

UNAMI Herald

Volume 7, Issue 5

September—October 2020



Hennis-Plaschaert: “My message to all Iraqis on the 75th anniversary of our organization is that you belong to these United Nations as we belong to you”

Baghdad, 24 October 2020 - Message from UN Iraq Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plaschaert on the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations: “Seventy-five years ago, the United Nations were born from the ashes of the Second World War. Iraq was present at this moment, then a young state yet one with an immensely rich history. As a founding member of the United Nations, Iraq played a role in shaping the shared future of humanity.

Like the Iraqi people, the United Nations were not spared the effects of the conflicts that buffeted the country. On 19 August 2003, the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad was devastated by a massive bomb. This was sadly only one of the countless explosions that ravaged the Iraqi capital over the years of conflict, but it impacted the United Nations in a way few attacks did before or have since. Twenty-two of our colleagues were killed and more than 150 were wounded. Among those who lost their lives was my predecessor, the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, Sergio Vieira de Mello. This date remains etched in our common memory.

Through our presence on the ground, the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Agencies, Funds and Programmes, in close coordination with successive governments, helped mobilize international support for the country as it faced many daunting challenges. These efforts continue to this day.

When Da’esh seized large parts of the country in 2014, driving millions of Iraqis out of their homes, the UN mounted an enormous effort to protect, shelter, feed and look after the health of displaced communities and ensure their safe and dignified return after the conflict. Billions of dollars were raised and spent on humanitarian assistance, stabilization, reconstruction and development. Efforts also focused on addressing human rights, justice and



accountability, gender equality and supporting the political and electoral processes, as well as many diverse programmes in such essential fields as public health, the environment, education and sustainable development.

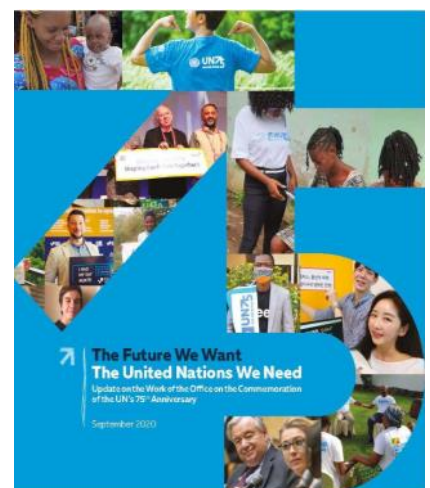
Today, more than ever, we remain strongly united. The World Health Organization (WHO), working hand-in-hand with the authorities from the local to the federal level, is leading UN efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and lessen its impact on the country. Humanitarian assistance to those in need continues. Our electoral team is providing advice and technical support to Iraqi national institutions on the upcoming general elections. Our political efforts continue with a multitude of stakeholders to create an enabling environment that consolidates post-conflict stability, strengthens the economy and invites international investment. Our colleagues advocate for, monitor and report on human rights - including those of children, women, people with disabilities, minorities and other vulnerable groups - and help strengthen government institutions to ensure these rights are realized for all.

Iraqis have contributed immensely to the UN, be it here in Iraq as national staff who are critical to our operations, or internationally, including in senior leadership

positions across the UN System. Iraq today is an active participant in many UN programmes and policies globally.

My message to all Iraqis on the 75th anniversary of our organization is that you belong to these United Nations as we belong to you. Let us continue our shared journey, stepping up our joint efforts to live up to the ideals and principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

Let us reaffirm our commitment to these shared values and remain unwavering in our determination to deliver a brighter, more just and prosperous future for all Iraqis”.



In this edition ...

UNAMI welcomes agreement on Sinjar: a first and important step in the right direction

Baghdad, 9 October 2020 – Welcoming the agreement between the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government on the status of Sinjar district in Ninewa as a “first and important step in the right direction”, UNAMI expressed hope that it would pave the way for a better future. *More on page 6.*

UNAMI facilitated the transfer from Iraq to Kuwait of human remains exhumed in January 2020 from the al-Shaykhayah site

Baghdad, 16 September 2020 – The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) facilitated today the transfer from Iraq to Kuwait of human remains exhumed in January 2020 from the al-Shaykhayah site in Iraq’s Samawah desert. *More on page 11.*

“Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability” virtual workshop held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 29 September 2020 - Twenty-nine young women and men from across Baghdad Governorate participated in a three-day virtual workshop, from 24 to 27 September, to discuss their role in addressing challenges facing their communities. Held under the theme “Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability”, this workshop was the fifteenth in a series organised throughout Iraq by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), in cooperation with the Committee for Coexistence and Societal Peace in the Prime Minister’s Office and the Iraqi Al-Amal Association. *More on page 4.*

SRSO Hennis-Plasschaert decried violence against women as a commonplace occurrence that is most acutely felt in the domestic context

Baghdad, 19 September 2020 – UN Iraq Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert addressed the 12th annual international conference, “Islamic Day to Counter the Violence against Women”, organized by the Al-Hakim International Foundation in Baghdad. *More on page 14.*

UNAMI started publishing “Iraq’s Electoral Preparations and Processes Report”

Baghdad, 4 September 2020 - In September 2020 United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) started publishing “Iraq’s Electoral Preparations and Processes Report”. This report, the first in a regular series to issue on a monthly basis, is prepared pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 2522, adopted on 29 May 2020. In extending UNAMI’s mandate, the Council instructs that the Special Representative of the Secretary General and UNAMI shall: “further advise, assist and support the Government of Iraq and the Independent High Electoral Commission with efforts to plan and execute genuinely free and fair Iraqi-led elections ... *More on page 11.*”

Most comprehensive report to date on women’s participation in political life in Iraq: Challenges and ways to overcome them

Baghdad/Beirut, 1 November 2020– Women’s participation in political processes in Iraq is hampered by many obstacles, despite Iraqi women’s determination to engage in the public sphere. In 2020, Iraq ranked 70th worldwide in terms of women holding seats in parliament. *More on page 18.*

Deputy Special Representative for Iraq visits Ninewa, advocates for increased efforts to facilitate IDP return

Baghdad, 15 October 2020 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, travelled to Ninewa this week to assess the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in protracted displacement and to meet with authorities at local and governorate level as well as community leaders. She reaffirmed the UN’s long-term commitment to support the Government of Iraq in addressing the challenges it faces as it continues its stabilization, recovery, reconciliation efforts and achieving durable solutions, and to ensure that all IDPs have the right to a safe home and to a self-sufficient and dignified life even through voluntary return to their places of origin or settling down in new communities in safety and dignity. **More on page 32.**

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

PIO Director: Samir Ghattas
Editor-in-Chief: Ivan Djordjevic

Editorial Board: Samir Ghattas, Khalid Dahab, Ivan Djordjevic, Laila Shamji, Celia Thompson, Sarmad Al-Safy.

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

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

Power of youth in a peacebuilding virtual event

Baghdad, 27 August 2020 - Today, youth from Colombia, Kosovo and Iraq shared their stories and reflected on the power of youth in peacebuilding during a virtual event - Global Young Change-Makers - conducted by the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, and

the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to celebrate the power of youth in building peace and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic by organizing the first joint online youth platform to share experiences and ideas. The event created bridges of solidarity and union.



The first virtual Steering Committee meeting for IOM's project "Contributing to ongoing stabilization efforts in Iraq by preventing and reducing violence in communities at risk" led to useful discussion



Basra, 10 September 2020 - The first virtual Steering Committee meeting for IOM's project "Contributing to Ongoing Stabilization Efforts in Iraq by Preventing and Reducing Violence in Communities at Risk" led to useful discussions between the guests, united

around the common goal of supporting vulnerable communities in Basra. The need for further conversations on this topic was highlighted, in order to garner interest and involve more segments of society in Basra.

"We hope to see broader programs that include all members of the community in such projects. Given the current economic situation, we need to support unemployed young people as well as the private sector to provide opportunities," said Abdulla Salim, Head of the al Hejaj tribe, during this meeting.

"The overall objective of this IOM's project is to provide space for local conflict resolution and prevention and to reduce local sources of violence," said Sarah Arafa, IOM Iraq Program Officer.

"Our approach is to contribute to economic recovery and community

resilience through access to decent work, job creation and enterprise development at the individual, community and institutional levels," said Aws Ezzi, Return and Recovery Basra Field Officer for IOM Iraq.

Muhannad al-Saad, Deputy Governor for Sports and Youth Affairs, delivered the opening speech. He explained the ongoing projects in Basra Governorate and highlighted cooperation with IOM Iraq to train youth leaders and train the unemployed.

"We are very pleased to cooperate with IOM Iraq on this new project in Basra. "We now have a goal to harness international efforts to support Basra's youth and women," he added.

Participants from the local government, community police, youth and sports representatives, activists, journalists, international and NGOs took part in the conference.

IOM Iraq train youth to promote local solutions to sustainable peace

Baghdad, 15 September 2020 - In Baghdad IOM Iraq recently held a workshop on "Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding Skills" for 10 participants from Al-Saadiyah sub-district, Diyala Governorate. The workshop also focused on encouraging youth to participate in activities to spread peace and support humanitarian initiatives.

"The information and discussions presented during the workshop will be useful to the rest of the community because they are positive and useful in many areas of life. [We talked about] participation and cooperation, respect for all opinions, tolerance and love," said Donia Faisal who returned to Al-Saadiyah after two years in displacement. This workshop was funded by European Commission.

On 16 September 2020 IOM Iraq, in coordination with Nonviolent Peaceforce, organized a workshop about developing sustainable peace in Alyadiyah in Tel

Afar District, Ninewa Governorate. During the workshop, overseen by the Mayor of Alyadiyah, members of local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Youth Volunteer Groups shared their thoughts and discussed how they can engage their communities to play an active part in achieving sustainable peace. This event was funded by the Government of Japan.

In July IOM Iraq started delivering a training package focused on leadership, peace building and community engagement for 10 CSOs and youth groups in Semel, Duhok Governorate. The training aims to develop skills that the participating groups can then use to design and implement two-month initiatives in their communities to promote local solutions to sustainable peace. As part of the training package, IOM planned to hold in-kind support sessions to guide the CSOs and youth groups in developing procurement and

recruitment processes for their own projects. Due to restrictions put in place to limit group gatherings and slow the spread of COVID-19, the sessions were held online.

This activity was funded by European Commission - Development & Cooperation - EuropeAid. Commission.



“Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability” virtual workshop held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 29 September 2020 - Twenty-nine young women and men from across Baghdad Governorate participated in a three-day virtual workshop, from 24 to 27 September, to discuss their role in addressing challenges facing their communities. Held under the theme “Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability”, this workshop was the fifteenth in a series organised throughout Iraq by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), in cooperation with the Committee for Coexistence and Societal Peace in the Prime Minister’s Office and the Iraqi Al-Amal Association. It was the first such workshop to be held online, due to the current health crisis. During training sessions, the group used interactive online tools to discuss challenges they identified as important. These included youth employment, recruitment processes and ways to foster job creation within the private sector; young people’s political empowerment and ways to enhance their role in decision-making, in particular ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections; state control of weapons; protection of women; and public service provision. During the closing session on 27 September, workshop participants had an opportunity to share their views and



conclusions with local officials, including Deputy Governor of Baghdad Ali Ahmed Al-Ethawi and representatives from the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Committee for Coexistence and Societal Peace in the Prime Minister’s Office, in the presence of the United Nations Deputy Special Representative for Iraq, Alice Walpole.

Ms. Walpole encouraged participants to speak their mind and contribute their ideas on how to overcome the challenges facing Iraq, especially

against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and its double health and financial burden on the country. “Empowering young people, supporting them, and ensuring they can fulfil their potential is important in every society. If we are to create a more peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Iraq, we need you as partners and leaders,” she said.

The activity is in line with UNAMI’s mandate to support youth and their valuable contributions to Iraqi public life.

“Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability” virtual workshop held in Misan

Amara/Baghdad, 19 October 2020 - Under the theme “Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability”, thirty young women and men from across Misan Governorate have just participated in a three-day workshop to discuss their role in addressing challenges facing their communities. The sixteenth such workshop, and the second to be held online due to the ongoing health crisis, was organised by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), in cooperation with the Committee for Coexistence and Societal Peace in the Prime Minister’s Office and the Iraqi Al-Amal Association. During the training sessions, the group used interactive tools to discuss a number of issues they identified as important. These included: fostering young people’s political empowerment and enhancing their role in decision-making, in particular ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections;

overcoming tribal conflicts; improving employment and investment opportunities, including in the tourism and alternative energy sectors; asserting state control over weapons; protecting women from domestic violence; preventing the spread of drugs among youth; and providing better public services.

During the closing session on 18 October, workshop participants had an opportunity to share their views and conclusions with local officials, including Members of Parliament, the Director of Youth & Sport in Misan and representatives from the Committee for Coexistence and Societal Peace in the Prime Minister’s Office, in the presence of the United Nations Deputy Special Representative for Iraq, Alice Walpole.

Ms. Walpole encouraged participants to speak their mind and contribute their ideas on how to overcome the challenges facing Iraq. “This is a tense and complex period for Iraq. The

outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic... has exacerbated pre-existing social, economic, environmental and security challenges”, she said. “Young people have demonstrated their resilience in times of crisis. The catalytic energy that young people can bring to resolving political or social deadlock should not be underestimated. You are a source of innovation, ideas and solutions,” she added.



IOM Iraq brings high-level governmental officials and tribal leaders together for a training focused on community engagement in Basra Governorate

Basra, 20 October 2020 - Today IOM Iraq launched its first capacity building workshop (20-22 October) for high-level governmental officials and tribal leaders in Basra governorate. The 3-day workshop aims at enhancing the capacities of Basra's decision makers on topics like human rights, internal displacement, mediation, peace building, counter violence and community engagement. IOM Iraq is one of the first actors to bring high-level governmental officials and tribal leaders together for a training of this kind, focused on community engagement in Basra Governorate. This workshop was funded by the European Commission.

On the second day of IOM Iraq's capacity building workshop participants discussed community engagement; the relationship between local government and citizens;



empowering people with disabilities; efforts (such as negative tribal and obstacles to community stability

traditions).

“Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability” virtual workshop held in Muthanna

Baghdad/Samawa, 28 October 2020 - Under the theme “Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability”, twenty-nine young men and women from Muthanna Governorate had the opportunity to discuss the challenges facing their communities at a three-day virtual workshop on 22, 23 and 27 October. This was the seventeenth in a series of workshops organised by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), in cooperation with the Committee for Coexistence and Societal Peace in the Prime Minister's Office and the Iraqi Al-Amal Association. Due to the ongoing health crisis, it was the third workshop in the series to be held online.

Fifteen young women and fourteen young men from various parts of the Governorate attended the training sessions and used interactive tools to discuss a number of issues they identified as important. These included: enhancing the role of youth in decision-making processes; fostering young people's economic empowerment; improving local employment and investment opportunities; promoting the tourism sector in Muthanna; asserting state control over weapons; overcoming tribal tensions and providing better public services.

At the closing session on 27 October,



workshop participants had an opportunity to share their views and conclusions with local officials, including the First Deputy Governor Sami Ni'ma, MP Adnan Al-Asadi, the Director of Youth & Sport in Muthanna and representatives from the Committee for Coexistence and Societal Peace in the Prime Minister's Office, in the presence of the United Nations Deputy Special Representative for Iraq, Alice Walpole.

Ms. Walpole encouraged participants to speak their mind and contribute their

ideas on how to overcome the challenges facing Iraq, especially in light of the upcoming elections. “Young people leading the public demonstrations for national reform over the past year have initiated fundamental political and social change in Iraq. [...] The United Nations supports you in your demands for meaningful reform and sustainable development. The catalytic energy that young people can bring to resolving political or social deadlock should not be underestimated,” she said.

UNAMI welcomes agreement on Sinjar: a first and important step in the right direction

Baghdad, 9 October 2020 – Welcoming the agreement between the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government on the status of Sinjar district in Ninewa as a “first and important step in the right direction”, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) expressed hope that it would pave the way for a better future.

Sinjar witnessed horrific ordeals and heinous crimes committed by Da’esh (ISIL) against the Yazidis in 2014.

Since the military defeat of Da’esh, victims and survivors have faced obstacles due to discord on security arrangements, public service provision and lack of a unified administration.

The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, hoped that the agreement would usher in “a new chapter for Sinjar, one in which the interests of the people of Sinjar come first” and that it would “help displaced people to return to their

homes, accelerate reconstruction and improve public service delivery. She cautioned that “for that to happen, stable governance and security structures are urgently needed”.

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert emphasized continued UN support to help normalize the situation in the district, and concluded: “Against all odds and in their darkest hour, the people of Sinjar remained determined to build a better future. May that future begin today”.

UNAMI on Twitter

Baghdad, 2 October 2020 - Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert: "Recalling the

start of public protests one year ago, we emphasise that further action is needed to deliver justice and accountability. As we remember the brave Iraqis who lost

their lives, we praise the resilience of those who are not giving up, who continue to push for change".

Baghdad, 2 October 2020 - The impartiality and independence at the heart of the United Nations mandate

mean that we engage with a wide variety of stakeholders in the pursuit of peace. Our work in Iraq is no exception.

Dialogue is the only solution. Intimidation, violence are never the way forward.

Baghdad, 6 October 2020 - Reports of an interview with the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine

Hennis-Plasschaert, in a German magazine are entirely fabricated and baseless. There was no such interview. We call on the public and the media not

to be misled by such misinformation and to rely on official UN communication channels.

Baghdad, 17 October 2020 - We express our grave concern about burning of Kurdistan Region flag and

attack on KDP offices in Baghdad today. Acts of violence and intimidation (never a solution to disagreement!) are

to be condemned. Iraq needs unity, stability and dialogue to tackle its many problems.

Baghdad, 18 October 2020 - Appalled at wanton killing of 8 men in Salah al-Din. Our hearts go out to the victims'

families. We urge all parties to support government investigation to hold the perpetrators accountable. Immediate

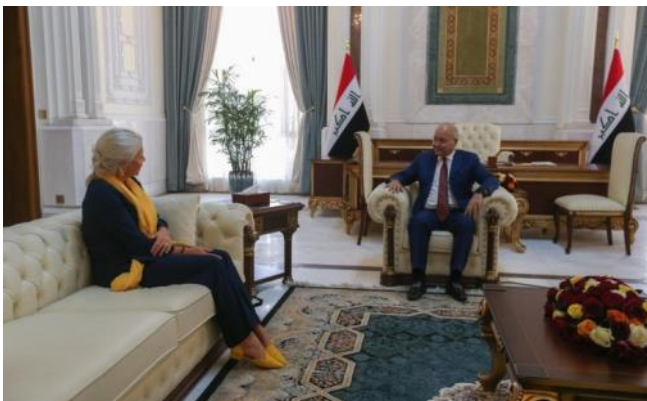
efforts should focus on securing the safe release of the 4 men still missing.

Baghdad, 25 October 2020 - Powerful expression of solidarity and patriotism today by Iraqis who demand justice and

wish to build a more stable, prosperous future. A year to remember the brave souls lost, to learn from them the power

of peaceful change.

Political Consultations



Baghdad, 1 September 2020 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, was received today by the President of the Republic of Iraq, H.E. Mr. Barham Salih. They discussed current political, health, security and humanitarian situation in the country, including preparations for the forthcoming early elections.
Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Iraqi Presidency.



Baghdad, 1 September 2020 - Mr. Paolo Fontani, Director of UNESCO in Iraq, and Mr. Martin Huth, EU Ambassador in Iraq, met with the Minister of Culture, Dr. Hassan Nazim, to discuss a number of joint projects, mainly the reconstruction of the two old cities in Mosul and Basra.

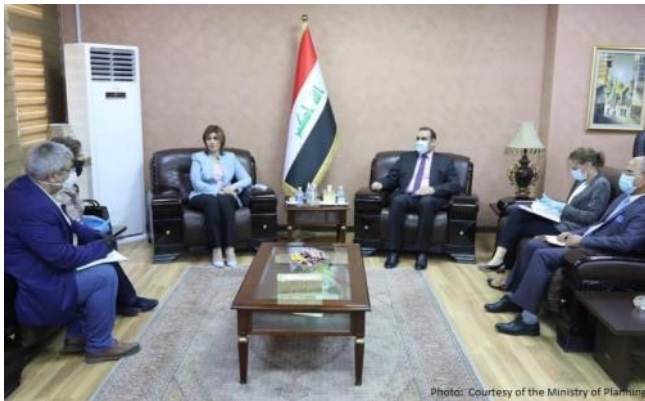
Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Culture.



Baghdad, 2 September 2020 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Baghdad with the President of the Kurdistan Region, Mr. Nechirvan Barzani. They discussed the current political, health, security and humanitarian situation in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, including Baghdad-Erbil relations.
Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the KR Presidency.



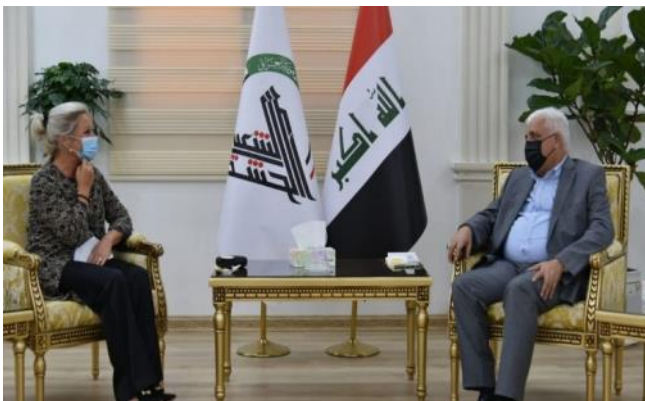
Baghdad, 3 September 2020 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Baghdad with Mr. Lahur Talabany, Co-President of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). They discussed the current political situation in the Kurdistan Region, including Baghdad-Erbil relations.



Baghdad, 3 September 2020 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq/Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator, Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, met today with the Minister of Planning, Dr. Khalid Battal al-Najm, and the Minister of Migration and Displacement, Ms. Ivan Fa'iq. Among other issues, they discussed humanitarian situation and the ongoing challenge of population displacement. Both parties (the United Nations family in Iraq and the Government of Iraq) agreed to continue working together to ensure that long term durable solutions are found to address the challenge of displacement in the country. It was further agreed that, the government of Iraq will work closely with the United Nations to develop a joint comprehensive plan which will guide the durable solution process.
Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Planning.



Baghdad, 6 September 2020 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, was received today in Baghdad by the Prime Minister, Mr. Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. They discussed the current political and security situation in Iraq including preparations for early elections.
Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Prime Minister



Baghdad, 6 September 2020 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the head of the Popular Mobilization Authority, Mr. Faleh Al-Fayyad. They discussed the current political and security situation in Iraq including fight against terrorism.
Photo courtesy of PMA.



Sulaymaniyah, 13 September 2020 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, was received today in Sulaymaniyah by the President of the Republic of Iraq, Mr. Barham Salih. They discussed the current political and security situation in the country, including preparations for the forthcoming early elections.
Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Iraq Presidency.



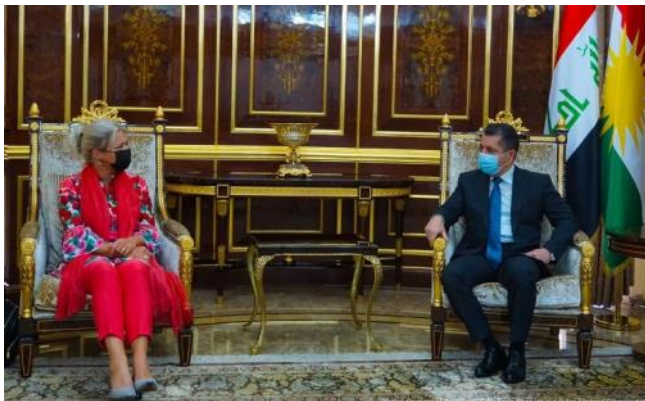
Najaf, 13 September 2020 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, was received today in Najaf by His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Al-Sistani.

