate, a strategic project for the region, as it supports the establishment of a comprehensive social protection system in the region."

Her Excellency Janet Alberda, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Iraq, remarked: "We already made great results in the first phase of the PROSPECTS partnership, but this important work needs to be continued. We need to ensure that true durable solutions are found for all displaced communities in Iraq. People should have the voluntary decision on where to settle, taking with them the education, training and opportunities that they have acquired along the way."

The PROSPECTS programme is a flagship initiative showcasing the Netherlands' substantial commitment to put the humanitarian-development nexus into practice by promoting increased collaboration between humanitarian, development actors and the private sector to support Iraq's long-term stability. The second phase builds on the achievements of the first phase, which included enrolling nearly displaced 4,000 children in secondary education, supporting over 130 refugee entrepreneurs with microfinance loans, and providing essential civil documentation to more than 45,000 IDPs.

The second phase of the PROSPECTS Partnership (2024–2027) will focus on four key pillars:

1. **Protection and Social Protection** pillar will seek to ensure all refugees, IDPs, children and people at risk of statelessness – including individuals with complex cases – are able to obtain their core civil documents. This will also aim to strengthen legal frameworks to better protect asylum-seekers, refugees and individuals at risk of statelessness, provide legal assistance to refugees

and asylum-seekers to ensure their access to asylum and prevent refoulement, along with legal assistance to IDPs and IDP returnees to access civil documentation.

2. **Education and Learning** pillar will aim to provide refugee children, in particular the most vulnerable (girls and children with disabilities), with access to quality education on par with local community students, and young people with the essential skills they need to enter the labour market.

3. **Employment with Dignity** pillar will focus on access to decent jobs and economic opportunities for displaced persons and host communities, through enabling policies and mechanisms.

4. **Critical Infrastructure** pillar will seek the rehabilitation of infrastructure damaged and destroyed due to the conflict, including water and sanitation facilities in schools.

Iraq hosts over 324,000 refugees, with 87 per cent are living in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) and over one million internally displaced persons, with some 134,000 living in 21 IDP camps in the KR-I. While Iraq has made significant improvements in stability and development, continued collaboration with partners remains essential to ensure a prosperous future for all its people. The second phase of PROSPECTS will ensure that refugees, IDPs, and host communities receive durable solutions, allowing them to make voluntary decisions on their future while leveraging the skills and opportunities gained through the program.

The launch event reaffirmed the commitment of all stakeholders to continue delivering tangible, sustainable, long-term solutions for Iraq's most vulnerable populations.

The PROSPECTS programme is part of a broader global initiative being implemented in eight refugee-hosting countries across the Middle East and North Africa, and the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes regions.



UN-Habitat is committed to empowering women who historically faced limited access to housing, land, and property rights

Baghdad, 02 October 2024 - UN-Habitat is committed to empowering women who historically faced limited access to housing, land, and property (HLP) rights. We are actively raising awareness about HLP rights and providing support for women to secure these rights.

Through targeted awareness-raising sessions, we disseminate essential information and guidance on accessing services that facilitate the formalization of HLP rights. On

September 30th, we conducted a women-only and child-friendly session in Dugrey mujama'at led by a female trainer. This inclusive environment, which accommodated children, fostered a comfortable and supportive space for women to learn and engage.

With 17 attendees, we covered crucial topics such as how to upgrade their occupancy certificates into title deeds and the legal assistance UN-Habitat can provide.



A new beginning: Sarah's story from grief to growth

Diyala, 02 October 2024 - Sarah, from Diyala, remembers the year her world fell apart. Her son, Mohammed, was diagnosed with cancer, and she and her husband were forced to sell everything they owned to try to save him. Before this tragedy, they ran a thriving food supply store, providing for their community and restaurants. But life dealt with them differently. Despite their desperate efforts, Mohammed passed away, leaving them not only heartbroken but also financially ruined. The death of their son left Sarah and her husband not only heartbroken but also financially devastated. With their source of income gone and no job opportunities in Diyala, Sarah's husband had to seek work in Baghdad. He commuted four days a week, leaving Sarah alone in Diyala to cope with both her grief and their dire situation. Yet, in the midst of their darkness, a glimmer of hope began to emerge.

Sarah received training and a grant from of United Nations Development Programme's Building Resilience through Employment Promotion (BREP) programme that allowed her to buy basic equipment, including a large mixer, pastry-making supplies, an oven, and a refrigerator to display cakes and food products. These resources helped her to stand on her feet once again. The grant, part of a larger initiative aimed at supporting young Iraqis, gave Sarah and her husband a chance to rebuild their lives and start fresh.

Today, Sarah's work is more than just a food business. It's a beacon of resilience. She expanded her menu to offer a variety of traditional Iraqi breakfast meals and pastries, which attracted a growing number of customers. As demand for her products grew, Sarah dreamed of involving her husband in the business. She plans to



buy a motorcycle so he can help deliver orders, easing his burden of working away from home.

Her business success has brought significant financial relief. On some days, Sarah earns as much as 60,000 Iraqi dinars, providing a decent living for her family. Her ambition didn't stop there—she also hired female workers during busy periods like Eid, creating jobs for others in need.

Sarah's journey has become a symbol of hope for many women in Diyala. She has shown that even in the face of devastating loss and hardship, it is possible to rise again. Her story demonstrates that with perseverance and support, dreams can be achieved, no matter the obstacles.

Sarah's story is a remarkable example of the human spirit's ability to overcome adversity and achieve success. Through his determination and with the support of the United Nations Development Programme's Building Resilience through

Employment Promotion (BREP) programme, in partnership with the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (HRF) and with generous backing from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through KfW Development Bank, Sarah transformed her dream into a tangible reality.

This initiative not only helped Sarah rebuild her life, but it also made her able to rebuild her life from the ashes of her grief. Her work is now known for its quality and distinctive taste, offering her a new lease on life and proving that even in the darkest times, there is hope for a brighter future.

To date, over 1,181 small and medium-sized businesses like Sarah's have been supported through grants, training, and mentoring, inspiring countless others to pursue their dreams and overcome life's challenges. Sarah's story is a testament to the strength of the human spirit and the power of resilience.

New online tools let Iraqi small businesses navigate export rules

Baghdad, 03 October 2024 – (ITC News) As Iraq pursues the process of joining the World Trade Organization (WTO), small businesses need more information about how to export.

To meet that need, three new online tools, launched by the International Trade Centre (ITC), help small businesses navigate quality requirements and connect with international markets.

As Iraq's trade landscape evolves, particularly through its WTO accession process, small businesses are under increasing pressure to meet international quality requirements. Competing in global markets requires not only high-quality products but also a deep understanding of legal regulations, standards, and market preferences.

The new Iraq Quality for Trade Platform offers valuable resources that help businesses navigate complex quality requirements, so they can access more markets and achieve long-term growth. The platform includes three connected tools.

Quality Compass identifies key quality-related requirements, such as sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and technical barriers to trade, standards and market preferences for priority sectors – including one of Iraq's hallmark exports, dates.

Quality Connect links small businesses with institutional and individual experts, offering tailored services and showcasing the expertise of Quality Champions developed under the SAAVI project.

Quality Success shares stories of entrepreneurs who successfully addressed quality hurdles. This



inspires others by highlighting the practical benefits of quality compliance.

These tools together help Iraqi small businesses meet international quality requirements, improve productivity, and boost their presence in competitive markets. The platform, currently focused on dates, also plays a critical role in the Iraq Quality Champions Programme, offering ongoing access to information and expanding the reach of local quality experts.

The platform was created by an EU-funded project, Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy (SAAVI).

The launch event brought together government ministries, trade associations, quality and standards organizations, and entrepreneurs. They explored the platform's practical applications, fostering collaboration between businesses and experts, helping small businesses overcome quality-related challenges, and connecting with a wider network of quality service providers.

The Iraq Quality for Trade Platform

is poised to enhance Iraq's market access, support sustainable economic growth, and contribute to the country's long-term development.

About SAAVI

The Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy (SAAVI) project, funded by the European Union, focuses on the development and implementation of sector strategies for high-potential products, as well as on defining market-oriented policies to improve predictability and efficiency in the business environment. SAAVI also helps enhance Iraq's trade policy and supports the country in its WTO accession process.

SAAVI is implemented under the leadership of the Government of Iraq through the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Trade.

The project forms part of the overall European Union Special measure for supporting employment creation and improving economic governance in Iraq.

UN-Habitat announces that a further 366 houses will be rehabilitated

Sinjar, 03 October 2024 - Government support has been crucial for the successful and sustainable return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to Sinjar.

UN-Habitat, with support from KOICA Iraq Office, has been closely working with Iraqi government officials under the project titled "Promoting Peace and Stability in Iraq by Facilitating Sustainable Returns" to develop durable solutions for Housing, Land, and Property rights disputes, affordable housing provision, and the recovery of basic Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure.

On October 3rd, the project's Steering

Committee Meeting brought together high-level representatives from Displaced Affairs and Organizations, Sinjar Municipality, and Sinjar District. The meeting provided updates on the three key components of the project: the rehabilitation of WASH facilities, the rehabilitation of damaged houses, and the issuance of occupancy certificates.

Government representatives expressed their gratitude to UN-Habitat and Korea International Cooperation Agency for the timely efforts in supporting returning residents, including the extensive outreach to smaller villages.

To reinforce the ongoing commitment,

UN-Habitat announced that a further 366 houses will be rehabilitated during the no-cost extension period until July 2025.

ADDITIONAL 366 HOUSES TO BE REHABILITATED IN SINJAR
by July 2025, under KOICA-Funded Project

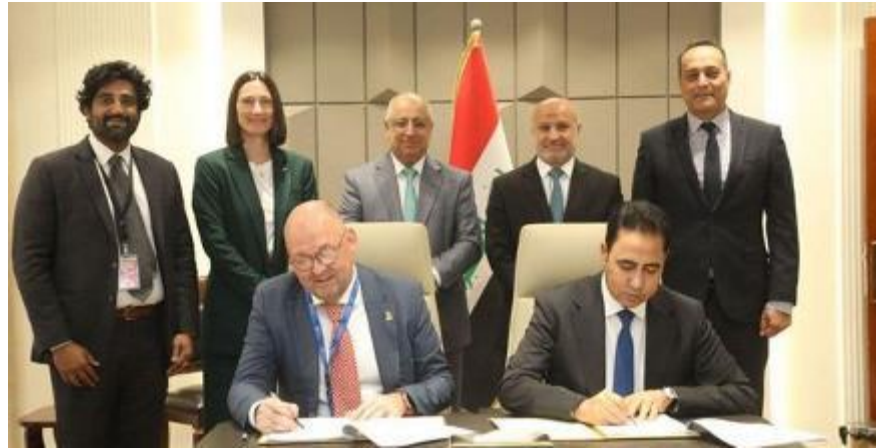


Under the auspices of the Ministry of Planning, Iraq and the United Nations sign the document on the peace and stability project in Sinjar with a grant of 3 million dollars

Sinjar, 06 October 2024 - Iraq and the United Nations signed today the document on the peace and stability project in Sinjar.

The Ministry said in a statement: "The project comes under the auspices of the Ministry of Planning and is funded by the United Nations, and implemented by three UN agencies, namely UNDP and IOM in addition to UN Women," explaining that this project supports stability in Sinjar, and achieving sustainability in the fields of training and development. The statement added that "the project's cost is (3) million dollars, and it includes infrastructure components, and components related to training and social cohesion, and achieving stability in Sinjar"

The project was signed on the Iraqi side by Ninawa Governor Mr. Abdul Qader



Al-Dakhil, and on the United Nations side by Mr. Auke Lootsma, UNDP Representative in Iraq, in the presence of Mr. Maher Hammad Johan, Deputy

Minister of Planning for Technical Affairs, and Dr. Saher Abdul Kadhim, Director General of the International Cooperation Department.



Kirkuk, 30 September 2024 - Kirkuk Joint Coordination Forum convened today with active participation from governorate, UN agencies, and NGO representatives. Co-chaired by the Governor Assistant and IRC, discussions focused on the local government's vision, challenges & essential services in return areas.



Mosul, 09 October 2024 - At the 7th Ninewa Joint Coordination Forum today, representatives from the local Government, UN and NGOs addressed key priorities, including recent joint visits to Sinjar and Hasan Sham village, as well as complex legal issues aimed at supporting IDPs and returnees in Ninewa.



Sulaymaniyah, 09 October 2024 - The World Food Programme (WFP) in Iraq emphasizes the importance of collaboration between academic institutions and the private sector to bridge employment gaps and equip youth with essential skills for competing in the labour market, as discussed at the "#NextStep24" Fair in Sulaymaniyah.



Ninewa, 14 October 2024 - Ninewa Joint Coordination Forum (JCF) held today an ad-hoc meeting with relevant local government, UN, and NGO representatives to address complex legal issues affecting IDPs and returnees. A working group was formed to communicate the cases with the Supreme Judicial Council.

FAO Iraq on X

Baghdad, 15 October 2024 - "On Rural Women Day, we honor the vital role of rural women in achieving food security and sustainable development in Iraq. Despite challenges, their resilience and innovation inspire us all. At FAO, we are committed to empowering rural women paving the way for an equitable future.

In Iraq, FAO's commitment to rural women is unwavering. With our partners, our interventions focus on improving agricultural practices, providing job opportunities and ensuring their role in shaping a sustainable future and achieving food security."

WFP on X

Baghdad, 16 October 2024 - "On World Food Day, the World Food Programme (WFP) highlights its strong partnership with the Government of Iraq and work to ensure that vulnerable communities have access to the food they need to thrive. The government's leadership is crucial in driving initiatives that strengthen Iraq's agricultural sector and enhance livelihoods, to ensure that Iraq's food security, which is challenged by climate change, is sustained. Together, WFP and the Government of Iraq are tackling those threats through a suite of innovative solutions that serve Iraq and its people."

UNICEF on X

Baghdad, 17 October 2024 - On the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, let's be together to end poverty and bring hope and smiles to the faces of our children!

UN-Habitat organizes training on the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM)

Erbil, 16 October 2024 - UN-Habitat, in collaboration with the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), is enhancing land management and Housing, Land and Property rights in Iraq through training on the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM).

From 6 to 10 October 2024, training sessions took place in Erbil for representatives from various Iraqi government agencies, including Real Estate Registration Directorates and Municipalities from Sinjar, Erbil, Baghdad, and Ninewa, along with participants from academic institutions and civil society. This initiative equips officials to customise and effectively use the STDM, addressing data gaps in land management, security of tenure, and improving their knowledge in using, managing, and operating housing, land, and property rights

processes.

Funded by partners from the international community, including the European Union and the Government of the Netherlands, this initiative aims to empower local authorities and improve access to Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights for all Iraqis. This training is a continuation of a series of sessions currently under implementation throughout the lifespan of the projects, ensuring durability and sustainability in support and capacity building for the involved stakeholders.

The ongoing STDM training is essential for enabling authorities to manage land rights effectively, ensuring a secure and sustainable urban future for all Iraqis. Civil society organizations (CSOs) also participated to understand the benefits. Their involvement

strengthens the overall impact of these initiatives, contributing to more inclusive and transparent land governance.



UN-Habitat celebrates the convergence of multiple positive outcomes in the implementation of the Japan Village Project

Mosul, 20 October 2024 - UN-Habitat celebrates the convergence of multiple positive outcomes in the implementation of the Japan Village Project: homes for returnees, job opportunities for unemployed youth and women, and a better urban future for Mosul.

Funded by the Government of Japan, the construction phase of the 48 social housing units in the Japan Village Project, which will serve as the future

home for more than 300 returnees, incorporates a workforce of 100 young men and women from Mosul who recently graduated from vocational training classes.

While gaining valuable work experience, they are helping to prepare the Rajm Hadeed neighbourhood and beyond in Mosul, Ninewa Governorate, for its designation as a returnee accommodation area.



SDG target 6.4 aims to significantly increase water-use efficiency in all sectors

Baghdad, 21 October 2024 - Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Country Representative for Iraq and the Head of AS&GIS opened the training workshop on monitoring and reporting of SDG 6.4 target for water use and scarcity in Iraq with the aim of strengthening capacities of key public institutions in: data collection; management; monitoring and reporting of SDGs.

The workshop was attended by 20 public officials involved in the production, monitoring, or use of water-

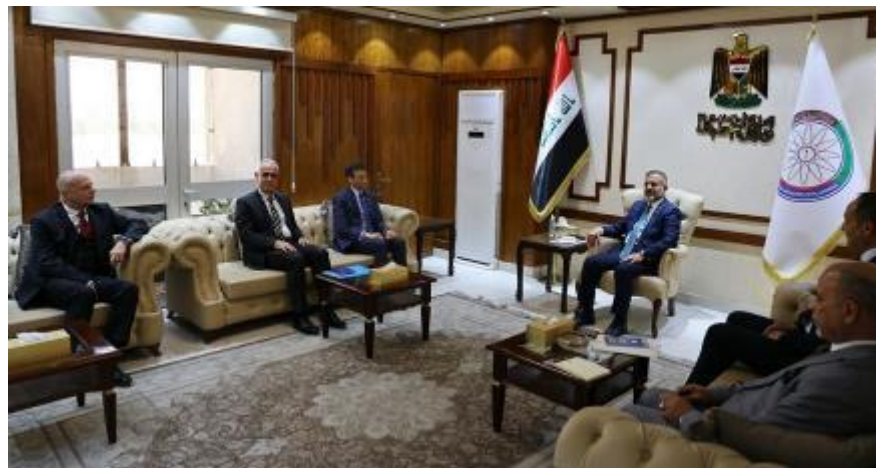
related data from: Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, AS&GIS, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources – KRI and Kurdistan Region Statistical Office.

SDG target 6.4 aims to significantly increase water-use efficiency in all sectors, ensure sustainable withdrawal and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity, and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity by 2030.



SRSG/Head of UNAMI meets with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning

Baghdad, 23 October 2024 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, met today with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning, Dr. Muhammad Ali Tamim. They discussed the close cooperation between the United Nations and the Government of Iraq on the development and humanitarian files, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the upcoming national census, addressing climate change, and the future collaboration under the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.



UNDP's Sustainable Finance Hub comes to Iraq

Baghdad, 29 October 2024 - UNDP Tax for Sustainable Development Goals Initiative is in Iraq this week scoping avenues for mobilization of domestic revenues for diversified and inclusive economic growth in Iraq.

The Tax for Sustainable Development Goals Initiative, or Tax for SDGs, supports developing countries in increasing domestic resource mobilization (DRM) and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Under the Initiative, taxation is considered both a tool for revenue collection and a policy instrument to encourage sustainable growth strategies and influence behaviour towards desired outcomes related to climate, nature, well-being, and governance.

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is considered both a tool for revenue collection and a policy instrument to encourage sustainable growth strategies and influence behaviour towards desired outcomes related to climate, nature, well-being, and governance.

Tax for SDGs leverages UNDP's role as an enabler, integrator and catalyst at the country level. It works to expand people's choices for a fairer, sustainable future with planet and people in balance and achieve the vision of the world as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Tax for SDGs Initiative is a part of UNDP's Sustainable Finance Hub. Established in April 2019, the Sustainable Finance Hub offers a comprehensive package of methods and tools in support of the organization's SDG Integration offer to enable governments, the private sector and international financial institutions to accelerate financing for the SDGs. At the national level, the Sustainable Finance Hub supports UNDP Country

Offices in aligning public as well as private finance with the SDGs. Working with UNDP Regional Bureaus, the Sustainable Finance Hub promotes knowledge and technical/technology exchanges between countries through South-South partnerships and works to generate stronger regional integration on key financing-related topics.

The Tax for SDGs Initiative is supported by the Government of Finland and the Government of Norway.



Crafting hope and community after displacement



Baghdad, 31 October 2024 - In Al Qaim, where the sun sets over the resilient landscape, Nassem's story unfolds—a tale of resilience, hope, and renewal. At 53, he has faced profound challenges, including displacement from his home and the loss of his job due to the turmoil in his homeland. For four years, Nassem and his family lived in the Al-Hol camp, navigating harsh conditions and uncertainty, before finally returning home in 2022. Yet, the road to reintegration was steep, marked by community rejection and financial insecurity.

Nassem's life began to change dramatically when he was accepted into a business support program implemented by UNDP and World Vision with generous support from USAID. This initiative offered him not just financial aid but a lifeline—a business grant specifically for his passion: blacksmithing.

“Receiving this grant means more than just money to me,” Nassem shares, his eyes gleaming with newfound hope. “It’s a chance to rebuild my life.” With this support, he plans to set up a small workshop, transforming his skills into a

sustainable source of income and provide for his family. The grant will enable him to purchase advanced tools and materials, expanding his operations and improving the quality of his work.

The impact of the program extends far beyond financial stability. Through extensive business management training, Nassem learned essential skills—financial planning, marketing, and operational management, helping him find a sustainable livelihood. “This training has equipped me with the knowledge to turn my dreams into reality,” he explains, emphasizing the importance of leadership and effective communication in running a successful business.

However, Nassem's journey isn't just about economic recovery; it highlights the collective effort of reintegration and the significant role it plays in fostering social cohesion. His active engagement in the program has allowed him to connect with diverse community members, bridging the gap between returnees and locals. Through his business and personal efforts, Nassem has become an integral part of the

community, providing services and opportunities that benefit his community.

“Being part of this group has given me a sense of belonging,” he says. “I’ve built relationships that empower me to face future challenges.” Engaging with other community members not only helped him overcome the fear of isolation, but has also reinforced his role in rebuilding community bonds.

Regular psychological support sessions further strengthened his resilience, helping him manage stress and rebuild his emotional well-being. “The psychological support has alleviated much of the anxiety I felt,” he reflects. “I feel more equipped to handle whatever comes my way.”

As he prepares to launch his business, Nassem is filled with optimism for the future. He envisions not only providing for his family but also creating jobs for others in his community. “By empowering myself, I hope to empower others,” he states, driven by a desire to contribute to the local economy and foster unity among those who have shared similar experiences.

For Nassem, this grant represents a pivotal moment—a bridge from a painful past to a hopeful future. His journey illustrates the transformative impact of targeted support, skill development, and community engagement. With renewed purpose, he stands ready to embrace the opportunities ahead, committed to building a stable, fulfilling life for his family and contributing to a brighter future for his community.

In Nassem's words, “Together, we can overcome the challenges of displacement. Together, we can build a brighter future.”

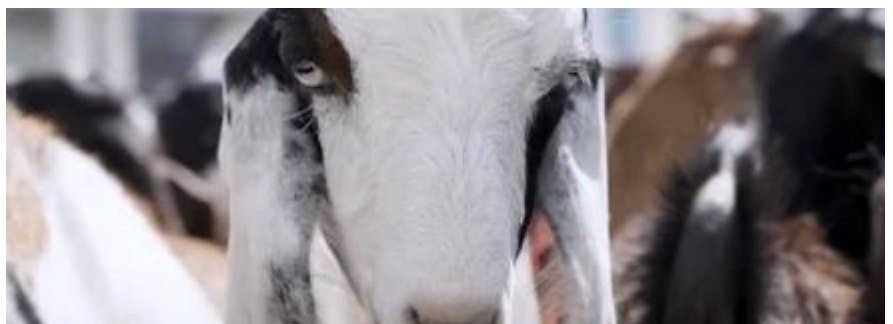
Funded by USAID, this initiative is underscoring the collaborative effort to support individuals like Nassem in their journey toward reintegration and community building.

IOM and KfW open a new livestock market to support the local economy

Kirkuk, 23 October 2024 - Sheep trade is the engine of the economy of Hawija in Kirkuk.

IOM and KfW has opened a new livestock market to support the local economy.

Now the market is beneficial to thousands of pet owners and other traders coming to Hawija.



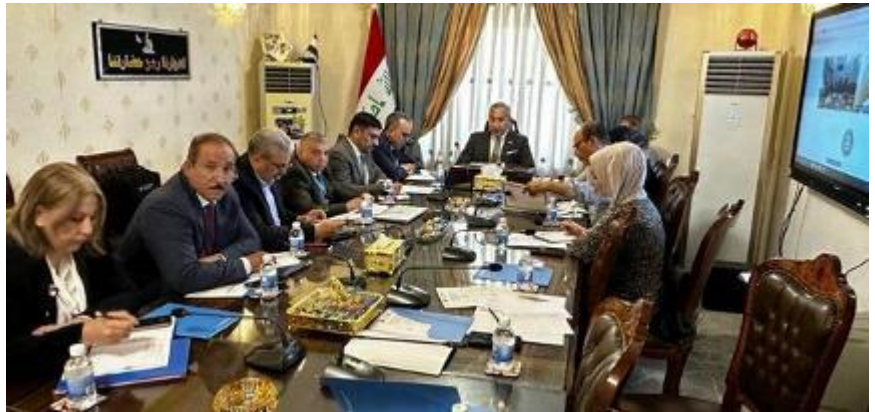
FAO and MOE are developing the National Strategy for Sustainable Land Management in Iraq

Baghdad, 02 September 2024 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq, conducted the annual National Project Steering Committee under the project "Sustainable Land Management (SLM) for Improved Livelihoods in Degraded Areas of Iraq," funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented in partnership with the Iraqi Ministries of Environment (MoE), Agriculture (MoA), Water Resources (MoWR) as well as local governments in Thi Qar and Muthana.

The meeting, chaired by Dr Jassim Al-Falahi, Technical Deputy of the MoE and Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Country Representative in Iraq, focused on the project implementation progress, challenges and suggested solutions to strengthen collaboration on promoting conservation agriculture and agroecological practices in ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates.

The project outcomes yet included drafting the national SLM strategy, inclusive of a Marshland Conservation Action Plan, and finalizing the natural resources Knowledge Management Platform for Iraq, in addition to train 121 officials (31% females) from MoA, MoE and MoW on SLM policy making and 1500 farmers (21 % women) on Conservation Agriculture.

Presented results showed an increase of 20-25% in crop yield of wheat and barley productivity as a result of adopting of conservation agriculture practices, demonstrating the significant benefits of conservation agriculture in sustainable land



management.

Next steps include finalizing the national SLM and marshland conservation Strategy for Iraq in cooperation with MoE, train 40 MoA Extension Officers in Agroecology and Marshland Conservation, and establish Farmer Field School Demonstration plots under Agroecology practice across Thi Qar and Al-Muthanna governorates, in addition to training 1000 farmers on promoting Agroecology practices of SLM.

Dr. Jassim Al-Falahi, the Technical Deputy Minister of Environment, emphasized the importance of the partnership with FAO Iraq, stating that, "The environmental challenges facing Iraq due to climate change induced water scarcity, drought, desertification and land degradation. The Technical Department at the MoE is partnering with international organizations like FAO, to improve land management and insure sustainability. We value the collaboration with FAO Iraq, and the project's role in enhancing our

efforts."

"The successful outcome of the recent harvest from Farmer Field School Demonstration plots underscores the effectiveness of Conservation Agriculture practices in enhancing agricultural productivity and promoting sustainable land management," said Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassa, FAO Iraq Representative. "We are committed to continuing our collaboration with the Iraqi Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Water Resources, local governments in Thi Qar and Muthana and other partners to further promote sustainable agriculture practices and improve livelihoods."

This project aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). By promoting sustainable land management practices, that will be enhancing local communities resilience and contributing to global environmental benefits.

FAO consulting engineers visited National Gene Bank in Baghdad to assess for the rehabilitation process

Baghdad, 03 September 2024 - As part of the project 'Restoration and Strengthening the Resilience of Agri-Food Systems in Southern Iraq' funded by the European Union in Iraq, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) consulting engineers visited the Ministry of Agriculture National Gene Bank in Baghdad, to assess for the rehabilitation process.

"Grateful to see progress is being made with plans for rehabilitating the NGB

that should help in better conserving plant genetic material in Iraq" said Dr.

Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Iraq Representative.



FAO Iraq starts the implementation phase of four critical agricultural protocols aimed at enhancing the development of date



Basra, 04 September 2024 - As part of the “Restoration and Strengthening the Resilience of Agri-Food System in Southern Iraq,” a project funded European Union in Iraq and implemented in collaboration with the

Ministry of Agriculture FAO Iraq, in collaboration with the University of Basra/Faculty of Agriculture, started the implementation phase for four critical agricultural protocols aimed at enhancing the development of date

palm and tomato value chains in Southern Iraq.

The four protocols cover diverse aspects of agricultural innovation, including the production of nutrient-enriched biochar from local residues, the treatment of irrigation water salinity using rice husk ash, the production of organic liquid fertilizers, and the development of biological control using *Bacillus thuringiensis* for sustainable agriculture. These innovations are expected to significantly enhance the cultivation of key crops like date palm and tomato.

According to the first protocol, farmers and MoA facilitators are receiving a training on how to produce nutrient-enriched biochar. This innovative approach will improve soil fertility and crop productivity of palm trees and tomatoes.

Training on irrigation performance assessment tool held in West Gharraf

Baghdad, 05 September 2024 - FAO and International Water Management Institute (IWMI) in cooperation with the Ministry of Water Resources concluded the workshop on third on-the-job training on irrigation performance assessment tool in West Gharraf using Monitoring land and water productivity by Remote Sensing WaPOR tool.

The training focused on: relative water deficit, farm level uniformity, introduction to IPA and bright and hot spots.



Fifth Steering Committee meeting of the ‘Restoration and Strengthening the Resilience of Agri-Food Systems in Southern Iraq’ project held in Basra

Basra, 07 September 2024 - In its 5th Steering Committee meeting, the ‘Restoration and Strengthening the Resilience of Agri-Food Systems in Southern Iraq’ project funded by European Union in Iraq, showcased the progress of the project interventions in the main value chains of date palm, tomato and milk products.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Mithaq Abdul Hussein Al-Khafaji, Technical Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, and Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, in the presence of Lennart Derider, Head of Cooperation, European Union in



Iraq, Rene Verduijn, Senior Resilience Specialist, Dr. Saad Mohammed,

Agricultural Policy Expert, and Ismail Fadel, Program Support Specialist.

FAO uses drones and climate-smart agriculture applications in rice fields



Najaf, 08 September 2024 - With the aim of spreading and implementing climate-smart agricultural practices in rice cultivation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in cooperation with the Najaf Agriculture Directorate and with support from the Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Najaf Governorate Council, implemented a field activity to spray foliar fertilizer using drones in rice fields planted using mechanical transplanting in Al-Mashkhab/District 32 Umm Khashm.

This field activity is part of the project "Enhance climate resilience of vulnerable agriculture households in Southern Iraq through the promotion of climate smart water management and good agriculture practices in selected value chains" funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation

Agency (SIDA). The project aims to rationalize water use and improve productivity to adapt to conditions of water scarcity and climate change.

The event was attended by Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, Dr. Hadi Al-Yasiri, Director General of the Horticulture Department, Mr. Munir Ali, Director of the Agricultural Extension and Cooperation Department, Mr. Munim??, Director of Najaf Agriculture, Mr. Farouk Al-Ghazali, Chairman of the Agriculture and Water Resources Committee in the Najaf Governorate Council, Eng. Mohammed Abdullah Mahmoud, Deputy Director General of the Operations Authority at the Ministry of Water Resources, Mr. Raed Abdullah, Deputy Director of the Water Resources Directorate in Najaf, the Najaf Agriculture Directorate team and a number of rice farmers in the region.

In this context, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan stated, "The FAO efforts are continuing, in cooperation with the Najaf Agriculture Directorate, the Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources, and the local government to develop the rice production chain using climate-smart agriculture applications to confront the challenges of climate change and water scarcity. "Fertilizers are now being used by drones to reduce production costs and pollution, leading to increased production" he added.

The representative of the Ministry of Agriculture said, "This event aims to introduce the advantages of using foliar fertilizers, reduce production costs, and reduce pollution by completing the implementation of climate-smart applications in cooperation with FAO, which provides great support to the agricultural sector in Iraq in order to face the challenges of water scarcity and climate change."

FAO recently organized a field event for rice planting using a package of technologies including mechanical transplanting in Al-Mishkhab district, which contributes significantly to saving water and agricultural inputs such as seeds, pesticides and labor costs, in addition to reducing pollution.

This initiative supports several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 2: Zero Hunger, by enhancing food production efficiency; SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, through the sustainable use of water resources; and SDG 13: Climate Action, by promoting practices that help farmers adapt to climate change impacts.

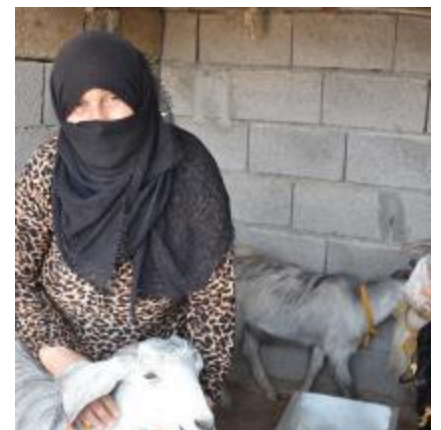
Rebuilding lives: empowering women through agribusiness at Gawilan Refugee Camp

Erbil, 08 September 2024 - In the heart of Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), nestled 47 kilometers northwest of Erbil in the remote southeastern part of Duhok Governorate, is Gawilan Refugee Camp. Home to over 11,000 Syrian refugees, and one of the most isolated refugee camps within KRI, Gawilan faces numerous obstacles such as socio-economic challenges and high unemployment rates. These challenges have been further exacerbated by the recent influx of 455 families (2,062 people in total) who faced secondary displacement due to the closure of Bardarash Camp in early 2024. Amidst this backdrop of hardship and uncertainty, a beacon of hope and

opportunity began to emerge—an agribusiness training programme supported by the Japanese Government and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

The 2023-2024 initiative aims to empower Syrian refugee women at Gawilan Refugee Camp in KRI. Building on a successful programme from 2018, UNIDO expanded the initiative to reach more women who lacked income. The project is part of UNIDO's broader "Emergency livelihood support to mitigate the food insecurity crisis among vulnerable people in Iraq," generously funded by the Japanese Government.

For many women in Gawilan, life had



been a series of relentless challenges. Before the project, women like Rafaaa

Rebuilding lives: empowering women through agribusiness at Gawilan Refugee Camp *(continued)*

Yosef Ali, a 46-year-old single mother of five, had no choice but to work long, grueling hours picking potatoes in the fields near the camp for a meager 10,000 Iraqi Dinars — around USD 7.60 per day. This income was barely enough to cover basic needs, let alone provide any sense of security or hope for the future of her family.

Rafaaa, who relocated to Gawilan from Bardarash after the camp's closure nine months ago, saw the UNIDO project as a lifeline. "I am excited for the goats to reproduce," she shared with a hopeful smile. "I plan to sell the extra goats or use them for meat and also sell dairy products like milk, yogurt, and cheese. This will help me provide a better life for my children."

After interviewing Gawilan Camp's most vulnerable women, including those who recently relocated from Badarash Camp, primarily single mothers and heads of households with husbands too ill to work, UNIDO selected 53 women to participate in the agribusiness initiative.

The initiative was designed to provide comprehensive support to the women, starting with a six-day intensive training programme. This training covered all aspects of goat farming — from the basics of setting up a goat farm and building shelters for breeding, nutrition, and health management. The women learned to care for young, lactating, and pregnant goats, optimize milk and meat production, and manage diseases and emergencies. They also received training in hygiene and waste management, in addition to entrepreneurial skills such as budgeting, record-keeping, packaging, marketing, and selling their products.

Following the training, each woman was given two goats — some of which were pregnant — and two baby goats. They also received several months' worth of feed and all the necessary tools and equipment for milking and dairy production. To ensure the goats



were well cared for, a centralized goat house was constructed, complete with individual stalls for each woman, a feeding area, a housing unit for male goats, a service room, and a warehouse. This facility provides a secure and organized environment conducive to efficient goat farming.

For Asmahan Saleh Ali, a 47-year-old mother caring for two daughters while her husband battles illness, the project was an opportunity to provide additional support for her family. "I was very excited to be selected for this project after being interviewed by UNIDO. I love animals, and this project also teaches my children to love them," she explained, adding that her children enjoy helping her take care of the goats. Asmahan has since learned to make yogurt and cheese from goat milk and plans to expand her production as the number of goats increases.

The project's impact extended beyond individual beneficiaries to foster a stronger sense of community within the camp. For Wsal Abdulrahman Aloskan and her husband, Sulaiman Mullah Mohammed, both 52, the project came at a crucial time. Sulaiman had recently undergone open-heart surgery, leaving Wsal to manage their livelihood. "The training was very helpful, and I am grateful to have my own goats now," Wsal said. Sulaiman added, "UNIDO has laid out a clear path for us, guaranteeing the project's benefits for our community."

As the project progresses, it has become clear that the initiative was more than just a means of income; it was a catalyst for rebuilding lives and strengthening community bonds. The women from Bardarash and Gawilan, who had initially been strangers, began to work together, helping each other care for their goats and supporting one another in growing their businesses. "The collaboration among the women has strengthened community bonds," noted Yahya Manaf Ahmed, the camp field officer. "They now assist one another in goat care and business growth."

The training marked a turning point in the life struggles of 36-year-old Bereeban Maasoum Malakhalil. Solely responsible for providing for her family, Bereeban viewed the project as an opportunity to secure her family's livelihood independently, without depending on assistance from the camp or government. "This project gives me the chance to sustain my family

without relying on assistance," she said, with her eyes filled with determination. She plans to expand into yogurt and cheese production, aiming to create a stable income for her family.

Mahdya Qenjo Mahmood, a 50-year-old woman who had faced numerous hardships since her husband's disappearance in Damascus, Syria, over 11 years ago, found new hope in the project. "This project is truly remarkable, especially as our goat herd expands," she expressed. "My intention is to sell milk, yogurt, and cheese to provide for my children." Since her husband's disappearance, Mahdya has been the sole caretaker for her two daughters, now aged 14 and 15. The project has given her a renewed sense of purpose and equipped her with the means to support her family.

The success of the agribusiness initiative did not go unnoticed by the camp management. "The Japan-UNIDO project is greatly appreciated by us, and it is crucial for sustaining livelihoods in the camp," said Imaad Osman Salih, the Deputy Camp Manager. "The project not only provides income but also strengthens the community bonds and resilience."

To support the beneficiaries, UNIDO enlisted the help of Salih, known as "Abu Omer", a seasoned volunteer with extensive experience in goat rearing. Abu Omer, who had owned his own goats in Syria before fleeing to KRI, provides invaluable support to the project by offering security for the goat house and assisting the women with any issues they encounter and answering questions they may have. His expertise and willingness to help others have been instrumental in the project's success.

The agribusiness initiative at Gawilan camp is more than just a success story; it is a testament to the power of resilience, community, and international cooperation. Through targeted, sustainable development initiatives, the Japanese Government and UNIDO have transformed the lives of vulnerable Syrian refugee women, providing them with the tools, knowledge, and resources needed to achieve economic independence and improve their quality of life. The project will further strengthen food security and economic stability in Gawilan Camp, offering a viable pathway to a better future for these resilient women and their families.

FAO visits Najaf Specialized Nursery

Najaf, 08 September 2024 - After coordination with the relevant authorities, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) visited Najaf Specialized Nursery affiliated with the Horticulture Department in the Ministry of Agriculture to follow up on the activities of developing local capacities to confront climate change.



FAO and Directorate of Agriculture discuss the development of the livestock sector, milk production chain, and activities to support rural women in Karbala Governorate

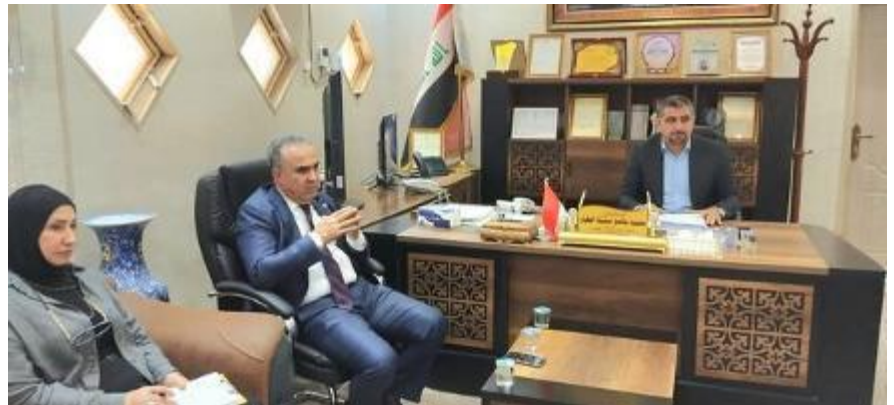
Karbala, 09 September 2024 - With the aim to discuss the development of the livestock sector, milk production chain, and activities to support rural women in Karbala Governorate, FAO held a meeting at the Directorate of Agriculture.

Mohammed Al-Tayyar, Director of the Directorate, praised FAO's efforts to support livestock breeders through many interventions, calling for more in order to increase production in terms of quantity and quality.

Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, stressed the need to move forward with efforts to develop capacities and capabilities

specially of rural women in order to improve the productivity and quality of

dairy products, in addition to developing fodder farming.



Strengthening Iraq's date sector: local expertise, global reach

Baghdad, 09 September 2024 - Last week, International Trade Center (ITC-SAAVI) connected with passionate producers and exporters from Karbala, Basra, and Baghdad to explore the vibrant world of date production. We were inspired by the dedication of Iraqi professionals, uncovering opportunities for growth, innovation, and collaboration.

Stay tuned for ITC upcoming publication with insights and recommendations!



Date Fair of the Directorate of Agriculture held in Basra

Basra, 10 September 2024 - As part of the Date Palm Value Chain Development Program, an activity under European Union in Iraq funded project, partner farmers participated in the Date Fair of the Directorate of Agriculture in Basra, showcasing multiple high-quality varieties after receiving trainings from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture.



FAO strengthens the capacities of Iraqi government institutions to collect, manage, monitor and report on the SDGs



Baghdad, 11 September 2024 - FAO is continuing to strengthen the

capacities of Iraqi government institutions to collect, manage, monitor

and report on the Sustainable Development Goals.

At the Steering Committee meeting of the Program to "Strengthening Government capacity to monitor and report Sustainable Development Goals under FAO's custody" held at the Ministry of Planning, the following were discussed: methods for calculating sustainable development indicators; expected training courses; executive steps for the working group technically and sectorally; developing National Statistical Capacities during 2024-2025; developing national monitoring and reporting systems; improving the coordination mechanism between stakeholders.

4,000 farmers in Diyala empowered with access to 25,000 seedlings annually through modern irrigation and solar energy solutions

Baqubah, Diyala, 23 September 2024 – In a significant boost to local agriculture, the newly rehabilitated nursery in Baqubah has been officially inaugurated, marking a vital milestone in Diyala's agricultural development. Through the partnership between the Government of Japan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), over 4,000 farmers in Diyala can now access more than 25,000 seedlings annually, supported by modern irrigation techniques and solar energy.

The nursery, a critical component of the Diyala Agriculture Department, has undergone extensive upgrades, including installing advanced irrigation systems, expanding greenhouse areas, and the provision of diverse seeds and agricultural materials. These improvements have significantly enhanced the nursery's production capacity, substantially increasing seedling output. This, in turn, bolsters the nursery's revenue stream, allowing for reinvestment in its continued development and sustainability.

The nursery plays a crucial role in the local community, producing a diverse range of plants and trees, including fruit-bearing trees such as citrus, apple, pomegranate, and fig, as well as ornamental and shade trees. Before UNDP's intervention, the nursery's annual production ranged between 10,000 and 15,000 seedlings. Post-intervention, production has surged to 25,000 seedlings annually.

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

The donation to rebuild the nursery



represents a tangible investment in the future of the liberated areas of Iraq. Farmers will benefit greatly from this project, as they will receive a wide range of seedlings at prices lower than those available on the market. In addition, farmers can learn modern irrigation techniques and how to harness solar energy on their farms. This transfer of knowledge is invaluable, promoting sustainable farming practices and boosting overall agricultural productivity in the region. The Programme adopts an integrated approach, promoting sustainable livelihoods and employment opportunities by rehabilitating infrastructure in productive and industrial sectors, contributing to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8 and 13.

This initiative has been implemented by UNDP in collaboration with Welthungerhilfe and generous funding from the Government of Japan, through collaborative efforts and sustained support from the

international community, Iraq moves closer to realizing lasting stability and prosperity for all its citizens.

Mr. Auke Lootsma, UNDP Resident Representative in Iraq, remarked: "The reopening of this nursery, equipped with state-of-the-art systems, marks an important milestone in Diyala's journey toward rebuilding and recovering from years of instability. Finding local, climate-smart, and sustainable solutions for projects like these is essential for creating a secure and dignified environment for families returning to Diyala."

He continued: "We are here today thanks to the generous support from one of our founding partners, the Government of Japan. Together with the German Society for Combating Hunger, we have made significant strides toward achieving stability in Iraq. I would also like to acknowledge the strong partnership between UNDP and both the Iraqi and local governments, which is crucial for the successful implementation and

4,000 farmers in Diyala empowered with access to 25,000 seedlings annually ... (continued)

sustainability of such projects." The Japanese Ambassador also expressed his satisfaction with the project's completion, stating: "Japan has been standing by all the people of Iraq in times of difficulties. Our

support to realize agricultural sustainability in Iraq, including the introduction of Japanese wisdom and high technology on efficient water use, demonstrates our goodwill towards Iraqi people. Today I am very delighted

to commemorate the formal opening of Baqubah Nursery in Diyala, wishing for long-term sustainable development in Diyala and all over Iraq."



FAO continues its capacity building program for youth beekeepers on good beekeeping practices and pest management

Ninewa, 25 September 2024 - In Ninewa, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continues its capacities building program for youth beekeepers on good

beekeeping practices and pest management. The workshop is technically led by trainers who were trained at workshop in Erbil. Senior academia and

beekeepers monitor and evaluate the trainers performance.

The workshop was attended by Dr Mithaq Alkhafaji technical deputy of the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO Representative in Iraq Dr. Salah Elhadj Hassan, Abdullah Hamoo director of Agricultural directorate Ninewa Mohammed Yonis Alallaf Dean of Agriculture and forest, University of Mosul, Beekeeping Association academia and beekeepers.