Photo courtesy of the Office of His Eminence Al-Sistani.



Erbil, 15 September 2020 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the President of the Kurdistan Region, Mr. Nechirvan Barzani. They discussed the current political and security situation in Iraq and the region, including forthcoming early elections and Baghdad-Erbil relations.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the Kurdistan Region Presidency.



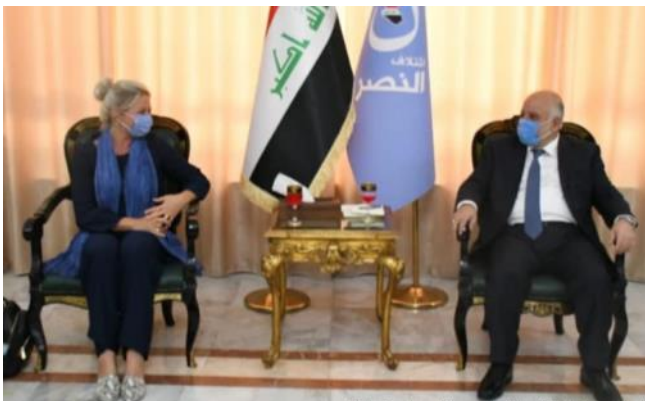
Erbil, 15 September 2020 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with Kurdistan Region Prime Minister, Mr. Masrour Barzani. They discussed the current political, security and humanitarian situation in Iraq and the region, including forthcoming early elections, voluntary return of internally displaced persons, and Baghdad-Erbil relations.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the KRG Prime Minister.



Erbil, 15 September 2020 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, Mr. Masoud Barzani. They discussed the current political and humanitarian situation in the Kurdistan Region.

Photo courtesy of KDP.



Baghdad, 16 September 2020 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with former Prime Minister, Dr. Haider Al-Abadi. They discussed the current political and security situation in the country, including preparations for the upcoming elections.

Photo courtesy of the media office of Dr. Al-Abadi.



Baghdad, 17 September 2020 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Baghdad, Iraj Masjedi. They discussed the latest developments on the Iraqi scene.



Baghdad, 19 September 2020 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, was received today in Baghdad by Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, Mr. Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. They discussed cooperation on early elections as well as the file of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).
Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Prime Minister.



Baghdad, 22 September 2020 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Baghdad with Sayyed Ammar Al-Hakeem, Head of the Al-Hikma National Movement. During the meeting, they discussed the political situation in the country and preparations for early elections.
Photo courtesy of the Office of Sayyed Ammar Al-Hakeem.

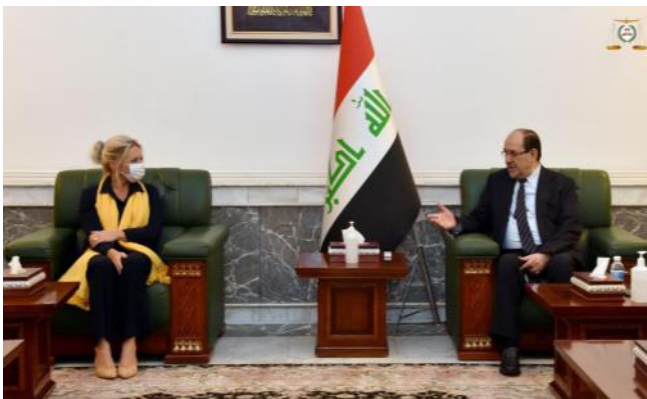


Baghdad, 29 September 2020 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, met today with the Minister of Planning, Dr. Khalid Battal al-Najm. During the meeting, the participants discussed potential future cooperation on Durable Solutions and returnees. The meeting emphasized the continued fruitful collaboration between the United Nations, the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Displacement and Migration, and was also attended by the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme and the Officer-in-Charge of the International Organization for Migration in Iraq.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Planning.



Baghdad, 30 September 2020 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Baghdad with Mr. Qassim Al-Araji, National Security Adviser for the Republic of Iraq. During the meeting, they discussed matters concerning the internally displaced persons in the country and priorities for safe, voluntary and dignified returns to places of origin.
Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the National Security Adviser.



Baghdad, 1 October 2020 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Baghdad with Mr. Nouri Al-Maliki, Head of the State of Law coalition. During the meeting, they discussed the political and security situation in Iraq and in the region.
Photo courtesy of the media office of Mr. Al-Maliki.



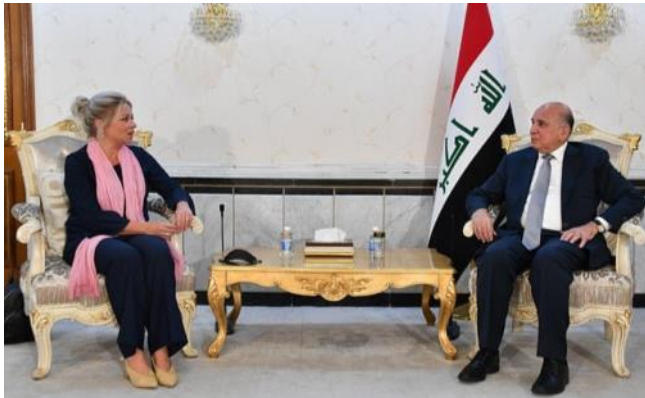
Baghdad, 4 October 2020 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Baghdad with Mr. Osama al-Nujaifi, Head of the Al-Qarar Aliraqi Coalition. They discussed the latest political and security developments in the country, as well as the upcoming early elections.
Photo courtesy of the media office of Mr. Al-Nujaifi.



Baghdad, 5 October 2020 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, was received today in Baghdad by His Excellency Dr. Barham Salih, President of the Republic of Iraq. They discussed the current political situation in the country, including preparations for the forthcoming early elections. Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Iraqi Presidency.

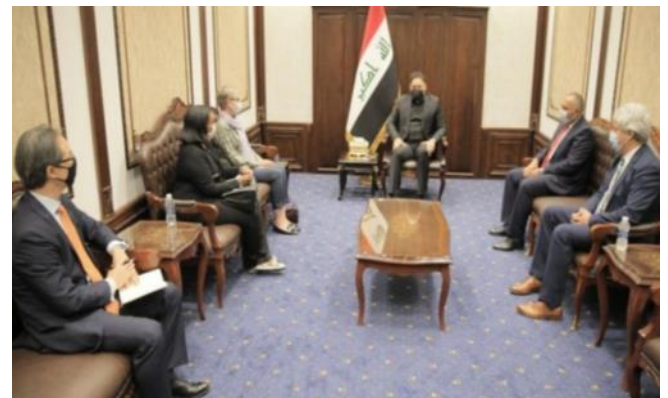


Basra, 5 October 2020 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, met today with the Governor of Basra, Mr. Asaad Al-Eidani, to discuss the United Nations impact in Basra and the current challenges faced by communities.



Baghdad, 7 October 2020 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met in Baghdad with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, Mr. Fuad Hussein. They discussed the current political and security situation in Iraq as well as preparations for the upcoming elections.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Baghdad, 19 October 2020 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Alice Walpole, met with the First Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Mr. Hassan Karim Al-Kaabi. They discussed the various pieces of draft legislation currently before the Council of Representatives, including ongoing developments on the electoral law.

Security

Statement by the United Nations in Iraq in light of a recent incident involving the detonation of an improvised Explosive Device as a UN humanitarian convoy passed by on a road in Ninewa Governorate

Baghdad, 05 September 2020 - In light of a recent incident involving the detonation of an improvised Explosive Device (IED) as a UN humanitarian convoy passed by on a road in Ninewa Governorate, injuring a staff member and damaging the vehicle, the United Nations wishes to reiterate the following:

- The United Nations serves all people in Iraq guided by the principles of impartiality and the common good. The UN is present in Iraq at the request of the Government of Iraq, with whom it cooperates and coordinates closely. Our mandated activities provide critical humanitarian, political,

electoral, human rights and development support which benefits all people across the country.

- Iraq is a founding member of the United Nations Organization. We carry out our work in Iraq in full cooperation and coordination with local, regional and national authorities, and in full compliance with applicable laws. United Nations staff are guided by and bound to the ideals and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. These include neutrality, impartiality and integrity. All United Nations staff must comply with strict rules governing operational activities and individual actions, and all UN assets are used exclusively to carry out

the mandate of the United Nations. Any claims of UN bias towards other organizations or individual member States are entirely baseless. These false claims harm the very Iraqis that the United Nations seeks to help.

- The UN in Iraq provides life-saving support to the people in Iraq, including the displaced and refugees, and other vulnerable segments of the population. To this day, millions of people continue to benefit from these services, with billions of dollars spent in Iraq on UN-sponsored programmes. Many diverse communities crucially depend on humanitarian assistance at this critical time of pandemic.

UNAMI facilitated the transfer from Iraq to Kuwait of human remains exhumed in January 2020 from the al-Shaykhiyah site

Baghdad, 16 September 2020 – The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) facilitated today the transfer from Iraq to Kuwait of human remains exhumed in January 2020 from the al-Shaykhiyah site in Iraq's Samawah desert. The human remains

were transferred from the Republic of Iraq to the State of Kuwait aboard a UNAMI aircraft. The handover was conducted under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) whose staff were present on the flight from Baghdad to Kuwait.

UNAMI facilitated the transfer in line with its mandate established by the Security Council resolution 2107 (2013), related to missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives.



Electoral

UNAMI started publishing “Iraq’s Electoral Preparations and Processes Report”

Baghdad, 4 September 2020 - In September 2020 United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) started publishing “Iraq’s Electoral Preparations and Processes Report”. This report, the first in a regular series to issue on a monthly basis, is prepared pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 2522, adopted on 29 May 2020. In extending UNAMI’s mandate, the Council instructs that the Special Representative of the Secretary General and UNAMI shall: “further advise, assist and support the Government of Iraq and the Independent High Electoral Commission with efforts to plan and execute genuinely free and fair Iraqi-led, Iraqi-owned elections and referenda, including through regular technical reviews and detailed reporting on electoral preparations and processes, as part of the Secretary-General’s regular reporting cycle.”

First edition covers the following topics:

- Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) Board of Commissioners provide updates to the Prime Minister and Speaker on electoral preparations.
- Finalization of the electoral operational plan and commencement of IHEC preparatory activities.
- Status of recruitment of IHEC Directors General and heads of

departments/sections.

IHEC Commissioners requested UN support for further capacity development activities within IHEC, in particular, for its newly appointed officials. The IHEC CEO raised the need for induction training to familiarise IHEC officials with organisational goals and framework, values, structure of the Commission and international principles and best practice on elections. The CEO also sought assistance in building capacities on operations, logistics and civic voter education, among other priorities. UNAMI confirmed that capacity building, together with support for IHEC’s technical preparations for early elections, are the two focal areas for UN electoral assistance.

September report is available at https://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&task=download&id=3884_1a15967642dce22975506a2d118641f&Itemid=738&lang=en

Highlights in the October edition (covering activities in September 2020) of the Report include:

- Continued lack of political agreement on the content of technical annexes to the electoral law, with Parliament suspending deliberations until 10 October.
- IHEC moves forward with preparations but continues to face

significant challenges in the absence of a finalized electoral law, lack of clarity on the electoral budget, and continuing staffing gaps.

As in previous elections, IHEC intends to issue invitations through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for international partners to observe the upcoming elections. UNAMI furnished IHEC with a list of international organisations established in election observation. IHEC formed a committee on electoral observation, which is now working to finalise accreditation procedures and a code of conduct for international observers.

Following discussions between UNAMI and IHEC on the potential impact of COVID-19 on the upcoming elections, IHEC has decided to form a committee (with UNAMI participation) to map out strategies and measures that can be adopted at all stages of electoral preparations to mitigate the potential impact of the ongoing pandemic. Lessons from other countries which have recently held elections under pandemic circumstances will be harnessed as IHEC develops its voter registration, vote counting and other procedures for the elections.

October report is available at https://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&task=download&id=3949_e8f2d6723fda47d233c10bcbf8a183f9&Itemid=738&lang=en



Erbil, 23 August 2020 - UN Women representative in Iraq and Yemen, Ms. Dina Zorba, held a meeting today with the Secretary General of the High Council of Women Affairs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Dr. Khanzad Ahmad. The two discussed cooperation between UN Women and the council and means of supporting the council's work in empowering women in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Photos courtesy of High Council of Women Affairs.



Erbil, 24 August 2020 – The Minister of Internal Affairs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Mr. Rebar Ahmed, received UN Women Representative in Iraq and Yemen, Ms. Dina Zorba, for talks on the status of women in the region as well as protection of women during times of conflict. The meeting, attended by Secretary General of the High Council of Women Affairs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Dr. Khanzad Ahmed, tackled steps needed to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women peace and security and the endorsement of the second National Action Plan on the resolution. The minister voiced support for efforts to implement the resolution and to offer all needed protection for women.

Women’s participation critical to ending corruption in Iraq: New forum launches today

Baghdad, 3 September 2020 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq, is today launching Iraq’s first-ever anti-corruption forum for women, highlighting the integral role women play in combating corruption in the country.

The Women Against Corruption forum brings together 35 academics and activist Iraqi women from the government, civil society and the private sector across the country to elevate the participation of women in anti-corruption measures for the socio-economic development of Iraq.

As part of its commitment to achieving gender equality under Agenda2030, UNDP supported the establishment of the forum, providing group members with technical support to identify ways to engage young women in the fight against corruption, and develop an awareness-raising campaigns targeting the general population.

The forum takes a grassroots approach, placing community at its core and actively involving individuals - men and women - in the process of fighting corruption.

“In Iraq, most anti-corruption measures focus on governmental institutions, while the role of the community, civil society and the private sector remain secondary. If the country is to succeed in its fight against corruption, it should invest in the community as a whole,” says Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad.



“Corruption exacerbates gender inequalities. As primary caretakers of their households and communities, women experience corruption in their everyday lives. Understanding corruption at a grassroots level, from the perspective of women, and highlighting their critical role in addressing misuse of power is central to preventing and reducing corruption in Iraq,” she adds.

Prior to the forum’s launch, members undertook research that revealed the most prevalent forms of corruption in Iraq from the perspective of women. The research also revealed that the most common obstacles preventing

women from reporting corruption included a lack of confidence in the party receiving the reports, and a fear of reprisals from the reporting agency.



Safe space for women and girls reopened in Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 4 September 2020 - The Women Leadership Institute (WLI) reopened its safe space for women and girls in Kirkuk, 238 kilometers north of Baghdad, on 16 August 2020 as part of the activities of the “Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) project in Iraq”. WLI said in a statement that the reopening of the safe space aims to provide support for women refugees, host communities and IDPs inside and outside the camps in Kirkuk

governorate. It said this it will work to create livelihood opportunities by providing business skills training, and at the same time providing protection services including psychosocial and legal support.

The project is implemented with support by UN Women through generous funding by the Japanese government with the aim of giving beneficiaries access to economic opportunities, protection mechanisms and empowerment support.



First Lady of Iraq participated in a webinar related to the second Iraq National Action Plan (INAP) for the implementation of UNSC resolution 1325

Baghdad, 4 September 2020 - In observance of the 20th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, the Iraq Foundation held a webinar to discuss issues related and the second Iraq National Action Plan (INAP) for the resolution. The meeting, which was attended by Iraqi First Lady Dr. Sarbagh Salih, was held in cooperation with UN Women, the Department of Women Empowerment at the Council of Ministers Secretariat, Parliament’s Women Committee, the Caucus of Iraqi Women Parliamentarians and with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

(SIDA). It was also attended by several women parliamentarians as well as

international experts in the field of women, peace and security.



The Women and Girls Safe Spaces Center has been inaugurated in Ramadi city

Baghdad, 08 September 2020 - The Women and Girls safe spaces center has been inaugurated in Ramadi city, the provincial capital of Al Anbar governance on 27 August 2020. The Center is part of the Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) project in Iraq implemented by Women Leadership Institute with UN Women and funded by the Japanese Government.

The project aims at supporting, educating and raising awareness amongst girls and women about violence and abuse and how to address them, as well as empowering them economically by building their capacities and boosting their skillsets; increasing their opportunities to secure a decent job.

Managed by Baghdad Women Association, the Center will also

provide psychological, social and legal support services, economic empowerment for the displaced girls and women and support the host community to further foster social cohesion.

WLI said the provision of services will

take into consideration health instructions issued by the authorities in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected work at the safe space.

It urged women in need of its services to call the following telephone number: 07712321122



SRSR Hennis-Plasschaert decried violence against women as a commonplace occurrence that is most acutely felt in the domestic context



Baghdad, 19 September 2020 – UN Iraq Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert addressed the 12th annual international conference, “Islamic Day to Counter the Violence against Women”, organized by the Al-Hakim International Foundation in Baghdad. While referring to unspeakable acts of conflict-related violence in Iraq’s recent history, she also decried violence against women as a commonplace occurrence that is most acutely felt in the domestic context. Describing the use of violence at home as a “silent crisis”, the Special Representative welcomed ongoing efforts to address the issue in order to ensure the safety and security of all family members.

Here is the text of the statement by UN Iraq SRSR Hennis-Plasschaert:

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to participate with you in the 12th Islamic Day for countering Violence against Women. I thank the Al-Hakim International Foundation for

this initiative, which reaffirms our shared position that violence against women in any form is unacceptable and cannot be justified.

Regrettably, violence against women and girls is a harsh, everyday reality. We will soon be hearing from survivors of unspeakable acts of conflict-related violence which have tragically marked the recent history of Iraq.

Sadly, in Iraq as elsewhere, violence against women is also a commonplace occurrence that is most acutely felt in the domestic context: I will focus my remarks today on this silent crisis, and efforts to address it.

Measures that had to be put in place to counter the rapid spread of COVID-19 unfortunately exacerbated the use of violence at home.

In April 2020, the United Nations Secretary General, António Guterres, called on all nations not to turn a blind eye to this crisis, but to prioritize the protection of women and children as part of their COVID-19 response. We

all have a collective responsibility to end violence against women, he said, in all its forms. Before, during, and after the pandemic.

Later in April, amid concerning reports of increased gender-based and domestic violence cases across Iraq, I met with the Parliamentary Women Caucus and advisors to the Prime Minister.

We discussed the much-needed steps to guarantee continued access to appropriate protection and support services, and to ensure that perpetrators cannot act with impunity.

Meanwhile, we welcomed the commitments made by the Head of the High Judicial Council affirming that there is no legal justification for domestic violence. We also noted that victims can now file complaints over the phone and obtain rapid police response.

Within this context, I would also like to commend the Government’s efforts towards the enactment of a law with the objective to protect all family members from domestic violence.

The efforts and interest of both the Prime Minister and the President are truly appreciated. We now look forward to the parliamentary deliberations under the leadership of the Speaker.

The passing of a law that aligns with the Iraqi Constitution, and adheres to international standards and norms, while also complementing Sharia Law, will be of great value.

Equally important is the understanding that the law aims to protect not only women and girls from domestic violence, but all vulnerable household members, including men, boys, the elderly, persons with disabilities and domestic workers.

In closing, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to recall the words that gave birth to the United Nations 75 years ago, and which Iraqi delegates helped shape as founding members of the Organization.

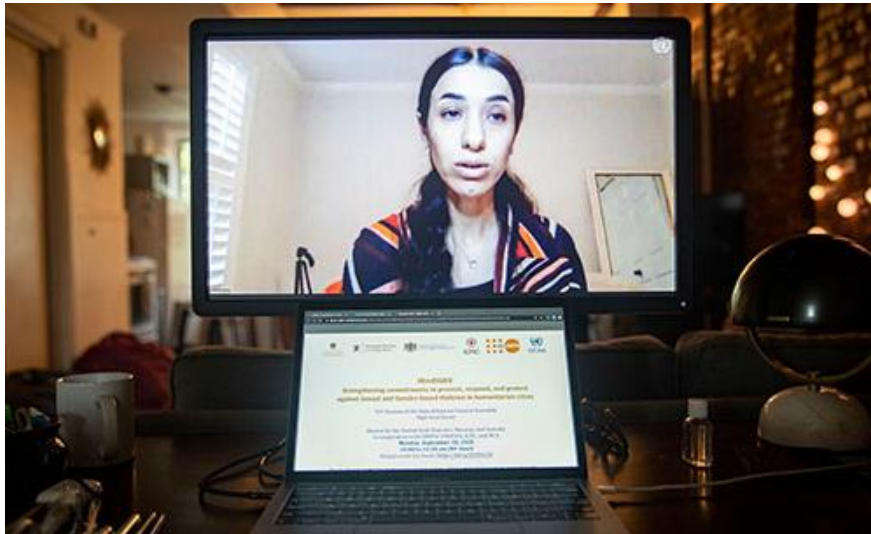
Every day, we work, side by side “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women” and “to practice tolerance and live in peace with one another”.

These words ring as true today as they did in 1945. Let us honour them through our shared action to end violence against women, and indeed violence in all its forms.

Thank you.



Survivors of sexual violence need healing and justice even amid pandemic, leaders assert



New York/Dohuk, 30 September 2020 – Nearly 1,000 delegates convened at a virtual United Nations event yesterday to urge action to end sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian settings.

Sexual and gender-based violence affects one in three women and girls globally. In some humanitarian settings, this figure is estimated to be two in three. The consequences are devastating for individuals, families and communities alike, costing the world an estimated 2 per cent of its annual GDP.

The high-level event was convened by the governments of the United Arab Emirates, Norway and Somalia, in coordination with UNFPA, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Committee of the Red Cross, in order to follow up on progress made since the “EndSGBV” conference held in Oslo in May 2019.

At that 2019 conference, a variety of commitments were mobilized to help end sexual and gender-based violence in crisis settings. Some 86 per cent of the financial pledges from Oslo have been disbursed, delegates heard yesterday.

“But we cannot allow ourselves to rest on the laurels of our accomplishments,” said Nadia Murad, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and President and Chairwoman of Nadia’s Initiative. “Collectively, we must identify our failures and work collaboratively to create solutions. Only then can we turn our failures into achievements. One of the biggest failures is our unwillingness to provide adequate

resources to communities in peril.”

Healing and justice

Ms. Murad is a member of the Yazidi community, which was brutalized by the Islamic State of the Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS or Daesh). After the northern Sinjar District of Iraq was taken by the militants in 2014, Yazidi women were subjected to horrifying violence, including sexual slavery.

Though ISIL no longer controls Sinjar, “thousands of Yazidis still face sexual violence every day at the hands of ISIL,” Ms. Murad said. “Over 2,800 Yazidi women and children are still missing and in captivity.”

She called on delegates at the event to seek justice: “Victims deserve justice. Investigations have begun. Evidence has been collected, and survivors have recorded their testimonies. But justice has yet to be served.”

UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem spoke to these points in her own remarks: “Part of healing is addressing impunity and the political blindness that does not react when women are damaged and in danger.”

Dr. Kanem also called for more services to respond to the needs of survivors. “The psychosocial consequences need to be taken seriously,” she said. “We need to invest in... social work and legal counselling for women and girls affected by this issue. I hope that case management will be scaled up.”

Help on the ground

In Iraq, UNFPA is supporting such services for survivors of gender-based violence, including for members of the

Yazidi community.

“Each day would last a year. We would die every minute. Not every hour but every minute,” Yasmin* told UNFPA. Yasmin, a Yazidi, was abducted by ISIL and sold seven times, experiencing horrific violence each time.

After her ordeal, she received services from the Women and Girls’ Treatment and Support Centre in Dohuk, Iraq, where UNFPA supports medical, psychological and legal assistance for survivors.

“The first case we received was a survivor of the most atrocious forms of sexual and physical violence,” said Qalavej Jafaar, a therapist at the centre. By 2019, the centre had received more 1,300 cases.