"FAO initiative aims at empowering number of national team across Iraq to contribute on improving the local capacities, and improvement the Value Chain of beekeeping and honey production due to its importance on food security and livelihoods." said Salah Elhadj Hassan.



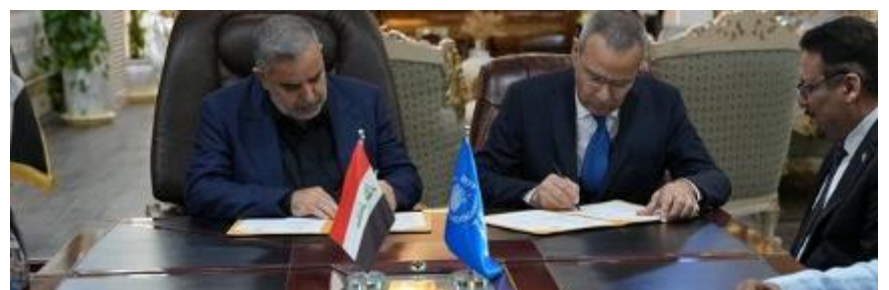
Ninewa, 26 September 2024 - Within the framework of following up on the sustainability of the livelihood support project implemented by FAO with funding from European Union Delegation in Iraq in Ninewa Governorate, Dr. Mithaq Al-Khafaji, Technical Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, and Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO representative in Iraq, inspected a number of women's group projects that raise livestock, grow green fodder and manufacture and market milk.



Erbil, 26 September 2024 - In cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and members of the Food Security Committee, a workshop started in Erbil to review and complete the National Food Security Strategy in Iraq. It was attended by Mithaq AlKhafaji, MoA Technical Undersecretary, Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, and a number of directors.

Iraq Ministry of Agriculture and the World Food Programme (WFP) extend their collaboration agreement

Baghdad, 02 October 2024 - Today, Iraq Ministry of Agriculture and the World Food Programme (WFP) extend their collaboration agreement. Reinforcing and expanding our partnership is crucial to address the critical challenges facing Iraq's agriculture and food security in the face of climate change and climate variability.



Towards climate-smart agriculture in Iraq



Baghdad, 04 October 2024 - UNDP, in partnership with the Ministry of

Agriculture and with the generous support of USAID Iraq, brought

together passionate individuals for a dialogue on "Iraq Towards Climate-Smart Agriculture." This initiative aimed to provide actionable recommendations for enhancing the agricultural sector's performance.

Through sharing stories, insights, and innovative strategies, we fostered a collaborative environment focused on sustainable agriculture.

The discussions led to several key recommendations, including a detailed report using satellite imagery analysis, vital policy reforms, and plans for ongoing conversations among stakeholders to build strong partnerships.

FAO participates in the Iraqi Date Palm Festival held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 13 October 2024 - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) participated in the Iraqi Date Palm Festival held in Baghdad under the patronage of Prime Minister Mohammed Al Sudani.

The GAP of palm cultivation implemented in cooperation with Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and funded by European Union in Iraq were showcased to promote the date palm sector in Iraq.

The Date Palm Value Chain Development component within the project "Restoring & Enhancing the Resilience of Agri-Food Systems in Southern Iraq", funded by the European Union has contributed to significant developments in terms of quality, value, production, farmers income and added value.

The project implemented good agricultural practices to improve date palm productivity in Basra, Dhi Qar and Maysan through fertilization, thinning, bending, soil surface covering

(organic mulch), automatic pollination, sleeving, IPM, post-harvest transactions.

On the sidelines of the Iraqi Date Palm Festival held in Baghdad the Minister of Agriculture honored Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representative in Iraq, Dr. Salah Al-Hajj Hassan, and his team for their distinguished efforts in

developing palm cultivation.

DG of Horticulture at MoA praised FAO performance in Iraq, saying that cooperation is continuing to develop the date value chain and introducing modern technologies.

He stressed Ministry's support for FAO's activities as well as the One-Country-One-Product and Hand-In-Hand initiatives.



FAO expands capacity for animal disease surveillance and reporting in Iraq with EMA-i and EMPRES-i+ platforms

Erbil, 15 October 2024 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iraq, in collaboration with Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MoAWR-KRG), the Ministry of Health (federal and Kurdistan Regional Government), and the Veterinary Syndicate, conducted two consecutive Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops in Erbil from 7 to 15 October 2024. These workshops aimed to bolster Iraq's animal disease surveillance and reporting systems by introducing the



Event Mobile Application (EMA-i) and EMPRES-i+ platforms to veterinary

professionals from across Iraq.

The two ToT workshops were conducted

FAO expands capacity for animal disease surveillance and reporting in Iraq with EMA-i and EMPRES-i+ platforms *(continued)*

under the project entitled "Strengthening Iraq Veterinary Legislation and Expanding Delivery of Animal Health Services and Disease Surveillance," funded by the (DTRA), which aimed to enhance Iraq's veterinary and disease surveillance systems. The workshops accommodated 65 veterinary professionals. The first workshop, held from 7-10 October 2024, involved 33 participants from six governorates: Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, Diyala, Salahuddin, and Baghdad. The second workshop, held from 12-15 October 2024, hosted 32 participants from six additional governorates: Babel, Al-Najaf, Karbala, Thi-Qar, Messan, and Al-Diwaniya. The training covered EMA-i+ for real-time disease event reporting on farms

and EMPRES-i+ for national-level data management and analysis. Participants engaged in practical, hands-on sessions, including the installation and configuration of these applications on smartphones and laptops to create, send, review, accept, and validate disease reports. These tools allowed veterinary professionals to enhance the quality and quantity of animal disease reporting, facilitating quicker decision-making and improving response times to outbreaks.

The participants, consisting of hospital and dispensary veterinarians, epidemiology and laboratory specialists from both central and governorate levels, represented various organizations such as the MoA, MoAWR-KRG, the Ministry of Health

(both Federal and KRG), and Veterinary Syndicates.

"This training marked a significant step in enhancing Iraq's early warning systems for animal diseases. By utilizing EMA-i and EMPRES-i+, Iraq's veterinary services became better equipped to monitor disease outbreaks, safeguard livestock, support the One Health approach, and protect food security," emphasized Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq. He added, "The real impact lies in the practical implementation and consistent follow-up of these applications in the field. Ensuring that veterinary professionals apply these tools effectively will greatly improve Iraq's ability to respond quickly and efficiently to disease outbreaks."

Abdul Amir Salman Aissa: "Rye grass has transformed our farming."

Basra, 16 October 2024 – On the World Food Day, we honor Abdul Amir, a food hero transforming lives in Iraq's marshlands through sustainable farming practices that enhance food security.

At age 53, Abdul Amir Salman Aissa has been raising buffalos for almost half a century. He started when he was 5 years old, working in his parents' field in southern Iraq – the same field he is raising his own buffalos today.

He has 35 of them, plus four cows, for milk and cheese production. But keeping them healthy has not always been easy in the challenging climate in Basra Governorate, where climate change looms and biodiversity is steadily decreasing.

Water shortages and poor soil conditions meant that fodder crops for his animals were often scarce or of poor quality, which threatened his food production and livelihood.

When Abdul Amir got the chance in 2023 to participate in a project that

would provide him with more resilient fodder crop varieties and teach him how to get the most out of them, he jumped at the opportunity.

"Rye grass has transformed our farming," says Abdul Amir with a satisfied smile. "It's a sustainable solution that boosts our livestock's health and our profits."

As part of the training he received, Abdul Amir installed drip irrigation, which ensures efficient water use and optimal growth of the new fodder varieties he's now cultivating. He now gets several cuts per season and his yields have significantly increased to 25 to 30 tons per donum (some 250 to 300 tons per hectare).

Thanks to the premium fodder, Abdul Amir and other farmers in the FAO project have seen their milk production increase by an average of 37 percent for both buffalo and cows, and quality has gone up too. That, in turn, means more income from milk and cheese sales.

But the fodder itself is good business,

too. Selling his surplus has generated an additional USD 2 000 per season – and that has allowed him to reinvest in his farm, purchase better equipment, and expand his fodder production.

Besides rye grass, he is growing more sorghum now and has prepared a 3-donum field to grow alfalfa as a fodder crop.

"We now have a reliable source of income and a way to sustainably manage our farm," Abdul Amir says about his family of nine. "It's not just about surviving anymore – it's about thriving."



Iraqi Minister of Agriculture and high-level delegation attend Hand in Hand Investment Forum in Rome

Rome, Italy, 17 October 2024 – At Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) headquarters Hand in Hand Investment Forum, attended by Iraqi Minister of Agriculture and high-level delegation, Deputy Minister presented Iraqi investment potentials that support agricultural sector and selected agri-food value chains based on joint success with FAO supported by

European Union in Iraq.

In his intervention, Iraqi Minister of Agriculture commended the successful projects implemented in partnership with FAO. He also highlighted the Government interventions to support farmers and mitigate climate change as well as reducing emissions.



The Green Climate Fund (GCF) approves \$39 million to support FAO-led project addressing water scarcity and climate change in Iraq

Bagdad, 24 October 2024 - Today, the Green Climate Fund approved a USD 39 million project aimed at improving water and food security in Iraq's rural areas with climate-resilient agriculture.

The six-year project, known as "Strengthening Climate Resilience of Vulnerable Agriculture Livelihoods in Iraq's Rural Communities" (SRVALI), seeks to address climate-induced water scarcity and improve food security in three targeted governorates – Karbala, Muthanna and Najaf – where climate change threatens agricultural production.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of Iraq welcomed the announcement, which was made at the fortieth meeting of the GCF Board.

"The Iraqi government, represented by the Ministry of Environment, has today achieved an important accomplishment by obtaining funding from the Green Climate Fund to implement SRVALI project in coordination with FAO" stressed HE the Minister of Environment, Eng. Nizar Amedi.

"The project will focus on promoting climate-resilient agriculture in Karbala, Najaf and Muthanna, and will be implemented in cooperation with the Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources and local governments, considering that accruing this funding support is an important technical, political and diplomatic achievement for Iraq" HE added.

The project will be officially launched during COP29 in Baku in coordination with FAO. In this regard, the Iraqi Ministry of Environment extends its thanks and gratitude to FAO for their distinguished efforts to complete the technical requirements of the project.

"We are very pleased to implement this project in Iraq, which will benefit close to two million rural people, including nearly a million women, and enhance the climate resilience of agriculture households in Iraq's rural communities," said HE Dr. Jasim Al-Falahi, Technical Deputy Minister from Iraq's Ministry of Environment and National Designated Authority (NDA). "This project also closely aligns with Iraq's climate change policy."

Transforming Iraq's agriculture sector



This initiative will deliver urgently needed investments in adaption and resilience in Iraq, which the United Nations categorizes as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change in the Near East.

The country faces mounting water scarcity concerns as temperatures in the arid climate continue to rise.

"The project will efficiently transform Iraq's agriculture sector, making it more climate resilient, equitable and sustainable with improved water distribution systems as well as increased access to renewable energy and water at the farm level," added Al-Falahi.

Efficient water systems for food security

By transforming the existing irrigation network, the initiative will help stabilize water availability and make water systems more efficient.

"Water scarcity, exacerbated by climate change, conflicts, and population growth, poses a significant threat to our region's food security and sustainable development.

Projections indicate rising temperatures and declining precipitation, further straining our already limited water resources. SRVALI project will help mitigate the impact of these challenges on water and food security in rural areas of Iraq through several well-thought-out and proven interventions for a better life and a better future for all" said Mr. Abdulhakim Elwaer, FAO Assistant Director-General, Regional Representative for Near East and North Africa.

"This project offers a comprehensive, inclusive, and innovative approach to enhancing the climate resilience of rural households. It will introduce climate adaptive technologies and farming practices that should improve water-use efficiency and stabilize water availability for improved crop yields," said Salah

ElHajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq.

The project will also create employment opportunities for local people especially internally displaced persons.

"With a long-standing history in Iraq, FAO is well-positioned to ensure the successful implementation of the initiative by leveraging on-going projects, building the capacity of public institutions for sustainable development, and working with international partners to drive governmental reforms," he added.

Over the six-year implementation period, FAO will work with Iraq's Ministries of Water Resources, Environment and agriculture to deliver on the project's objectives.

Empowering farmers

FAO's expertise in Farmer Field Schools, training and capacity development will encourage farmers to adopt on-farm water-saving irrigation methods and technologies as well as resilient crop and soil management.

Women will be among the beneficiaries trained as "agents of change" and provided with the knowledge to manage climate risks at the community level.

The climate-resilient technologies, practices and approaches introduced by the project can also be integrated into agriculture-related curricula at universities and vocational schools, as well as scaled up and replicated in other countries in the region.

Ultimately, this catalytic investment will create a basis for replicating successful climate-resilient agriculture practices throughout the country and attract further investment in climate initiatives that promote water and food security.

Acknowledgements

FAO acknowledges the continuous efforts as well the co-financing for SRVALI project from the Government

GCF approves \$39 million to support FAO-led project addressing water scarcity and climate change in Iraq *(continued)*

of Iraq, especially Ministries of Water Resources and Environment. FAO also acknowledges the co-financing from the Swedish International Development

Cooperation Agency and the Canadian International Development Agency. Finally, the FAO Investment Centre's expertise in project design and

investment strategy played a key role in shaping this initiative to ensure long-term impact and sustainability.

Japanese Government supported project revitalizes dairy farming among vulnerable populations in Iraq

Baghdad, 28 October 2024 - UNIDO - United Nations Industrial Development Organization "Emergency Livelihood Support to Mitigate the Food Insecurity Crisis Among Vulnerable People in Iraq" project, funded by the Government of Japan, provided essential support to 83 women across IDPs, refugees and host community members, to revitalize dairy farming. The initiative, particularly focused on empowering women, aimed to help them rebuild their lives after conflict by offering six days of extensive training in modern dairy production techniques, hygiene practices, and entrepreneurship skills.

Participants gained vital knowledge in areas such as temperature control, pH testing, and business management, which significantly improved the quality of their dairy products and enhanced their market

competitiveness. The training included practical sessions that allowed participants to apply their new skills hands-on. In addition to training, the project provided essential tools and equipment, enabling participants to scale up their production immediately. This comprehensive approach not only helped individuals increase their

income but also strengthened local economic resilience and improved food security within their communities. By fostering a supportive network of dairy producers, the project promoted collaboration and knowledge sharing, further empowering vulnerable populations to overcome the challenges posed by food insecurity in Iraq.



FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, with European Union in Iraq support, distributes 500 Ghannami male cultivar seedlings

Basra, 30 October 2024 - To expand the adoption of good agricultural practices for date palm cultivation in Iraq, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture and with European Union in Iraq support, distributed 500 Ghannami male cultivar seedlings to 100 farmers in Basra, Thi Qar and Maysan.

Our goal is to support farmers and enhance the quality of local production.



Labour Issues

Ministry of Planning hosts the fifth meeting of the Steering Committee for Iraq's Joint Social Protection Program

Baghdad, 03 September 2024 - The Ministry of Planning hosted the 5th meeting of the Steering Committee of the Joint Social Protection Programme for Iraq, in collaboration with the European Union and ILO, UNICEF, and WFP. Deputy Minister of Planning Dr. Maher

Johan emphasized the importance of continuing efforts in social protection: "By ensuring the protection of vulnerable groups and enhancing the scope of social security, this programme reflects our deep commitment to the Government's strategic social protection priorities." This cooperation

continues to make significant progress towards improving the social protection system in Iraq, with a focus on addressing vital issues such as food security, health, and education #ForEveryChild.



ILO holds the first meeting of the technical working group on Social Security and Regulation in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq



Erbil, 3 September 2024 – Today, the International Labour Organization (ILO) held the first meeting of the Technical Working Group on Social Security and Regulation in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The meeting brought together key stakeholders involved in extending social security to the informal economy, including representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the Chamber of Commerce.

The ILO presented a comprehensive overview of the labour market situation for informal workers in the KRI, focusing on priority sectors such as

agriculture, construction, and manufacturing. In his presentation, Igor Bosc, ILO Technical Advisor on Social Security, called for a rethinking of the approach to regulation by adopting more coherent and flexible strategies. He emphasized the importance of ensuring decent work in the informal economy as a key pathway to improving workers' conditions and entering the formal market.

The meeting featured an interactive discussion among participants on the challenges and opportunities associated with regulating work and extending social security coverage to workers in the informal economy. The discussion focused on the policy aspects of

expanding coverage, as well as the opportunities and constraints imposed by the current legal and institutional frameworks. Participants also discussed the complex nature of addressing informal employment issues and ways to develop an effective policy response.

Participants emphasized that priority sectors may differ across the four regions and three autonomous provinces of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Therefore, the selection of these priority sectors will be coordinated in collaboration with a tripartite committee, to ensure that strategies are tailored to the unique economic and social contexts of each region.

This first meeting of the Technical Working Group on Social Security and Formalization is the beginning of a series of quarterly meetings aimed at strengthening multi-stakeholder policy dialogue. The aim is to identify opportunities and explore possible pathways to formalization in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Future sessions will address specific aspects such as the formalization of priority sectors and the extension of social security to specific groups of workers within these sectors.

This meeting is part of a broader initiative supported by the ILO under the EU-supported Joint Social Protection Programme in Iraq. This programme aims to accelerate reforms and build on an effective response and is being implemented in collaboration with UNICEF and WFP.

ILO supports Iraq's efforts to enhance trade union rights and freedoms in line with international labour standards

A high-level Iraqi delegation visited ILO headquarters in Geneva from 3 to 5 September 2024 to discuss technical support for enacting new trade union legislation aligned with international labour standards, particularly ILO Conventions 87 and 98.

Geneva, Switzerland, 05 September 2024 - (ILO News) - With broad participation from Iraq's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Parliamentary Labour Committee, and trade unions, the International Labour Organization (ILO) hosted a study visit for the Iraqi delegation. The visit aimed to discuss technical assistance to support Iraq's efforts in drafting a new trade union law to replace the outdated Law No. 52 of 1987, which is not fully in line with international labour

standards ratified by Iraq.

In the opening session, Mr. Ahmed Al-Asadi, Iraq's Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, highlighted Iraq's commitment to enhancing trade union freedoms: "Iraq's dedication to strengthening trade union rights stems from our belief that decent, sustainable work can only be achieved within a framework that respects workers' fundamental rights, particularly their right to organize and engage in collective bargaining. These rights are not just part of international labour standards but also reflect our respect for human dignity and every individual's right to participate in decisions affecting their professional life."

Throughout the visit, the delegation

was briefed on the ILO's mandate, structure, functions, supervisory mechanisms, and tools, with a focus on trade union rights. They also reviewed international labour standards on trade union rights ratified by Iraq, particularly Convention 87 (1948) on Freedom of Association and Convention 98 (1949) on Collective Bargaining.

Mr. Hussein Arab, Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Labour Committee, emphasized the importance of protecting trade unionists from discrimination and ensuring a legal environment that promotes the free and independent organization of workers under international standards. Ms. Maria Helena André, Director of the ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities, stressed that "respecting

ILO supports Iraq's efforts to enhance trade union rights and freedoms in line with international labour standards *(continued)*

human and workers' rights is essential to addressing Iraq's diverse challenges, including technological advancements, climate change, and demographic and economic shifts. Well-designed labour laws that align with international standards are critical not only for protecting the rights of employers and workers but also for promoting fair working conditions and achieving sustainable economic growth."

During the study visit, the Iraqi delegation discussed their draft trade union law, which had its first reading in Parliament on 29 April 2024. The ILO's technical comments were reviewed alongside input from various stakeholders to ensure the draft aligns with international labour standards.

Corinne Vargha, Director of International Labour Standards at the ILO, expressed her satisfaction with the collaboration, saying, "There is a strong commitment, lively discussion, and a clear plan to move forward. We are fully prepared to support our partners in Iraq on this critical journey and share their ambitions to become a role model for trade unions and freedom of association in the region."

Maha Kattaa, ILO Country Coordinator for Iraq, affirmed that providing a solid legislative foundation aligned with international labour standards ratified by Iraq will empower



workers and their unions, thereby supporting Iraq's economic and social development.

The study visits also reviewed the outcomes of the ILO's Direct Contact Mission to Iraq on the implementation of Convention 98 from 2 to 4 May 2023. Discussions included forming a technical committee to draft the new trade union law, strengthening the coordination council comprising Iraq's Ministry of Labour, trade unions, and labour federations, and establishing a tripartite forum to support efforts to promote trade union freedoms. The ILO's ongoing technical support to Iraq,

requested by the government, was also highlighted.

Participants agreed to enhance tripartite consultations to finalize the draft trade union law in line with ILO's technical feedback and Iraq's national labour framework, including Law No. 37 of 2015. They also committed to implementing the roadmap established by the ILO's Direct Contact Mission.

The ILO will continue providing technical support to Iraq, focusing on social dialogue and trade union rights, through EU-funded programs aimed at promoting inclusive labour practices and social protection.

ILO official visits Iraq

Baghdad, 18 September 2024 – ILO Iraq was delighted to welcome Ms. Mito Tsukamoto, Chief of the Employment and Investment Branch of the Employment Department at ILO Headquarters in Geneva, during her recent visit to Iraq. During the first day of her visit, she highlighted the work being done through the Employment-Intensive Investment programmes (EIIP) approaches through Prospects ILO and its partners.

On her second stop, Ms. Mito Tsukamoto, Chief of the Development and Investment (EMPINVEST) branch of the ILO's Employment Policy Department, visited the Ninawa Technical Training Center in the Nablus neighborhood, Mosul, Iraq, where Mr. Mohammed Alubaidi, the Deputy Technical Manager, welcomed her. He shared insights about the center's role in providing technical and business training and the significant progress made in its reconstruction. The center, which suffered major damage during the 2014 war, has

completed 90% of its reconstruction efforts. It currently accommodates 250 technical students and 100 aspiring entrepreneurs. Once the construction is fully completed, with 10 new classrooms, the center can host an additional 250 students.

Since 2004, over 250,000 applicants have sought job skills training at the center. Following the war and re-opening of applications, the center has received 170,000 applications. Despite

limited resources, the center has successfully trained and graduated 3,500 students since 2018.

Female participation is between 30-40%, depending on the course type. "We put our efforts to involve women in traditionally male-dominated fields, such as construction, where they have not only participated but also delivered high-quality work that has impressed project managers," Mr. Mohammed shared.



Towards promoting decent employment for public works programmes in Iraq

Erbil, 19 September 2024 - (ILO News)- Iraq today faces immense economic and social challenges resulting from years of conflict and economic obstacles. Widespread unemployment, urgent infrastructure needs, and social inequality make it essential to seek innovative and effective solutions to overcome these challenges. In this context, the National Public Works Program stands as one of the important initiatives that could significantly contribute to providing decent job opportunities for the most vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, and displaced persons, while also improving the country's infrastructure.

Public Works Programmes have been used globally to stimulate economic growth and reconstruction, not only by creating immediate job opportunities but also by investing in the improvement and development of essential services and realizing other complementary socio-economic objectives. The International Labour Organization and the Ministry of Planning jointly organized a consultative workshop in Erbil on September 2024, gathering key stakeholders, including the Iraqi Government, civil society organizations, and development experts, to discuss how to design and implement a national public employment programme (PEP). PEPs are state(or donor)-funded programmes that have as their primary purpose the creation of employment that contributes to the public good, but are outside the normal public service and complement rather than displace existing delivery mechanisms. The workshop aimed to present, discuss and seek consensus amongst national stakeholders on the road map process by reviewing successful local, regional and international practices and experiences and providing clear recommendations for the establishment and operationalization of a National Public Employment Programme that meets the interests of the nation of Iraq and promotes decent work principles.

We have seen the implementation of similar programmes, using social development funds in Yemen and Egypt, regional public works programmes in Jordan, Turkey, and Syria, community road maintenance



in Morocco, and the ongoing ILO employment-intensive investment programme supporting decentralization in infrastructure functions in Tunisia. Although not all these programmes are fully financed nationally yet, they have an objective to use public investments to create local job opportunities creating needed employment for vulnerable groups who face difficulties in accessing paid work by engaging them in providing much-needed public infrastructure assets and/or basic services. And as ILO, we promote the objectives of inclusive employment and decent work.

International Lessons and Experiences

During the workshop, programme design considerations and successful examples from other countries were discussed, showcasing how these initiatives could bring multiple benefits. These included national public employment programmes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) in India, the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in South Africa, the Social Fund for Development in Yemen and highlighted also the successes of Employment Intensive Investment Programme in Dohuk, Iraq which focused widely on infrastructure development and green works, improving public services and providing decent employment. These examples offer valuable lessons on how Iraq can adopt similar strategies to address the economic and social challenges it faces.

Experience of the ILO in supporting the design and implementation of similar Public Employment Programmes has established three key aspects including careful design, monitoring of performance and

continued adjustments; ensuring the objectives are clear and realistic; and ensuring that the programmes are inclusive and based on an appropriate wage.

One of the key lessons from international experiences is the importance of embedding decent work principles and effective targeting of women, youth and the disabled into such programmes. Ensuring fair wages and equality between men and women, safe working conditions, and the right to social protection not only benefits workers but also contributes to the long-term success and sustainability of these programmes. Workshop participants emphasized that a National Public Employment Programme in Iraq should integrate these standards from the outset to maximize its impact.

Learning from global practices and effective design of other existing national public employment programmes over the years and ensuring that as part of the life cycle those that are able-bodied and willing to work are given the equal opportunity to work are valuable insights that Iraq can use to design and monitor its national strategies.

Focus on Decent Work and Infrastructure Development

In Iraq, a National Public Employment Programme can stimulate job creation, providing immediate relief to those most affected by unemployment or underemployment. Simultaneously, it would help rebuild vital infrastructure, from roads and schools to water systems, which are crucial for the country's development, support green works to address climate change, and contribute to the restoration of cultural heritage. A PEP could also increase support in a wide range of care services for the

Towards promoting decent employment for public works programmes in Iraq *(continued)*

local community offering equal opportunities to men and women. The programme has the potential to contribute to regional stability, especially in conflict-affected areas, by fostering job creation and restoring local economic growth, contributing to social cohesion.

However, achieving these outcomes requires a carefully designed strategy. A critical factor is ensuring that the programme targets the right beneficiaries, including the poor, women, youth, disabled and displaced persons, who are often excluded from the formal labour market. By focusing on these vulnerable groups, Iraq's National Public Employment Programme would directly contribute to poverty reduction through decent work, social protection, and the development of a more inclusive labour market.

Key Recommendations Moving Forward

To ensure the successful implementation of Iraq's National Public Employment Programme, workshop participants outlined several key recommendations. Foremost among these is that the government, alongside the ILO and other development partners, should invest in building the capacity of local institutions to manage and implement public employment programmes effectively. This includes training workers and supervisors, as well as ensuring the availability of the necessary technical expertise.

The national program must also align with Iraq's broader national development goals, particularly in areas such as poverty reduction, infrastructure development, and regional stability. This alignment would help ensure that public works projects contribute to long-term sustainable development. Three key opportunities can ensure that an NPEP in Iraq makes an impact and leaves a legacy, contributing to some of the other priorities mentioned in the Iraq National Development Plan. The first opportunity lies in infrastructure development and the PEPs potential to contribute to infrastructure construction, restoration, rehabilitation and maintenance. The second is through the restoration of natural infrastructure - Iraq's ecosystems provide critical services like water treatment and storage, soil formation, shade and cooling erosion control and many others. The third opportunity is the potential to expand the provision of services to "useful work" which is prioritized by the communities themselves. Additionally, the programme should address several core principles including Creating a mechanism to prioritize participation in projects to respond to what is perceived as the most urgent local needs; Supporting gender empowerment and youth employment; Ensuring social inclusion at the workplace for persons with disabilities; Strengthening a development focus by not designing the PEP as a crisis response programme

with short-term gains; and increasing policy coherence with other key employment, social protection, sectoral and development strategies and resources allocated. This is crucial for promoting social cohesion and Increasing support in a wide range of care services, in local community services to address the root causes of inequalities in post-conflict Iraq.

However, caution is also provided in that although Public Employment Programmes can achieve multiple objectives simultaneously, achieving them all is not a given, and we can easily overload them with too many objectives, causing programmes to lose focus and being able to live up to their promise. Hence a need to balance trade-offs between objectives, which need to be carefully weighed against each other.

By adhering to these recommendations, Iraq's National Public Employment Programme can become a key tool in addressing unemployment and achieving sustainable development.

As Iraq embarks on its post-conflict recovery journey, national public employment programmes offer a promising opportunity to address the dual challenges of unemployment and infrastructure deficits. By leveraging international experiences, Iraq can design a programme that not only creates inclusive jobs but also improves the quality of public infrastructure and contributes to social stability.

By Ms. Mito Tsukamoto, Branch Chief of Employment Investment at the ILO

ILO, Iraq's Ministry of Planning and the national partners conclude a consultative workshop on promoting decent work in public works programmes supported by the European Union

This workshop was held under the "Building Inclusive and Just Transition" (BEIT) project, funded by the European Union and aimed at stimulating decent work opportunities for youth and addressing the urgent need for affordable housing in Iraq.

Erbil, 19-20 September 2024 - (ILO News) - The International Labour Organization (ILO) held a consultative workshop in Erbil titled "Promoting Decent Work in National Public Works Programmes," which lasted for two consecutive days. The workshop brought together representatives from the Iraqi Ministry of Planning,



Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, along with local and international experts from the United Nations

Human Settlements Programme and the International Trade Centre. In the opening of the workshop, Dr.

ILO, Iraq's Ministry of Planning and the national partners conclude a consultative workshop ... (continued)

Maha Kattaa, the ILO Country Coordinator in Iraq, stated: "Public works programmes in most countries are among the essential components of the social protection network aimed at alleviating the impacts of crises and economic shocks, as well as providing a way out of the poverty cycle. The design and implementation of a public works programme in Iraq is expected to also provide infrastructure, social services, including childcare to increase women's participation in the labor market, and enhance responses to climate challenges through a focus on the green economy."

Maha Abdul Kareem Hamoud, Director General of the Planning Department, expressed the importance of the programme, stating: "The public works programme designed by the Ministry of Planning in collaboration with the ILO seeks to provide decent job opportunities for youth and enhance economic development through infrastructure investment."

Mito Tsukamoto, Branch chef of

Employment Investment at the ILO, emphasized the importance of sustainable employment in rebuilding Iraq, saying: "Every investment must lead to viable and lasting job opportunities. Both the public and private sectors in Iraq must be mobilized for this effort."

During the workshop, participants discussed strategies to ensure that the national public works programme contributes to economic growth, social inclusion, and gender equality. The programme is designed to benefit all Iraqis, especially the most vulnerable groups, and lessons learned from similar global experiences were highlighted.

Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Ms. Zakia Said Saleh, stated: "Creating jobs is essential to reducing poverty and driving economic growth in Iraq and Kurdistan. To achieve this, we must remove existing obstacles and develop effective policies and programs, including public works programs,"

Dr. Khaled Al-Saegh, Deputy Minister

of Labour and Social Affairs, added: "Involving the National Centre for Occupational Health and Safety has an impact on raising awareness among workers regarding safe working methods and adherence to safety rules." The workshop concluded with a commitment from all stakeholders to establish a technical working group and a supervisory committee to ensure the effective implementation of the national public works programme. The importance of ongoing collaboration between Iraqi institutions and international partners was emphasized as crucial to the programme's success.

This workshop is part of ongoing efforts to support the Iraqi government in establishing a national public works programme aligned with Iraq's National Development Plan (2024-2028), aimed at addressing unemployment, promoting decent and sustainable job opportunities, and improving infrastructure and public services across Iraq while adhering to international labour standards.

Breaking barriers: promoting inclusion and safety for women and youth in Iraq's oil and gas sector in Basra

A high-level tripartite workshop was held today in Basra to address critical issues surrounding labor conditions, the labor environment, and environmental practices within Iraq's vital oil and gas sector.

Basra, 24 September 2024 - Organized by the ILO in partnership with the local government, represented by First Deputy Governor Mr. Zaid Al-Emara, the event gathered senior officials from the Basra Chamber of Industry, workers' organizations, national and international companies, and key figures from the Social Security Department, Labour and Vocational Training Directorates, and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) from Baghdad and Basra. The ILO Deputy Regional Director for the Arab

States and the ILO Iraq Country Coordinator were also in attendance.

The workshop was opened by First Deputy Governor Mr. Zaid Al-Emara, who stated, "We take this opportunity today, with the presence of all government parties, the private sector, and the International Labour Organization, to find solutions that encourage youth to work in the private sector. As the local government, we also have a specific vision to use social responsibility projects, including specialized academies aimed at developing the skills of job seekers in various fields required by the labor market."

The workshop fostered social dialogue, bringing together diverse stakeholders to discuss these issues and work

collaboratively on solutions. Discussions centered on improving workplace safety, enforcing stronger labor rights, and integrating environmentally sustainable practices across the sector.

The ILO Deputy Regional Director for the Arab States, Mr. Peter Redemaker, stated, "Today's workshop is an essential step in the right direction. Through this rapid assessment, we aim to gain a clearer understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by oil companies in Iraq, with a focus on employment practices, worker rights, and the impact of the industry on local communities. As we look ahead, we must also recognize the critical intersection of the oil and gas industry with climate change and Just Transition."

The workshop presented the findings of a rapid assessment of labor conditions, work environments, and environmental practices in Basra's oil and gas sector, offering a comprehensive overview of the current landscape. Key results included a lack of female participation in 40% of international companies versus 25% of local companies. Skills development is offered by only 50% of international companies compared to 26% of local ones, while only one



UN senior official says Gaza war is pressuring Iraq into a conflict it wants to avoid *(continued)*

international and 23% of local companies employ persons with disabilities. Alarming, 10% of men and 57% of women reported experiencing harassment by a coworker, supervisor, or manager during or after hiring. Safe transportation is provided by 63% of international versus 55% of local companies for both genders.

Childcare facilities are rare, with only one international and four local companies offering nurseries. In terms of social security, 63% of international versus 27% of local companies have over half of their employees registered. Paid maternity leave is unavailable in 85% of local and 50% of international companies. Furthermore, 75% of international and half of local

companies are unaware of their impact on climate change, and only a few have policies addressing this issue. Transparent greenhouse gas emission reports are produced by just one international and two local companies.

Moreover, the findings on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) emphasized the need for significant improvements in safety protocols within the sector. The report identified several hazards that workers face and called for the adoption of more rigorous safety measures to reduce risks and improve worker protection.

To tackle these challenges, the workshop proposed several key recommendations, focusing on improving employment and recruitment practices, enhancing safety

and healthy workplace policies and employee welfare, promoting environmental responsibility and sustainability, and increasing the involvement of SMEs and young entrepreneurs in the sector's supply chain.

In conclusion, the event underscored the importance of continued collaboration between national and local governments, workers' organizations, employers' organizations, and private sector companies to drive positive change. By focusing on the well-being of workers and the sustainability of the environment, the sector can contribute not only to Iraq's economic growth but also to social and environmental progress.

Iraqi delegation participates in the Academy on Social Security in Turin

Turin, Italy, 21 September 2024 - A delegation from the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region took part in the Academy on Social Security at the ILO International Training Centre in Turin. The training, 9 - 20 September 2024, funded by the EU Social Protection Project, focused on expanding social protection coverage, particularly for workers in the informal sector, and leveraging digital transformation to modernize service delivery.

The delegation had the opportunity to discuss shared challenges and explore ways to improve social security systems in both Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. This participation marks a step forward in ensuring broader access to social protection and establishing a more inclusive system for all.

The event also featured practical sessions on communication and advocacy, equipping participants with the tools to advance social security reforms and gather public support.

This experience highlighted the importance of collaboration between

the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, setting the stage for future joint efforts. It represents a significant step forward in the country's efforts to strengthen social protection, with a strong focus on formalizing the informal sector and



ILO Deputy Regional Director for the Arab States visits Basra

Basra, 01 October 2024 – On his first visit to Basra, Mr. Peter Rademaker, Deputy Regional Director of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for the Arab States, participated in a series of events to support young men and women in developing their projects and professional skills.

Mr. Rademaker attended the closing ceremony of the Entrepreneurship Promotion Project, where he delivered an opening speech emphasizing the importance of training young people to start and manage their businesses to create decent employment



opportunities. He also participated in a discussion with a group of young trainees, listening to their feedback on

the training programs they had received. One of the inspiring moments was his visit to a young female

ILO Deputy Regional Director for the Arab States visits Basra *(continued)*

entrepreneur who shared her success story of launching her local café and her aspirations to expand it within Iraq and abroad. She explained how she follows activities and events that support her business and the way she works with her employees to ensure their development and satisfaction with the work environment.

On the second day, Mr. Rademaker toured the Basra Vocational Training

Center and the Employment Service Center, both supported by the ILO. He also took part in the launch of the operational procedures manual for public employment services. Additionally, he met with young people involved in the maintenance of public schools under the employment-intensive investment program EIIP.

Mr. Rademaker concluded his visit by participating in the launch of the rapid

assessment conducted by the ILO in collaboration with Basra Governorate on working conditions in the oil and gas sector, attended by representatives from the local government, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, trade unions, the Iraqi Federation of Industries, and local and international companies operating in this sector.



ILO and partners discuss the successes and challenges related to expanding social security coverage in Iraq under the Social Security and Pensions Law No. 18 of 2023.

Baghdad, 15 October 2024 - The International Labour Organization (ILO) held a workshop today, at the Al-Mansour Melia Hotel in Baghdad, to discuss the successes and challenges related to expanding social security coverage in Iraq under the Social Security and Pensions

Law No. 18 of 2023.

The workshop was attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, along with representatives from the Departments of Pensions and Social Security, labor organizations, and employer organizations from Baghdad,

Basra, Muthanna, and Kirkuk. Discussions focused on the progress made in expanding social security in these provinces and the challenges faced by the tripartite groups formed in those regions for this purpose.

The workshop also reviewed the preparatory steps and measures taken to launch the national awareness campaign on social security in Iraq. This event is part of the ongoing efforts of national partners, supported by the technical assistance of the ILO, to strengthen social protections for workers in Iraq. It also serves as preparation for the national conference that will be held tomorrow, October 16, on informal work and pathways to decent work in Iraq, as part of the "Enhancing Effective Response and Accelerating Social Protection Reforms" program funded by the European Union.



Employment specialists in Kurdistan Region trained on Digital Employment Platform

Erbil, 23 October 2024 - In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and Soft Max, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has successfully trained 30 employment specialists from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) on the newly developed Digital Employment Platform. This intensive three-day training gave participants a thorough understanding of the platform's features, highlighting its practical applications for streamlining job matching and enhancing employment services.

The training offered step-by-step guidance on navigating the platform, designed to connect job seekers with employers, particularly in the private sector. Participants engaged in interactive discussions to share feedback and suggest improvements, focusing on optimizing platform

functionality. Additionally, the program emphasized stronger collaboration between MoLSA, vocational training centers, and other key stakeholders to ensure the platform's widespread adoption across the KRI.

By the conclusion of the training, participants had formulated regional coordination strategies to integrate the platform into their daily operations.

They also gained the necessary skills to efficiently support job seekers in their regions. A detailed six-month action plan was developed to drive private sector engagement and expand platform outreach to underserved communities.

The platform is set to be officially launched on 10 November 2024, during the Job Fair in Sami Abdrakhman Park, Erbil



National conference paves pathways to formalizing Iraq's informal economy

Baghdad, 16 October 2024 - In the face of growing economic challenges, Iraq's informal economy, which encompasses over half of the nation's workforce, has come into sharper focus. As revealed by the 2021 Labour Force Survey, 5.73 million Iraqis—two-thirds of the country's workers—are employed in informal jobs. Key sectors such as construction, agriculture, and manufacturing remain dominated by informal labour arrangements, leaving workers without the protections of formal contracts or social security. This informality hampers the development of a sustainable, resilient economy and threatens efforts toward equitable growth.

Against this backdrop, Yesterday's National Conference on "Informal Work and Pathways to Decent Work in Iraq" marked a critical step in addressing these challenges. Organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the Government of Iraq and funded by the European Union, the conference brought together national and international stakeholders—including representatives from federal ministries, local authorities, workers' and employers' organizations, academia, civil society, and development partners—to foster a unified approach to formalizing Iraq's economy.

The event set the stage for an ambitious national strategy aimed at expanding social protection coverage and formalizing employment across sectors over the next five years. Throughout the discussions, the consensus was clear: addressing informality is essential not only for safeguarding workers' rights but also for driving Iraq's economic recovery and future prosperity.

The opening remarks by Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Ms. Huda Sajad, emphasized the urgent need for action: "This phenomenon represents a significant portion of the workforce, with the number of workers in the informal sector reaching around five million. This poses a serious economic and social challenge that requires us all to work together to address it seriously. In cooperation with our partners from unions, civil society, and the private sector, we aim to transform this reality by regulating work and providing social protection to those who are not currently covered. We also seek to develop policies and programs that



contribute to integrating these groups into the formal economy and achieving economic and social stability."

Dr. Hanaa Ismail, Administrative Deputy of the Ministry of Planning, stressed the importance of transitioning to formal employment, noting that "the informal economy encompasses numerous activities that are not subject to legal regulation, making it difficult to reach the workers involved. Through these efforts, we aim to empower affected groups, facilitate the transition to the formal economy, and create job opportunities that ensure economic and social stability."

In her speech, Dr. Maha Kattaa, the ILO Coordinator in Iraq, highlighted that "the large size of the informal economy presents significant challenges in Iraq. More than five million workers are not covered by social security and work in poor conditions. In addition, there are hundreds of thousands of private sector companies operating informally, making it difficult to reach these workers and companies, particularly during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. The ILO's Recommendation No. 204 of 2015 outlines guiding principles and policies to help countries transition to a formal economy. We are working to provide technical and expert support to the government and social partners for a gradual and smooth transition."

Discussions during the conference examined the complex factors driving informality in Iraq. Among the barriers are the bureaucratic and administrative challenges that make formalization a costly and lengthy process for businesses, as well as cultural practices that perpetuate informal labour relationships.

Addressing these issues, participants explored how simplifying business registration processes and offering incentives to employers could help transition workers into formal employment while expanding their access to vital protections like social security.

A major focus of the event was Iraq's recent legislative achievements, particularly the ratification of ILO Convention No. 102 on Social Security and the passing of Law No. 18 on Pensions and Social Security in 2023. These reforms are a pivotal milestone in the journey towards formalization, offering new protections for informal and self-employed workers, including maternity and unemployment benefits. By extending social security coverage to millions who were previously excluded, Iraq has taken a significant step forward in addressing the challenges of informality.

Participants also heard from international experts, who shared successful examples of formalization from other regions, such as Asia and Latin America, where integrated policy frameworks have helped millions of workers transition from the informal to the formal economy. These case studies provided valuable insights into the potential strategies Iraq could adopt to support its transition.

The technical sessions of the conference explored several key themes, including the social costs of informality and the economic, legal, and institutional reforms needed to foster formalization. Drawing on ILO Recommendation No. 204, participants discussed how to gradually implement a structured, coordinated approach to formalization that can drive both economic growth and social justice.

National conference paves pathways to formalizing Iraq's informal economy *(continued)*

As the conference concluded, a set of recommendations was presented, outlining clear actions to expand social protection coverage, streamline business formalization, and build an inclusive economy where all workers can enjoy decent work. Over the coming years, the ILO will continue to work

closely with the Government of Iraq and national partners to translate these recommendations into tangible outcomes, ensuring that the foundations laid today will lead to lasting, positive change for Iraq's workforce.

This conference is part of the activities

of the Social Protection System Reform Program, implemented by the International Labour Organization in collaboration with UNICEF and the World Food Programme, and supported by the European Union.



Strategic partnership launched between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Higher Council for Youth to empower Iraqi youth for job market entry



Baghdad, 27 October 2024 – In a pioneering partnership aimed at empowering Iraqi youth and enhancing their skills in green economy, decent work, and career guidance, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has collaborated with the Higher Council for Youth to launch a comprehensive national program. This initiative seeks to prepare local trainers capable of disseminating these concepts and raising awareness among youth across Iraq.

During the opening, Mr. Ali Hilal Khalaf, Executive Director of the Higher Council for Youth, welcomed the partnership, highlighting its potential to empower Iraqi youth as future leaders in sustainable development. Dr. Maha Kattaa, ILO Country Coordinator in Iraq, emphasized the importance of this collaboration in building a national network of trainers to foster knowledge transfer and enhance sustainable employment opportunities, supporting Iraqi youth's aspirations toward new career fields that contribute to sustainability, address unemployment, and promote inclusivity in the labor market.

Mr. Qasim Al-Zalmi, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, underscored the need to adapt training programs to meet the specific needs of

Iraqi society and the local labor market, ensuring that knowledge reaches all provinces and fosters effective youth integration into the Iraqi economy. He emphasized that this partnership serves as a model of fruitful cooperation that achieves sustainable results and develops an informed generation capable of tackling future challenges.

The primary objective of the program is to train cadres from the Higher Council for Youth to become national trainers capable of conducting specialized workshops for Iraqi youth on career selection, job search strategies, and guiding them toward green economy employment opportunities. Additionally, the program includes training for trainers in labor law, social

security, and decent work, enhancing youth awareness of their labor rights and promoting a safe environment that upholds decent work standards. Moreover, the partnership involves training trainers on the "Start and Improve Your Business" (SIYB) program, one of ILO's largest global training initiatives in entrepreneurship. The program aims to empower youth to launch and grow environmentally friendly and sustainable business ventures.

The ILO, in cooperation with the Higher Council for Youth, will regularly monitor and evaluate trainer performance to ensure their readiness and certification as ILO-accredited trainers. This will be achieved through periodic reports documenting the programs' success and impact on youth development in Iraq. Training content will also be updated flexibly to align with evolving market needs and expanded to achieve sustainable development goals.

This partnership between the ILO and the Higher Council for Youth represents a strategic step toward supporting Iraqi youth on their path to stable and sustainable career trajectories, focusing on environmentally friendly job opportunities that contribute to economic and social growth while protecting the environment.



First Steering Committee meeting for the project "Towards More and Better Employment through Enhanced Support to Private Sector in Southern Iraq – with a Focus on Green Business"



Baghdad, 27 October 2024 - Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), ILO, Italy, and Partners meet in First Steering Committee Meeting for the Project "Towards More and Better Employment through Enhanced Support to Private Sector in Southern Iraq – with a Focus on Green Business".