UNFPA recently finished building an extension at the centre to assist even more survivors. Today, the centre is supported by the European Regional Development and Protection Programme and the governments of Australia, Canada and Luxembourg.

The care survivors receive is specialized to address the traumas they have endured. “I have been attending the centre for treatment for two years,” Yasmin said. “I have learned from the doctor that I am dignified and I have to keep my head up.”

COVID-19 complicates response

But recent events have complicated the ability of humanitarian actors to prevent and address gender-based violence, speakers at the high-level event yesterday highlighted.

“COVID-19 has set back progress, and we see a surge in gender-based violence around the world,” said Dr. Kanem.

“We have all had to adapt,” she added. In Iraq, for instance, UNFPA has created a remote case management system to help women receive treatment even under lockdown.

Still, Dr. Kanem said, “stronger collective action is urgently needed to protect the rights of women and girls.” The world must also start listening to survivors, delegates at the event emphasized.

“Survivors know best what they need to heal and recover,” Ms. Murad said. “Efforts to engage survivors at every level of their recovery will empower them.”

*Name changed for protection and privacy

By UN News./UNFPA.

Their voice, our equal future, time to focus on girls in Iraq

Baghdad, 11 October 2020 - 11 October marks the International Day of the Girl Child, a day dedicated to girls' empowerment, fulfilment of girls' rights and solving challenges that they face. This year, the global theme is "My Voice, Our Equal Future," a reminder to listen to girls, understand the changes they want to see and to ensure that all of them have an equal opportunity for a bright, safe and healthy future.

In Iraq, the challenges experienced by girls and boys are many and complex. Violence against children, including young people is unacceptably high in Iraq, with 80 per cent facing violence at home and in schools. Many girls in Iraq, like millions of girls around the world, suffer from female genital mutilation, child marriage, sexual harassment and abuse, and other harmful practices.

Girls across Iraq continue to be particularly affected by increased insecurity, which in turn has imposed restrictions on movement that affects their access to education, protection and jobs. Young girls are keen to make the most of opportunities, have specific interests, identities and experiences and are keen to share accountability in their development, exercise of human rights and ensure their gender-differentiated needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on movement have elevated risks for girls to be violated and abused. The number of gender-based violence cases has increased since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic in Iraq according to the Protection Cluster Monitoring in Response to COVID-19 (August 2020)

According to the GBV Information Management System's data of the first two quarters of 2020, 23 per cent of the incidents of violence reported to the service providers were among children and adolescents, of which 6 per cent were aged between 0 and 11 years, and 17 per cent were aged between 12 and 17 years old.

Interviews conducted by the United Nations with families living in displacement camps across Nineveh governorate, affirm that child marriage remains a frequent practice and a coping mechanism for families living in poverty to reduce the financial strain.

Education and learning are some of the best ways to empower girls and protect them against violence, exploitation and social exclusion by providing them with the opportunity to build a better life for



themselves, their families and their communities. To make education and learning accessible and empowering for girls, it needs to be safe and gender sensitive.

Having zero tolerance to bullying, cyberstalking, sexting and harassment should be a priority for all as part of the national COVID-19 efforts to reimagine school systems and learning, we must address violence against girls of all ages in and around classrooms and on digital learning platforms. Because girls have higher risk than boys to experience violence, verbal and sexual abuse, a multi-sectoral approach is needed to address all risk factors and cases. Youth-friendly, accessible and quality education and learning, health and social services are essential for girls' empowerment and their development.

Ending gender-based violence is not a far-fetched dream; this is a real possibility. All that is needed is for girls to have access to formal education, skilled, civically engaged, healthy, supported, and protected at home, in institutions and at the community. The alternative is devastating with a lasting negative and damaging impact to the health, education and well-being of Iraqi girls.

We call on the government, civil society organisations, the private sector, faith-based groups and the international community to accelerate their efforts to:

- Improve equal access to quality primary and secondary education including life-skills
- Promote access to alternative learning opportunities for out of school adolescents and youth, in the form on life skills and citizenship education, including social and business entrepreneurship for improved learning to work transition;

- Increase capacity of the health sector to provide adolescents and youth-friendly health services across the country, with focus on girls; Ensure that girls - survivors of GBV access free and quality specialised services anchored in survivor-centred and age-appropriate approaches

- Mobilise girls, boys, parents and leaders through civic and social engagement to challenge discriminatory gender norms and create real social, economic and civic opportunities for all girls;

- Draft and enforce legislation, such as the anti-domestic violence law and child law, to protect girls and prosecute those who harm them;

- Implement the recommendations by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, including to criminalise, forced, temporary and child marriage;

- Increase availability of child protection services for girls and young women.

Girls can be powerful agents of change, and nothing should keep them from participating fully in all areas of life. We must come together and show our commitment by dedicating resources for girls to realise their rights and fulfil their full potential.

--



UNICEF Representative to Iraq,
Ms Hamida R. Lasseko



UNFPA Representative to Iraq,
Dr Rita Columbia



OHCHR Representative to Iraq,
Ms Danielle Bell

A UN Women team visited the Women Safe Space Centre in Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 5 October 2020 - A UN Women team visited today the Women Safe Space Centre in Kirkuk, 238 kilometres north of Baghdad.

The visit aimed to follow up on progress achieved in the activities of the “Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access & Protection (LEAP)” project, carried out by UN Women through funding by the Government of Japan.

The centre, managed by the Women Leadership Institute (WLI), a leading Iraqi NGO, is implementing part of the activities of the project, which aims to give beneficiaries access to economic opportunities and services, protection mechanisms and empowerment support.

The centre provides such services to survivors of gender-based violence, offering them legal and psychosocial support. In addition, it also provides livelihood support for vulnerable women and girls and to GBV survivors



or victims.

During its visit, the UN Women team met the centre’s staff, including WLI Director Eman Abdulrahman, to get familiarized with its services. The team also met with eight beneficiaries from

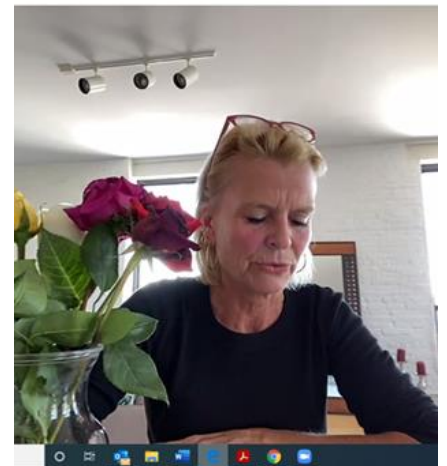
the centre’s services, including women and girl survivors of gender-based violence as well as vulnerable women. Discussions during the visit focused on means of to improving services at the centre.

A webinar on “Violence against women in politics and in public life” conducted by UN Women

Baghdad, 15 October 2020 - In collaboration with the Center for Global Affairs of the New York University, UN Women conducted today a webinar on “Violence against Women in Politics and in Public Life”.

Opening remarks were given by Mrs. Åsa Regnér, Assistant Secretary General and UN Women Deputy Executive Director, where she touched upon the power balance in politics which is still in favor of men and UN Women’s work in combatting violence against women. This was followed by a comprehensive presentation by Ms. Mona Lena Krook, Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University in which

she provided data on women in politics and the forms of violence that women encounter in politics. Lastly, panel members, Ms. Millie Odhiambo – member of Parliament in Kenya – and Ms. Anais Marin – UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Belarus - discussed the impacts of violence by sharing their personal experiences. The overall conclusion was that the concept of democracy will only be achieved when there is a balance between men and women in politics and the public life. Women’s participation in political decision-making strengthens us and the democratic institutions



DPPA commemorates the 20-year anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security

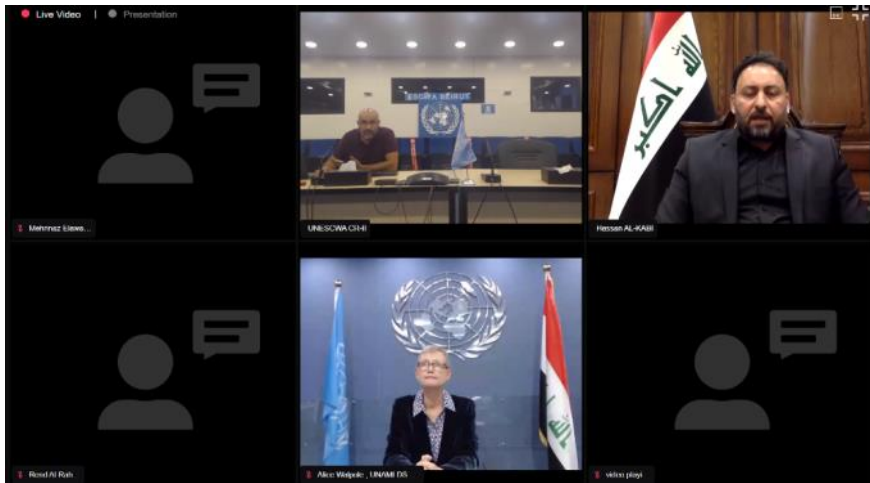
New York, 28 October 2020 - Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, participated in the “Beyond the Pandemic: Opening the Doors to Women’s Meaningful Participation” online event hosted by the United Nations Department on Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. The event celebrated the 20-year anniversary of United Nations Security Council

resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

“In order to promote women’s meaningful participation, we need to lead by example. We need to practice what we preach and translate great speeches and excellent intentions into positive actions. To all women, I would like to say: wear your heart on your sleeve and dare to aspire openly,” SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert said.



Most comprehensive report to date on women's participation in political life in Iraq: Challenges and ways to overcome them



Baghdad/Beirut, 1 November 2020-- Women's participation in political processes in Iraq is hampered by many obstacles, despite Iraqi women's determination to engage in the public sphere. In 2020, Iraq ranked 70th worldwide in terms of women holding seats in parliament.

These findings are highlighted in a new report issued today by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the Iraq Foundation, which documents the challenges faced by women running for elected public office and the factors influencing voter choices regarding women candidates. The report also proposes a set of recommendations to overcome these challenges.

"Women's meaningful participation does not just mean increasing the numbers of women in public life – although that's a good start! It also means pursuing pro-women legislation; it means politics that address issues of concern to women, such as domestic violence; it means removing barriers

that impede women's equal participation in decision-making. The research study that we are discussing today provides a compelling picture of the challenges women encounter when entering politics, suggests what could help them move ahead; and identifies areas where some simple changes would make a huge difference to women's access to the political arena," explained UNAMI's Deputy Special Representative Alice Walpole.

In addition to quantitative data, the report relies on a large number of interviews and focus groups with women professionals, current and previous members of parliament and of provincial councils, and civil society and human rights activists in Iraq. It reveals the different types of constraints on women's participation in political life, including socio-cultural constraints such as prevailing traditional stereotypes or traditional gendered divisions of labour; political constraints, with a quota system being implemented to increase women's participation rates; and economic and financial constraints including lack of

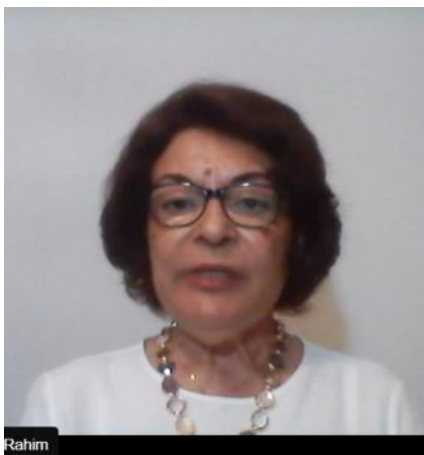
funding for the political campaigns of women candidates.

"It is time for policymakers in Iraq to acknowledge that women's meaningful political participation is not a luxury or a gift. It is an inseparable part of establishing real democracy, justice and equality for all," underlined Iraq Foundation President Rend Al-Rahim.

Some of the challenges faced by women are of bureaucratic and structural nature, such as the media's portrayal of women as inadequate and ineffective. Women are often excluded from decision-making in sensitive sectors relating to security and conflict resolution negotiations. Women candidates also face discouragement or even intimidation from family and society, and threats by opponents and challengers.

However, the report underlines that, despite these tremendous challenges, practical experience shows that women have proven their ability to manage State affairs and are also viewed as transparent, credible, efficient, responsible, honest and accurate.

"We call for the promotion and dissemination of a culture of gender equality and for the inclusion of women's participation among policy priorities to consolidate the values of equality, justice and democracy. It is also very important to establish a national machinery for the advancement of women," highlighted Leader of the Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development Cluster at ESCWA Mehrnaz Elawady. The launch of the report will be followed by training courses for women interested in taking up a role in Iraqi public life, in addition to training for media professionals to explore their role in reporting on women's political activism.



Deliberate silencing of peaceful voices in Iraq ‘unacceptable’, says UN human rights chief



Baghdad/Geneva, 27 August 2020 –

A new UN report launched on Thursday highlights human rights violations and abuses that were committed during recent demonstrations in Iraq and calls for immediate action for justice.

“This report sheds light on the suffering and provides concrete recommendations to help rebuild public trust”, said UN Special Representative for Iraq Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert.

Rising unemployment, years of corruption and failing public services had sparked massive protests last October.

Despite promising steps by the current Government, the report, Human Rights Violations and Abuses in the Context of Demonstrations in Iraq, cites actions and omissions in handling the demonstrations during the time when they began up until April.

The report recommends protection measures for demonstrators and redress for victims.

Some of those targeted were described in the report as influential in their local community in mobilizing protesters, or supportive of protests on social or national media.

“Of great concern is the continued targeting and killing of activists and human rights defenders”, she continued. “This is not random violence but a deliberate silencing of peaceful voices, coupled with the total impunity enjoyed by perpetrators”.

Demystifying the situation

Based on more than 900 interviews with victims, relatives, witnesses, journalists and civic and political activists, the Human Rights Office of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) documented that at least 487 people were killed and 7,715 injured during the protests – mostly young men.

The report highlights a pattern of excessive force, including live ammunition, when dealing with protesters along with abductions and

attacks by so-called unidentified armed actors.

And with some 3,000 demonstrators detained, concerns have mounted over arbitrary detentions and ill-treatment. “Without accountability, the crimes committed will remain mere statistics, numbers on a page”, warned the UN Special Representative.

The right to freedom of expression was also severely curtailed, with frequent internet blackouts, raided news outlets and journalists assaulted, harassed and arbitrarily detained, their material confiscated or deleted.

“People were killed, injured, tortured and mistreated, kidnapped, disappeared, arbitrarily detained, for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression”, said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, “This is unacceptable”, she stressed.

Since taking office in May, the current Government has taken welcome steps to establish an independent investigative body and offer some redress for the victims and their families, but much more needs to be done.

“Everyone has the right to peacefully demonstrate and to publicly express their frustration at not being able to provide for themselves and their families”, Ms. Bachelet underscored.

By UN News

Intithar Hasan defies physical disability, negative social attitudes to achieve her dreams

Baghdad, 1 September 2020 -

Intithar Hasan, a 29-year-old Iraqi girl with special needs, is 140 centimetres tall. She has short limbs, which makes her look much shorter.

Living in Abu Al Khasib in the southern Iraqi governorate of Basra, Intithar says that she suffers from domestic and verbal abuse due to her short stature.

“I didn’t enjoy many of my basic rights in my life, including my right to work. I couldn’t find a job that would enable me to live in dignity and help rid me of deprivation and want”, explains Intithar.

“I went through many difficult stages in my life; I suffered frequent nervous breakdowns. I used to feel that I was living in a cruel, unfair and merciless society. Yet, all of this did not hold me back. I was constantly striving to have

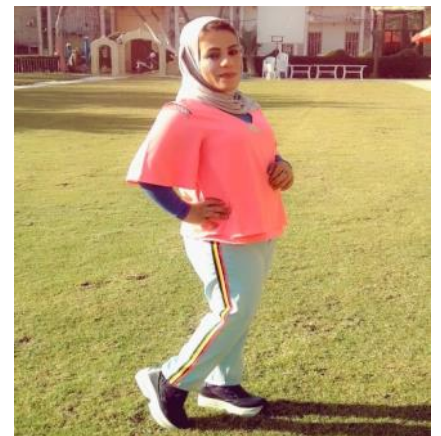
a better life, fighting not to lose hope, and with every disappointment I suffered, I have become stronger, and my patience has grown greater”, Intithar continues.

She confidently states: “Yes, it is a fact that I have short stature, but I have many talents that God has granted me. I am talented in writing poetry, as well as theatre and drama scripts. I also have a talent for acting”.

“I was able to employ these talents in training and supporting abused children during my voluntary work at many humanitarian organizations ... and I was able to defend the rights of minor girls and to fight against underage marriage through my participation as an actress in theatre works”.

“I will continue to prove my capabilities to others in order to realize my dreams.

I am a free Iraqi activist, and I hope that all the youth of my country will be able to fulfill their dreams, regardless of their circumstances and their affiliations,” Intithar confidently asserts.



UNICEF condemns the death of four children in Baghdad and calls on all parties to protect children from violence

Baghdad, 29 September 2020 – Statement attributable to Ms Hamida Lasseko, UNICEF Representative in Iraq: “UNICEF is saddened and shocked at the killing of four children, all under the age of 10, and three of whom were siblings whilst another child was injured, when a rocket fell on their house in Baghdad yesterday. UNICEF condemns all acts of violence against children and joins the families

in mourning this unnecessary loss of lives. Being a target of, witnessing or fearing violence should never be part of any child’s experience.

Our sincere condolences go to the children’s families and their community. Nothing ever justifies attacks on children and women. UNICEF calls on all parties to fulfil their obligation, under international law, to protect children at all times and

without delay. All children in Iraq deserve to live their lives without the constant threat of violence.

UNICEF appeals to all parties to ensure the safety and well-being of children and youth, and calls for the upholding of children’s right to protection and to live in an environment that is free from violence at all times.”

First virtual interactive dialogue held between Iraq and the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances



Baghdad/Geneva, 7 October 2020 - On 5 and 7 October, the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) held its constructive public dialogue with Iraq. This is Iraq’s second dialogue, since its ratification of the Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances, in 2010. The dialogue was held as part of the 19th CED session in Geneva and for the first time held entirely online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Minister of Justice, Judge Salar Abdulsattar Mohammed, headed the

13-member government delegation. The dialogue focused on three preselected thematic areas, including the status of the draft law on enforced disappearances, preventive measures taken, and progress made in investigations in cases related to enforced disappearances and follow up on the Urgent Actions procedure on individual cases received by the Committee.

The CED thanked the Government of Iraq for its constructive participation and mutual interactions with the Committee during the dialogue, aimed at strengthening the existing protection framework and uncovering the plight of disappeared persons in Iraq. The head of the Iraqi government delegation welcomed the opportunity to take part in the dialogue, affirming its commitment to address cases of enforced disappearance and requested the Committee to share its observations on the draft law.

On 9 September, as part of the same dialogue, nine civil society

organizations and the Iraqi High Commissioner for Human Rights (IHCHR) also shared their expertise in separate and closed briefings to the Committee.

The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance for Iraq (UNAMI) facilitated the participation of the delegations from Baghdad in the dialogue.

The full State Party dialogue can be found in Arabic and English at the following links:

5 October

<http://webtv.un.org/search/consideration-of-iraq-333rd-meeting-19th-session-committee-on-enforced-disappearances/6197583662001/?term=CED%20Dialogue%20with%20Iraq&sort=date>

7 October

<http://webtv.un.org/search/consideration-of-iraq-contd-334th-meeting-19th-session-committee-on-enforced-disappearances/6198399981001/?term=CED%20Dialogue%20with%20Iraq&sort=date>

Promoting human rights, advocating for protection at centre of UNAMI HRO Chief’s discussions with officials, activists in Kurdistan Region

Erbil, 15 October 2020 - Promoting human rights, listening to and raising the concerns of activists as well as encouraging Regional government efforts in advocating for protection of human rights were at the centre of discussions of the Chief of the UNAMI Human Rights Office (HRO), Danielle Bell, during a four-day visit to the Kurdistan Region.

During the 11-14 October 2020 visit to Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk, Ms. Bell held a number of meetings with representatives of the Kurdistan Regional Government, local officials, civil society activists, journalists and

human rights defenders. Protection of human rights defenders, right to liberty and security, freedom of expression and right to peaceful assembly were among the issues discussed.

In a meeting in Erbil on 12 October with Dr. Dindar Zebari, the Coordinator for International Advocacy in the Kurdistan Regional Government, Ms. Bell raised the issue of the protection of peaceful protesters and the right to peaceful assembly. Ms. Bell affirmed UNAMI HRO’s support to the Kurdistan Regional Government in upholding the protection of human rights and creating an enabling

environment for the people to freely voice their opinion.



Programme “Breaking the silence”, implemented in Iraq by UNESCO and Free Press Unlimited

Baghdad, 10 September 2020 - Journalists need to be able to do their work in safety. If they become victims of violence while doing their job, then the perpetrators need to be held accountable in order to deter future violence. These are the principles behind the programme “Breaking the Silence”, implemented in Iraq by UNESCO and Free Press Unlimited.

Between 1-4 September, a training took place for police officers in the Special Investigative Unit on Crimes Against Journalists. During the training, a central theme was the increased number of threats and attacks against journalists in Iraq. Using old case studies, the officers discussed the best ways to go about investigating such cases. The training also addressed basic principles of freedom of expression, and how to apply them during daily



interactions. Police Officer Marawa Ahmed said: “This course has enhanced my knowledge and taught me practical, effective ways to handle such issues arising in field locations”. 58 police officers, of which 12 female officers,

participated in the training. The programme “Breaking the Silence”, of which this training is a part, is funded by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq and implemented with Free Press Unlimited.

UNESCO builds capacity of the Ministry of Interior’s radio station staff in Iraq



Baghdad, 5 October 2020 - UNESCO Iraq organized a capacity-building training to support the Ministry of Interior’s radio station. The training aimed at assisting the MoI’s radio station in providing services to the journalism community regarding the safety of journalists. The training focused on the role of the radio station in feeding journalist’s news and collecting testimonies as well as reporting on violations that journalists encounter.

“The knowledge and skills on how to gather different information and testimonies, which are of concern to the journalists was needed”, Colonel Raed Hamdan the director of the radio

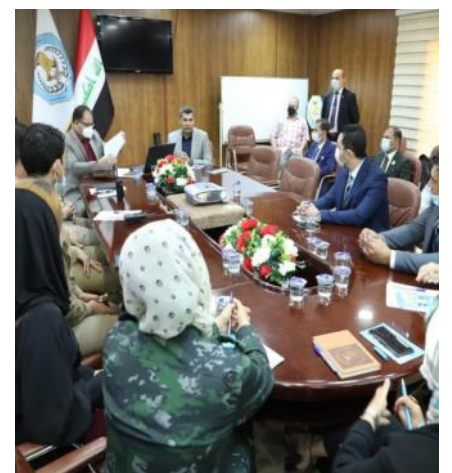
station said. He added, “participants will now be able to properly source for news stories and testimonies for the radio station. We have to report on such subject areas and put the journalists in direct contact with the senior official in the ministry”.

Capt. Ibsam Muzail said “The segment on receiving complaints will empower female journalists to be able to report these issues during on-air programmes, whereas the segment on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity enabled our staff to discuss, explain and apply ethical principles, standards of practice and rules of conduct for the safety of journalists planning at the radio station.

M.G. Saad Maan, the Chair Deputy of the Iraqi National Committee on the safety of journalists stated that the trainings were key in deepening and improving knowledge and skills for the radio station staff members. He thanked UNESCO for its continuous support in building the capacities of the ministry.

This training is part of the Netherlands funded project “Breaking the Silence: enhance accountability on safety of journalists and issue of impunity in Iraq.”

Practical exercises, lectures and discussions were used as a mode of delivery for the trainings to enhance and encourage participation, thus enabling participants to properly grasp issues raised during the training.