In a strong show of collaboration, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the representatives of the Italian Embassy and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), and a coalition of partners held the inaugural Steering Committee meeting for the project "Towards More and Better Employment through Enhanced Support to Private Sector in Southern Iraq – with a Focus on Green Business." Chaired by Director General of the labour and vocational training directorate, Mr. Osama Majid Al-Khafaji, the meeting brought together key stakeholders committed to promoting sustainable private sector development and decent work opportunities in Southern Iraq.

The meeting included the Head of the Parliamentary Labour Committee, Mrs. Nahida Al-Daini; ILO Country Coordinator in Iraq, Dr. Maha Kattaa; and the Head of the Economic and Development Cooperation Office at the Italian Embassy, Mrs. Rosamaria Genovese, alongside a delegation from AICS. Partners represented at the meeting included representatives from the Ministries of Trade, Industry, and Environment; the Federation of Iraqi Industries; the Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce; the Muthanna and Basra Chambers of Industry; the Iraqi Company for Bank Guarantees; the Higher Council for Youth; and youth leaders focused on environmental and developmental issues, reflecting the breadth of collaboration that supports the project.

Mr. Al-Khafaji highlighted that the

project is a key component of the Iraqi government's initiative to generate employment opportunities for youth and reduce unemployment. He emphasized the importance of improving policies in favor of small and medium enterprises, expanding financial inclusion, and enhancing skill development. Mr. Al-Khafaji noted that collaboration between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the International Labour Organization, and Italy through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation and its partners is essential to create a resilient and prosperous economic environment in Iraq. He underscored the need to establish a mechanism for guaranteeing loans for income-generating projects, following the same approach the project intends to implement with private banks through the Iraqi Company for Bank Guarantees.

Dr. Maha Kattaa from ILO stressed the alignment of this project with Iraq's National Decent Work Programme, stating, "This project, which integrates green business promotion with private sector development, embodies our shared commitment with the Iraqi government to foster economic growth and create decent job opportunities. Our focus on 'decent work' stems from the belief that every individual has the right to a work environment that respects their rights, ensures job security, and offers equal opportunities. Such a project is a vital component of broader efforts under Iraq's National Decent Work Programme, which we signed alongside the government, employers, and labour unions to promote dignified and equitable working conditions."

Mrs. Rosamaria Genovese, Head of the Economic and Development Cooperation Office at the Italian Embassy, reaffirmed Italy's commitment to supporting Iraq's journey towards economic resilience,

green business growth, and sustainable development, in partnership with ILO and the Iraqi government. "This project represents one more step towards a more inclusive and thriving Iraq, fostering the growth of a conducive business environment for the private sector, starting with small and new entrepreneurs, especially in southern Iraq. Italy attaches great importance to this project and expects a positive influence in the socio-economic, prosperity and environmental aspects of the lives of the Iraqi people".

Additionally, Mr. Raed Jabbar, Director General of the Planning and Follow-up Department at the Disability and Special Needs Commission, provided valuable recommendations on creating a more inclusive environment for entrepreneurs with disabilities (PWDs). He emphasized the importance of tailored support to ensure equitable access to training, resources, and financial services for PWD entrepreneurs, helping them overcome unique business challenges.

Amaal Bani Awwad, the ILO Project Manager, presented an overview of the project's progress over the first year, detailing achievements in supporting SMEs, promoting green business initiatives, and enhancing financial inclusion in southern Iraq. She also outlined the challenges faced, including regulatory hurdles, limited financial access for SMEs.

The committee discussed the need for stronger coordination with local and governmental entities, emphasizing the importance of adaptive strategies to address these barriers. They also explored strategies to facilitate the registration of small and medium enterprises and to overcome regulatory obstacles to formalization. Additionally, the committee examined financial and administrative support mechanisms for these businesses, aimed at enhancing their sustainability and contributions to Iraq's local economy.

The committee agreed to hold regular consultation meetings to ensure continuous progress, adapt to challenges, and foster collaboration among stakeholders. This inaugural meeting concluded with strategic action items designed to align the project's objectives with Iraq's national economic and social development goals, laying a foundation for impactful and sustainable outcomes.

A tripartite social dialogue to validate the business registration manual (BRM) for MSMEs in Iraq organized in Baghdad

Baghdad, 31 October 2024 - The ILO, in cooperation with the Private Sector Development Directorate at the Ministry of Trade (MOT), organized a tripartite workshop that included representatives of stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), the Ministry of Industry (MOIN), the Ministry of Planning (MOP), the Ministry of Environment (MOEN), the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), the Central Bank of Iraq (CBI), the Farmers Association Union, the Iraqi Federation of Industries (IFI), the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and representatives of workers, at the Station headquarter in Baghdad.

This workshop aimed to validate the registration business manual (BRM) for SMEs in Iraq, which aims to support entrepreneurs and owners of SMEs in moving from the informal economy to the formal economy. This process begins with the legal registration of businesses, followed by the steps of



registering workers under the social security umbrella, which contributes to enhancing the protection of workers in the Iraqi labor market.

A technical committee, including representatives from all relevant authorities, collected data and defined the necessary procedures for business registration through a comprehensive questionnaire. The registration business manual is expected to be finalized by the end of this year and

will be launched as part of a national awareness campaign designed to encourage registration and highlight its benefits.

Additionally, recommendations will be developed to streamline and simplify the registration procedures. These recommendations will be consolidated within a unified platform across the relevant authorities, making the registration process more accessible and straightforward for business owners in Iraq.

This initiative falls within the framework of the project "Towards more and better employment through enhanced support to private sectors in southern Iraq – with a focus on green business" implemented by the ILO with the support of Italy through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS). The project is part of a broader effort under the Iraq Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) signed by the Government, employers' and workers' organizations, and the ILO to promote employment and decent work.



Security Sector Reform

Effective AML/CFT measures - safeguard financial systems and national economies

Erbil, 29 August 2024 - UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, wrapped up a 5-day workshop in Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, on financial investigations in anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT).

37 Iraqi officials from the Financial Intelligence Unit, Counter Drugs Directorate, Intelligence, Counterterrorism, Ministry of the Interior, and Kurdistan Regional Government sharpened their skills in detecting illicit financial flows and enhanced inter-agency cooperation.



UNDP Iraq launches the Anti-Corruption Strategy Report



Erbil, 04 September 2024 - Today marks a significant milestone in the fight against corruption in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq as we launch

the Anti-Corruption Strategy Report. This comprehensive report highlights achievements, challenges, and lessons learned in our joint efforts with the

Commission of Integrity of KRI and the European Union. By implementing the strategy Kurdistan Region has taken significant steps towards achieving an Iraq free from corruption. However, a lot of work remains.

As discussed in today's gathering, the next phase of the strategy will continue focusing on creating more transparent and accountable governance and an equal society where everyone enjoys equal and just rights and opportunities. Key leaders gathered at this event to review our progress and chart the next steps in fighting corruption. With speeches from H.E. Prime Minister of #KRG, Masrour Barzani, and other prominent figures, we are shaping a future rooted in integrity and transparency.

Read the report at <https://go.undp.org/49J>

Thank you, European Union in Iraq, for your continuous and generous support.

UNOCT works on enhancing human rights in the investigations of terrorist cases in Iraq

Baghdad, 05 September 2024 - The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)'s Human Rights Unit and the UNOCT Baghdad Office, in partnership with the Office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA) of the Republic of Iraq, conducted two training workshops in September.

The first workshop, held from 1-2 September 2024, focused on the legal aspects of counter-terrorism investigations. Participants included legal experts, security forces' legal advisors, lawyers from the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR), and counter-terrorism practitioners. The workshop explored the legal challenges and human rights norms relevant to investigations, emphasizing their integration into legal practices. The second workshop, held from 3-4 September 2024, aimed to enhance the practical application of human rights standards in counter-terrorism investigations by security professionals.

During the two workshops, 50 participants from various Iraqi entities convened to discuss best practices and address the intricate relationship between security and human rights within Iraq's counter-terrorism framework.

The workshops featured a presentation by the Iraqi National Committee on Counter-Terrorism highlighting its commitment to human rights compliance, while UNOCT underscored

the importance of complying with human rights to successfully address terrorism. On its part, the Iraqi IHCHR underscored the commission's critical role in safeguarding human rights during terrorism-related criminal procedures.

Participants engaged in interactive discussions and working groups, sharing experiences and strategies to address challenges in their respective fields. The workshops also included:

- a discussion on the role of women in the counter-terrorism context;

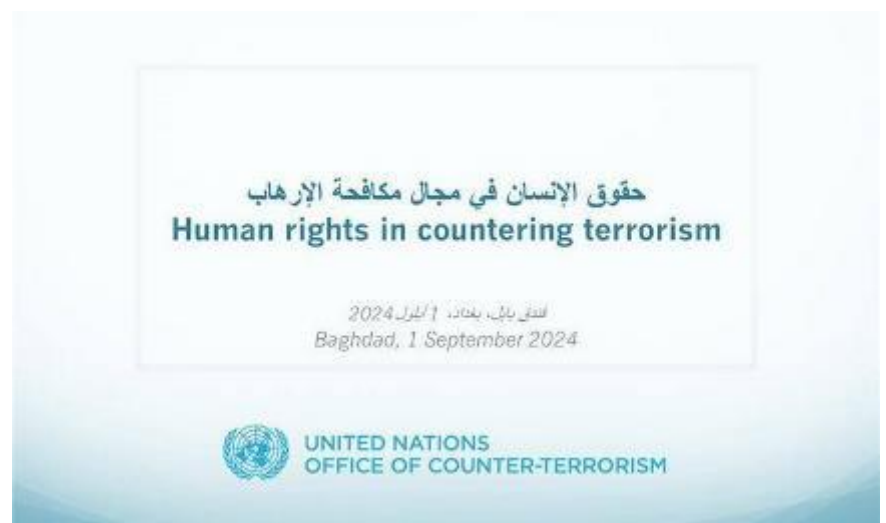
- a presentation on the role of legal professionals in protecting individual rights in terrorism cases;

- an integrative session on human rights

standards within the counter-terrorism context and the Iraqi legal framework.

These workshops were part of the project on "Human Rights and Counter-Terrorism: Capacity-building Support to Law Enforcement and Intelligence Services in Iraq", funded by the Government of Canada. The project, launched in 2023, aims to equip Iraqi law enforcement and intelligence agencies with the tools to integrate human rights into counter-terrorism work.

The project's next steps will involve additional training dedicated to specific entities, roundtables on human rights in counter-terrorism, and the development of a trainer's manual.



Terrorists can't operate without funding!

Amman, Jordan, 05 September 2024 - Cutting off their financial lifelines is the first step to dismantling their networks. By tracing financial flows and analyzing intelligence, we can expose the connections between terrorists and disrupt their operations—no matter where they are. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) organized a 3-day workshop on Countering the Financing of Terrorism and implementing Targeted Financial Sanctions. The workshop brought together senior Iraqi representatives from the Supreme Judiciary Council, State Council, Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), Company Registrar, and the Kurdistan Region Prime Minister's Office, in

coordination with Jordan's FIU. Participants explored how Targeted Financial Sanctions are influential

tools in the efforts against terrorism, stressing the importance of regional and cross-sector collaboration.



Corruption is multifaceted - we all have a role to play!

Baghdad, 18 September 2024 - At the Second Arab Forum on Transparency and Good Governance in Baghdad, UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime led key sessions on Business Integrity and Asset Recovery and hosted a working group on Anti-Corruption. Co-hosted by UNDP, Transparency International, and the Iraqi Federal Commission of Integrity, the forum advanced transparency and accountability efforts towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Highlights included inspiring presentations from three young leaders from Egypt and Palestine, part of the UNODC MENA Youth Network, who showcased their innovative projects and highlighted the vital role of youth in driving change.

"I introduced an initiative to enhance financial inclusion for marginalized girls aged 15 to 28, which aligns with the principles of transparency and good governance by addressing the lack of female representation in formal financial systems and promoting financial literacy and independence from a young age," said Alaa ElShaer, UNODC MENA Youth Network representative from Egypt.

"The forum gave us as youth, a platform to engage with representatives from various Arab countries, highlighting corruption's impact, especially on Generation Z. We shared our ideas and outcomes, aiming to create a safe, inclusive community for all youth," said Abdel Fattah Ayman, UNODC MENA Youth Network representative from Egypt.

"My participation was a valuable and



enriching experience, deepening my understanding of combating corruption and raising awareness of SDG 16. I gained insight into developing action plans and innovative cooperative strategies to create strong, flexible approaches to countering corruption in all its forms," said Mahmoud Al-Azza, UNODC MENA Youth representative from Palestine.

The Second Arab Forum brought together over 300 participants from 29 countries in Baghdad, sparking a renewed commitment to transparency and accountability.

The participants developed key recommendations to promote sustainable solutions to curb corruption in the Arab region, which include:

- Streamlining government processes

and adopting e-governance tools.

- Strengthening public-private partnerships for enhanced accountability.

- Empowering civil society to play a more active role in anti-corruption strategies.

- Encouraging the private sector to boost internal governance and financial transparency.

Co-organized by UNDP, Transparency International, and the Arab Administrative Development Organization, hosted by the Federal Commission of Integrity, and co-financed by the European Union, the Forum reaffirmed Iraq's dedication to fighting corruption.

For the full list of recommendations and more, visit: go.undp.org/oAP

Spreading awareness on anti-money laundering and terrorism financing

Baghdad, 26 September 2024 - The Office of the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) held a workshop today entitled "Spreading awareness on the fight against money laundering and terrorism financing" at the Babylon Hotel. The workshop was attended by 60 employees from various governmental departments. The workshop addressed two main topics:

- The legal framework to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism in the Republic of Iraq.
- Output of the National Risk Assessment Process.



Community policing helps improve access to justice and security

Baghdad, 30 September 2024 - The annual Community Police Conference in Baghdad, with IOM and German Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt), united community leaders and law enforcement to discuss results and strengthen community policing efforts across Iraq, including areas of return.



Discovering new professional avenues and unlocking Iraq's business potential: award-winning future lawyers Zahraa Amer and Mandana Saman Abdulla

Baghdad, 16 October 2024 - "It was incredibly rewarding to win a special award in Vienna and be recognized at an international level! Representing Iraq for the first time in such a prestigious competition was an absolute honor," shares Zahraa Amer. "This experience made me realize that Iraq is full of untapped potential and hidden talents. All we need is a little push in the right direction, just like the support my team and I received from UNDP Iraq."

Zahraa, a recent law graduate, participated in the IBA-VIAC CDRC International Mediation & Negotiation Competition in Vienna, Austria. This marked Iraq's first appearance at the event, and the team brought home an award for Best Mediator Opening Statement, recognizing their professional excellence.

Similarly, Mandana Saman Abdulla takes pride in representing Iraq on a

global stage. She competed in the International Investor-State Mediation Competition in Colombo, Sri Lanka. "The competition was a highlight, a culmination, filled with both victories and lessons learned. And certainly, I loved exploring Colombo, a city so far from Iraq, and connecting with amazing people worldwide," she says.

Mandana and her team earned a special award for Distinction in Mediation Advocacy.

Mediation as a way of life and as a tool for legal professionals

Both Zahraa and Mandana, future lawyers of Iraq, are now determined to contribute to the country's efforts to build a robust legal framework that



Discovering new professional avenues and unlocking Iraq's business potential ... (continued)

will enable foreign investors to trust the Iraqi market.

Along with other students from 9 universities, they attended UNDP's workshops on Commercial Mediation and Negotiation Techniques. Following the workshops, UNDP supported their coaching and preparation for international competitions, where they showcased the skills they had gained. Zahraa reflects on her experience, which encouraged her to pursue a career in commercial dispute resolution: "The whole journey opened my perspective to something I had never been exposed to before: The concept, skills and culture of dispute resolution. As lawyers, we are only taught how to fight legal arguments, but often missing the commercial perspective and non-commercial interests that the client may have, e.g. to maintain a good reputation, to keep the relationships, etc. The training made me realize that understanding the other party's perspective may often be a much more efficient strategy to protect the interests of my client. This was an eye-opening experience, and I am committed to pursuing a career in this field."

"Mediation in a legal context was completely new to me, and I was perhaps even sceptical in the beginning, and at the same time eager to explore its essence and potential impact in Iraq," explains Mandana. "As a result of the exercises and multiple rounds of role-plays, where I got to chance to participate in the process from the perspective of a party representative, I realized how much we may be missing by simply refusing to listen. The skills I learned are life skills that will be useful in many contexts."

Zahraa adds, "Iraq needs legal professionals with the knowledge and skills to advocate for and engage in modern efficient dispute resolution techniques like mediation. This will help business solve their differences swiftly, with less cost and to maintain commercial relationships, where they may be valuable."

"Mediation in a legal context was completely new to me, and I was perhaps even sceptical in the beginning, and at the same time eager to explore its essence and potential impact in Iraq," explains Mandana. "As a result of the exercises and multiple rounds of role-plays, where I got to chance to participate in the process from the perspective of a party representative, I realized how much we may be missing by simply refusing to listen. The skills I learned are life skills that will be useful in many contexts." Zahraa adds, "Iraq needs legal professionals with the knowledge and skills to advocate for and engage in modern efficient dispute resolution techniques like mediation. This will help business solve their differences swiftly, with less cost and to maintain commercial relationships, where they may be valuable."

Mandana is also looking forward to Iraq's progress in this field. "For Iraq to take its rightful place in international forums, we need comprehensive, robust laws on mediation, arbitration, and development of efficient commercial dispute resolution methods. These mechanisms will enable faster and credible solutions to business disputes, making the market more attractive, reliable, and safe for foreign investors." As young people we are the future Both young women see a bright future

for Iraq through the development of its business sector. "We envision Iraq with a strong and diversified economy. A well-developed business sector can unlock Iraq's potential, improve lives, and strengthen our country against conflicts. To realize this vision, investment in youth must be a priority. As young people, we are the future. We have the will and the potential to drive change," Zahraa emphasizes.

Mediation, not meditation

People often confuse mediation with meditation, but what exactly is mediation, and why is it important for Iraq? Mediation is a process in which a neutral third party helps two disputing sides talk through their issues, negotiate, assess risks, and find solutions that benefit both parties. This process maintains, restores, and strengthens business or personal relationships. This process of commercial dispute resolution enables businesses to solve their disputes quicker and more efficiently, rather than going into the bureaucracy of the local courts.

Through its Anti-Corruption and Arbitration Initiatives, funded by the European Union, UNDP Iraq is working to create an investor-friendly market by developing the country's Commercial Dispute Resolution framework. This includes supporting legal reforms, such as Iraq's new Arbitration Law and Iraq's recent signing of the Singapore Convention on Mediation. UNDP has also been empowering Iraq's future lawyers, like Zahraa and Mandana, by providing capacity-building workshops and facilitating their participation in international commercial dispute resolution competitions.

Handover ceremony of refurbished Juvenile Reformatory concludes in Mosul – supporting rehabilitation and reintegration of children and young people affected by terrorism

Mosul, 30 October 2024 – An important milestone has been marked in Iraq's journey toward supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of children deprived of their liberty for alleged involvement with terrorist groups: the handover of the newly refurbished Ninawa Observation House, a juvenile reformatory in Mosul that host approximately 300 children and young people, was held on 30 October.

The handover ceremony was attended

by high-level representatives of national and international partners including the Ministry of Justice; European Union (EU); United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN-Habitat. The event celebrated the conclusion of concerted efforts to improve the physical infrastructure of the reformatory; and to create a safe and supportive environment that is conducive to rehabilitation and reintegration.

Mr. Radu Butum, Head of the EU

Liaison Office, emphasized the importance of the project, stating, "When we focus on the development of these children as individuals, this in turn enhances the well-being and stability of society as a whole. This approach aligns with our vision of achieving security and stability. Our partnership with UNODC and the Iraqi authorities has been invaluable in accomplishing this achievement and we look forward to further collaboration". The refurbishment of the reformatory

Handover ceremony of refurbished Juvenile Reformatory concludes in Mosul ... (continued)

was carried out as part of the EU funded project "STRIVE Juvenile: Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Children by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups" which is led by UNODC in partnership with the Government of Iraq. This initiative highlights the parties' joint commitment to ensuring the effective rehabilitation and reintegration of those deprived of their liberty by providing good living conditions; access to education and marketable vocational skills training; health-care, freedom to practice religion; and regular and safe contact with families and with the wider community.

Mr. Mohamed Radi Bahr, Director General of the Juvenile Care Directorate under the Ministry of Justice, praised UNODC's leading role in the STRIVE Juvenile project, stating that this project "contributed creating an ideal environment that supports the growth of both staff and young people" and that "the developmental programs provided by UNODC were not merely passing initiatives; they were firm steps towards building a brighter future for our coming generations."

Speaking at the event, Mr. Ali El-Bereir, Head of UNODC in Iraq, emphasized the importance of this milestone. "The renovations we see today are part of UNODC's continued efforts to support children and young people, ensuring that these reformatories provide not just safe environments, but also a space where children and young people can live with dignity and engage in meaningful rehabilitation and reintegration processes," said Mr. El-Bereir.

Among the significant renovations at the Ninawa Juvenile Reformatory are the addition of classrooms designed to create a conducive learning environment, along with a new gym and multipurpose hall that facilitate physical and recreational activities. Furthermore, the capacity for family visits has been increased by 60%, which strengthens the connection between the children and the outside world.

Dedicated spaces have also been established where social workers can meet with those deprived of their liberty, providing essential mental health and psychosocial support. The renovated washrooms promote good hygiene, while the installation of



solar panels and new water tanks ensures a sustainable and secure supply of electricity and water. Notably, the solar power system installed is not only the first of its kind in a juvenile reformatory but also the largest hybrid system in Mosul. It is designed to generate enough electricity to cover the entire facility's needs, with surplus energy being fed back into the national grid. These renovations have been made possible through collaborative efforts with UN-Habitat since 2023, all aimed at enhancing the living conditions of the young people at the Ninawa Observation House.

"Through the work of modernizing spaces for learning, social interaction, and recreation, UN-Habitat is proud to be engaged in a project that provides these young people with better opportunities for social reintegration," shared Mr. Muslim Qazimi, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq, on the occasion.

Through the EU-funded project 'STRIVE Juvenile', UNODC and Iraq are implementing important initiatives to prevent and respond to

violence against children and young people in context of counter-terrorism. The project is dedicated to promoting rehabilitation and reintegration of children and young people in Mosul and Baghdad who are deprived of their liberty hence contributing for broader peace and reconciliation processes in Iraq.

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In a related activity, UN-Habitat installed a hybrid solar power system with 144 solar panels at Mosul's youth detention center as part of its rehabilitation, in collaboration with UNODC.

Following the installation, a training course was conducted to equip staff with the skills to design, operate, and maintain the system, covering everything from basic concepts to advanced troubleshooting.

UN-Habitat consistently promotes sustainable energy practices and advocates for their adoption across the public sector.

Investing in #CleanAirNow supports the transition from fossil fuels to a cleaner, diversified energy matrix and a sustainable future.



Danish delegation visits Explosive Ordnance Disposal Training Centre in Salman Pak



Baghdad, 28 August 2024 - UNMAS Iraq thanks the Ministry of Interior, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Training Centre in Salman Pak, for hosting a

visit from the Government of Denmark in coordination with UNMAS Iraq.

The Danish representative could firsthand see how the technical support initiatives provided by UNMAS Iraq and had an opportunity to engage in discussions with the officials and police officers about their crucial roles in protecting Iraqi communities from the threats of explosive ordnance.

UNMAS Iraq is grateful for the continuous support and financial contributions from the Government of Denmark that have allowed UNMAS Iraq to strengthen the national mine action response and ensure the safety of the communities across the country.

Mine Action coordination meeting held at DMA

Baghdad, 05 September 2024 – In his speech today during the coordination meeting sponsored by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Director General of DMA, Eng. Shawkat Tayeh Masoud, confirmed the importance of joint efforts in accelerating the clearing of lands and declaring Iraq free of mines as soon as possible.

The official spokesperson of DMA, Mustafa Hamid Majeed, says that DMA in cooperation with UNMAS, held a coordination meeting that included the representatives of donor embassies and of international organizations that are engaged in various fields of mine action, in addition to the representatives of the national stakeholders (the Ministries of Defense and Interior and the Popular Mobilization Forces).

Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, stressed in his speech the importance of efforts of all national and international organizations to clear the remaining contaminated areas, which enhances the chances of success, growth and

prosperity.

DMA holds such meetings on an ongoing basis, which consequently enhances the deepening of understanding and cooperation between the national authority and implemented authorities.



Baghdad, 11 September 2024 - Following the recent visit to the UNMAS Iraq Implementing Partner, clearance site in Mosul in August, His Excellency, **Mr. Thomas Seiler**, the EU Ambassador to Iraq, welcomed a visit of **Pehr Lodhammar**, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, to the Embassy of the European Union Delegation in Baghdad. Lodhammar provided an overview of the UNMAS Iraq operations and discussed the achievements and challenges in the mine action sector in Iraq.



New York, 28 October 2024 - The women and men who oversee UN mine action programmes, from Colombia to Iraq, met with the Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Peace Operations, **Jean-Pierre Lacroix**, on 28 October, to kick-off their annual Heads of Mine Action Components conference at UN Headquarters in New York. USG Lacroix, who is also the Chair of the UN inter-agency group, noted the unique role of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and reiterated his strong support for the Service. Today, there are 20 mine action programmes around the world.

Bringing drone technology to Iraqi Police



Baghdad, 07 September 2024 - "In 2021, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Salman Pak Training Center received 20 drones from UNMAS Iraq. These drones were distributed to relevant departments across the Iraqi governorates in order to ensure the best use of this technology during operations. UNMAS Iraq has provided training courses at Salman Pak Training Center since 2019 to ensure that the necessary knowledge accompanies the equipment", declared by Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed Falah, the Head of Training Courses in

Salman Pak.

UNMAS Iraq has been at the forefront of introducing drone technology to Iraqi police. Drones are capable of navigating and exploring areas that are typically inaccessible to robots or human operators, such as narrow spaces, mine-contaminated areas, muddy areas, pools of water, and rooftops of buildings. By surveying sites and detecting unknown objects, drones play a crucial role in assisting users in drawing safe paths for movement.

The integration of drone technology plays a vital role in protecting communities from mines and explosive

remnants of war (ERW). The ability to safely and efficiently survey areas minimizes risk to both operators and civilians.

Commissioner Akram Hussein, from the Explosives Control Department of Najaf Governorate, shared his experience with drone technology and the training provided by UNMAS Iraq: "Before the training course, I had no prior knowledge of drones. However, after completing the training, I acquired the skills to operate the drone, which we now use for reconnaissance when suspicious objects or activities are reported. The drones provided by UNMAS Iraq have greatly enhanced our work at the Explosives Control Directorate."

The training provided by UNMAS Iraq has significantly strengthened the capabilities of the Iraqi MoI Explosives Control Directorates nationwide. The introduction of drone technology has not only improved the efficiency and safety of explosive device detection and management but has also contributed to broader public safety and security measures. This underscores the transformative impact of innovative technology in the field of explosive ordnance disposal and community protection.

Minister of Interior receives Chief Mine Action Programme

Baghdad, 15 September 2024 - Mr. Abdulameer Al Shimary, Minister of Interior, received Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) in Baghdad. They discussed UNMAS Iraq's continued support to the Directorate of Explosive Ordnance Disposal at the Ministry of Interior and future cooperation. Since programme inception UNMAS has supported the training of over 5,000 Iraqi MoI officials through 248 training courses. UNMAS Iraq extends its deepest



gratitude to the MoI for the longstanding collaboration over the

years and looks forward to continuing this partnership in the future.

Healthcare

WHO Iraq Representative visits the central WHO warehouse in Erbil

Erbil, 04 September 2024 - WHO Iraq Representative Dr Georges Ki-Zerbo visited the central WHO Warehouse in Erbil, a critical hub that serves all Iraqi governorates, including KRG's Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Duhok. The visit highlighted Who Iraq achievement as a WCO fully implementing WHO integrated electronic warehousing system. This state-of-the-art facility receives and

stores medicines, medical equipment, supplies, and furniture contributed by various donors, ensuring timely distribution to those in need. Together, we're building a healthier future for Iraq!





Erbil, 01 September 2024 - World Health Organization (WHO) Iraq Representative, **Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo**, paid a courtesy visit today to **Dr. Saman Barzangy**, Minister of Health, Kurdistan Region Government. They shared updates on WHO Iraq supported projects in Kurdistan Region.



Sulaymaniyah, 01 September 2024 – WHO Representative in Iraq, **Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo**, shared insights with **Dr Sabah Hawramy**, Director General of Sulaymaniyah Directorate of Health. Dr Ki-Zerbo reiterated WHO’s commitment to supporting health services in Sulaymaniyah. “We discussed the renovation of health facilities, pre-hospital emergency care and combating waterborne diseases.” “Together and with partners we contribute to building a resilient health system that anticipates risks and addresses the needs of all, including refugees and IDPs.”

The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environment hosts a multisector workshop focused on implementing the Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment

Baghdad, 12 October 2024 - With support from WHO, the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environment hosted a multisector workshop focused on implementing the Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment, as well as advancing the Health National Adaptation Plan to be part of the Iraqi national adaptation plan. This training program aims to evaluate how climate change affects the health of populations, identify the most vulnerable groups and regions, and assess the capacity of health systems to adapt to these impacts in order to strengthen the health sector’s capacity



to mitigate the impacts of climate change, safeguard public health, and bolster community resilience to evolving health risks.

WHO Iraq Representative visits Dohuk

Dohuk, 06 September 2024 - WHO Iraq successfully concluded a productive visit to Duhok where Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo, WHO Iraq Representative, met with the Director General of Duhok Directorate of Health, Dr Afrasiab Yones. Discussions focused on various health issues, including the alignment with the Regional Director’s new vision for the EMRO region.

During the visit, WHO team visited the Oncology Center, currently under construction with support from WHO accompanied by Duhok DG. The team also visited WHO-supported Primary Health Care center in Kiberto 2 IDP camp. The center continues to provide essential health services, treating an average of 150 patients daily.

Together, we remain committed to advancing health services in Iraq.



Iraq's landmark achievement in polio transition reaps benefits



Baghdad, 08 September 2024 – Iraq, the first country among polio transition priority countries to achieve the polio transition process in full, continues to reap benefits from its historic success. Its polio programme will now be sustained through domestic financing, marking a significant step forward in Iraq's public health goals.

Last month, Iraq's success was highlighted as part of the Eastern Mediterranean Region's investment cases at two international events, the Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) 50th anniversary ceremony in Cairo and the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) meeting in Geneva.

"Iraq's achievement in completing the polio transition shows the strength of the commitment of the Iraqi health

authorities to a polio-free future. This is not just a victory against polio, it's a victory for every child in Iraq who now has a better chance at a healthy life," said Dr Georges Ki-Zerbo, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq.

Iraq has reduced the number of zero-dose children by more than 50,000, complementing the successful completion of the polio transition process. This is not only a victory over polio, but testament to Iraq's broader efforts to strengthen its health systems. It also highlights the effective role of immunization programmes in safeguarding public health and reducing mortality rates among children under 5 years of age. In 2023, the EPI programme in Iraq prevented

11,034 deaths and is expected to prevent a further 11,663 by the end of 2024.[1]

The health benefits of Iraq's immunization efforts extend beyond saving lives. By preventing disease and reducing mortality, Iraq secures economic benefits as more children grow up healthy and contribute to the workforce. Preventing polio-related paralysis ensures that more people can lead productive lives.

"The completion of the polio transition is a remarkable milestone, not just for Iraq but for the entire Region. This achievement shows that with strong will, adequate resources and collaboration with our international counterparts at WHO and other partners and we can accomplish what once seemed impossible," said Dr. Riyadh Al Hilfy, Director General of the Public Health Directorate at the Iraqi Ministry of Health.

Iraq's success serves as an example to other countries, demonstrating that even in the face of significant challenges public health goals are within reach. The Ministry of Health in Iraq, in collaboration with WHO Iraq, is actively documenting its achievements to inform and guide future public health initiatives.

"This story is about more than defeating polio, it is about Iraq's broader victory in strengthening health systems, improving surveillance and ensuring that every child, regardless of circumstance, has access to lifesaving vaccines," concluded Dr Ki-Zerbo.

"Iraq's resilience and determination in achieving this momentous goal is an inspiration for global health efforts. It is not only a source of national pride but a significant contribution to universal health coverage, health security and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals."

[1] Estimates based on data from Dr Andrew Shattock of the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute.



Baghdad, 11 September 2024 - Productive meeting between **Dr Georges Ki-Zerbo**, WHO Representative in Iraq and HE Ambassador of Algeria, **Djihed Eddine Belkas**, in Baghdad to explore cooperation in health and fostering experience sharing among WHO Member States. Together, we aim to accelerate progress towards Universal Health Care, strengthen Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (PPPR), and place health at the heart of UN SDGs.

WHO joins World Patient Safety Day 2024 marking in Baghdad

Baghdad, 17 September 2024 - The World Health Organization (WHO) joined the Iraq Ministry of Health to mark World Patient Safety Day 2024 [17 September] under the theme: "Get it right, make it safe!". In his remarks, Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo, WHO Iraq Representative, noted: "We reaffirm our continued support to Iraq's healthcare system and express our gratitude for the recognition from the Iraq Ministry of Health".



IOM and the BPRM complete an awareness campaign to prevent non-communicable diseases

Baghdad, 24 September 2024 - IOM and the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration completed an awareness campaign to prevent non-communicable diseases in Ninewa and Anbar to promote a culture of preventive health care and promote healthy lifestyles. Nearly 800 people benefited, with 20% of them referred for further testing.



WHO Iraq Representative attends the meeting and conference of the High Committee on the Antimicrobial Resistance Program Project

Baghdad, 30 September 2024 – Iraqi Minister of Health, Dr. Saleh Mahdi Al-Hasnawi, presided over the conference and meeting of the High Committee of the Project Antimicrobial Resistance Program in the Ministry, in the presence of the Representative of the World Health Organization in Iraq, Mr. Dr Georges Ki-Zerbo, representatives of the Ministry, the General Directors of the Ministry's Center Districts, and a representative from the Doctors' Union. The Minister noted in his speech that "antimicrobial resistance causes large numbers of deaths annually globally, and there is global interest in the antimicrobial resistance control

program." The representative of the World Health Organization in Iraq, Dr Georges Ki-Zerbo, in his speech emphasized the

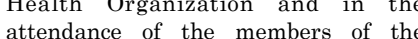
importance of the program and the cooperation between the World Health Organization and the Iraqi Ministry of Health for its success in Iraq.



The Department of Public Health and the World Health Organization discuss the Health Information Management System

Baghdad, 02 October 2024 - The Department of Public Health today held a meeting chaired by the Deputy Director General of the Department, Dr. Asad Mehdi Asad, and in the presence of the Deputy Director General for Administrative Affairs, with the technical team of the World Health Organization and in the attendance of the members of the

essential team for managing the health information system in the department, in order to determine the assigned tasks and responsibilities of the team to ensure the quality of health programs work within the platform of the Health Information Management System.



WHO Iraq highlights the important role played by educational and psychological counseling

Sulaymaniyah, 06 October 2024 – The World Health Organization (WHO) took part in the International Symposium on the Importance and Role of Educational and Psychological Guidance in Society and the Labour Market, held last month in Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The event, which brought together stakeholders from the health, education and humanitarian sectors, focused on the integration of mental health support in primary health care and the educational system, and on developing mental health support for the workforce.

The symposium highlighted the importance of collaborations between WHO and the Ministry of Health, local authorities and non-state actors to enhance mental health services. Such partnerships help embed WHO mental health tools within primary health care services and educational institutions, ensuring that effective mental health support is available across the country. Two Symposium sessions were dedicated to the professional development of university and college educators, underlining the importance of psychological counseling in fostering a healthy and resilient workforce. In the second session, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq Dr Georges Ki-Zerbo reiterated WHO's long-term commitment to integrating mental health into the health and education sectors not just in response to crises but as an essential pillar for rebuilding and stabilizing communities.



“Mental health is central to life and underlines every stage of human development,” said Dr Ki-Zerbo.

WHO Iraq highlights the important role played by educational and psychological counseling

“In collaboration with our partners, WHO is equipping Iraq's health and education sectors with the tools and competencies to address mental health challenges. Our focus on integrating mental health into primary health care and schools reflects our commitment to creating a more resilient and supportive society, ensuring that no one is left behind.”

Drawing attention to the crucial link between mental health and Iraq's broader developmental goals, and with the Sustainable Development Goals in particular, Dr Ki-Zerbo underlined how investment in mental health services is not just about recovery but about reinforcing sustainable societal progress.

He pointed to WHO's successful integration of global mental health standards into local contexts, citing

Iraq's humanitarian and primary health care services, where WHO-supported mental health tools are being used to address gaps and strengthen the capacity of health care professionals and educators, as an example.

“As part of its ongoing strategy, WHO Iraq continues to collaborate with academic institutions and local authorities to advance workforce development in Iraq. Through targeted pre-service and in-service training programmes we are empowering educators and counselors to provide the psychological support needed to foster mental resilience and preparedness in the education system and labour market. My gratitude goes to the authorities in Sulaymaniyah, the event organizers and co-panelists for their efforts and collaboration.”

Workforce development and the utilization of WHO mental health tools have a single goal – to help build a healthier, more resilient society that meets the mental health challenges of today and tomorrow.

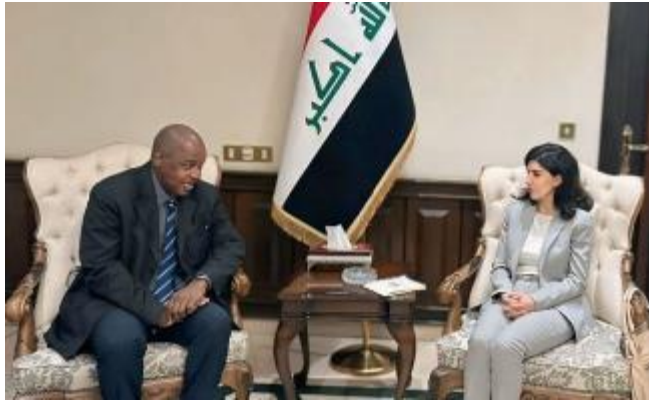
UNICEF on X

Baghdad, 15 October 2024 - Happy Global Handwashing Day - Clean hands are key to protecting the health and future of Iraq's children. Handwashing with soap and water is a simple yet powerful way to stop the spread of diseases like cholera. By promoting good handwashing habits, we're investing in a healthier, brighter future for every child. Let's spread health, hope, and a little soap!

Baghdad, 17 October 2024 - Washing hands with soap and water is one of the best ways to protect ourselves from getting sick!

On the World Handwashing Day, in collaboration with the Municipal Awareness Department of Baghdad Secretariat and the Ministry of Education, we conducted activities to teach children in schools the right steps for washing hands through interactive puppet shows, fun hands-on demonstrations and painting. Let's build healthy habits that last a lifetime!





Baghdad, 9 October 2024 - Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo, WHO Iraq Representative and Head of Mission: "I am grateful for an insightful meeting with Ms. Sara Allawi, Civil Society Advisor to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq. We reflected on the World Health Organization (WHO) cooperation with the Government of Iraq prioritizing health in all policies. We converged on the need to involve all stakeholders including community based organizations and civil society organizations as partners for durable solutions in line with the UNIraq 2030 Agenda."



Doha, Qatar, 16 October 2024 - Dr Hanan Balkhy, Regional Director, World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO EMRO), met with the Iraq Ministry of Health delegation on the margins of the 71st session of the WHO Regional Committee currently convening in Doha, State of Qatar. Enhanced cooperation in line with Iraq's health priorities was agreed.

WHO Iraq on X

Baghdad, 24 October 2024 – On World Polio Day, we celebrate Iraq's resilience in maintaining its polio-free status! Vaccinate today for a healthier and polio-free tomorrow!

UNICEF on X

Baghdad, 24 October 2024 - It's World Polio Day! There is no cure for polio. But you can prevent it. Protect your baby and other children today with the life-saving polio vaccine. Together we can #EndPolio forever.

Iraq joins the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH)

Baghdad, 27 October 2024 - The World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq and the Embassy of the United Kingdom in Iraq, in partnership with the Iraq Ministry of Health, are pleased to announce that Iraq has officially joined the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH)! This significant step marks

Iraq's commitment to addressing the urgent challenges posed by climate change and its impact on public health. ATACH is a global initiative that brings together countries and organizations to develop and implement strategies for mitigating climate-related health risks. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/40k9qw0>



IOM and Kirkuk's Directorate of Health held awareness-raising sessions as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Pink Month

Kirkuk, 31 October 2024 - With breast cancer cases rising in Iraq, IOM and Kirkuk's Directorate of Health held awareness-raising sessions as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Pink Month. Thirty women from IOM-supported centers in Kirkuk and Riyadh joined to learn about early detection and self-care.



Zaynab's story of mental wellness - finding strength and hope

Sulaymaniyah, 16 July 2024 - In Ashti camp for internally displaced persons in Sulaymaniyah, 36-year-old Zaynab Kareem, hailing from Salahaddin Governorate, exemplifies resilience. Married at 15, Zaynab became a mother for the first time at 16 and has now eight children, her youngest being just nine months old. Zaynab's life was filled with hardships, compounded by an unresponsive husband. Married as a child, she was thrust into the role of a young mother while still a child herself. "My mental health was in a terrible state," she recalls, burdened by overwhelming responsibilities that came too soon. Feeling powerless and lacking purpose in her life, she often considered taking her own life. Luckily, she found hope when neighbors told her about mental health support sessions at the camp's Women and Girls Safe Space. Initially hesitant, the positive feedback from her neighbors encouraged her to attend a UNICEF Mental Health and Psychosocial Support session. The warm welcome from the social worker made Zaynab feel comfortable disclosing her case and she decided to give these sessions a try. Zaynab realized she could improve her situation and trust others.

The Path of Healing

Within a day of Zaynab reaching out for help, social worker Rozhgar Akram

took action. Based on Ashti camp's referral pathway, she guided Zaynab towards other specialized service providers renowned for their expertise in supporting individuals in similar situations. After a few sessions, the service providers asked Rozhgar to provide Zaynab with ongoing psychosocial support sessions. Together, they crafted a supportive environment, offering Zaynab opportunities to engage in activities designed to nurture her emotional and social well-being.

Zaynab's healing began with ten individual sessions. "I was breaking dishes at home because my husband didn't care for me," she says. Her sessions provided a sanctuary where she could express her pain and anger. The programme offered more than just support; it represented a chance to regain her mental health and, by extension, her life. The safe space became a place where she could start to rebuild herself. Gradually, her mindset shifted, thanks to the social worker, who reminded her that "Nothing is worth the pain and anger you are going through, and your children need you."

Zaynab also joined group sessions with other women facing similar challenges. The peer support and friendships she formed played a crucial role in her transformation. Seeing others navigate their struggles and emerge stronger



gave Zaynab a new perspective. "Now I'm calmer with my kids at home, and I know they aren't blame for what I was going through," she says. Over time, she transitioned from feeling overwhelmed and burdened to becoming calmer and more self-assured in her role as a mother.

Rozhgar emphasizes the importance of continued care. "We will keep supporting Zaynab," she explains. This ongoing support highlights the crucial role of community and professional assistance in mental health recovery.

Zaynab's journey, supported by UNICEF and funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), demonstrates the transformative power of accessible mental health services, offering hope and resilience to those in need.

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

Changing the narrative on suicide

Baghdad, 11 September 2024 - Changing the narrative on suicide requires policies that prioritize mental health, access to care, and support for those in need.

IOM has helped the Government of Iraq to develop its National Strategy for Suicide Prevention and supports its smooth implementation

"After losing my 16-year-old son to suicide, my family and I founded Azhee in 2019 to advocate for suicide prevention. With IOM's support, we contributed to the creation of the national strategy in Iraq and Kurdistan Region," says Sabah, Yaseen Abdulrahman, co-founder and Deputy Director, Azhee, Action Against Suicide.

"The action plan for implementing the National Strategy on Suicide Prevention will focus on prevention and service provision to people who attempted suicide and their families, as well as families of suicide victims," says Dr Adnan Yassin, National

MHPSS Advisor, Ministry of Health.

"The Kurdistan Region's Ministry of Health, working with federal and local agencies, is tackling suicide risk heightened by displacement, conflict,

and COVID-19 through an action plan and capacity building for competent specialists," says Dr Amer Ahmed, MHPSS focal point, Ministry of Health, KRI.



WHO Iraq Representative message for World Mental Health Day

Baghdad, 10 October 2024 - Dr. Georges Alfred Ki-Zerbo, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq, sent this message on the World Mental health Day:

"Today, we mark World Mental Health Day.

The global scale of the mental health challenge is immense.

In 2019, nearly one billion people worldwide lived with a mental disorder, including anxiety, depression, bipolar and schizophrenia.

Globally, 15 per cent of working-age adults have a mental disorder at any point in time.

This translates to one in six people.

Let us come together today and join in observing this year's World Mental Health Day, together with Dr. Hanan Balkhy, WHO Regional Director EMRO, and Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, WHO Geneva. We do that at the national, regional and global levels.

Shukhran."

Video produced by the Strategic Communications and Public Information Office (SCPIO) of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq."

See it at <https://bit.ly/3CinAUx>



UN volunteer engages in health promotion and community engagement with WHO

Baghdad, 10 October 2024 - Dr. Ahmed Al-Imam, a UN Volunteer works with World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq. On #WorldMentalHealthDay he reminds us that mental health is a fundamental human right that we must protect. "In

a world facing unprecedented turmoil and challenges, I believe that promoting and protecting mental health is a necessity, a conviction further reinforced through my work in health promotion and community engagement with WHO."



UNICEF marks World Mental Health Day

Baghdad, 10 October 2024 - On the occasion of World Mental Health Day, we celebrate Iraqi youth who participated in the Global Innovation Week in Istanbul, where they had rich discussions and shared experiences with young entrepreneurs from around the world. They have demonstrated exceptional creativity in developing innovative social solutions aimed at improving their communities.