Safety guide for journalists: a handbook to protect journalists in the field

Baghdad, 10 October 2020 - UNESCO, Ministry of Interior and CMC, launched the safety of journalists handbook to enhance relations amongst journalists and police officers.

With the generous support from the government of Netherlands, UNESCO succeeded in developing and printing out 10,000 copies of the safety of journalists handbook, the book contains instructions for better and safe dealing with journalists by police officers at all checkpoints throughout Iraq.

UNESCO, FPU, MoI and CMC, together with members of the Iraqi National Committee for the Safety of Journalists and Issue of Impunity are standing up for the safety of media professionals and officially launched this handbook.

The 14-page guide offers essential tips and practical instructions for security forces to assist journalists and facilitate their movement in the cities. This publication comes in the context of developing the safety of journalists mechanism in Iraq and in reducing threats against media professionals.

“This guide is an important document that has been approved by the Minister of Interior, as it compiles the knowledge and experience acquired over the 2 years of implementing the Breaking Silence project, which is part of the campaign for freedom of expression in Iraq” said Brigadier General Ahmed Al-Sudani, Director of Moral Guidance at the Ministry of Interior.

The Safety Guide for Journalists contains a wide range of essential information to enhance the safety of journalists. It stresses the importance of well-prepared planning before taking assignments in dangerous missions and gives essential tools for journalists. The guide is useful for all those who work in news and information, mainly reporting from hostile environments, such as conflict zones, violent demonstrations, riots and terrorist attacks.

This edition of the Safety of Journalists Handbook resulted from long discussions between the police and journalists. Since then, it has been

designed and now the ministry will widely distribute it to be the main document of dealing with journalists in a safe manner.

UNESCO continues its work within the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. Aimed at creating a free and safe environment for journalist and media workers, the UN Plan of Action was adopted in April 2012 and confirmed by the UN General Assembly in November 2013.



UNITAD

‘Their homecomings have not marked the end of their suffering’

Baghdad, 10 September 2020 - UNITAD was pleased today to welcome Nicolette Waldman of Amnesty International, and listened as she explained the challenges Yazidi child survivors of ISIS faced when rejoining their families in Iraq.

Nicolette Waldman: “Returning children were confronted with physical and psychosocial problems, language barriers, and barriers to reintegrating with their families and communities.

Missed educational opportunities set back their development by years. Despite this, their desire for justice and accountability was stronger than that of personal compensation or help. This is where UNITAD can play a role.”

You can access her report “Iraq: Legacy of Terror: The Plight of Yazidi Child Survivors of ISIS” at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde14/2759/2020/en/>



SA Khan: “International investigative mechanisms exist, above all, for victims and survivors”

Baghdad, 17 September 2020 - Special Adviser Karim Khan QC participated in International Bar Association panel today, which took a closer look at the mandates of international investigative mechanisms UNITAD.

SA Khan: “UNITAD was created by a unanimous SC resolution, is based in Iraq, and focused on ISIL only. Iraqi staff work alongside international staff

and cooperation with the Government of Iraq, judiciary and local NGOs is at the heart of our investigative and case-building efforts”.

SA Khan emphasized that international investigative mechanisms exist, above all, for victims and survivors, and that their responsibility is to ensure impacted communities see the meaningful justice they deserve.



Security Council unanimously extends UNITAD mandate



Baghdad/New York, 18 September 2020 – The Security Council decided unanimously today to extend the mandate of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh/ISIL (UNITAD) until 18 September 2021.

The extension, reflected in resolution S/RES/2544 (2020), was made at the request of the Government of Iraq. Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team, Karim Asad

Ahmad Khan QC welcomed the unanimity of the Council’s decision as a demonstration of the continued collective will of the international community and the Government of Iraq to work side-by-side in pursuit of justice and accountability for the victims and survivors of Da’esh crimes. Expressing his appreciation for the continued support of the Government of Iraq for the mandate and work of the Team, the Special Adviser underlined the commitment of UNITAD to

continue to work closely with Iraqi authorities in the implementation of its mandate.

Special Adviser Khan emphasized that “since the start of our work in Iraq in late 2018, the realization of our mandate and the fulfillment of the promise made to survivors through Council resolution 2379 (2017) has relied on a unique partnership between our Team, Iraqi authorities, impacted communities and all States. I am delighted that, upon the request of the Government of Iraq, the Council has again underlined its unanimous support for this work, and I look forward to building on the progress made to date with our Iraqi counterparts in the coming year”.

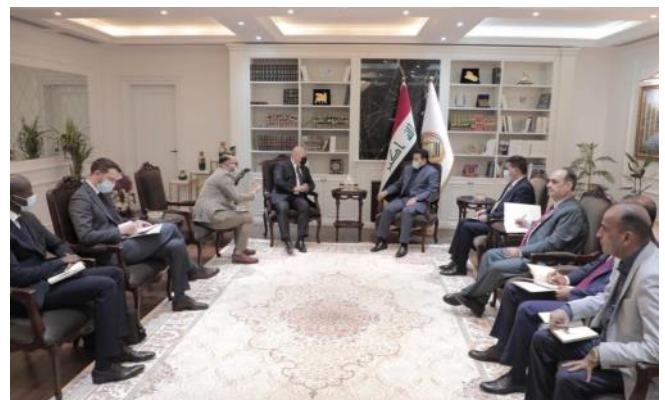
Established through resolution 2379 (2017), the Investigative Team is mandated to support efforts to hold members of ISIL/Da’esh accountable for War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide they committed in Iraq. Special Adviser Khan last briefed the Security Council on 15 June 2020.

SRSG Gamba addressed a UNITAD Guest Lecture event

Baghdad, 29 September 2020 - UNITAD hosted Virginia Gamba, SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict, as part of its Guest Lecture series. She shared key points on effectively conducting investigations and collecting evidence relating to crimes committed against children in armed conflict, including by ISIL in Iraq.



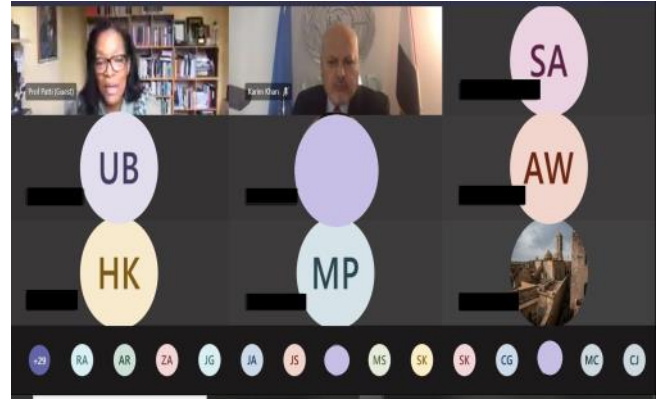
Baghdad, 4 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC met with Major General Faez al-Mamouri of the Directorate of Military Intelligence-DMI in Baghdad today. They agreed to augment ongoing cooperation to archive and preserve ISIL material collected from the battlefield by the DMI and increase the number of DMI trainees on specialized forensic equipment.



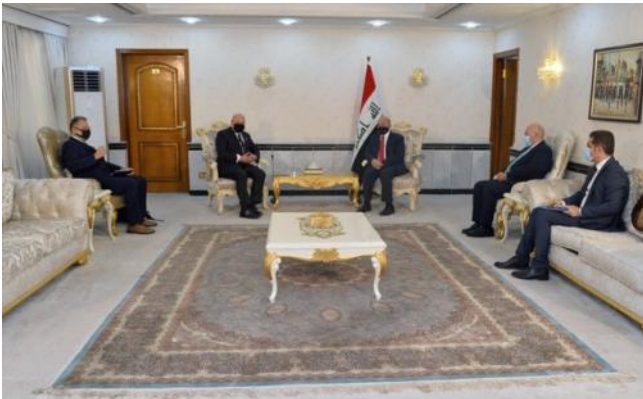
Baghdad, 6 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC was pleased to meet the Iraqi National Security Adviser Mr. Qassim Al Araji in Baghdad today. They discussed ways to advance cooperation between the National Security Advisory and UNITAD, including in the area of evidence collection and preservation, as well as support to victim communities in Iraq that suffered from ISIL crimes.



Baghdad, 6 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC met with MP Sayyed Ammar al-Hakeem, Head of the Hikma National Movement. They discussed mobilizing parliamentary support for the Iraqi High Tribunal law amendment. UNITAD experts will also be cooperating with the Hakim International Foundation to provide support to Turkmen, Shabak and Yazidi women survivors who suffered from ISIL crimes.



Baghdad, 7 October 2020 - UNITAD hosted ICC OTP Adviser on Gender, Professor Patricia Sellers, as part of its ongoing Guest Lecture series. Professor Sellers shared her rich and diverse experience in investigations and prosecutions. She also discussed the importance of intersectional gender analysis and contextualization while investigating ISIL sexual crimes.



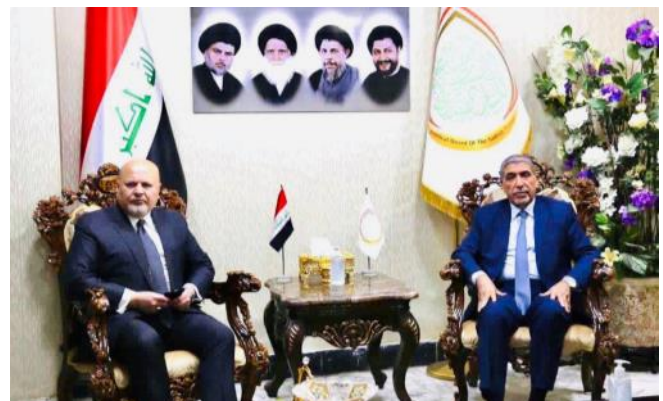
Baghdad, 11 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC met with Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Fuad Hussein in Baghdad today. The Special Adviser thanked Minister Hussein for his help on the recent mandate extension. They also discussed advancing an amendment in the Iraqi Parliament that provides a basis for Iraq to prosecute ISIL members for international crimes.



Baghdad, 12 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC was pleased to meet with Mr. Hadi al-Amiri, Head of the Fatah Alliance, in Baghdad today. Special Adviser Khan and Mr. al-Amiri discussed UNITAD's mandate and activities in support of efforts in Iraq to hold ISIL members accountable for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.



Baghdad, 15 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC met with Sairoon MP Mohamad al-Ghazi, Deputy Chair of the Parliament of Iraq's Legal Committee, and Yazidi MP Saib Khidir. Strong support expressed for the IHT amendment before Parliament which will enable prosecuting ISIL for international crimes against all Iraqi communities.



Baghdad, 20 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC met with Head of Sairoon political bloc MP Nassar al-Rouba'i. They discussed the importance of passing legislation in the Iraqi Parliament to prosecute ISIL international crimes in Iraq, and also contribute to promoting global accountability for ISIL crimes.

Exhumation of Solagh and Kojo mass graves started in Sinjar



Sinjar, 24 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC participated in the opening ceremony of Solagh mass grave in Sinjar, known as the Grave of Mothers. In his statement, he reaffirmed to survivors and victim families that they are not forgotten and that UNITAD is committed to supporting their call for justice. Teams begin exhumation of Solagh and Kojo mass graves. They also finalized preparations for DNA sampling from families to match with exhumed

remains. UNITAD has provided advanced equipment and training to MLD and MGD to assist their work on-site in line with international standards. Exhumations carry an emotional toll for families and survivors. UNITAD provided on-site psycho-social support during the opening of the graves to help alleviate distress alongside partners IOM Iraq and Yazda. The opening of the mass grave in Solagh was preceded by a traditional

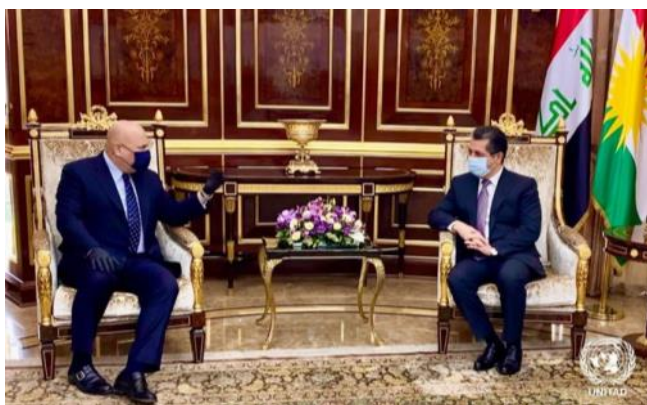
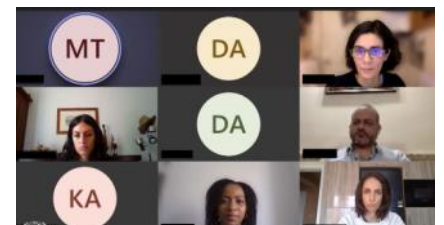
Yazidi religious ceremony. UNITAD close coordination with the Government of Iraq is what is making exhumations at Solagh and Kojo possible alongside that of partners like IOM Iraq, International Commission on Missing Persons - ICMP and Yazda. UNITAD is also grateful for U.S. Embassy Baghdad's support which enabled the purchase of equipment critical to work undertaken at these sites.



UNITAD provided training for Turkmen Rescue Organization

Baghdad, 27 October 2020 – UNITAD Psychosocial Support experts conducted a virtual training for NGO partners Turkmen Rescue Organization, providing them with necessary skills and knowledge to strengthen support for ISIL survivors without causing further harm.

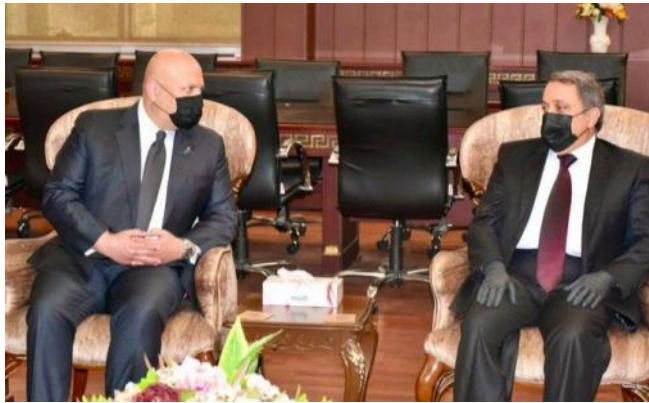
The training raised awareness of social media communication threats, provided guidance for managing physical and psychological safety of its users, and covered the importance of building and strengthening peer support groups and improving physical and mental wellbeing through stress management.



Erbil, 25 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC met with Kurdistan Prime Minister, Masrour Barzani, to discuss ever closer cooperation in the joint quest to achieve accountability for Daesh crimes. Discussions included options to better ensure the recognition and prosecution of international crimes Da'esh may have committed. The Prime Minister underlined his commitment to fair, evidence-based trials, and that such a process would allow victims and survivors to have their day in court; help expose Daesh's false ideology; and establish the responsibility of Da'esh members, beyond a reasonable doubt. Both also agreed on the importance of support for victims and survivors, including psychosocial support, and vindicating their rights through legal proceedings. Prime Minister Barzani reaffirmed his support for UNITAD's work in this area and his commitment to ensuring justice for victims.



Erbil, 26 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC had fruitful discussions with Kurdistan Region Justice Minister H.E. Farsat Ahmad on preparations to prosecute Daesh for international crimes. H.E. expressed strong support for UNITAD's work and the importance of accountability for crimes committed against all Iraqi communities.



Erbil, 26 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC met with Hon. Judge Bangin Qasim, Head of the Judicial Council of Kurdistan Region. Discussions focused on continued collaboration between UNITAD and KRG judges, including assistance that UNITAD can provide to ongoing investigations of ISIL crimes committed in Iraq. Special Adviser Khan and Judge Qasim also discussed capacity building measures to ensure that international crimes trials are held according to international standards. Special Adviser Khan expressed UNITAD's readiness to provide the support needed in this regard.



Baghdad, 28 October 2020 - UNITAD was delighted to engage today with over 50 Iraqi and international NGOs in the first thematic roundtable of the UNITAD-NGO Dialogue forum. Participants addressed how UNITAD can partner with NGOs to empower survivors and witnesses to come forward with their accounts. Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC underlined that NGOs are crucial partners in ensuring that the voices of those impacted by ISIL crimes are heard. Discussions focused on ensuring a survivor-centered approach and challenges in communicating effectively with impacted communities regarding accountability processes.

SA Khan speaks with members of the Iranian Center for International Criminal Law

Baghdad, 29 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC was pleased today to speak with members of the Iranian Center for International Criminal Law as part of their webinar “ISIS Accountability for International Crimes: The Role of UNITAD”, providing an overview of the Investigative Team’s work before answering questions from participants.



Humanitarian

UNHCR: Refugee artist turns camp environment into amazing art scenes

Dohuk, 28 August 2020 - “I am a Muslim, but very happy to have murals of a church and a Yazidi temple beside the one of a mosque all together on the outer wall of my house. The meaning is there, which is that the three communities, despite their different beliefs, find the way of living together with a harmonious coexistence. I have heard many who agree with me that this mural is the highest rated one among all the others inside the camp. It shows peace among communities,” said Mahmoud about murals near his home in Gawilan Refugee camp in Dohuk. “These murals have brought life to the walls and streets of this camp. Each has its own story. This painting on the



wall of my house tells the story of two lovers, wearing Kurdish traditional costumes, and looking up to a bright future. I think we can learn from this story that by sticking together we can build a bright future,” Akram described

the art on his wall. In Gawilan refugee camp, Dilovan the artist is known by all refugees for his great art work that captivated the minds and hearts of camp residents and made their surroundings beautiful.

Following Anbar operation, supported voluntary returns of displaced families continue in Ninewa



Ninewa Governorate, 10 September 2020 — Nine families were given support to leave Salamiyah Camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) yesterday (9/9) and return voluntarily to their areas of origin in northern Iraq's Ninewa Governorate; a further 26 families left the camp today (10/9). These families were the first to depart from a group of 120 households in the camp that are expected to return to areas of origin through an initiative organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in support of and in partnership with the Government of Iraq's Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD).

During the conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) more than 6 million Iraqis were displaced from their areas of origin. Ninewa was hard-hit during the ISIL crisis; its capital city and Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul, was captured in June 2014.

Nearly three years after the official defeat of ISIL, hundreds of thousands of families across the country have returned to their areas of origin; an estimated 1.3 million individuals still remain in displacement. This supported voluntary return activity is among the first of its kind in post-conflict Iraq.

"These voluntary returns in Ninewa build on the earlier experiences in Anbar in July, where both government and international agencies partnered to support the sustainable resolution of displacement. They form part of a bigger programme of support to displaced communities, a programme that we hope will continue to expand," said IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Gerard Waite. "These activities are grounded in principles of safety, voluntariness and dignity for IDPs; they work

towards post-conflict recovery and ultimately greater stability in Iraq."

"Ninewa Governorate seeks to make more efforts to help IDPs return to their areas of origin, by providing services and logistical supplies to the people and through cooperation and communication with the federal government, IOM and other organizations," said Mr. Najm al-Jiburi, Governor of Ninewa. "We value the wonderful efforts of the relevant ministries and IOM to ensure that there is a new life for the displaced through voluntary returns to their areas."

IOM Iraq and MoMD worked closely with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to facilitate the operation in Salamiyah Camp, with camp management support from ACTED. Premiere Urgence Internationale covered health-related activities, while the International Rescue Committee (IRC) oversaw the protection accompaniment for the returning families. INTERSOS and other partners are providing protection support and other services both in the camp and in the families' communities of origin. Project activities consist of two phases — pre-departure and transition — that address interventions in camps and support in areas of

return. Types of assistance include housing and livelihood support; transportation; cash assistance in the form of departure and reinstallation grants; rehabilitation of basic services; and post-return reintegration support.

The Ninewa operation follows a similar activity that took place in Anbar Governorate in July, when 40 households departed from Amriyat al-Fallujah camp and returned to their homes in Anbar over two days. Both operations are part of a larger initiative organized by IOM Iraq — a leading member of the Durable Solutions Network — and MoMD. It is expected to reach 2,400 IDP households that registered to receive voluntary return support in these governorates.

The importance of safe and dignified returns is even more relevant considering the risks posed by COVID-19; this concerns the risk of infection in camps, as well as efforts to improve services and conditions in areas of return. IOM Iraq is putting significant protective measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during return activities, including sharing up-to-date guidance and information related to the returns.

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

IOM and numerous international partners, including UNHCR, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), are engaged in a wide variety of activities to support the needs of IDPs, returnees, host communities and other vulnerable populations in Iraq.



First ever assessment of migration governance in Iraq highlights good practices, areas for further development



Baghdad, 14 September 2020 — In 2020, Iraq continues to face complex migration patterns. As part of post-conflict recovery efforts, following the territorial defeat of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, there are strong opportunities for progressing migration governance.

Starting in 2019, Iraq's migration policies were assessed according to the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI). The MGI is a standard set of 90 indicators that assist countries in assessing their migration policies and advance the conversation on what well-governed migration might look like in practice. The research was undertaken by a specialist with expertise in Iraqi and international law as part of a programme co-led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and a Technical Working Group (TWG) on migration, composed of representatives from several government ministries, with the support of the European Union.

The resulting MGI profile has now been published by IOM. It summarizes the well-developed areas of Iraq's migration governance structures and highlights areas with potential for further development.

The MGI profile notes, for example, that Iraq has adopted an integrated approach to border management, a best practice made possible with the establishment of the Border Points Commission in 2016. Iraq has taken concrete steps in recent years to develop legal instruments to counter trafficking in persons, including through an anti-trafficking law passed in 2012 and a labour law passed in 2015. The MGI profile also reveals that migrants lawfully residing in Iraq have access to public health-care services, education and social protection.

However, Iraq currently does not have a national strategy to manage migration. As a signatory of the Global Compact for Migration, Iraq is committed to ensuring migration occurs in a safe, orderly and dignified manner. "The MGI assessment helped identify key steps to implement the Global Compact for Migration in Iraq," said Ahmed Raheem Hassan, the National Focal Point for the Global Compact for Migration at the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD). Supporting national implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) is one of the assessment's key objectives.

In addition to supporting GCM

implementation, the assessment also complements efforts to achieve Target 10.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals — "[facilitating] orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies".

"The MGI report tells us that Iraq has the building blocks of good migration governance in place," said IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Gerard Waite. "The next step is to use these findings to develop a national migration strategy that advances the Global Compact for Migration objectives in Iraq and contributes to Iraq's national development goals."

A national strategy, currently under preparation with IOM Iraq's support, will guide the many inter-linked actions needed to achieve this.

"Ultimately, our work on migration policy will directly benefit migrants within and outside the country by ensuring their rights and dignity," said Talib Askhar Dusa, Chairman of Migration Affairs at MoMD.

Until 2003, when MoMD was established, Iraq had no history of a central governing institution with a migration mandate. Last year, Iraq became the first country in the MENA region to simultaneously complete both the MGI assessment and a Migration Profile — the first-ever statistical overview of migration in Iraq. The findings of the Migration Profile were released in December 2019; the complete version is being finalized in English.

In early 2020 the results of the MGI assessment were validated by officials representing ministries from the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government. The TWG distilled the findings of the assessment into four thematic policy priorities: migration data, return and reintegration, legal frameworks, and economic affairs.

IOM is providing ongoing technical support to MoMD, the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Interior and the other government institutions represented in the TWG.

The MGI assessment was carried out with support from the European Union's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development. Research for the Migration Profile was supported by the Government of the Netherlands.



New study conducted by IOM and Georgetown University: "Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq: experiences of female-headed households" launched

Baghdad, 23 September 2020 - Nearly five years after being displaced by the ISIL conflict, female-headed households are more likely to still be in displacement than male-headed households. To meet their basic needs, female-headed households reduce food and other expenses, and borrow money from family and friends. This finding and more are explored in a

newly issued study conducted by IOM and Georgetown University: "Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Experiences of Female-Headed Households". It aims both to provide more information on the experiences specific to IDP women and also provide gender-disaggregated data.