Among these distinctive solutions, the Psychar platform, developed by a group of young people in Iraq, is making a real impact. The platform connects patients with mental health professionals and provides advanced services such as appointment booking and access to specialized resources based on geo-site, with personalized

recommendations for personal growth. The platform aims to expand across Iraq, focusing on providing confidential consultations to reduce the social stigma associated with mental health, and encouraging physician participation through flexible subscription plans.

This initiative has won among the Top 10 Global Initiatives in the Youth Innovation Challenge. This initiative is a pioneering step towards reshaping notions related to mental health in Iraq, contributing to building a society that is more aware and understanding of these important issues.



IOM Iraq message on World Mental Health Day

Baghdad, 10 October 2024 - This World Mental Health Day, let's pledge to create supportive work environments for all — migrants, humanitarians, and beyond.

Mental health and work are linked.

This World Mental Health Day, IOM reaffirms its commitment to reducing mental health risks in the workplace,

including for those on the frontlines of humanitarian action.

Creating supportive environments is key to fostering mental well-being.



Refugee volunteer leads the change around mental health in her community



Erbil, 10 October 2024 - Every day, Narmine wakes up with a purpose to improve someone else's day. As a Syrian refugee, she is no stranger to mental health challenges, having witnessed firsthand how issues like anxiety, depression, and anger are all too common among displaced communities. It is this personal experience, she explains, that propels her to break the stigma around mental health.

"Some of the most important work I do is outreach and awareness," Narmine shares, adding that many refugees arrive to Iraq with trauma from conflict they have witnessed back in Syria. Even though many have now been displaced for over a decade, this trauma is still very much real but many who need help, are often afraid to ask for it. Narmine's proactive approach, however, means she goes beyond waiting for people to come to her. Instead, she visits refugees in their homes, offering support and organising group counselling sessions. "If someone is uncomfortable speaking, we arrange for individual sessions or other ways to make them feel safe."

She further explains that one of the most common issues she sees is anxiety, along with postpartum depression. However, with support from UNHCR and its partner, Wchan Organisation for Human Rights Violations, breathing and stress management sessions were introduced, which have been fundamental in helping the community address these challenges before they worsen.

The ripple effect of Narmine's outreach is evident.

"When I visit a household, the next day, it's a conversation in the neighbourhood. That's a big step toward breaking the taboo around mental health. People start talking,

and that's how change begins."

One of the refugees impacted by Narmine's work is Fawzieah, who, after nine years of displacement, still struggled with emotional stress and anxiety. Living in Kurdistan with her eight children, she feared how seeking help might make others perceive her.

"I heard that someone could help me with stress, anger, and depression, but I was afraid people would look at me differently," Fawzieah recalls. Despite her fears, she decided to take that first step and signed up to a group counselling session organized by Narmine and designed specifically to help the Syrian refugees tackle mental health challenges in their community through providing individuals with training on breathing techniques, self-kindness and stress management.

"What helped me the most was realising I wasn't alone", Fawzieah says as she remembers her first group session.

Since that first session nine months ago, Fawzieah has been on a substantial mental health journey. She recalls how the stress of her husband's unstable job and the responsibility of caring for her children used to weigh heavily on her. "I used to come home and pick fights with my family, but I didn't realise how much my anger was affecting them."

In this context, the group support sessions became a lifeline.

Over time, the stigma that once held her back started to fade. "My children used to hear people talking about me seeking help, but I taught them that mental health is just like any other illness—it needs treatment."

Today, Fawzieah is confident in her ability to handle life's challenges with a calmer mindset. "The first ones to notice were my kids," she laughs. "Now, when I come home, they say, 'You went

to the mental health session today, didn't you?'"

A growing movement within the refugee community to address mental health openly and without shame is the ultimate goal. Community workers like Narmine are the key to driving forward this change, with refugees taking the lead in specifying what works best for them and delivering the support needed to their peers.

"One person can impact a community. We all face mental health challenges, but by supporting each other, we can overcome them," Narmine concludes.

In collaboration with the Department of Health and both international and local NGOs, UNHCR provides critical mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services to refugees and their host communities across Iraq. These services equip individuals with the tools to rebuild resilience and enhance well-being.

In 2024, UNHCR has provided nearly 10,000 mental health consultations and has mainstreamed the provision of mental health support into areas like education, child protection and gender based violence. UNHCR continues to work with the Government of Iraq to strengthen mental health provision through the public health system as well as advocate and support refugees to benefit from such services.

UNHCR thanks its major donors of unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Private Donors.

By Hamzeh Almomani and Lilly Carlisle, UNHCR Iraq



IOM responds to Basra’s higher demand of healthcare services

Basra, 24 October 2024 - Faced with the impacts of climate change and conflict, Basra has to deal with a higher demand of healthcare services.

In response, Embassy of Italy in Baghdad and Italian Agency for Development Cooperation - Jordan and Iraq - AICS Amman, and IOM have launched a new project to help address these needs, focusing on mental health and psychosocial support.

This initiative aims to enhance access

to and quality of healthcare services, address drivers of migration and

mitigate the risks of health emergencies.



Environment

Young people demand their active participation in decision-making to co-lead climate action

Baghdad, 02 September 2024 - During the Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) in Iraq, young people demanded their active participation in decision-making to co-lead climate action. The event, led by youth and supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in partnership with UNICEF and the Ministry of Environment, set the stage for COP29 Azerbaijan.

Over 100 young participants engaged in discussions on pressing issues like education, water security, renewable energy, and the health impacts of climate change. The closing session united youth with environmental and climate experts, along with academics

from the Ministries of Youth and Sports and Environment, where they

announced the children and youth declaration to be presented at COP29.



A climate activist from Mosul attends the High-Level Global Forum on Youth, Peace, and Security in Jordan

Amman, Jordan, 03 September 2024 - Maryam Alfakhrey, a climate activist from Mosul, attended the High-Level Global Forum on Youth, Peace, and Security in Jordan, where she emphasized the crucial role of youth in decision-making to ensure peace, security, and inclusion. Supported by UNFPA Iraq in collaboration with UNFPA Jordan, Maryam contributed to a panel discussion on the synergies

between the Youth, Peace & Security, and Climate Agendas.

Maryam concluded her panel with a powerful message: “Adaptation and mitigation measures can’t be decided without involving those who are at the heart of the crisis—youth, women, and the next generation. Youth are the future, and they have the right to reshape it.”



UN-Habitat is adopting a scientific approach to mitigate the impact of sand and dust storms

Basra, 07 September 2024 - September 7th marks the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, and the 2024 call to action is to invest in #CleanAirNow.

In southern Iraq, UN-Habitat is adopting a scientific approach to mitigate the impact of sand and dust

storms by investing in nature-based strategies that will enhance air quality and improve public health outcomes, particularly in reducing respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

This initiative funded by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) under UN-Habitat's

"Improved Resilience to Transboundary Sand and Dust Storms" project, inspire actions towards investing in #CleanAirNow.



Invest in Clean Energy for #CleanAirNow and beyond



Baghdad, 08 September 2024 -Iraq has strong solar potential, and the government is committed to using it,

aiming to generate one-third of the country's electricity from renewable sources by 2030.

UN-Habitat supports this goal by promoting solar energy adoption and providing vocational training to help build a skilled workforce and prepare future generations for sustainable urban development.

Recently, in partnership with the International Labour Organization in Iraq (ILO) and Peace Winds Japan, nearly 150 young people in Mosul and Basra were trained in solar panel maintenance through ongoing projects in those areas.

Investing in education is key to sustainable development, economic recovery, and #CleanAirNow.

UNAMI publishes new analysis report on Climate, Peace and Security in Iraq

Baghdad, 13 September 2024 -Iraq is among the world's most climate vulnerable countries because of its geographic location and existing environmental fragility which interact with socio-economic and institutional factors. While Iraq is enjoying its most stable period since 2003, governance challenges, instability and violence still exist. Climate change has the potential to exacerbate these existing tensions to undermine peace and increase the risk of conflict. This new UNAMI report identifies four primary localised climate, peace and security risk pathways in Iraq. It further proposes

entry points for climate, peace and security interventions and provides recommendations for addressing

climate, peace, and security risks.

Access the report at <https://bit.ly/3Xs0odc>



Iraq unveils a blueprint for a greener future: National Strategy for Environmental Protection and Improvement (2024-2030)

Baghdad, 18 September 2024 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, proudly announce the launch of the National Strategy for the Protection and Improvement of the Environment in Iraq (2024-2030). This strategy marks a critical milestone in Iraq's efforts to tackle environmental challenges and aligns with its national development goals.

Developed through comprehensive assessments of Iraq's current environmental conditions, the strategy provides a roadmap to address pressing issues such as population growth, unsustainable resource use, and regional water management challenges. These factors have contributed to significant environmental degradation, including desertification, loss of biodiversity, and water resource



depletion. The new strategy aims to mitigate these pressures and support vulnerable populations to enhance Iraq's social, developmental, and environmental resilience.

"This strategy has been devised in a way that reflects the high level of commitment of the Republic of Iraq and the official, civil, and local organizations it represents to the global

agenda for sustainable development by working effectively within international fora and global agreements to achieve the required level of environmental protection, conservation of its components, and integration into development plans within the system of sustainable solutions." stated Engineer Nizar Amidi, Minister of Environment. "I extend my gratitude to UNDP and

Iraq unveils a blueprint for a greener future: National Strategy for Environmental Protection and Improvement (2024-2030) *(continued)*

USAID for their financial, organizational, and technical support for preparing the strategy.” added Eng. Amidi.

The strategy’s development involved a collaborative process with national institutions, environmental experts, and civil society, under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment. Iraq is dedicated to strengthening its environmental protection capabilities by integrating sustainable practices across all sectors.

“UNDP Iraq is committed to supporting Iraq’s climate and environment agenda, partnering closely with the Ministry of Environment to advance our shared goals. We are dedicated to ensuring Iraq’s pathway towards sustainable and resilient environmental outcomes, and we are grateful for the crucial support from USAID in this endeavor. Their contribution is pivotal in helping Iraq achieve its climate change adaptation and mitigation targets,” said Auke Lootsma, UNDP Iraq Resident Representative.

“USAID commends Iraq’s advancement

of environmental protection through this comprehensive strategy. It is an important milestone in addressing the environmental challenges that impact the health, livelihoods, and future of the Iraqi people. We are proud of our continued collaboration with the Government of Iraq and partnership with UNDP to foster sustainable development, conserve natural

resources, and enhance the quality of life across the country,” said Erin Mone-Marquez, Acting Mission Director of USAID Iraq.

The strategy will guide Iraq’s environmental protection efforts over the next six years, ensuring that sustainability is prioritized in policy-making, legislation, and the implementation of key initiatives.



United Nations in Iraq mark World Cleanup Day

Baghdad, 20 September 2024 - Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq:

“Today’s first-ever World Cleanup Day highlights the urgent need for us to advocate and adopt economical, sustainable practices to safeguard our planet from unwanted waste and pollution. In Iraq, as with every other country, the work starts with us and the responsibility is on us, individuals and society, to limit waste and pollution that destroys our environment and communities.”

Talented Iraqi artist Ali Jamal illustrates how he recycles plastic, medical, and other waste materials into works of art; creativity through which he encourages young people to apply in their communities to make it a better and healthier place to live in.

A production in collaboration with the Strategic Communications and Public Information Office (SCPIO) of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

Access the video at <https://www.facebook.com/UnitedNationsIraq/videos/422123480901004>



The United Nations in Iraq remains fully committed to supporting Iraq's climate resilience efforts

Baghdad, 22 September 2024 - Climate change in Iraq isn't just a threat to public health; it's reversing decades of development and slowing progress on SDGs. Extreme weather events put millions at risk. At the International Conference on Climate Change and Health Security, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam M. Isaccai, emphasized the urgent need to address these challenges.

Here is the text of the DSRSG/RC/HC Isaccai's remarks at this event:

"Your Excellency Mr. Abdulatif Rashid, President of the Republic of Iraq,

Your Excellency Mr. Qasim Al-Araji, National Security Advisor

Your Excellency Mr. Nizar Amidi, Minister of Environment

Your Excellency Mr. Saman Al-Barazanji, Minister of Health of the Kurdistan Region,

Distinguished Participants

Al-Salmu Alikum and Good morning.

I would like to thank [organizer] for this opportunity to speak at this important International Conference on Climate Change and Its Impact on Health Security in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

I would like to express my gratitude to President Rashid, and National Security Advisor Al-Araji for their leadership and commitment to this critical issue.

The theme of the conference is very relevant to Iraq.

Iraq faces increasing threats from climate change. Extreme weather events—including heatwaves, severe water shortages, sand and dust storms and floods—are affecting millions across the country.

These challenges do not only pose serious risks to public health and population but also reverses decades of development gains and delays



in Iraq's progress to achieve the SDGs. The UN has been working very closely with our government and development partners including CSOs on how to address and mitigate the impact of climate change on vulnerable population in Iraq.

For example, in Southern governorates the UN has launched a transboundary project between Iraq and Kuwait to address challenges related to sand and dust storms through eco-system restoration. Last year, we launched a nationwide 'green spirit' communication campaign, to reach 15 million individuals, significantly raising public awareness on climate change and its impact on health.

We are providing support to farmers to enhance climate resilience of rural communities and support sustainable agriculture practices in drought-prone areas, through the distribution of drought-resilient seeds and modern irrigation tools, including solar systems for irrigation.

We also supported population access to safe drinking water in Basra and established 8 water treatment units in Baghdad and Ninewa benefiting 3.5 million residents and significantly enhancing public health.

Over the next two days, we have a unique opportunity to share our

collective expertise, resources, and experiences and develop practical and effective strategies to protect Iraq's communities from the worst effects of climate change, particularly in the health sector.

This requires improving health infrastructure, establishing early warning systems, and building healthcare systems that are resilient to climate impacts.

The United Nations is fully committed to working closely with the Government of Iraq, Kurdistan Regional Government, and all stakeholders to support these efforts. The United Nations has prioritized environmental sustainability and climate change as an overarching theme in its new Cooperation Framework covering the next five years.

Our support to Basra Climate Conference and the establishment of the Water Task Force and Climate Advisory Group demonstrates our determination to address climate impact in Iraq.

I am confident that the outcomes of this conference will lead to stronger partnerships, new ideas, and practical solutions that will help secure a healthier and more resilient future for all Iraqis.

Thank you."

UNDRR and WFP hold a three-day workshop on Anticipatory Action and Climate Information in Iraq

Baghdad, 24 September 2024 - With UN agency for the Coordination of Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), WFP held a three-day workshop on Anticipatory Action and Climate Information in Iraq. Experts discussed key findings and highlighted the need for cooperation in pursuit of

sustainable plans that mitigate and reduce the impacts of climate on Iraq's food security.



UNDP and Ministry of Environment discuss Iraq's preparations for COP29



Baghdad, 25 September 2024 - The Minister of the Environment, Eng.

Nizar Amedi, met today with the UNDP Resident Representative, Auke

Lootsma. They discussed preparations for the 29th Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP29) that will be held in November in Azerbaijan.

Mr. Lootsma reaffirmed his support for Iraq's efforts in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, expressing the readiness of the United Nations Development Programme to promote cooperation and contribute to the success of Iraq's participation in the COP29 Conference.

The meeting was attended by the technical advisor of the Ministry of Environment, Dr. Amar Jaber Al-Atta and the director of climate change, Youssef Moeed.

World Food Programme is launching its first-ever call for applications in Iraq

Baghdad, 09 October 2024 - Iraq is one of the countries, most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, facing extreme temperatures, unpredictable precipitation, intensified drought and increasing water scarcity. At the same time, rapid population growth, urbanization and inefficient water use by the agricultural and industrial sectors are propelling a demand for more water. The multifaceted stressors have led to further losses of agricultural livelihoods, especially in southern governorates, thus aggravating food insecurity. As Iraq transitions from a humanitarian to a development context after decades of conflict and political unrest, the country is focused on building a strong, home-grown innovation ecosystem that supports a climate-smart and resilient future capable of withstanding the challenges posed by climate change. To address these challenges, the World

Food Programme (WFP) is launching its first-ever call for applications in Iraq. The PALM (Promoting Adaptation through Localized Methods) Iraq Innovation Challenge aims to identify and support local cost-effective

solutions, both low-tech and high-tech, to build resilience and enhance climate adaptation of affected communities.

More information at <https://innovation.wfp.org/palm-innovation-challenge>



UNICEF launches the Net Zero Water Consumption project at Sami Abdulrahman Park in Erbil

Erbil, 14 October 2024 - Today, UNICEF launched the Net Zero Water Consumption project at Sami Abdulrahman Park in Erbil. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism and with the support from the German Development Bank (KfW), UNICEF is teaming up with young people to recycle water for irrigation and protect the environment - building a sustainable water management model that can be replicated across Iraq.



UNDP and USAID Iraq are working together to enhance sustainable resource management

Basra, 20 October 2024 - In Basra, UNDP and USAID Iraq are working together to enhance sustainable resource management and tackle the impacts of climate change in central and southern Iraq.

Through this collaboration, we have equipped 30 farmers in Basra - including three farmers in Al-Zubair - with power systems and water management equipment. These innovations empower them to better access resources, improve farm productivity, and address environmental challenges.



Environmental justice roundtable held in Erbil

Erbil, 13 October 2024 - Providing support in improving legislative and institutional frameworks for environmental justice in the KRI, UNDP hosted community consultations and supported the Kurdistan Regional Government Board of Environmental Protection and Improvement in convening an Environmental Justice Roundtable.

Experts, activists, and stakeholders came together to address critical environmental and climate justice issues in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). During the workshops, participants engaged in in-depth discussions about the region's environmental challenges, explored



potential solutions, and identified key priorities for promoting climate justice. Read more about the National Strategy

for the Protection and Improvement of the Environment (2024-2030) at <https://go.undp.org/oPb>.

UNICEF in Iraq and the University of Mosul, funded by the Dutch government, launch the campaign "Youth for Climate Action"

Mosul, 30 October 2024 - UNICEF in Iraq, in partnership with the University of Mosul and funded by the Dutch government, launched the campaign "Youth for Climate Action" to empower young people as advocates for climate action. Through training and hands-on initiatives for afforestation, students are now better able to foster resilience and sustainability.

"Today, with UNICEF, we enable young people as agents of change", said Dr. Munir Salem Taha, Deputy President of the University of Mosul, "By creating green spaces, like this garden, we are working towards cleaner air and a sustainable future." Nour, 27, said: "I realized how important it is to share what I've learned about climate change with my family and friends. Even the smallest acts can make a big difference to our environment and health."

In this context, Hayat, 23, a final year student at Mosul University said: "Every individual has the ability to make a difference. If we all commit to planting a tree or guiding water use,

together we can make a monumental impact." Through these initiatives, young people are spreading hope and life throughout Iraq!



UNESCO takes part in the Nineveh International Fair

Mosul, 14 September 2024 - UNESCO Iraq participated in the Nineveh International Fair which was held from 9-11 September, where the UNESCO booth showcased the remarkable achievements of UNESCO in its efforts to Revive the Spirit of Mosul as it works to restore the soul of Mosul's historic Old City. UNESCO engineers and the UNESCO Community Center staff were on hand to answer questions and provide insights into UNESCO's ongoing efforts.



UNESCO announces the successful launch of the "Heritage Guardians" program



Baghdad, 15 September 2024 - UNESCO is pleased to announce the successful launch of the "Heritage Guardians" program, featuring 32

young participants from Nineveh. Organized by the Bytna Foundation and supported by UNESCO, the Higher Council for Youth affiliated with the

Iraqi Prime Minister's Office, Al-Noor University, Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, Rehab Nineveh Company, and the Lamassu Foundation, the program is designed to empower youth in preserving their cultural heritage.

The program will deepen participants' understanding of cultural preservation, build practical skills for protecting heritage sites, and cultivate a strong sense of pride in their cultural identity. Through these efforts, we hope to create a generation of dedicated heritage guardians committed to safeguarding their local and national heritage.

A delegation from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation visits UNESCO Community Center for the #RevivetheSpiritofMosul Initiative and Mosul University libraries

Mosul, 22 September 2024 - UNESCO welcomed a delegation from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation to the Community Center for the #RevivetheSpiritofMosul Initiative.

The delegation explored the center's vital role in showcasing and implementing community activities, highlighting UNESCO's efforts in Mosul, and fostering local engagement in collaborative initiatives.

The delegation included Mr. Pierluigi Candier, Economic Development Program Manager, Ms. Monica Pisu, Development Program Coordinator, and Mr. Humam Ghanim, Project Manager for the "Restoring Mosul University Library" Project at UNESCO Iraq Office.

The delegation also met with the Secretary General of the University of

Mosul Libraries, Mr. Sayf Al-Ashqar, together with a number of officials of the Central Library divisions.

They were impressed with the distinguished efforts made by the library staff members of the Central Library and sub-libraries to follow the directives of the President of the University of Mosul and serve the library users. During the visit, the work stages in the Restoration of

University Library Project to update the Central Library technologically were reviewed. It was agreed to continue cooperation between the UNESCO, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Italian Embassy, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, and the Steering Committee to ensure progress of the modernization and automation of the Central Library.



UNESCO continues Training of Trainers programme for the University of Mosul's library staff

Mosul, 03 October 2024 - On 16 September and 2 October 2024, as part of the ongoing Training of Trainers programme for the University of Mosul's library staff, UNESCO and Ulster University conducted two key training sessions focusing on digitization, managing e-collections, and evaluating library services.

The sessions equipped the 20 participants with practical skills for preserving valuable library resources, improving accessibility for the academic community, and assessing the effectiveness and quality of library services in an ever-evolving educational environment.

Led by professional trainers from Ulster's Library, these sessions are

part of the broader capacity-building initiative under the "Restoring Mosul University Library" project. Funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and implemented by UNESCO Iraq in partnership with

the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the University of Mosul, the project aims to revive and modernize the library as a vital resource for education and research in Iraq.



A specialized team of international experts and Iraqi trainees is working on the restoration of the upper base and the shaft of the Al-Hadba Minaret



Mosul, 09 October 2024 - A specialized team of international experts and Iraqi trainees is working on the restoration of the upper base

and the shaft of the Al-Hadba Minaret, using advanced restoration techniques to preserve the original bricks. The team members include (Ayman

Mohammed, Ahmed Faisal, Omar Ahmed, and Ahmed Kamal), who are fresh graduates from the Fine Arts College at the University of Mosul. They state that their participation in the restoration of this historical landmark is a source of pride as it represents the identity of Mosul. They consider the work a valuable opportunity to apply the restoration techniques they learned during prior UNESCO trainings to save such an important monument.

The restoration of the Minaret is part of the reconstruction efforts by UNESCO in partnership with the United Arab Emirates, the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, and the Sunni Endowments.

Restoration of the Al-Tahera Church continues

Mosul, 11 October 2024 - UNESCO's rebuilding efforts go beyond bricks and mortar. In close consultation with religious authorities, we're pioneering sustainable techniques and using eco-friendly materials, like the solar panels on Al-Tahera. This paves the way for a greener, more resilient Mosul.

UNESCO has completed the meticulous restoration of the main altar of Al-Tahera Church, using original Mosuli alabaster blocks salvaged from the rubble. This sacred centerpiece, a symbol of Mosul's resilience, has been fully restored, preserving its historical and cultural significance.



Distinguished guests visit Erbil citadel

Erbil, 29 October 2024 - The UNESCO Iraq team, led by the Head of the Culture Programme, Mr. Junaid Sorosh Wali, and the High Commissioner for Erbil Citadel Revitalization, welcomed H.E. the EU Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Thomas Seiler; the United Nations DSRSG/RC/HC for Iraq, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai; and the Head of the EU Liaison Office in Erbil, Mr. Radu Butum, to the Erbil Citadel, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Their visit underscored the substantial progress made under the EU-funded project, "Support to Livelihoods through Cultural Heritage Development."

This initiative has contributed to revitalizing the Citadel, promoting cultural heritage preservation, and

generating 1086 employment opportunities for Iraqis and Syrian refugees. The distinguished guests expressed appreciation for the remarkable achievements and

commended the collaborative efforts of UNESCO and its partners in preserving this historic landmark for future generations. <https://bit.ly/3NGSp7V>



Education

Drawing dreams: Farah's journey to education

Ninewa, 11 August 2024 - Drawing vivid pictures in her small notebook helps 10-year-old Farah channel her vibrant imagination to escape the hardships she faces. Alongside her two sisters and one brother, Farah's family originally hails from Baaj district in Ninewa governorate, Iraq. Their lives were upended in 2017 when conflict forced them to flee to Syria, where they spent nearly a year at the border. In Syria, Farah's father went missing. The family then endured the harsh conditions of the Al-Hol refugee camp in Syria from 2018 to 2023.

"Life in Al-Hol camp was so difficult," recalls Farah's 35-year-old mother. "The area was not ours; you felt like you were in prison. There was no going out and coming back to the center, even if one was sick, it was too difficult to let

them out. We were constantly afraid for our children."

Upon their return to Iraq in 2023, they stayed at Al Jadaa 1 rehabilitation center for 11 months. "When we came to Al Jadaa center, the situation was different; it was safer," Farah's mother continues.

The Impact of Legal Support on Farah's Family

Farah and her siblings faced another challenge: they lacked identification documents, making it difficult to enroll in school. At Jadaa rehabilitation center, a school was established for the returnees to ensure education despite the absence of proper documentation. However, once they left Al Jadaa center, continuing their education without identification became a significant challenge.

Thanks to the legal support funded by the Government of the United States and facilitated by UNICEF, Farah and her siblings now have the opportunity to continue their education. The legal team diligently worked on the paperwork, transferring them to an outside school. "Now I'm in the second grade," Farah proudly says.

Farah's 8-year-old brother, Adam, also attended school and was in the same grade as Farah. Both siblings had a fondness for the Arabic language and dream of becoming Arabic language teachers in the future.

UNICEF's intervention is pivotal in providing not only legal documents and education but also hope and stability for Farah's family. Their ongoing legal support aims to secure identification documents for the entire family, ensuring a brighter and more secure future; age- and gender-sensitive psychosocial support was also crucial to help them cope with the changes and find their way through.

Through the Government of the United States' funding, and the support and facilitation of UNICEF's dedicated teams, families like Farah's can rebuild their lives, one step at a time, reaffirming that every child deserves the chance to dream.

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

With the support of UNHCR, KRG has made significant strides in including Syrian refugee children and teachers into the public education system in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq



Erbil, 29 August 2024 – UNHCR is excited to announce the opening of a new school that will provide quality education to over 400 refugee and Iraqi children in the area. With the support of UNHCR, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)

has made significant strides in including Syrian refugee children and teachers into the public education system in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. UNHCR's support enabled the distribution of around 34,000 teaching and learning materials to schools,

helping accommodate more students. Additionally, over 390 refugee teachers received training, and more than 7,000 refugee children, parents, and teachers participated in Kurdish language courses.

Furthermore, over 4,000 refugee students benefited from catch-up and literacy classes, and 2,900 students received assistance with transportation costs.

The KRG is committed to expanding this education program to include grades five to 12 by 2030.

All these efforts have been made possible with the support of the Netherlands. Through this partnership, we can continue this vital work, ensuring that both refugee and Iraqi students have access to education and advocating for better ways to include refugees into the education system, fostering a better learning environment for all.

UNESCO and UNICEF and partners hold the first Programme Steering Committee (PSC) for EU funded programme on “Equitable Quality Education in Iraq: Improved Teaching and Learning and Enhanced School Management” (ITALEEM)

Baghdad, 10 September 2024 - Today, UNESCO and UNICEF, in partnership with Ministry of Education (MOE) in Federal Iraq and KRI, held the first Programme Steering Committee (PSC) for EU funded programme on “Equitable Quality Education in Iraq: Improved Teaching and Learning and Enhanced School Management” (ITALEEM). ITALEEM aims to strengthen institutional capacity, school management and civil society engagement in the education sector. The PSC is chaired by the Deputy Ministry of Education for Scientific, and it provides overall strategic guidance for the programme



implementation. The Head of Cooperation, Delegation of EU in Iraq, PMAC and MOE Technical Officials

participated. The PSC took stock of progress to date and approved the workplan for the rest of 2024

UNFPA strengthens the capacity of educational staff to better guide adolescent girls

Baghdad, 12 September 2024 - With support from the British Embassy in Baghdad, UNFPA strengthened the capacity of educational staff to better guide adolescent girls.

By empowering these young girls to tackle essential issues like reproductive health, life skills, and education, we help shape a brighter future.

Through this initiative, 350 female educational counselors and health coordinators have been trained across several Iraqi provinces, benefiting about 21,000 students in schools nationwide.



Syrian refugee teachers bridge the language gap to strengthen education for all in Iraq



Baghdad, 26 September 2024 - While students at the Kobane school in Sulaymaniyah, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), enjoy their summer holidays, classrooms have opened their doors to other types of learners: refugee teachers and parents.

Throughout the summer, Maqboola has been one of about 30 Syrian refugees attending morning language classes four days a week. As their instructor writes new words on the board, the students read and repeat the new vocabulary aloud, filling the classroom with the sound of a new language.

In Syria, Maqboola grew up speaking the Kurdish Kurmanji dialect prevalent among communities in northwest Syrian. After completing her studies to become a teacher, she began her career in her hometown of Kobane, joining the local teaching staff and teaching Arabic curriculum. Her work went beyond just teaching; she played a crucial role in the development of her community by nurturing young minds and empowering the next generation with knowledge.

When she fled to Iraq in 2019 due to armed conflict, her knowledge of Kurmanji helped her navigate daily life in the KR-I. To continue her work as a teacher at the local school, however, she needed to perfect her knowledge of Sorani, the Kurdish dialect most widely spoken in the KR-I and the official language of instruction in public schools.

At the onset of the Syrian crisis, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) set-up a parallel refugee education system, featuring a KR-I specific curriculum and learning materials taught in Arabic by Syrian refugee teachers in refugee-only schools. In 2022 this changed with the launch of the Refugee Education Integration Policy (REIP), which seeks to gradually

integrate Syrian refugee children and qualified teachers into the public education system.

“The curriculum language was changed to Kurdish Sorani, which initially created difficulties both for us teachers and the refugee students, as we were used to teaching and learning in Arabic,” says Maqboola.

To facilitate this transition, UNHCR provides Kurdish language courses to Syrian refugee teachers, helping them improve their ability to deliver quality education to both refugee and Iraqi children in integrated classrooms. Since September 2022, UNHCR has provided language courses to over 40,000 refugee children, parents, and teachers.

Language courses are also available for refugee students to aid their comprehension of the new instruction language, as well as for refugee parents to enable them to support their children’s learning.

“We really benefit from these courses...Now we can read, write, and teach effectively in the Kurdish Sorani dialect. I feel confident in delivering lessons to students,” Maqboola says with determination, her eyes set on the upcoming 2024-2025 academic year.

The realization of the REIP is a joint effort between the Government of Iraq, UNHCR, UNICEF and Save the

Children. It signifies not just an educational shift but a broader social transformation. By empowering refugee teachers, the chance to contribute meaningfully to the education system in Iraq, the initiative benefits both refugee children and the communities that welcomed them, while also creating livelihood opportunities for a more sustainable and inclusive future.

Dilshad Omer, the Director General of the Department of Education of the KRG in Sulaymaniyah states that “As the new academic year approaches, organizations are preparing students and teachers in various locations to learn the language and successfully implement the programme. With strong collaboration with UNHCR, we prepared well-trained staff to facilitate language courses for students and teachers across all schools in Sulaymaniyah governorate.”

The REIP programme has been possible thanks to the PROSPECTS partnership, an initiative spearheaded and funded by the Government of the Netherlands. One of its aims is to seek to further durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons, and the host community in Iraq, including through strengthening inclusion in national education systems.

The success of the REIP speaks for itself. In the 2023-2024 academic, 70 per cent of all Syrian refugee children were enrolled in 1,500 public schools in the KR-I – a 11 per cent increase from the previous academic year.

For teachers like Maqboola, the language classes have also played an instrumental part in allowing them to continue their profession, support their families and gain new skills.

“They hired us as qualified teachers, same as the local teachers. We benefit each other,” she concludes.

By Rasheed Hussein Rasheed in Erbil and Farha Bhooroo in Baghdad, UNHCR



UNAMI on X

Baghdad, 05 October 2024 - Today, on World Teachers Day, we celebrate educators who inspire and guide students in discovering their potential. Despite their vital role, teachers often go unrecognized. In Iraq, UNESCO's ITALEEM, implemented with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, with support from the EU, empowers teachers and strengthens the education system, ensuring they receive the tools and recognition they need. UNESCO calls on you to support and uplift teachers' voices and honor their contribution to shaping the future of education.



Rehabilitating schools, rebuilding the future

Dohuk, 14 October 2024 - Al-Husseinia School is one of the schools UNHCR have rehabilitated in Duhok, and it is now open for displaced students and host communities.

As part of the Kurdistan Regional Government's refugee education integration policy, UNHCR is helping improve and build schools in areas that need it more than others. UNHCR have renovated over 100 schools since 2014.



UNESCO Iraq, the University of Mosul, and the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research visited Ulster University in Northern Ireland to strengthen partnerships

Ulster, Northern Ireland, 22 October 2024 – Today, UNESCO Iraq, the University of Mosul, and the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research visited Ulster University in Northern Ireland to strengthen partnerships and establish long-term collaboration.

During the visit, formal meetings were held between the delegation and various representatives of Ulster University, focusing on key areas of synergy. An agreement was reached to expand current and future collaboration between Ulster University, the University of Mosul, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

The visit included tours of Ulster University's Coleraine, Derry-Londonderry and Belfast campuses, alongside strategic discussions on the partnership between the Mosul and Ulster Universities. This marked a significant milestone in advancing cooperation between the two institutions. Additionally, the delegation, including staff from the Central Library of the University of Mosul have had observation tours and meetings and made new connections

with the librarians from the three campuses of Ulster University.

The visit was organized as a part of a broader initiative to build partnerships between the Mosul University Library and other local and international institutions under the "Restoring Mosul University Library" project. This project is funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)

and implemented by UNESCO Iraq in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the University of Mosul.

We will soon share amazing updates on the capacity-building program for the library staff, developed within the framework of the Partnership Agreement with Ulster University. Stay tuned for more!



IOM and Sesame Workshop foster peace through reintegration in Iraqi schools

Baghdad, 28 October 2024 - In post-conflict Iraq, helping children reintegrate into their communities is essential for long-term peace and social cohesion. With materials developed by Sesame Workshop, IOM launched an initiative in 14 schools across Ninewa, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din governorates to provide children with the support they need to rebuild their lives. Through a combination of catch-up classes, creative activities and infrastructure improvements, this initiative is transforming schools into inclusive spaces where children can thrive.

Children returning from prolonged displacement often lack basic literacy skills and face significant challenges and social stigma due to perceived affiliations with extremist groups and need accelerated learning to bridge the gaps in their education and help them heal and reintegrate. To address these challenges, and in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the programme provided accelerated learning opportunities to uphold their right to education. Through after-school catch-up classes in English, Arabic and Maths, these students can catch up on years of missed schooling and move toward healing and reintegration into society.

Sesame Workshop's well-researched materials enhanced interactive learning, making each activity engaging and effective. These resources helped students stay productive and make new friends. Students read stories that taught valuable life lessons, further enriching their educational experience.

Beyond academics, the programme also emphasized creative and recreational activities like painting, music, sports and gardening. Gulshan, a 10-year-old student from



al-Zab, finds joy in art and thrives in this creative environment. Art activities have a therapeutic effect, connecting children with their emotions. "Art helps me show my feelings," Gulshan says with a smile. Saja, a student with a passion for singing, often performed during music sessions, delighting her classmates and contributing to a positive, supportive atmosphere. "Singing makes me happy and helps me forget my worries," Saja reflects, illustrating how music helps improve well-being and promote community spirit.

Sports were a vital aspect of the initiative, helping children forge new friendships and feel a sense of belonging. Ahmed, a 12-year-old from Shirqat, discovered that playing football during breaks not only kept him active but also introduced him to new friends and taught teamwork. "Football helps me make new friends," he said, highlighting how these moments of camaraderie broke down social barriers between returnees and host community children.

The initiative also recognized the critical importance of improving school infrastructure to support these children's reintegration. Many schools received solar panels, air coolers and water tanks, ensuring a

comfortable learning environment. In Hawija, for instance, the installation of solar panels has made classrooms brighter and more sustainable, allowing students to focus on their studies in a well-lit, cool space.

For children with disabilities, integration into the school system was a priority. Specialized resource rooms were set up to ensure that these students could receive the support they needed, and teachers were trained in inclusive education techniques. A comprehensive needs assessment in Salah al-Din governorate helped identify key barriers to learning for these children, while accessibility audits ensured that schools could accommodate students with diverse needs.

Teachers were central to this transformation, receiving specialized training in modern teaching techniques and child protection, with a focus on mental health and psychosocial support. This professional development enabled them to better understand their students' needs and create a nurturing learning environment. Additionally, local community members, volunteer groups, and civil society organizations played a vital role in facilitating after-school recreational activities, working hard to keep students active and engaged. "We have seen tremendous growth and enthusiasm from our students during this initiative. As we move into the new school year, we will continue integrating these creative and interactive methods into our lessons to maintain this momentum and further support our students' development," Mr. Omar Hassan, a dedicated teacher from Hawija, underscored the intervention's success.

Parent-Teacher Committees were



IOM and Sesame Workshop foster peace through reintegration in Iraqi schools *(continued)*

established to foster collaboration between families and schools. Together, they organized activities like school beautification projects and cultural sessions, which brought the community together and fostered a sense of unity. Supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), over 5,000 students, teachers and parents are now ready to tackle the

new school year with increased empowerment and resilience. By creating safe, inclusive spaces for learning and building bridges between returnees and host community children, the programme is helping to lay the foundation for a more peaceful and unified Iraq and supports the Government of Iraq in the implementation of the National

Education (INES) and National Development Strategies for Iraq. For students like Gulshan, Saja and Ahmed, this programme has offered more than just education support — it has given them opportunity, friendship and a sense of belonging.

By Ahmed Kaka, IOM Senior Communications Assistant

High-level guests visit UNESCO Iraq's EU-funded project at the Erbil Agricultural Vocational School

Erbil, 30 October 2024 - Today, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ghulam M. Isaczai, and European Union Ambassador to Iraq, Thomas Seiler, visited UNESCO Iraq's EU-funded project at the Erbil Agricultural Vocational School. This initiative equips Iraq's youth with essential agricultural skills, linking education with job opportunities for a sustainable future.



Youth

Dreams of an engineer: Yazan's journey to a better tomorrow

Ninewa, 06 August 2024 – Originally from Baaj District, 12-year-old Yazan and his family lived in Mosul when the conflict erupted in 2015. The turmoil forced them to flee, and they suffered a heartbreaking loss—Yazan's father went missing in Ninewa. "The hardest thing in my life is not having my father here with me," Yazan says.

Yazan and his family (his mother, grandmother, and siblings) spent eight years in Al-Hol camp, in Syria. "During those eight years, we faced our darkest days. We endured fear, hunger, and instability," his grandmother vividly recalls.

In 2023, they returned to Iraq, finding temporary solace in Al Jadaa 1 rehabilitation center for 11 months. "Our situation improved at Al Jadaa 1 center", the grandmother says. "It was safe, and we had enough food, but we were still struggling with the instability."

At Al Jadaa 1 center, Yazan attended sessions at a child protection center supported by UNICEF and funded by the United States Government. There, he found more than just safety. "I loved

going to the center to play football and basketball," Yazan says, smiling. "I made friends and had fun. I also learned about hygiene, respecting others, and the importance of education."

Yazan's mother participated in a parenting programme at the center. "The most valuable lesson I learned was to support my children's education," she says. "So, in the future, they can be self-reliant and contribute to the community."

Now back in Mosul, the family lives in a rented house, surviving on the modest income Yazan's mother and aunt earn from harvesting potatoes and making and selling baked goods at home. Despite these financial challenges, Yazan continues his education.

When the family left Al Jadaa 1 center at the end of 2023, Yazan was in the middle of the school year, and enrolling in a new school was difficult without official documentation. However, the child protection center team facilitated his transfer to an outside school and managed the paperwork. The family is

now receiving support from the legal team in the UNICEF-supported programme to secure Yazan's civil documents.

Yazan dreams of a brighter future. "I want to become an engineer and design tall buildings," he says, his eyes shining with hope.

Yazan's journey from darkness to hope is a testament to the strength of a young boy who, despite unimaginable hardships, continues to dream big and aspire for a better future.

By Shahad Butrus Bulbul, UNICEF Iraq

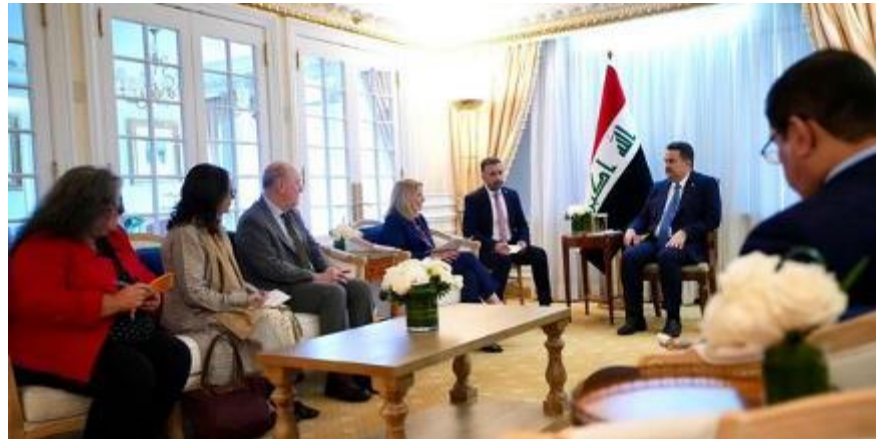


Iraqi Prime Minister receives the Executive Director of the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)

Baghdad, 22 September 2024 – Iraqi Prime Minister, Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, received the Executive Director of the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), Mrs. Catherine Russell.

They discussed children's rights and international laws related to them, and the progress that Iraq had made in these fields.

Prime Minister invited the International Organization to cooperate with the Iraqi private sector in the field of education, and he confirmed the readiness of educational institutions to make the most of the cooperation with UNICEF in these areas.



WFP and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs launch the Youth Economic Empowerment Project in Al-Diwaniyah and Baghdad

Baghdad, 30 September 2024 - World Food Programme (WFP) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs launched the Youth Economic Empowerment Project in Al-Diwaniyah and Baghdad to help vulnerable youth move from social assistance to self-sustaining livelihoods. This is in response to a critical need for employment opportunities in Iraq.



The 1st Academic Child Protection Conference held in Erbil

Erbil, 03 October 2024 - The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Kurdistan Region, in collaboration with UNICEF, Save the Children UK and Save the Children Kurdistan, held the 1st Academic Child Protection Conference in Erbil, focusing on safeguarding vulnerable children including IDPs, refugees, and returnees.



Leading by example!

Basra, 24 October 2024 - Children from Jurf Al-Maleh, Al-Ahrar, and Al-Kubiya—informal settlements in Basra—are becoming role models, leading the way to a more sustainable urban future.

Their schools have embraced the “Make Basra More Beautiful” campaign, which raises awareness about adopting better practices to prevent pollution and set new standards for sustainable living.

Around them, people will find it harder to throw waste in the wrong place without being called out! They’ll encourage their families to use returnable bags and carry refillable bottles, reducing single-use plastics—simple yet impactful changes.

Initially focused on three informal

settlements, the campaign aims to inspire change across all of Basra, creating a ripple effect of positive behaviours.

The “Make Basra More Beautiful” campaign is implemented by UN-

Habitat in partnership with the NGO EADE under the EU-funded project Increasing Access to Employment Opportunities for Vulnerable Urban Populations in Basra City in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis.



UNICEF launches the child-focused benefit pilot in Duhok Governorate

Dohuk, 27 October 2024 - Under the leadership of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), funded by the EU, UNICEF has launched the Child-Focused Benefit pilot in Duhok Governorate! This initiative is part of the EU, ILO, UNICEF and WFP social protection programme in support of the Government. It provides financial

support to Social Safety Net families, and connects beneficiaries to essential services, helping children transition from primary to secondary school.

Dr. Sherzad Hameed Hassan, Director General of the Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs in Duhok, shared:

"We have seen many cases where students leave school due to financial



hardship. The main reason for dropping out is often the family's low income, making it difficult to afford transportation, school supplies, or clothing. I am confident that this initiative will provide essential support, enabling students to continue their education and bring out-of-school children back to learning."

The first round of payments began today and will support more than 1,600 children!

Together, we're creating better opportunities for children and families across Iraq.

Timeline

Message from SRSF for Iraq Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan on UN Day

Baghdad, 24 October 2024 - Today marks a cherished and precious anniversary in the course of nations to end conflicts, spare the generations the scourge of war, and work to build a more secure, stable and developed world.

United Nations Day reminds us of the importance of peace and stability for the good of humanity. We shall not forget those who served in this Organization and those who made great sacrifices to support peace and establish security and prosperity.

The United Nations works to serve people in defusing conflicts and in time of peace, in order to promote sustainable peace, justice and development. In Iraq, this is what we are doing as well: we serve all sectors of society, through sustainable development, support and humanitarian action, as well as through efforts to promote human rights, just as we stood with the Iraqi

people in past times of conflict.

As a founding member of the United Nations, Iraq plays its role in upholding the values, principles and rights encapsulated in the UN Charter which all 193 member states have committed to.

In his UN Day message, Secretary-General António Guterres sums up who we are and what we do. He says: "The United Nations was built by the world,

for the world. Since 1945, it has been the place for countries to unite behind global solutions to global problems."

We all belong to these United Nations. We are proud of this day, and we shall not forget the memory of all those who worked to uphold the name and values of the United Nations, and to defend the security and fundamental rights of all humanity.

Happy United Nations Day.



UNHCR Iraq on X

Baghdad, 24 October 2024 - "On UN Day and beyond, our commitment remains unwavering. Even when hope feels distant, UNHCR stands firm in our mission to restore dignity and safety for those forced to flee their homes around the world."