This study was funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of

Population, Refugees, and Migration. The study is available at https://iraq.iom.int/publications/access-durable-solutions-among-idps-iraq-experiences-female-headed-households?fbclid=IwAR12uVnBH8aufFIEU_ZWlFUU23eYzyAibOOAiVOZf4VEX6q1GMFpczHLKJ4

IOM Iraq finalized the distribution of newly-issued ownership or occupancy deeds for 183 households in Sinjar

Sinjar, 29 September 2020 - IOM Iraq's Legal/HLP teams recently finalized the distribution of newly-issued ownership or occupancy deeds for 183 households in Sinjar, Ninewa Governorate. As part of the legal processes for issuing or restoring missing HLP documentation, the teams conducted home visits to families with Category 2 or 3 damaged shelters, facilitated inheritance claims, processed municipal clearances through Mukhtar offices, and successfully endorsed property-title deeds with relevant authorities. The efforts included visits to courts, compensation committees, the agricultural directorate and other administrative bodies. All work was done in coordination with implementing partners, local authorities, and community stakeholders. This activity was funded by USAID.



UNHCR and partner Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid distribute fire extinguishers in IDP camps

Baghdad, 1 October 2020 - UNHCR and partner Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid distribute fire extinguishers in camps for displaced Iraqis in Baghdad and Anbar.

Fire extinguishers are ball type automated fire suppression sprinkler systems that are auto triggered in the case of fire to protect people.

In Latiefiye camp for displaced persons in Baghdad, UNHCR and Blumont distributed to all residents automated ball fire extinguisher sprinkler systems to enhance safety and prevent fires.

This activity is part of an ongoing plan of safety measures and installation of fire extinguishers by UNHCR with support from Camp Coordination and Camp Management cluster (CCCM) and Shelter and Non Food Items



partners for internally displaced persons in Baghdad (Latiefiye camps), and Anbar (K7, 9, 18).

In another development, the residents of Latiefiye camp in Baghdad feel safer at night, risk of SGBV reduced and night social life improved as UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and Blumont installed street lights.

In Latiefiye camp UNHCR partner Blumont in cooperation with Latiefiye Medical Department is taking the lead on the PCR testing of refugees and displaced people for COVID-19.

Prevention, awareness, testing and quarantine are all measures to fight the spread of the virus and protect people.

OCHA visited Sa'ad IDP camp, undertook focus group discussions

Baghdad, 4 October 2020 - Earlier this week, the Head of Office of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Iraq and members of the OCHA Diyala sub-office visited Sa'ad IDP camp, where they undertook focus group discussions with camp residents in a Women's Centre. Sa'ad IDP camp

was established in November 2014 by the local Diyala government; 118 families currently live in the camp. OCHA extends its thanks to the Governor of Diyala for a productive discussion on the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the joint commitment to finding effective solutions that will end displacement.



UNHCR constructed and opened the access road between Domiz-1 and Domiz-2 refugee camps in Duhok governorate

Duhok, 5 October 2020 - UNHCR, in cooperation with KRG authorities and partners, have constructed and opened the access road between Domiz-1 and Domiz-2 refugee camps in Duhok governorate.

This project aims to benefit refugees moving between the two camps as well as the local community members that reside in the area. The road is constructed by UNHCR through its partner Peace Winds Japan (PWJ) together with BNIAS Company based in Duhok.

The event was attended by Mr. Adil Amin, the Mayor of Faida Sub District, the head of Duhok Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) and PWJ in Duhok.

Peter Trotter, Head of UNHCR Sub-Office in Duhok said at the occasion:

“Bringing refugees and host community together, helping them connect and gain better and easier access to services is what UNHCR always tries to achieve. This access road is both an

expression of UNHCR’s appreciation for the support of KRI to refugees, and a practical contribution to the well-being of refugees and the local community”.



UNICEF and UNHCR improved access to quality water services

Baghdad, 6 October 2020 - With support from Germany, UNICEF is rehabilitating water projects in Al Rasheed, Al Abayachi, Al Mishahda, Al Tarmiya, Al Jisr, Al Wihda, Al Rashdiya, Al Hussainiya within Baghdad outskirts. This will improve the reach and provide quality drinking water for 32,600 people.

UNICEF and the Anbar Directorate of water have improved access to quality water services for 38,180 people of which 21,000 are female through the rehabilitation of four water compact units, in Al Karma and Saqlawiya district within Anbar governorate.

UNICEF also distributed water pumps and prefabricated safe rooms to schools in flood prone areas in Baghdad and Salaheldin.

Due to challenges in water supply and based on needs of the community, UNHCR field teams in Sulaymaniyah distributed over 2171 plastic buckets in Arbat refugee camp to the residents of the camp.

UNHCR staff with help from camp management enjoyed going door to door to distribute the needed buckets that

serve as extra storage space for water, and as additional measure to support hygiene due to the COVID-19 situation.



Germany contributes additional funding to support thousands of vulnerable refugee families in Iraq

Baghdad, 7 October 2020 - IRAQ - UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency in Iraq, welcomes the additional voluntary contribution of 13.36 million euros by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany to provide vital humanitarian assistance and protection to vulnerable Syrian refugee families in Iraq. This latest funding brings Germany's total contribution for displaced populations in Iraq to 21.4 million euros for 2020.

The global pandemic, coupled with the economic crisis, has significantly increased the financial constraints on many of the more than 243,000 Syrian refugees currently living in Iraq. Due to COVID-19 prevention measures, many refugees - whether employed formally or on a seasonal or daily basis - have witnessed the deterioration of their livelihoods, leaving them unable to provide for their families' basic needs without humanitarian assistance.

This generous German contribution will help UNHCR ensure the continuity

of critical life-saving protection and assistance programmes, including provision of basic services for vulnerable refugee families throughout Iraq. These services include much needed protection interventions, including legal aid, child protection services, the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence, and community-based protection.

Through close coordination with, and support to the Directorates of Health in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), UNHCR also provides refugees with free access to primary health care services at camp-based primary health care centres. Additionally, UNHCR continues to assist refugees fulfil their basic needs through various cash-based interventions including seasonal support, multi-purpose cash assistance and COVID-19 cash assistance.

"We look back on a trusting and successful cooperation with UNHCR our most important humanitarian partner in Iraq for several years",

stated Germany's Ambassador to Iraq, Dr. Ole Diehl. "Our support to UNHCR's activities has substantially contributed to improving the living conditions of refugees, internally displaced persons, vulnerable returnees as well as of their host communities in Iraq. It remains our goal that they can benefit from the humanitarian protection and assistance they need. In these challenging times it takes a common effort and a coordinated use of all resources available to address this displacement crisis in all its dimensions."

Nine years after the start of the conflict in Syria, Syrian refugees continue to face challenging obstacles in Iraq and elsewhere. With the current difficult and uncertain situation, displaced communities need support more than ever. Through this funding, Germany demonstrates once again that it is committed to assisting those most in need, and provides UNHCR with much needed resources to continue to deliver this assistance.

"With every passing day, the living conditions of refugee families in Iraq are becoming more challenging. This continuous, generous, and flexible contribution is truly a lifeline that will allow refugees to support their families and meet their needs with dignity," said Philippa Candler, Acting UNHCR Representative in Iraq. "Continued support from donors like the Federal Republic of Germany remains vital for refugee families in Iraq."



IOM Iraq hosted three online sessions about international migration law, attended by government officials from key ministries

Baghdad, 13 October 2020 - Migration governance is key to facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration. IOM Iraq has been working with the Government of Iraq to boost its migration governance for several years, notably in the fields of return and reintegration, legal frameworks and migration data. Work is ongoing towards the development of a national migration strategy for Iraq, with IOM's support. Restrictions put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19 have changed the way this work takes place, but they haven't stopped stakeholders from meeting — in September, IOM Iraq hosted three online sessions about international migration law, attended by government

officials from key ministries. Research and training efforts towards the development of the National

Migration Strategy are funded by European Commission - Development & Cooperation - EuropeAid.



Deputy Special Representative for Iraq visits Ninewa, advocates for increased efforts to facilitate IDP return



Baghdad, 15 October 2020 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, travelled to Ninewa this week to assess the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in protracted displacement and to meet with authorities at local and governorate level as well as community leaders. She reaffirmed the UN's long-term commitment to support the Government of Iraq in addressing the challenges it faces as it continues its stabilization, recovery, reconciliation efforts and achieving durable solutions, and to ensure that all IDPs have the right to a safe home and to a self-sufficient and dignified life even through voluntary return to their places of origin or settling down in new communities in safety and dignity.

During her visit to Ninewa, the Deputy Special Representative emphasized the need to ensure the protection of IDPs, national minorities and vulnerable sections of society, urging the

Government of Iraq to redouble its efforts to support them in achieving durable solutions, deliver basic services to all Iraqis and ensure that IDPs have the right to voluntary return to their places of origin in safety and dignity.

Ms. Vojáčková-Sollorano was accompanied by Ms. Sheri Ritsema-Anderson, Head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Iraq, Ms. Philippa Candler, Acting Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Iraq, and Ms. Zena Ali Ahmad, Resident Representative of UNDP in Iraq. IOM was present on the ground.

During her five-day visit, from 11 to 15 October 2020, the Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator met with civil society, humanitarian and development actors, and other key national and international stakeholders to discuss recovery and reconciliation efforts to support IDPs and communities.

The Humanitarian Coordinator, accompanied by Head of OCHA, acting Representative of UNHCR, and IOM Head of Community Stabilization, also visited the Hassan Sham IDP Camp in Ninewa and met with the camp management and residents and returnees in the province to discuss challenges they face as well as the obstacles that prevent them from returning to their hometowns and villages.

The Resident Coordinator visited the Directorate of Civil Status, Passports and Residency, which issues identification cards, including civil ID, nationality and residency certificates, with whom UNHCR has a national partnership. The loss or destruction of

civil documentation is one of the main protection issues resulting from the ISIS occupation and the consequent conflict. There are numerous reasons for the loss of civil documentation, such as missing or destroyed during conflict or flight, confiscation at checkpoints or at screening sites, and in some cases within the camps. Absence of documentation exposes IDPs to arrest or detention, prevention of freedom of movement, and denial of access to services and return of property. Single women and children are particularly vulnerable; without documentation, they are exposed to violence, and children risk de facto statelessness and denial of access to education.

The Resident Coordinator further visited Mosul's iconic Al-Nuri Mosque, and Al-Tahera Church, which are being rehabilitated by UNESCO in association with the Sunni Endowment, the Ministry of Culture and with funding by the UAE. The Resident Coordinator also visited other projects funded by the EU aimed at reviving heritage houses in the old quarters in the city of Mosul, as well as visiting a UNDP housing project in Mosul, accompanied by the UNDP Resident Coordinator. She met homeowners and a local community leader to discuss the impact of the housing rehabilitation and the challenges faced by residents while living under ISIS occupation. In Mosul, UNDP has rehabilitated more than 6,000 houses, enabling thousands of displaced families to return to their homes.

The Resident Coordinator paid a visit to the UNAMI field office in Mosul and viewed potential future expanded premises. The expanded premises would enable UN agencies to increase the UN family's footprint in the Ninewa region.



Milestone Covenant signing facilitates voluntary returns to Muhalabiya, Mosul

Baghdad, 14 October 2020 – A Covenant of Honour to encourage more than 1100 families perceived to be affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to return to their places of origin in the Muhalabiya sub-district was signed at today's Local Peace Conference.

The conference, organized by the West Mosul Local Peace Committee, was sponsored by the Governor of Ninewa and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq. Attendees included Muhalabiya community members, government figures, sheikhs, community leaders, and family members of returnees.

For many families, the Covenant signing will mark their return home for the first time in three years, when liberation operations in the area began. During the conflict with ISIL more than 6 million Iraqis were displaced from their areas of origin. An estimated 1.4 million individuals remain displaced today which includes close to 330, 000 persons in Ninewa Governorate alone. For individuals perceived as affiliated with ISIL hardships often include threat of exploitation and violence during displacement.

Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq Zena Ali Ahmad, emphasizes, "The dedication of the Local Peace Committees to reintegrate people who have been displaced from their communities is vital to ensure a strong and cohesive future for the people of Iraq. This conference and the resulting



covenant are a milestone for Muhalabiya and a promising indication of community peace and stability moving forward."

UNDP Iraq, in partnership with the Danish government, supports the work of 24 Local Peace Committees in Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Anbar governorates, with planning underway for establishment of additional committees in Diyala and Kirkuk. These committees play a major role in conflict resolution, advocate for peace and coexistence, and work to empower locals to promote social cohesion and reconciliation within their communities.

UNDP Iraq has recently launched a project on community readiness and reintegration of perceived ISIL-affiliated families with a target to reach

4,000 families in four locations of Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Anbar governorates in the first year, to be followed by more households in 2021 and 2022. Local Peace Committees play a vital role in the project to enhance community readiness and reintegration through designing and implementing activities that facilitate dialogue, mediation, reintegration and trust-building between different community groups. The project is built on the UN Iraq joint approach for community-based reconciliation and reintegration of persons perceived to be affiliated with ISIL/Da'esh in Iraq.

UNDP projects and intervention under the Social Cohesion Programme in Iraq are implemented with generous support from the governments of Denmark and Germany.

Cities as home: understanding belonging and acceptance among IDPs and host communities in Iraq

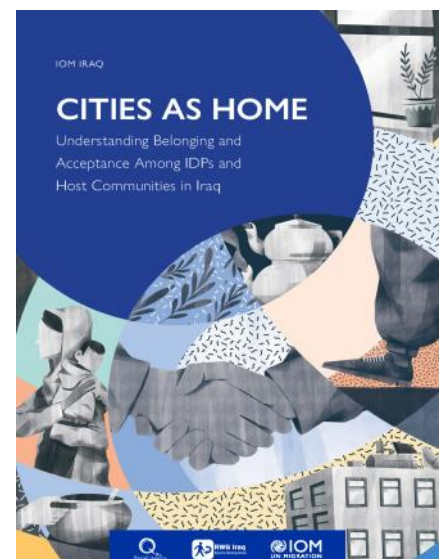
Baghdad, 19 October 2020 - In order to contribute to the measurement of local integration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Iraq, IOM Iraq, the Returns Working Group, and Social Inquiry implemented an in-depth study of 14 urban locations in the country hosting a high density of families displaced due to the ISIL conflict.

Utilising data collected on IDPs' perceptions and living conditions in displacement (1,382 respondents) and on those of host community residents (1,437 respondents) in the same neighbourhoods as well as key informant interviews with local authorities and policy-implementers (40 interviews) in these areas, this work seeks to identify which factors help or hinder local integration – and

those locations that are more (or less) conducive to this outcome.

This study is predicated on the understanding that local integration is not only based how on IDPs perceive their own belonging in the hosting location, irrespective of any stated intentions to stay or return, but also how host communities feel about accepting them. Further to this, these feelings may themselves be influenced by the character of the urban areas where IDPs and host communities reside as well as the regulatory environment surrounding them.

Full report is available at <https://iraq.iom.int/file/115039/download?token=au04Cjeu>



UNHCR facilitated the handover of Unified National Cards to 470 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) living in Erbil



Erbil, 20 October 2020 - This past week UNHCR facilitated the handover of Unified National Cards to 470 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) living in Erbil with the help of partner SWEDO - The Swedish Development Aid Organization. "Identification documents are important for all people. Lack of documentation for IDPs and returnees

severely impacts their ability to access education, healthcare, and employment, in addition to freedom of movement." said Philippa Candler, Acting UNHCR Representative in Iraq. "Obtaining an ID card is a first step for building a better future." Since April 2019, UNHCR has collaborated with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) of the Government of

Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), to implement mobile missions to dispatch government officials to issue civil documentation to IDPs in camps and out-of-camp locations. In 2019 UNHCR and partners provided legal assistance and/or counselling to 47,172 individuals, of which 36,601 individuals successfully secured civil documentation. Without civil IDs and documentation, displaced people in Iraq remain far from restarting their lives! Thanks to the generous support of The European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), UNHCR continues to provide legal assistance to help them access civil documentation, public services, health and education. Throughout 2019 and 2020, the EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid has donated EUR 6M to support the internally displaced people in Iraq through UNHCR's legal assistance and camp management and camp coordination programs.

IOM and UNDP continue to provide aid to returnees

Baghdad, 20 October 2020 - IOM Iraq teams in Salah Al-Din distributed 200 Non-Food Items (NFI) Replacement Kits and 800 COVID-19 kits for 200 returnee families in Baiji District. IOM Iraq's Rapid Assessment and Response Team in Baghdad Governorate delivered basic NFI & COVID-19 kits to 227 returnee families in Al-Yousifya subdistrict on 19 October 2020. The NFI kits consist of mattresses, rechargeable lights and other household items, while the COVID-19 kits contain soap, laundry detergent powder and other sanitary items to help slow the spread of the virus. This distribution activity was carried out in coordination with local



authorities, following recommendations for social distancing and protective equipment. Supported by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

In early October families in Samaraa district received 400 NFI kits and 1600 COVID-19 kits through two distribution sites set up to welcome the families in line with social distancing guidelines. 400 families were reached with this initiative. The Local Peace Committees of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Iraq have worked in partnership with the Nabd Al-Amal Foundation for Community Development to provide support to the affected families. UNDP Iraq's Local Peace Committees have reached over 60,000 vulnerable people in Anbar, Salahaldin and Ninewa governorates with food and hygiene packages thanks to support from Denmark.



OCHA Iraq's is visiting Kirkuk to meet with officials about plans to close IDP camps and best ways to support returns

Kirkuk, 26 October 2020 - OCHA Iraq's OiC, Deputy Head of Office, Georgios Petropoulos, is visiting Kirkuk this week to meet with officials about plans to close IDP camps and best ways to support returns. OCHA Iraq welcomes time spent with H.E. Rakan Said Ali al-Jubouri, Acting Governor of Kirkuk, to discuss these important issues.

OCHA was proud to be on hand for the opening of the COVID-19 quarantine and isolation area in Laylan IDP camp this week. The quarantine and isolation area will serve about 9,000 IDPs in Laylan/Yahyawa camps. IOM Iraq, UNHCR Iraq, UNICEF Iraq, WFP Iraq and MSF Iraq all provide important support to the ward.



The United Nations supports IDP returns that are safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable

Baghdad, 30 October 2020 – The Government of Iraq has announced its intention to close multiple camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Iraq by the end of 2020. Several camp closures and consolidations have taken place within the last several days, and the Government has signaled that more should be expected.

These decisions are taken independently of the United Nations,

which is not involved in governmental determinations regarding the status of IDP camps. Primary responsibility for the protection and welfare of IDPs rests with national governments and local authorities.

The United Nations supports IDP returns that are safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable. The UN maintains its mandate to coordinate with the Government on issues of

humanitarian assistance and is working to ensure that IDPs who have left camps and are returning home have access to necessary support while en route and upon arrival.

The United Nations is tracking developments closely and has been in constant communication with the Government of Iraq on planning for longer term durable solutions for all vulnerable IDPs in Iraq.

Stabilization and Development

IOM Iraq supports efforts to establish and train Rapid Response Units (2RU) in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Duhok Governorates

Erbil, 16 September 2020 - IOM Iraq is supporting the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief — Technisches Hilfswerk (THW) — and the Kurdistan Regional Government's Joint Crisis Coordination Centre in their joint effort to establish and train Rapid Response Units (2RU) in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Duhok Governorates.

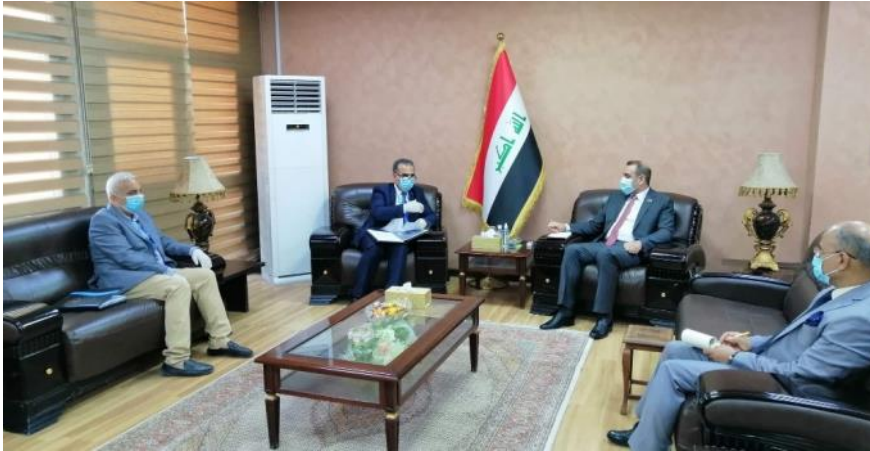
THW and JCC will train the 2RU to serve as first responders in search and rescue operations to react to disasters such as earthquakes, floods, or accidents. IOM Iraq's support will aim to develop their capacity for preparedness and response to crises. Last week, IOM provided a first training on Camp Coordination and



Camp Management for the Erbil 2RU at the JCC premises. Further areas for capacity development will be explored, and the training will expand to reach

the 2RUs to be established in Sulaymaniyah and Duhok. The training was funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

Ministry of Planning and FAO agree to strengthen cooperation for achievement of food security in Iraq



Baghdad, 20 September 2020 – H.E. the Minister of Planning - Dr. Khalid Batal Najim Abdullah, and the Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Iraq - Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, discussed FAO's programs and support to rural livelihoods and collaborative efforts with national institutions to strengthen sustainable agriculture with a focus on enhancing food security and improving the productivity of main crops in Iraq. During the meeting, FAO also discussed H.E. participation in the FAO's Regional Conference for the Near East and North Africa (NERC 35) that is being conducted virtually this year on September 21st & 22nd under

the theme "Transforming Food Systems to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals".

"FAO's efforts are further needed to positively impact the future of rural communities of Iraq", said H.E. Dr. Abdullah – Minister of Planning. "FAO has been a valued partner to the Government of Iraq through targeted technical and policy support, and by addressing the most pressing priorities of the agriculture sector and food security of Iraq." Moreover, H.E. Dr. Abdullah praised FAO's role in monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on agriculture production, availability and access to food. He confirmed the need to develop an action plan to help the implementation of the Food Security

Strategy.

Dr. ElHajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq briefed H.E. that FAO is currently implementing a number of strategic programs across Iraq through funds received from the European Union; focusing on the rehabilitation of agriculture and water infrastructure in liberated areas and strengthening value chains for major crops in an effort to improve agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods and support Iraqi produce.

Dr. ElHajj Hassan also highlighted that FAO supports the Government through institutional capacity building to strengthen quarantine and control measures of endemic and transboundary animal diseases funded by the US Defense Threat Reduction Agency. In light of the current challenges in climatic conditions, and funded by the Government of Japan and the Global Environment Facility, FAO is also introducing renewable energy sources as means for sustainable food production and supporting climate change resilient agriculture practices.

The Ministry of Planning and FAO agreed to work on an Action Plan that helps implement main priorities from the Food Security Strategy in full coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Food Security.

Cash payments given to community members in Anbar Governorate to rehabilitate their homes that were damaged during the ISIL conflict

Baghdad, 23 September 2020 - In 2014, Ayoub's family was displaced from Haditha District, Anbar Governorate, to Abu Ghraib District in Baghdad Governorate. They lost all their possessions when they were displaced from Haditha.

"When we returned to our home in 2018, we found it badly damaged. We did not have the money to repair it, and we were suffering so much; we could barely sleep in it because of [the burnt smell caused by the fires]," said Ayoub, 43.

IOM Iraq rehabilitated Ayoub's house, where he lives with his mother, brother, and sister. This is part of a larger initiative where cash payments are given to community members in Anbar Governorate to rehabilitate their homes that were damaged during the ISIL conflict. IOM teams tracked the progress of the rehabilitation work, and



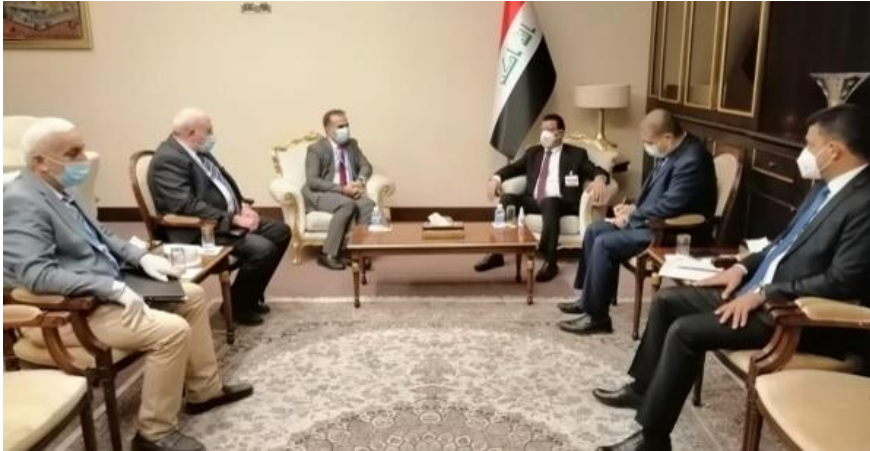
repaired damaged walls, electrical installations and plumbing. The project reached 120 houses in Anbar Governorate's Haditha and Heet districts — from a total of 957 houses targeted in Iraq through this project.

"After the restoration [the house is]

much better and it's more beautiful than before. Now we are trying to make up for the material losses and recover the furniture that we lost when we were displaced," Ayoub added.

These activities are funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

Minister of Agriculture discusses with FAO Representative in Iraq the sector's priorities and FAO's role in supporting Iraqi farmers



Baghdad, 22 September 2020 - His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture Eng. Muhammad Karim Jassim Al-Khafaji and the Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Iraq, Dr. Salah El-Hajj Hassan, discussed FAO programs, its support to rural livelihoods and its partnership with national institutions with a focus on agriculture, rural development, water and environment in Iraq. During the meeting, His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Al-Khafaji, emphasized the importance of protecting agriculture producers and food value chains of major crops during the current health crisis. He said,

“There is a need from FAO to continue its support to agriculture activities and strengthening of capacities of communities and the government to prevent future deterioration of food security and nutrition, and to build the resilience of the country as a whole.” Moreover, his Excellency observed the impact of COVID-19 on the economic situation in Iraq and noted FAO's responsibility and role from the start of the pandemic in monitoring its impact on food systems and coordinating actions to mitigate its impact. Dr. ElHajj Hassan highlighted and discussed with his Excellency the Minister of Agriculture FAO's current programs that aims to reduce rural

poverty and increase production through funds received from a number of international donors, including the European Union, the Threat Reduction Agency of the U.S. Department of Defense, the Japanese government and the Global Environment Facility.

Dr. ElHajj Hassan confirmed FAO's support to the rehabilitation of agriculture areas and irrigation systems in liberated areas, in addition to developing the performance of value chains in the agri-food sector for improved productivity across Iraq. He also stated that FAO will continue to provide its support to national partners through institutional capacity building to enhance veterinary services and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As climate change remains a priority to Iraq, Dr. ElHajj Hassan indicated that the organization is currently introducing renewable energy sources to support sustainable food production and support good agricultural practices resilient to climate change.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agriculture Organization has approved to formulate and finalize an action plan to help implement the main priorities of the Food Security Strategy in full coordination with the concerned ministries, such as the Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Water Resources.

UN-Habitat Iraq is constructing a new water well serving vulnerable IDPs, refugees and host community members



Erbil, 22 September 2020 - The EU Ambassador to Iraq, H.E. Mr. Martin Huth, and the Governor of Erbil, H.E. Dr. Firsat Sofi, have visited Mamzawa neighbourhood in Erbil, where UN-Habitat Iraq is constructing a new water well serving vulnerable IDPs, refugees and host community members. As an outcome of this initiative, 2,250 men, women, boys and girls will benefit

from an improved access to clean and regular water supply.

“Today we have been honored with the visit of H.E. Mr. Martin Huth, and would like to extend our sincere gratitude for EU's generous funding of this important project in Mamzawa and Qatawi low-income neighbourhoods,” H.E. Dr. Sofi said. “In this regard, I would like to extend our gratitude to

H.E. the EU Ambassador, UN-Habitat and UNDP for their support and partnership to meet a great deal of needs in this area,” he added.

This project comes under the programme “Strengthening the Long-Term Resilience of Subnational Authorities in Countries Affected by the Syrian and Iraqi Crises,” funded by the EU and implemented in partnership with UNDP. The programme includes the rehabilitation of 200 houses in Mamzawa and Qatawi neighbourhoods in Erbil and is being implemented in local partnership with Municipality No. 6 in Erbil and Erbil Water Directorate. Recognizing the crucial need for creating jobs during the ongoing pandemic, more than 1,300 job days for skilled and unskilled labour have been already created so far through local contractors during the implementation of this initiative in Erbil.

New survey of small and medium enterprises offers insight into state of Iraq's economy during COVID-19 Pandemic



Erbil, 24 September 2020 — Measures taken to curb the spread of COVID-19 have led to reduced operating hours or the closure of many of Iraq's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The economic impact of the pandemic is expected to be severe.

To measure the losses and investigate how SMEs are coping with movement restrictions, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the International Trade Center (ITC) launched a panel study of 893 enterprises in 15 governorates across Iraq.

The first round of data collection took place from 22 June to 7 July 2020 and focused on 16 economic sectors. Results

show that the pandemic has heavily impacted businesses' ability to retain employees. There was an average reduction of 27 per cent in full-time employment from February, before lockdown measures were implemented, to June. The pandemic also resulted in an increase 30 percentage points in the employment gender gap; in February, the ratio of women to men with jobs was on average 1 to 13, which increased in June to 1 to 17.

The COVID-19 crisis has negatively impacted SME production levels in Iraq, with an average decline of 67 per cent across all sectors. All governorates were similarly impacted; no governorate saw a decline in production of less than 50 per cent. SMEs also faced a 65 per cent decrease in monthly revenue on average. Eighty-six per cent of SMEs surveyed temporarily shut down in order to cope with the economic hardship of COVID-19, and 63 per cent report they are at risk of shutting down permanently.

To cope with the economic impact of the pandemic, between February and June SMEs employed strategies such as: temporarily reducing employment, including not paying salaries to employees (34%), requesting leniency in paying financial responsibilities (25%),

and sending employees home with a reduced salary (15%). SMEs report the most helpful form of government support to help cope with the impact of COVID-19 would be to reduce lockdown measures for some sectors (68%), provide rent subsidies (57%), and support self-employed individuals (45%).

The report provides further insight into the effect of border closures on SMEs, their ability to purchase inputs or sell outputs, and recommendations for public policies to help SMEs stay afloat. Wage subsidies and temporary tax suspensions would allow SMEs to retain employees and reduce job loss. Two more survey rounds with the same 893 businesses will take place in September and December 2020 to continue monitoring and analyzing the impact of COVID-19 crisis on production, labor, revenues and access to inputs, as well as the actions of SMEs in this context. This data will help illuminate the challenges faced by SME owners, and determine tools that can be developed to help them weather the COVID-19 crisis.

The study was funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and the European Union.

Celebrating five years of action



Baghdad, 25 September 2020 – Today marks five years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. During the UN Sustainable Development Summit in 2015, all UN member states endorsed an agenda that provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for all people and the planet.

Whether eliminating poverty and hunger, promoting equality and education, or addressing some of the planet's most pressing issues on health,

climate change, peace and economic growth, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action through a global partnership. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the realization of the Global Goals has never been more challenging, nor have the stakes been higher. Yet, by exposing the immense fragility of our world, the pandemic has also put into focus the need for a worldwide collective effort.

"The United Nations is here to support

and assist the government and all people in Iraq in achieving its SDGs, in line with Iraq's vision 2030," Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, UN Resident Coordinator for Iraq said, adding, "It is a day to remind us that Goals such as 1: No Poverty, 3: Good Health and Well-being, 13: Climate Action, and 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions are equally valid and give future generations a chance to live in peace and harmony, leaving no one behind."

* * * * *

Highlighting the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) on the 5th anniversary of its adoption, the United Nations family in Iraq hoisted the SDG flag at its headquarters in Baghdad, exceptionally replacing the UN flag for one day. All United Nations Member States of the United Nations, Iraq among them, have endorsed this universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 SDG were adopted in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals.

EU and FAO launch new project in support of Ministry of Agriculture efforts to recovery and development of the agriculture

Baghdad, 26 September 2020 – His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture, Eng. Muhammad Karim Jassim Al-Khafaji, and the Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Iraq, Dr. Salah El-Hajj Hassan, Head of Cooperation for Iraq - European Commission, Barbara Egger accompanied by representatives from IOM, ILO, GIZ, German Embassy, ITC and UNESCO discussed the support provided by the European Union to the support of governance and sustainable job creation in Iraq.

His Excellency, Mr. Al-Khafaji, expressed the Ministry's satisfaction and appreciation to the support provided by FAO and other aid agencies to strengthen rural development programs and implement small scale infrastructural projects in rural areas that have suffered significant damage since 2014. He said, "Iraq is steadily recovering from the recent crisis that have resulted in unprecedented socio-economic over the past five years. There is a need for the expansion of livelihood and employment opportunities in the rural



areas through a multitude of interventions which include agriculture and related sectors, including the services sector."

FAO representative in Iraq, Dr. ElHajj Hassan provided an overview on FAO programs in Iraq funded by the EU and the approach the organization is adopting to support the Government of Iraq in addressing poverty reduction. He said "These programs are unique as it capitalizes on the expertise and resources of several United Nations agencies for the development of Iraq's agriculture sector." He added "These projects funded by the EU will directly address creation of livelihood and

employment and will increase smallholder farming families' food security, raise their income and therefore improve their health and living standard."

In Iraq, FAO leads international efforts in supporting agriculture-led economic growth, more resilient communities, and improved food security and nutrition — especially for women and youth. FAO assistance supports farmers through a wide range of interventions, supporting Iraq's journey to self-reliance through assistance to producers, processors, agriculture support services, and improve the competitiveness of Iraqi products.

New WFP projects in Iraq help thousands of people get back to work during the COVID-19 crisis

Baghdad, 27 September 2020 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has launched new projects in Iraq to help provide thousands of people with short-term employment opportunities, so they can start working again during the COVID-19 pandemic and meet their family's food needs.

The projects target up to 68,000 people in Baghdad, Basra, Mosul and Wassit and are run in collaboration with WFP's partners Mercy Hands, OROKOM and GOAL. The initiative is part of WFP's COVID-19 response. Due to the pandemic, WFP identified the urgent need for activities to quickly help people who lost their jobs get back on their feet, especially day labourers and those who depend on seasonal employment.

WFP rolled out these urban livelihoods activities in August and they have now reached all locations. Participants receive a cash stipend in return for their work on useful community activities, such as clearing public parks and squares, renovating schools, planting trees, cleaning drains, painting sidewalks, recycling and more.

In parallel, WFP's ongoing work on resilience projects are helping an



additional 70,000 vulnerable people, creating sustainable sources of income through climate resilient agricultural activities. These projects focus on smallholder farmers and returnees from camps for internally displaced people. At the same time, WFP continues its food assistance for displaced and refugee families in camps, reaching up to an additional 45,000 vulnerable people during the pandemic.

At a time of ongoing uncertainty, when families are struggling to put food on the table, the projects also help inject cash into local economies, supporting entire local communities. WFP and its partners are collaborating closely with local municipalities in Baghdad, Basra, Mosul and Wassit, who have welcomed the initiative. All activities are being

coordinated with special COVID-19 precautions in place, to help keep people safe.

"The Urban Livelihoods projects are a new way to help people both meet their food needs during the crisis and contribute towards boosting the local economy, benefiting communities at large," said WFP Deputy Representative in Iraq Asif Bhutto. "We once again thank all donors for having made this vital element of WFP's COVID-19 response possible, and welcome new contributions to be able to reach more communities at a time of great need."

The Urban Livelihoods projects are supported by a number of generous donors to a special WFP internal fund that receives flexible contributions to be allocated where most needed. This year, the governments of Belgium, Canada, Finland, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and also private donors, have allowed WFP to respond to mounting needs in Iraq. Further Urban Livelihoods activities are required across the country, and WFP is appealing for US\$10.1 million to reach up to 300,000 people.

UN Women supports displaced women and girls, provides training workshops on the management of small projects

Baghdad, 28 September 2020 - Baghdad Women Association (BWA) conducted a three-day training workshop on the management of small projects in the period September 22-24, 2020 in Al Anbar Province, west Iraq.

Twenty women and girls took part in the workshop which was held as part of the “Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access & Protection (LEAP)” project in Iraq with the aim of supporting displaced and host-community women and girls, implemented by UN Women through support by the Government of Japan.

According to a BWA statement, the training activity tackled issues such as entrepreneurial qualities, implementing small projects, the Iraqi marketplace, developing project ideas, basic principles of commerce,

calculating project costs, pricing and expected profits, financial management, book keeping as well as risk and emergency management.

The statement said that women and girls who completed the training are expected to receive small grants to enable them to launch and run their own businesses.

The Women Leadership Institute (WLI) announced that it has selected 20 women to benefit from its small grants programme conducted as part of the LEAP Project.

According to a WLI statement, these 20 women were selected on the basis of vulnerability criteria out of a total of 322 applicants. The beneficiaries will receive training and support to enable them to start their own businesses at



WLI’s Safe Space Centre in Kirkuk, 238 kilometres north of Baghdad, the statement said.

The Safe Space for Women and Girls in Kirkuk Governorate continues to offer social, legal and economic services to those who need it for the third consecutive year, according to WLI.

Health, education, water, environment: Key issues highlighted in Resident Coordinator’s visit to Basra



Baghdad, 05 October 2020 -The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, Ms Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano visited Basra yesterday, reaffirming the UN’s long-term commitment to supporting the Government of Iraq in current challenges, particularly in the wake of COVID-19.

Ms Vojáčková-Sollorano was accompanied by Ms. Zena Ali Ahmad, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Iraq and Hamida Ramadhani Lasseko, Country Representative of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Iraq.

During a meeting with Basra Governor H.E Mr. Asaad al-Eidani, the Resident Coordinator discussed the challenges facing communities in Basra, including adequate healthcare amidst the pandemic and the need to encourage continued education, particularly for girls. She also met with representatives from civil society to express support for more robust environmental protection measures, long-term employment opportunities, and respect for human rights.

“From providing reliable and safe water sources, to establishing quality health infrastructure, to boosting employment opportunities for Basra’s youth – the UN has made a positive impact across Basra. But more needs to be done,” said Resident Coordinator Vojáčková-

Sollorano.

“We can’t deny that the outbreak of COVID-19 has brought on a unique set of challenges to a community that was already struggling to access basic services. In my discussions with the Governor and civil society members, one thing was clear – a collective desire to ensure these needs are addressed, and the most vulnerable communities in Basra are protected,” she said, adding “The UN stands ready to support this effort.”

Ms. Vojáčková-Sollorano along with Ms Ali Ahmad visited Al Fayhaa Hospital, where UNDP has recently completed the construction of a 20-bed isolation ward, which has the capacity to provide life-saving care to COVID-19 patients, as well as offering a purpose-built environment for hospital staff to manage cases safely and effectively. The construction of the ward, furniture and some of the medical equipment was funded by USAID, and ventilators provided by France.

Also on the agenda was a visit to the Hamdan wastewater treatment facility to the south of the city center that UNICEF successfully rehabilitated, in partnership with the province’s directorate of sewage and with funding from of the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). Thanks to the rehabilitation, at least 750,000 Basrawis have access to safe and clean water and are protected from preventable waterborne diseases.

Impact of COVID-19 on the Iraqi economy: New report highlights policy recommendations for Iraq's economic recovery

Baghdad, 7 October 2020 – Expanding social security coverage for vulnerable groups, increasing revenue generation to fund key Government programmes, and allocating more resources to develop the private sector are some of the key recommendations made by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in a new report on Iraq's economic recovery from COVID-19.

Released today, *Impact of Covid-19 on the Iraqi Economy* analyses the macroeconomic impact of the pandemic, setting out a number of policy recommendations that respond to challenges while ensuring continued progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“While Iraq's macroeconomic and fiscal conditions were broadly positive in the last few years, two major shocks have disrupted this progress: the oil crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic,” says Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad.

“This has significant impacts on communities, especially in relation to income, employment and poverty, with the real potential to significantly

increase inequality. For example, the research has revealed that Iraq's private sector employees are at much greater risk of falling into poverty than those who work in the public sector, particularly in low-income work and the informal sector, as well as female-headed households,” she adds.

According to the policy paper, the country's GDP is expected to reduce by nearly 10 percent in 2020, and the fiscal deficit is forecast to reach the unprecedented level of nearly 30 percent of GDP in 2020.

UNDP's recommended approach to the Government of Iraq and other key stakeholders in planning for Iraq's economic recovery is twofold, and covers:

- The need to rapidly identify additional financing options, avoid an unplanned monetary adjustment, and improve the quality and targeting of public expenditure; and
- Support the non-oil private sector economy to grow and reduce dependency on oil, while continuing to provide employment for a large number of the most vulnerable and low-income households by extending social

assistance schemes.

“UNDP and its partners stand ready to support the Government of Iraq to implement these measures, to stabilize the economy and ensure the most vulnerable people are protected,” adds Ms. Ali Ahmad.

The policy paper follows *Impact of the Oil Crisis and Covid-19 on Iraq's Fragility*, released in August 2020. Read the policy here.

<https://www.iq.undp.org/content/iraq/en/home/library/Stabilization/impact-of-covid-19-on-the-iraqi-economy.html>



UNIDO and the Government of Italy expand cooperation with new projects in Iraq, Jordan and Sudan

Vienna, Austria, 7 October 2020 - To support partner countries in their efforts to foster inclusive and sustainable industrial development, the Government of Italy is funding three new United Nations Industrial Development Organization's (UNIDO) interventions in Iraq, Jordan and Sudan. This announcement was made today at the UNIDO Headquarters by Ambassador Alessandro Cortese from the Permanent Mission of Italy to UNIDO to UNIDO's Director General, LI Yong, and representatives from the beneficiary countries.

To help realise the potential of Iraq's extensive reservoir network to drive its socio-economic development, one project aims to support the authorities in safely operating the Mosul Dam and in efficiently managing the national hydraulic infrastructure.

UNIDO's dam safety programme is a response to the Ministry of Water Resources' call for continued capacity development and technology transfer. It addresses the need to consolidate behavioural change for effective dam safety monitoring and maintenance.

The programme is designed to deliver on two major outcomes:

The Mosul Dam Monitoring Unit is strengthened as a Center of Expertise to effectively and autonomously make informed decisions as regards to the operational management of the dam; The National Dam Safety Unit is established at the Commission of Dams and Reservoirs in Baghdad and works in synergy with the Mosul Dam Monitoring Unit, paving the way for a national dam safety programme.

The provision of basic services such as water and electricity is crucial for the country's continued progress and for its industrial and agricultural development. Once the dam has been stabilized, it will be possible to increase water storage by 50 per cent, augmenting the country's freshwater storage capacity by almost 4 per cent. In terms of the long-term impact, the project will contribute to ensuring a safe and reliable water supply in Iraq.

UNIDO's Director General Li said, “Italy has always been a strong partner of UNIDO and advocate of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,”

adding that, “Together we have been able to achieve commendable results.”

Ambassador Cortese also stressed that “Italy is pleased to continue joining hands with UNIDO and our partner Countries to achieve inclusive and sustainable industrial development, with a special focus on job creation, and so build a better future in this decade of action.”

Italy is one of the largest donors to UNIDO, and through the support provided for the three projects, again signals its commitment to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.



IOM rehabilitated Al-Tahadee water treatment plant in Fallujah

Fallujah, 8 October 2020 - Al-Tahadee water treatment plant in Fallujah sustained damage during the conflict with ISIL, affecting 2,500 individuals. IOM rehabilitated the plant with funding from U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, improving water flow and quality and allowing the community to access potable water.

"We suffered from weak water flow and dangerous levels of turbidity," said

Ahmed, a father of eight. "I had to purchase water from private suppliers for fear of getting a disease, which added to my costs. Thank God, the water quality is now much better and we can safely drink it."

Through this and other infrastructure, livelihood assistance and community engagement projects, IOM Iraq contributes to improved conditions for sustainable recovery in Iraq and supports durable solutions to displacement.



Concluding Al-Yarmouk youth athletics for peace initiative

Mosul, 9 October 2020 - Much to the disappointment of Mosul sport fans, the 2-week long open air sports festival that UN-Habitat organised in Yarmouk Park has come to an end. In the final football match, the team of Al-Tathamon fought hard to win over the team from Mosul Municipality and took away the first trophy. The event was attended by the Head of Mosul Municipality, his deputy, staff of the Municipality sector and many enthusiastic residents of Sikak, Matahin, Maghrib and Yarmouk

neighborhoods. For the occasion, Mosul Municipality also organized a tournament between children and youth of its taekwondo club. The initiative was organized under the umbrella of the EU-funded programme 'Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development', implemented by UNDP in partnership with UN-Habitat, and was filmed by Mosul Municipality's Communication team who produced a series of five professional videos for its social media platform.



WFP expands its work in support of vulnerable people in the south of Iraq



Baghdad, 12 October 2020 - Responding to rising humanitarian needs in southern Iraq, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has expanded its activities in the region to support an additional 33,500 vulnerable people. One year after the re-opening of its Basra office, WFP has set up new projects to create work opportunities alongside its existing school feeding programme.

This expansion is part of WFP's response to the COVID-19 pandemic to mitigate the socio-economic effects of the global crisis on the most vulnerable. In Basra, and across the country, WFP launched new urban livelihoods projects to create short-term work opportunities for people

who lost their jobs so they can start working again and provide for their families. The projects also benefit the entire community as they are focused on rehabilitating or creating community assets such as renovating schools and medical centres, cleaning streets, planting trees, and more.

WFP has also launched rural work and training projects for the first time in Basra and Thi-Qar governorates, helping people grow and sell their own food, including small business grants for women. The livelihoods projects include irrigation, to help bring back water to communities in the hotter, drier south of Iraq, where climate change is hitting hard. WFP's rural and urban livelihoods projects are helping enhance people's resilience in the southern governorates, thanks to the support of Germany, France and other key partners.

As for its existing school feeding projects, WFP and the Ministry of Education are now working on resuming the programme in the 2020-2021 academic year. Complementary activities for students will be included such as hygiene awareness, nutrition and physical exercise. Since WFP opened its office in Basra last autumn it has been supporting school feeding in the south benefiting 107,000 children in Basra, Thi-Qar,

Muthanna and Misan. Around 400 jobs were created in the local communities, supporting bakeries, warehouses and more.

WFP is also carrying out - through a dedicated new conflict sensitivity specialist - research and providing insight on its potential contributions to social cohesion, principally in the south of Iraq and in Ninewa. This follows the joint research that WFP and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) conducted last year.

"This initiative is the first of its kind among WFP offices," said WFP Deputy Representative in Iraq Asif Bhutto. "The pioneering research enhances the conflict sensitivity of all our programmes, aiming to foster participation and social cohesion to bring communities closer together, and strengthen capacity with the government."

WFP is analysing how its projects can help people avoid adopting negative coping mechanisms, such as conflict-related means of earning an income. The new findings will help inform WFP's activities, to better support people in the south of the country and beyond. Building on the expansion in 2020 in response to people's needs, WFP plans to further scale up its new resilience projects alongside School Feeding in southern Iraq in 2021.

FAO receives 2.2 million dollars from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA/USA) to strengthen veterinary services in targeted provinces in Iraq

Baghdad, 12 October 2020 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO, welcomes the additional contribution of 2.2 million dollars from the Defence Threat Reduction Agency, DTRA/USA, to strengthen veterinary services in targeted provinces in Iraq and build capacity in disease recognition, field and laboratory diagnostics, epidemiology, data collection and analysis, reporting and early warning systems for high-threat animal diseases.

Dr. Salah ElHajjHassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, expressed FAO's commitment to strengthen the capacity of veterinary services to detect, diagnose, and report highly pathogenic animal diseases. He said, "As the whole world is dealing globally with the COVID-19 pandemic, a focus on community resilience through disease control is especially important. This project will strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of Iraqi veterinary services for effective surveillance and control of zoonotic and transboundary diseases to protect livestock from losses and reduce severe threats to human health and safety." He also stressed the importance of partnership and mutual cooperation with national stakeholders and other entities working in the same field.

Despite the efforts made by the Government of Iraq, the monitoring and control programs are restricted and with insufficient resources due to low oil prices and the Corona Virus pandemic, which affected animal health services in border areas and increased the risk of spreading highly contagious animal diseases within the region.

The health system in Iraq is already struggling to cope with COVID-19. An enhanced early warning system combined with new strategies and policies, and provision of animal health services, will ensure that livestock, an essential livelihood source for Iraqis, remain healthy and free from zoonotic

disease outbreaks. FAO will support veterinary services by improving communications between regional and central Iraqi authorities, as well as with the herding communities, in order to help mitigate the threat of highly-pathogenic animal diseases within the region.

FAO is grateful to the United States of America, Defence Threat Reduction Agency, for this generous contribution that aims to expand the scope of the ongoing project, "Improving Delivery of Animal Health Services and Disease Surveillance in Iraq," which brings the total amount contributed by DTRA to over 3.5 million dollars.



Building back better and greener



Mosul, 13 October 2020 - Rebuilding after a conflict provides a rare opportunity to build aspects of a city better than before. The more so, now, while trying to recover from the socio-economic crisis brought by COVID-19. Returning to "business as usual" for Iraq in particular is not an option, considering also the severe

environmental challenges it is facing. Catalysing the shift towards more sustainable building practices will require efforts from all individuals, above all decision-makers in the public sector.

It is in this spirit that UN-Habitat organized a two-day long training on "Green Building and Environmental

Sustainability" in Mosul. The training was delivered by KESK, a consultancy company specialized in Green Building based in Erbil. Participants included technical staff from the Mosul Municipality, Nineveh Governorate officials, Mosul University professors and staff of the Vocational Training Centre (VTC). The course covered several topics, including an overview of green building and its benefits, history and principles, assessment tools, sustainable sourcing and use of materials, energy and water efficiency, power issues and market opportunities for renewable energy in Iraq. Shams Al-Bayan Company delivered a session on the applications of solar energy in Mosul.

Environmental sustainability is an important aspect of the EU-funded programme 'Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development', implemented by UNDP in partnership with UN-Habitat.

Participatory design and testing of a pump track as a catalyst for change in Heet, Anbar Governorate

Baghdad, 14 October 2020 - Hesitant but enthusiastic bikers from Al Baker area gathered to help UN-Habitat's team and its implementing partner RIRP to design and test the ramps, table tops and camel humps of Heet's first pump track for mountain bikes and bicycle motocross (BMX). The track is being realized on an abandoned area east of Al Nejoom Primary School in Al Baker, as an experiment in innovative and inclusive urban transformation through the temporary (and reversible) use of a vacant public land earmarked in Heet's Master Plan for a future kindergarten. This initiative aims to engage youth in reclaiming open spaces for temporary community-interest purposes and to help the local authorities stop the illegal dumping of garbage and construction debris on such sites. Confident that the pump track will attract dozens of enthusiastic BMX users per day, helping to breathe



new life in this conflict-affected area and provide new economic opportunities, UN-Habitat will also support the set up of a "start-up" bicycle repair shop nearby, in a reclaimed container.

The engagement of youth is a priority of the EU-funded programme 'Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development', implemented by UNDP in partnership with UN-Habitat.

On World Food Day, FAO, IFAD, WFP and the World Bank renew their commitment on pioneering research to support food security in Iraq

Baghdad, 16 October 2020 - Today on World Food Day, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Bank renewed their commitment to continue their pioneering research on food security in Iraq and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the most vulnerable.

Each year, over 150 countries around the world hold events to mark World Food Day, making it one of the most celebrated international days. But this year's World Food Day is no ordinary day; it comes as the world continues to fight the coronavirus - a global scourge that has exposed the fragility of our food systems, threatens to push millions more into hunger, and has rekindled our appreciation for food security.

The socio-economic effects of the pandemic – particularly loss of incomes – are heightening existing threats linked to conflict and climate change. The need for concerted action to improve agricultural production while enhancing food supply chains is captured in this year's World Food Day theme: "Grow, Nourish, Sustain. Together."

The UN agencies and World Bank's latest bimonthly report highlights how

digital innovation can strengthen Iraq's food system. As well as providing a thorough analysis of the food security situation, the report reviews the current status of Iraq's digital ecosystem, identifying innovations that have been successfully introduced in Iraq and beyond, along the agriculture and food value chains.

"This crisis could be leveraged as a catalyst for reform. By diversifying import sources, investing in a food security early warning system and restructuring social protection policy, Iraq's food system can be strengthened," said FAO Representative in Iraq Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan, IFAD Representative for Iraq Tarek Ahmed, WFP Iraq Representative Abdirahman Meygag, and Ramzi Neman, World Bank Representative in Iraq, in a joint statement. "Digital transformation can underpin these initiatives, improving the resilience of Iraq's agriculture and food system against current and future shocks."

The latest monitoring results indicate that 3.8 million people in Iraq (10 percent of the population) have insufficient food. Meanwhile, COVID-19 cases continue to rise. The partners' data and analysis on food security have been helping inform the government, humanitarian and development

community since April, towards stronger food systems supporting vulnerable families, farmers, and endangered small and medium sized businesses in the food and agriculture sector. Following evidence-based planning and decision making, dynamic food systems can contribute both to community-based agricultural growth and the strengthening of national economies.

The partners will publish the next bimonthly report at the end of November, on their latest findings. Download copies of the latest reports at: <https://bit.ly/3IAKCIv>



Memorandum of Understanding to boost private sector and create job opportunities signed by UNDP and Ministry of Planning

Baghdad, 18 October 2020 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq and the Iraqi Ministry of Planning (MoP) have today signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will boost the private sector through micro, small and medium enterprises, create job opportunities and support an inclusive growth policy.

The MoU provides a general framework for cooperation between the two parties to conduct a survey of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) funded by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in three Iraqi governorates: Baghdad, Basra and Nineveh.

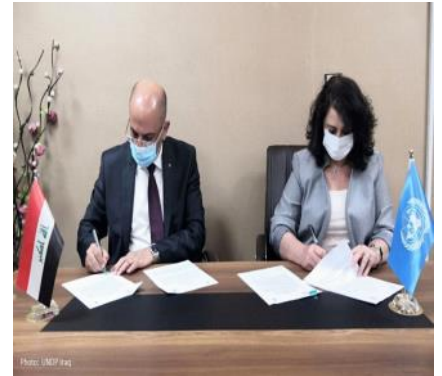
The survey will build a comprehensive national approach and an understanding of the MSMEs structure, their development trends, and operations, helping stakeholders make informed decisions on how to strengthen and develop MSMEs, and create a sustainable economic base in Iraq, in addition to identifying the opportunities and challenges. This will be supported by updated and reliable labor market studies and information.

It covers important areas of cooperation, including the exchange of knowledge, data and documents that serve the purposes and scope of the survey, and the provision

of the necessary technical support, including survey staff and qualified field staff throughout the survey development stages.

“The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding is clearly articulates the steps required to implement the private sector development strategy launched by the ministry in cooperation with the international partner, the United Nations Development Programme. UNDP has expressed strong commitment and has had a prominent role in the strategy by providing the necessary support to the Central Statistical Organization to implement the survey for small, micro and medium enterprises in both the formal and informal sectors for three governorates as a first phase, followed by the inclusion of the rest of the governorates in the second phase when health conditions improve.” said The Minister of Planning, Dr. Khalid Battal Al-Najm in a statement on the signing of this memorandum.

Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq Zena Ali Ahmad, emphasizes, “Micro, small and medium enterprises in Iraq face significant challenges which have been exacerbated by the outbreak of COVID-19, resulting in a reduction of growth potential and employment opportunities. The signing of this memorandum comes at a pivotal time and



is an important step towards strengthening the role of the private sector in Iraq and creating much-needed job opportunities.”

“This memorandum also emphasises the continued and fruitful cooperation between UNDP Iraq and the Iraqi Ministry of Planning - a key partner across many of our initiatives - as well as the partnership with our generous donors USAID. We are extremely grateful for their support in funding this critical work” she added.

UNDP will provide the necessary technical support to prepare the survey and develop recommendations that can assist stakeholders in establishing development policies for the economic sector.

Improving lives, one statistic at a time: Government of Iraq and UNFPA celebrate World Statistics Day

Baghdad, 20 October 2020 - A statistic is not only a number – it tells a human story. It speaks of people’s health and well-being, problems and prospects, and socio-economic circumstances. When collected and analysed well, statistics can advance the sustainable development of a country.

Today, the Ministry of Planning, the Central Statistics Organisation, and the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office with the support of UNFPA, the Iraqi Statistical Association and Al-Rafidin University and funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), organised the fifteenth conference on statistics, commemorating the third World Statistics Day.

In Iraq, the need for data is immense. It is needed for improving the living conditions of people, by identifying population size, resources available, pockets of the underserved and vulnerable population. Census is the primary tool to collect such data at the national level.

The event focused on the importance of data and the need to use them to help people improve their lives and realise their rights rather than use them for political gains. Discussions presented the steps that need to be taken to ensure that data are accurate, consistent, and complete. The participants also highlighted the statistical achievements done in Iraq in the last few years.

Speaking at the event, the Minister of Planning, Dr Khaled Battal Najm, emphasised on the role that data in the recovery phase: “Relying on statistics and data for the development of plans and policies is the effective way to face the repercussions on the crises that faced Iraq and to swiftly respond to the challenges. Indicators and data can identify the gaps in the economic and social levels”.

UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Rita Columbia added: “Throughout the years, UNFPA has supported the efforts with the Government of Iraq and the Government of Kurdistan to strengthen the national capacities to



collect and analyse statistical data including census. More recently, UNFPA facilitated the exchange of knowledge and expertise between Jordan, Egypt and Iraq to tailor the E-census to the Iraqi context.”

“UNFPA will continue working with the Governments and partners to strengthen reliable data, develop evidence-based strategies and plans for improving livelihoods of people, especially women and youth. Our goal remains ensuring that no one is left behind and that all women and men, girls and boys have equal opportunities to reach their life goals,” she concluded.

UNIDO and the KR Ministry of Education are introducing entrepreneurship education into secondary vocational schools

Duhok, 20 October 2020 - To help address the growing unemployment rate among youth in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Ministry of Education is introducing entrepreneurship education (ECP) into secondary vocational schools. Approximately 1,056 students will participate in the ECP curriculum this school year, 2020-2021.

As part of the initiative, UNIDO organized a 120-hour Training of Trainers on Entrepreneurship Development for 15 teachers and 2 staff of secondary vocational schools in Duhok Governorate of KRI, from September 20 – October 15, 2020. The objective of the training was to prepare teachers to assist students with securing pathways to employment. The training included courses on such topics as entrepreneurship, business planning, leadership, and pedagogy. In 2018 and 2019, UNIDO and the Ministry of Education successfully pilot tested the ECP curriculum in 10 secondary vocational schools in Erbil. The project introduced the program to 1,550 secondary education students in

Grades 10 and 11.

The UNIDO's ECP initiative is designed to advance the economic resilience of the local community and answer to the complex challenge of addressing human security in a post conflict environment. As a practical alternative to a college education, it aims to fill the gap between academia and industry. The Federal Government of Austria and the Japanese Government are supporting this initiative.

Ministry of Education of Duhok, Mr. Shazriy Khalil, serves as head of the Planning Department for Duhok's program. Khalil explains that, "it is necessary to develop industrial preparatory schools and support their graduates with small business support. This is essential for the development of the local economy."

He notes that the school system generally only sees a few highly competent students graduating on an annual basis and government support for vocational schools and their graduates has traditionally been minimal.

Khalil says, "there is an urgent need to intensify and develop curriculum to

build up the technical skills of students. As the ECP is now part of these vocational schools' curriculum, it will certainly make a positive change."

Mr. Bjar M Salih, a teacher of computer science in Duhok Vocational School, participated in the Training of Trainers program this fall. He sees the ECP curriculum as essential to the success of Duhok's secondary students—echoing the Ministry of Education's sense of urgency for reform.

He states, "Currently the education sector is not very effective. Students are after certificates rather than learning and developing their skills. There is also little support for youth and little guidance, in addition to the few and limited job opportunities available."



Conference highlights importance of achieving SDGs to recover from COVID-19 pandemic



Baghdad, 21 October 2020 - The challenges and opportunities of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of COVID-19 was the focus of a two-day conference organized by the Ministry of Planning in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq. Held on the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the SDGs, the conference provided an opportunity for dialogue

among development partners from ministries, civil society organizations, universities, the private sector, and youth groups to work together, exchange ideas, and identify opportunities for Iraq to progress on the ambitious SDG agenda.

Globally, COVID-19 has caused a crisis with far reaching impact on economic and human development. Iraq is not an exception, and the country has been impacted by the 'dual crisis' of COVID-

19 and the decline in oil prices.

These shocks are more likely to have a more severe effect on marginalized groups, including women, the elderly, people with disabilities, minorities, displaced people, and people living in informal settlements. This makes it imperative to remember what the 2030 Agenda called for, to leave no one behind.

With only ten years remaining to achieve the ambitious agenda, the SDGs are more important today than ever before as they aim to transform systems that undermine well-being and perpetuate vulnerabilities.

"The past few months have given us an opportunity, in partnership with the esteemed Ministry of Planning and our partners in other sectors, to rethink what a 'new normal' would look like post the COVID-19 pandemic," said Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad. "We should collectively work hard to support the achievement of the SDGs in Iraq and prevent any regression in the development gains that have been achieved over the past years."

Signature of the Fact Checking Tools Platform of Iraq



Baghdad, 22 October 2020 – UNESCO and Communications and Media Commission (CMC) signed the exchanging letters of establishing the FCT Fact Checking Tools Platform to fight Disinformation and fake news amid COVID-19, as part of the EU funded project “Coronavirus Facts: Addressing the ‘Disinfodemic’ on Covid-19 in conflict-prone environments” project.

With financial support from the European Union, UNESCO and CMC will develop the FCT platform to be the main tool for fighting misinformation and a new online system for fact checking to be hosted by the CMC with open access (free for all). Iraqi FCT

platform is a completely automatic fact-checking platform that can detect a claim as it appears in real time, and instantly provide the users with a rating about its accuracy. It’s a call to the computing and journalism communities to tackle the technical challenges they face in automating fact-checking and potential solutions.

More than 50 staff from CMC took part in the factcheck training, hosted by UNESCO on 26-27 August 2020, and today is the day of translating the hope into a concrete achievement. The two-day training was filled with info-sessions on the project’s lessons learned and with workshops and hands on sessions on the factcheck methodology.

Moreover, today we move to the second step in which we will provide the FCT platform to be the first in the MENA region.

This platform will be designed as a verification, helping journalists in saving time and to be more efficient in their fact-checking and debunking tasks on social networks especially when verifying videos and images.

Dr. Ali the Head of CMC on the FCT said, “with this FCT platform we can say that journalists, media actors, information specialists and general users will be able to verify the information relayed by COVID-19 and identify the misinformation”. Dr. Ali added “UNESCO Iraq office is a key partner that we can depend on to develop Iraqi ICT sectors”.

The provided tools will allow users to quickly get contextual information on Facebook and YouTube videos, to perform reverse image search on Google, Baidu or Yandex search engines, to fragment videos from various platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Daily Motion) into keyframes, to enhance and explore keyframes and images through a magnifying lens, to query Twitter more efficiently through time intervals and many other filters, to read video and image metadata, to check the video copyrights, and to apply forensic filters on still images.

Mine Action

Three bombs removed and half a million gets access to water

Baghdad, 6 August 2020 - Pehr Lodhammar is the Senior Programme Manager for United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq. The role includes great pressure from safety and expectations perspective, however also enormous rewards when the locals can return to their home after UNMAS has cleared the area from explosive hazards. UNRIC talked with Lodhammar to hear more about UNMAS’s work, Lodhammar’s journey to the UN, and how the Swedish management style has been to his benefit.

So far, Lodhammar has worked as a Senior Programme Manager in Iraq for three years. Before he started his position at UNMAS in Iraq, he worked in 14 different countries across the globe, and in all of these countries, the focus of work has been on ammunition

clearance.

From the Swedish countryside to Iraq Pehr Lodhammar grew up at a farm on the Swedish countryside and joined the Swedish Armed Forces in 1989. There he became one of the first to be trained in ammunition clearance in Sweden, and since then he has worked with ammunition clearance for almost 30 years before he started his job at UNMAS in Iraq.

When Lodhammar started his job as Senior Programme Manager in Iraq 2017, he understood that it would be a very significant challenge. The explosive hazard problem in Iraq is both complex and extensive.

“Working for UNMAS in Iraq would be a new challenge for me, which was what I was looking for”, says Lodhammar. “When I came to Iraq in 2017, they were defeating ISIS.

UNMAS was among the first to enter Mosul, where we were responsible for clearing up critical infrastructures such as hydropower plants, power plants, schools, and hospitals. One of the first places we cleared was what used to be Iraq’s second-largest hospital, which ISIS had taken over and used as their headquarter before they were defeated”, he continues.

In the area, UNMAS found thousands of different objects. From artillery ammunition, hand grenades, and suicide belts.

“We found many bodies from former ISIS fighters. Most of them also wore suicide belts, which meant that we had to take care of the bodies to remove the belts.”

Another great challenge to be aware of is the previous conflicts in the country, but also, the creativity that existed

Three bombs removed and half a million gets access to water *(continued)*



when the ammunition was built.

“It’s not only ammunition from the recent conflict but also from several previous conflicts in the country so the conflict with ISIS has only added another layer of ammunition”, Lodhammar describes. “There were also large amounts of improvised explosive devices, which was new to us. The ammunition we found had not been created from factories like we’re used to but built from what can be found in stores like clocks from microwaves and motion sensors that sense movements. This meant that we had to work differently from what we had done before”, Lodhammar explains.

The role of Senior Programme Manager

The first two years as the Senior Program Manager for UNMAS meant a lot of work for Lodhammar. He worked seven days a week, 18-19 hours a day, and had very limited sleep. The role included both being out in the field and see how they worked there, and at the same time, he would also seek funding from donors. And all the hard work really paid off.

“In the first year, we went from \$ 10 million to \$ 76 million in funding, and over 20 countries contributed. We went from 10 employees to over 100 employees so far”, Lodhammar concludes.

Demanding but rewarding work

Despite the fact that the job includes high risk and great responsibility, it’s a very rewarding job, he states.

“It has a direct effect on people so that they can return to their homes thanks to our work. It’s very difficult for people to return to their homes when there is ammunition in the area. But still, there are 1.38 million people in camps in Iraq waiting to return to where they came from originally and the job ammunition clearance must continue”, he says.

UNMAS cleared 1,800 areas of critical

infrastructure for people to return, and close to 67,000 different objects, of which more than 1,200 were suicide belts. UNMAS collaborated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the work for people to be able to return to their homes. When UNMAS had cleared a hospital, a school, or a bridge, it was for UNDP to get there and rebuild it. This meant that Lodhammar had to be sure that they could clear the area on time, but also that it was safe enough for other teams to go there and continue the re-building work.

“We cannot clear a place and then someone gets there experiencing an explosion. Then we have destroyed our trust, so it includes a huge psychological pressure”, says Lodhammar.

The biggest challenge for Lodhammar now is to convince the world that the work needs to continue even if ISIS has been defeated two years ago. Lodhammar and his team need to prove that Iraq still is in need of support to rebuild the region and the country.

Swedish management style

In his role as Senior Programme Manager for UNMAS in Iraq, Lodhammar has had positive results given his leadership style, which he describes, are based on openness and always being available to his staff.

“There are 36 different nationalities working for me, and everyone sees management and leadership in different ways. I believe that the “Swedish” way of leading contributed to the success we have had in Iraq. I always tried to make myself available, to be out in the field with my co-workers, while I also talked to ministers and ambassadors as well. I think it helped to have open and straightforward communication with my employees”, Lodhammar says.

Another factor that contributed to the great success of UNMAS in Iraq was that they dared to try new things and change the focus. It was something that impacted the work of the whole organization.

“We stopped focusing only on the number of mines cleared, and shifted the focus to look at what actually happens afterwards and focused on the outcome in re-built safety. When we, e.g., cleared three terrorist bombs at a water source, we saw that half a million people got access to clean water. We cleared a bridge and removed five bombs, and it turned out after the clearance that there are 6,000 cars and 500 trucks passing there every day. That is what actually counts from a people and societal perspective”, Lodhammar states.

For people who return to their homes after the clearance, UNMAS provides risk education to create awareness. In Iraq, Lodhammar saw the potential to try new things. The majority of Iraqis have a smartphone, which led UNMAS to start using social media, and they started making films with great quality for people who return, one for younger people as teenagers and one for children. They also started using radio and TV more than before, which proved to be successful.

Tips for an UN-career

To people who want to pursue a career within the UN, Lodhammar has three tips that he always gives to people who want to apply for jobs within the UN.

“The first thing is to learn as many languages as possible. The second is to focus on education. The third is to take care of your teeth”, says Lodhammar and laughs. “When you are out in the field, you don’t have the same access to a dentist as to when you’re home. But the most important is education and language.”



UNMAS provided three online explosive ordnance awareness sessions for 20 UN-Habitat Iraq field personnel working in Iraq

Baghdad, 25 September 2020 - UNMAS recently provided three online explosive ordnance awareness sessions for 20 UN-Habitat Iraq field personnel working in Iraq. UN-Habitat works to provide multiple housing solutions for internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups. The latest conflict with ISIL in Iraq has

left swathes of land contaminated with explosive ordnance, posing a danger to people's lives and inhibiting rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in the country. Since 2014, UN-Habitat has rehabilitated over 3,100 war-damaged houses and constructed over 4,000 durable housing units in Iraq.



UNMAS continues consultations with Iraqi authorities and diplomats accredited in Iraq

Baghdad, 30 September 2020 - The Senior Programme Manager of UNMAS Iraq, Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, regularly meets Iraqi stakeholders and ambassadors working in the country. Recently he held meetings with the Ambassador of Sweden to Iraq, Mr. Lars Ronnas, and senior officials of the Swedish mission in Iraq, and with the Ambassador of the Netherlands, Mr. Michel Rentenaar.

UNMAS is grateful for the strong support it receives from stakeholders and donors. Since the global pandemic, operations have slowed down, but they have never stopped.

Working together makes it possible for UNMAS to continue to implement its mandate, to survey, clear, educate, provide technical support, and deliver risk education.



UNMAS supports the Government of Iraq to enable humanitarian, stabilization, and reconstruction efforts to proceed unimpeded by explosive ordnance

Baghdad, 4 October 2020 - UNMAS Senior Programme Manager, Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, recently met with the Director General of the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA), Mr. Khalid Rashad and several DMA heads of departments in Baghdad and Mr. Siraj Barzani, Head of the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) in Erbil. The parties discussed their continued cooperation and how mine action activities will be prioritized amidst COVID-19. UNMAS will provide technical support to the Government of Iraq in organizing the digital Donor's Conference, which will bring together donors to discuss Iraq's mine action needs.



First virtual Mine Action donor conference for Iraq

Baghdad, 30 October 2020 - The Directorate of Mine Action, the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency and UNMAS in Iraq organized the first virtual Mine Action Donor Conference. The event gathered 13 donor countries and more than 150 participants from national authorities, United Nations agencies, NGOs and media. The conference addressed Iraq's extensive explosive ordnance contamination, identified clearance priorities and reviewed efforts made by all parties to reduce the threat. Several donors renewed their commitments to support mine action. "The role of the international community is very important as it is a critical partner in Iraq's endeavors to get rid of mines, explosive remnants of war, and improvised explosive devices," said the Minister of Health and Environment, Dr. Hassan al-Tamimi.



COVID-19 Pandemic

UNICEF aims to train 30,000 primary health care workers in Iraq in efforts to prevent and control Covid-19 infection



Baghdad, 1 September 2020 – With numbers soaring since early June, as of the end of August Iraq has confirmed 231,177 cases of COVID-19 and 6959 deaths. To stem the tide against the pandemic, UNICEF is supporting the training of an estimated 30,000 health care providers at the primary care level, with the aim of disseminating key information about COVID-19 infection, prevention and control, with a special focus on preventing infection among health providers.

Iraq is using a cascade approach for this massive exercise, with online training of 132 national officials from the Ministry of Health over four days in July, and over 580 personnel from the Primary Health Care departments at governorate- and district-level last week. These subnational

personnel will proceed to train primary care staff in person in coming weeks, thereby ensuring that their newly acquired knowledge is shared widely with other frontline health workers.

"Frontline health workers are the unsung heroes in Iraq's fight against COVID-19. Day after day, they continue to show up and provide critical services to those most in need, risking their lives," said Paula Bulancea, UNICEF's Deputy Representative in Iraq.

"This training will build on UNICEF's ongoing support to health workers and vulnerable communities in Iraq as we work together and with all of our partners in government, the World Health Organization, and in non-government organizations, to control this deadly virus," Dr. Bulancea added.

The cascade training will cover the needs of health workers providing immunization, maternal and neonatal care and nutrition services. It will also focus on water and sanitation in the primary health care setting in the context of COVID19.

"Simple acts such as washing your hands after seeing every patient, ensuring that you maintain social distancing with caregivers when vaccinating a child, and wearing a mask at all times will go a long way in ensuring that the safety of healthcare workers isn't compromised on the job," remarked Dr. Bulancea.

In addition to training health workers, UNICEF has:

- Reached over 14 million people with risk communication and awareness in online and off-line awareness raising campaigns.
- Distributed approximately 11,000 personal protective equipment (PPE) to front line health workers in the most affected governorates.
- Partnered with the University of Karbala to produce 14,500 bottles of locally made hand sanitizers and 10,000 large bottles of disinfectants to disinfect surfaces, in partnership with the Karbala Directorate of Health. These products were distributed in healthcare centers in Karbala and Baghdad.
- Launched a satellite TV education channel to support 1.5 million learners in Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The Ministries of Planning, Health, and UNFPA begin the assessment of COVID-19 impact on reproductive health services

Baghdad, 10 September 2020 - The Ministry of Planning and Health in the Federal Government and Kurdistan Regional Government, with the support of UNFPA, began on, 9 September a Rapid Assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on the reproductive health services in Iraq.

The Assessment covers 107 health centres at primary level and ten hospitals at secondary and tertiary levels in Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil, Najaf and Salahuddin governorates and is conducted by 27 physicians and 16 statisticians trained on data collection. The two-week assessment is conducted under the supervision of the Heads of the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO), and the Directors General of the Public Health Departments in the Ministry of Health at the Federal and Regional levels as well as field experts, with the technical and financial assistance from UNFPA. The Head of CSO, Dr Dhia Awad Khadum, commented on the project saying: "This assessment is vital for the

Ministry of Planning and CSO to analyse the impact of COVID-19 on the reproductive health services and the health workers in the field. The assessment will also give the Ministries involved a holistic picture of the needs to ensure the continuity of high-quality services and their continuity.



The Head of KRSO, Mr Serwan Mohammed, emphasised that "the assessment aims at identifying the gaps in the services provided, which were exacerbated because of COVID-19. The results will guide the response to strengthen the technical capacity of sexual reproductive health service providers and enhance the quality of the services".

For her part, UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Rita Columbia, reiterated the Fund's commitment to improving access and quality of the reproductive health services offered to women and girls across the country.

"As health systems across the globe struggle to cope with the COVID-19 response, reproductive health services risk being sidelined. UNFPA will continue to work with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to ensure that this would not be the case in Iraq; UNFPA will continue to provide financial and technical assistance to experts to improve the reproductive health system across the country," she insisted.

WHO procures 13 ambulances to enhance the response to COVID-19 and other medical services in hard to reach areas

Baghdad, 9 September 2020 - To strengthen referral services and ensure swift access to medical care for people in dire need, including COVID-19 patients in hard to reach areas, the World Health Organization (WHO) has delivered ten fully equipped ambulances to the Ministry of Health and Directorate of Health in Ninewa.

"The procurement of these ambulances is timely considering the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the country, particularly in Baghdad and Ninawa Governorates. Patients with complications resulting from COVID-19, pregnant mothers and other medical conditions in hard to reach areas can now access timely lifesaving medical care," said Dr Adham Ismail, WHO Representative for Iraq.

"This donation also comes as a response to requests from health authorities to upgrade referral structures that were heavily affected during the 5-year conflict in Iraq, leaving many remote districts with no or limited emergency health services and care. These ambulances are, therefore, a critical tool to ensure that people in such locations receive support and access to secondary health facilities," added Dr Ismail.

Early access to emergency medical care is a critical component in managing patients with major health complications, including women and children. WHO's

priority of preventing avoidable loss of life and reducing further medical complications ensures that health challenges arising from manageable conditions like COVID-19, pregnancy-related complications, and other conditions are attended to on time when transported through the ambulances to health facilities.

With an additional burden of COVID-19, referral services for other emergency health conditions such as pregnant women, children, and men were gravely affected as the later became a huge

challenge to the already struggling health system because of the conflict that destroyed and damaged hundreds of ambulances. Before COVID-19, people in hard to reach areas faced difficulties accessing referral services, including using privately rented vehicles without any medical assistance, long delays at the security checkpoints, and using out-of-pocket expenses.

The procurement of the ambulances was made possible with the generous funding from USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster (OFDA).



Protecting frontline officers from COVID-19 in Iraq

Baghdad, 14 September 2020 - Protecting frontline workers who deliver vital services to the public is key during the coronavirus pandemic. UNDP is working to ensure that law enforcement officers in Iraq are protected from COVID-19, so that they may continue to serve and protect the public.

On August 31, with generous support from the Government of Canada, 2000 boxes of protective gloves, 1750 boxes of medical facemasks, and 2000 bottles of hand sanitizer were handed over to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior and Police Affairs Agency.

Most of the protective equipment will go to police officers in Baghdad, the country's capital and most populous city.

Canada is a key partner for UNDP's ongoing work to strengthen local policing in Iraq, and this important work aligns with identified priorities within the Government of Iraq's Security Sector Reform aimed at improving criminal justice and local policing.

Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq,



Zena Ali Ahmed, emphasizes, "UNDP is grateful to the Government of Canada for this generous contribution, which will help local police in their efforts to protect the public from the pandemic while also ensuring their own safety from the coronavirus."

Following this initial supply, additional medical masks, examination gloves, hand sanitizer, and face shields will be

provided by UNDP.

In addition to this, the Government of Canada has contributed US\$1.85 million to support the Government of Iraq's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in partnership with UNDP in Iraq, which includes building isolation wards, providing life-saving medical equipment and providing PPE for healthcare workers.

UNICEF procured and presented 100 oxygen concentrators to the Iraq Ministry of Health, combats spread of COVID-19 related stigma



Baghdad, 16 September 2020 - UNICEF procured and presented 100 oxygen concentrators and accessories to the Iraq Ministry of Health in support of the national COVID-19 response. This was made possible with kind support from the Government of

Canada and Department for International Development.

As part of UNICEF's risk communication and community engagement, UNICEF supported 408 young people of which 192 are girls in tracking, debunking and combating

myths, rumors, fear, and the spread of stigma in the context of COVID-19.

A youth-led campaign called Ta'dheed "solidarity" was supported by a UNICEF partner to respond to the critical shortages in medical supplies in some designated hospitals with a significant rise in the number of COVID-19 patients in the city of Babylon.

The group of 24 young people led the campaign and were successful in fundraising around 85,000 USD that was utilized to procure oxygen canisters and protective gears for medical staff working in 3 hospitals namely Turkish Hospital, Hila Surgical Hospital and Hila Central Lab. This activity was made possible by a generous support from the Government of Germany.

The World Health Organization in Iraq (WHO) confirms that there is no imminent outbreak of COVID-19 in the country

Baghdad, 5 October 2020 - "Currently, Iraq is at the stage where COVID-19 is spreading in the community. This means that some people in the community have already been infected with the COVID-19 but

how or where they became exposed to the disease is not known," said Dr Adham Ismail, WHO Iraq Representative. "The Iraqi health authorities and partners are working hard to limit the further spread of COVID-19," added Dr

Adham.

WHO reminds all parties disseminating information to the public on COVID-19 to do so responsibly and with caution using verified information from WHO and Iraq health authorities.

Newly constructed COVID-19 Isolation Ward opens in Dohuk

Dohuk, 13 October 2020 – A 20-bed Isolation Ward designed to handle the most severe COVID-19 patients has been officially opened by the Governor of Dohuk in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq.

Constructed by UNDP and funded by USAID, the Isolation Ward sits adjacent to Dohuk’s Burns and Plastic Surgery Hospital and will serve a catchment area of 325,000 residents from Duhok, Akre, Semel, Zakho, Shekhan, Amedi and Bardarash districts. It includes life-saving medical equipment, most of which was also funded by USAID.

The facility is one of 13 isolation wards currently being established across the country by UNDP to support the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government’s efforts to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. Other measures under UNDP’s response package include increasing the testing capacity of laboratories, providing personal protective equipment to healthcare workers and undertaking assessments to establish post-COVID-19 recovery strategies.

“The new isolation Ward is critical for Dohuk, which continues to host a high number of people displaced from the ISIL conflict, as well as Syrian refugees. This facility will help alleviate pressure on nearby health centers, providing quality care for infected patients and a purpose-built environment for frontline workers,” says Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad.

“This facility could not have been established without the generous funding from one of our key partners, USAID, so we are extremely grateful

for their continuous support,” adds Ms Ali Ahmad.

“The United States is proud to continue helping communities through building facilities like this one. We will continue to work with the KRG as we face this pandemic, and we will all come through this together,” says U.S. Consul General Rob Waller.

In future, the Isolation Ward can be repurposed to treat patients with airborne infections and respiratory illnesses. The equipment can also be used to enhance the capacity of ICUs to provide intensive respiratory care.



Murals aimed at promoting increased compliance with measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission covered public areas in Baghdad



Baghdad, 14 October 2020 - Twenty murals aimed at promoting increased compliance with measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission covered public areas in ten Baghdad neighbourhoods, painted by artists from Imprint of Hope organization in Iraq with support from the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The murals also celebrate the incredibly important work of Iraqi

artists. Those talented individuals are playing a significant role in confronting coronavirus, through online awareness raising campaigns of drawings, cartoons, paintings as well as advocacy. Browse this photo album for a glimpse of the painted murals from the ten neighbourhoods in Baghdad.

https://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=13019:covid-19-awareness-raising-campaign-murals&Itemid=702&lang=en



Combatting COVID-19 in Karbala: Isolation Ward opened

Karbala, 26 October 2020 – Coronavirus patients in Karbala can now access safe and reliable healthcare thanks to a new Isolation Ward built in partnership between the Karbala Governorate and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq.

Constructed by UNDP and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the 20-bed Isolation Ward is part of the Al Hussein Teaching Hospital in Karbala and will serve a catchment area of approximately one million people.

The Ward is one of 14 currently being established across the country by UNDP, nine of which are being funded by USAID, to support the Government of Iraq's efforts to manage COVID-19, including another 20-bed facility in neighbouring Najaf which serves an approximately 100,000 people. All sites will feature the life-saving medical equipment required to effectively treat COVID-19 patients.

Other measures under UNDP's response package to support the Government of Iraq manage the pandemic include increasing the testing capacity of laboratories, providing personal protective equipment to healthcare workers and undertaking assessments to establish post-COVID-19 recovery strategies.

Known for its religious sites, Karbala receives tens of millions of visitors per year, and while pilgrim numbers

reduced significantly in 2020, local communities are still at risk from high numbers of tourists.

"While the COVID-19 caseload in Karbala is manageable at the moment, it is not an invitation to let our guard down. We've seen how the unpredictability of the virus has devastated all corners of the globe, so it's imperative we are well-prepared and have adequate facilities set up to deal with the most severe cases," says Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad.

"We are very grateful for the continued support of our donors, who have prioritised the health and wellbeing of Iraqi communities amidst this global disaster. In particular I'd like to thank

one of our key partners, USAID. Without their generous funding, this facility could not have been established; and to the Government of Sweden for funding some of the critical life-saving equipment," adds Ms Ali Ahmad.

"The United States is proud to continue helping communities through building facilities like this one. We will continue to work with the Government of Iraq and stand by the Iraqi people as we face this pandemic," says USAID/Iraq Mission Director John Cardenas.

In addition to Karbala and Najaf, isolation wards UNDP is currently establishing isolation wards in Babil, Basra, Dhi Qar, Diyala, Dohuk, Fallujah, Kirkuk, Missan, Mosul, Najaf, Ramadi and Tikrit.



Healthcare

IOM Iraq hosted an awareness raising session for 20 Akitu volunteers in Najaf

Najaf, 27 August 2020 - Akitu is an independent Iraqi volunteer team established in early 2016, focused on peace building, entrepreneurship, innovation and more in Najaf Governorate. During the pandemic, Akitu volunteers noticed that when COVID-19 patients recovered, they weren't widely accepted in the host community — their illness was becoming a source of stigma.

Last week IOM Iraq hosted an awareness raising session for 20 Akitu volunteers in Najaf to discuss the important psychological and social concerns of COVID-19 patients. IOM trained the participants to improve their skills, provide psychological

support to those affected, raise awareness of COVID-19, reduce stress, and increase social cohesion.

This training was funded by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



Iraq commemorates World Patient Safety Day: "Health worker safety: a priority for patient safety"

Baghdad, 17 September 2020 – Statement by Dr Adham Ismail Abdel Moneim, WHO Representative in Iraq: "Today, Iraq joins the world in commemorating World Patient Safety Day under the theme "Health worker safety: a priority for patient safety". It focuses on the interrelationship between health worker safety and patient safety with the slogan "Safe health workers, safe patients."

A safe working environment for health workers is essential in ensuring a safe environment for patients. Like many countries across the world, Iraq is currently facing an unprecedented challenge in protecting the safety of patients as it grapples with the threat posed by COVID-19. Addressing the health needs of not only patients infected with COVID-19 but all patients in a country already facing a humanitarian crisis has exerted immense pressure on an overburdened health care system, and health workers are finding themselves at increased risk of infection, violence, accidents, stigma, illness and even death.

Working in stressful and unsafe environments exacerbates these risks. Health workers facing the increased risk of infection can potentially also contribute to outbreaks in health care facilities, this coupled with limited access to personal protective equipment and sometimes an inability to implement effective infection and prevention and control measures, is only increasing risks for patients. Since the first case of COVID-19 was

reported in Iraq in February 2020, over 14 500 health care workers have been infected, representing 4.8% of the total number of infections in the country.

Ensuring patient safety is a prerequisite for strengthening health systems and making progress towards universal health coverage – a target of Sustainable Development Goal 3 "ensuring healthy lives and promoting health and well-being for all at all ages". Each year, 134 million adverse events occur in hospitals in low- and middle-income countries, due to unsafe care, resulting in 2.6 million deaths globally. As many as 4 in 10 patients are harmed in primary and outpatient health care, and up to 80% of harm is preventable. The majority of these events are related to incorrect diagnosis, prescription and use of medicines.

Investments in reducing patient harm can lead to significant financial savings, and more importantly, result in better patient outcomes. In addition, effectively engaging patients can reduce the burden of harm by up to 15% and increase community trust in the quality of care they receive.

In Iraq, WHO is working closely with health authorities providing technical support to ensure that patients are protected and by advancing the patient safety agenda at the highest political level, with support from international partners.

WHO has also developed a range of technical guidance to help ensure the safety of patients, including the "Safe

childbirth checklist" and "Surgical safety checklist, and by offering guidance on patient safety solutions and medication safety. WHO's support also includes fostering collaboration between the Ministry of Health and relevant stakeholders, identifying priorities for action, supporting capacity building of health workers and monitoring improvements in patient safety.

This year, WHO is calling on all individuals to "Speak up for health worker safety" and is asking for greater investment, by all stakeholders, in the safety of health workers as a priority for patient safety. WHO calls on policy-makers, regulators, parliamentarians and others to formulate, update and implement policies and legislation to ensure the safety of health workers and patients and develop and promote legislation for the protection of health workers and the rights of patients.

WHO also calls on health care leaders, administrators and hospital managers to create an open, equitable and transparent culture of safety for health workers and patients to report incidents in a timely way and create a supportive, safe working environment and implement innovative safety practices based on best practice.

Finally, WHO calls on health workers to protect their own physical and psychological health because as essential workers on the frontline of the fight against COVID-19 if they do not protect their own health they are less able to protect their patients."

In preparations for the religious Arbaeenia event in Kerbala WHO met with Ataba Husseinia officials

Baghdad, 24 September 2020 - In preparations for the upcoming religious Arbaeenia event in Kerbala, World Health Organization Representative in Iraq, Dr. Adham Ismail, met with Ataba Husseinia officials and team of the implementing partner UIMS to discuss WHO COVID-19 awareness-raising activities in central provinces of Karbala, Najaf and Babil.

The WHO Iraq awareness-raising campaign will be monitoring COVID-19 transmission precautionary measures taken at the main entries to Karbala from Najaf and Babil and promoting facemask-wearing exercises as well as social distancing and proper hand hygiene practices among the visitors to the holy sites.



Hevi Pediatric Teaching Hospital: A story of lifesaving services

Duhok, 14 October 2020 - Duhok Governorate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has led a significant approach to improve health care services in the past nineteen years, coordinated by the health directorate in the governorate and supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and its implementing partners and generous donors.

One of the projects nurtured by this approach was the renovation of Hevi Pediatric Teaching Hospital with a special focus on the expansion of the pediatric intensive care unit and the harmonization and maintenance of the pediatric wards in this hospital, built 16 years ago.

“Duhok DOH has indulged in a chain of projects including pediatrics, mental health, and essential health care services. These projects were implemented according to the DOH vision and priority health needs of the community in Duhok where a considerable number of refugees and internally displaced population (IDPs) are still hosted,” said Dr. Nizar Ismat Director-General of Duhok DOH.

More than two million beneficiaries have so far benefited from the multiple projects of the renovation, expansion, and reconstruction of health facilities dedicated to primary and secondary health care services in this governorate.

“WHO has technically invested considerable technical and financial resources in support for many health programs in Duhok,” said Dr. Adham Rashad Ismail Abdel Moneim, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq. “We highly appreciate the generous contribution of our donors and implementing partners and hail the role of Duhok DOH in leading a successful collaboration and guidance on the priority health needs for the governorate,” he added.

As of 20 September this year, more than 3200 patients with severe congenital diseases were admitted to the critical and intensive care units for specialized health services. Heman Adnan is 7 years old, reached Hevi health facility with an inflammation of the brain and status epilepticus (a medical emergency that could lead to permanent brain damage or death). He remained in the critical care unit in the hospital for three weeks and was discharged less than a month ago in good health conditions, “We were hopeless and helpless,” said Adnan Fouad, Heman’s father. “But my son was gifted life again thanks to the medical staff efforts and the health authorities and WHO for making such lifesaving services available to Duhok citizens.”

The human stories on the successful efforts put to finalizing this vital health

project in Duhok are plenty. Many young lives were saved and others recovered to enjoy a healthy life again, owing it to Duhok DOH, WHO, and the kind contribution of donors like the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO); the implementing partner Associazione Italiana Solidarietà tra I Popoli (AISPO); the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); the Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM) in the US Department of State; and the governments and peoples of Germany and Japan.

“WHO has a medical and moral responsibility towards the in-need population whether in refugee or IDP camps or the community in general. We are proud of the model led by Duhok DOH and will continue supporting the government to provide specialized services of lifesaving nature,” concluded Dr. Ismail.



New internal guidelines on remote MHPSS working modalities issued by IOM Iraq

Baghdad, 2 September 2020 - The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the psychological and social wellbeing of individuals, which has been further exacerbated by movement limitations and physical distancing. These changes have caused a shift in the previously used Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) service delivery modalities, to reflect safety measures such as physical distancing and limitations in movement. Since MHPSS is considered to be a key priority in crisis situations to help promote mental health and social wellbeing of individuals, these guidelines have been developed to assist MHPSS staff in efficiently delivering services to beneficiaries using remote working modalities.

Learn more and download the report at <https://iraq.iom.int/publications/internal-guidelines-remote-mhpss-working-modalities-0>

"Sahtak Aham" is a programme

designed to provide mental health services and psychosocial support through dedicated hotlines. Trained MHPSS professionals provide advice and counseling to callers and publish mental health awareness messages for citizens through social networks.

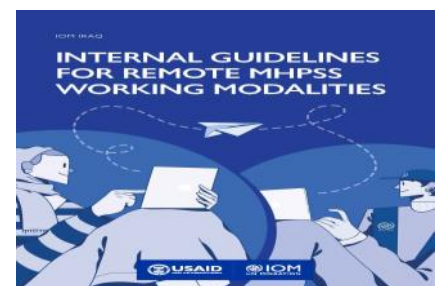
The programme was launched by the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights during the COVID-19 pandemic, with support from IOM Iraq and funding by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

In a related activity, in September IOM Iraq hosted a 3-day remote psychosocial first aid workshop for 10 volunteers from Jalawla sub-district, Diyala.

Participants learned about proper methods for communicating advice on mental health to assist people who need help. This workshop was funded by European Commission.

In September, IOM Iraq also hosted a series of awareness sessions on general and mental health for 20 people in

Kirkuk's Wahid Huzairan district. The sessions were organized to support community members who struggle with long term health conditions and give them tools to cope with stress. Individuals who battle long or short-term illnesses may not always have access to information about how to care for their mental health; these kinds of sessions aim to close the information gap and reduce the stigma around mental health issues in communities. This activity was funded by the Government of Germany.



There is no health without mental health!

Baghdad, 10 October 2020 - A message from the WHO Country Representative, Dr Adham Ismail, on the occasion of the World Mental Health Day :

“Today, WHO Iraq Country Office joins the rest of the world to mark World Mental Health Day 2020. This year’s theme is “Move for Mental Health: Let’s Invest” to advocate for increased international and domestic financing for mental health and well-being.

We all agree that investment in Mental Health is urgently needed because, at one point in time, one in four people will be affected by a mental disorder. Iraq, like many other countries, spends, on average, only 2% of its health budget on mental health. Although, for every US\$ 1 invested in scaled-up treatment for common mental disorders such as depression and anxiety, there is a return of US\$ 5 in improved health and productivity.

On average, people in Iraq pay out-of-pocket of at least 20% towards the cost of mental health services. This is worse for low-income households and other vulnerable groups because the cost of this essential care can cause financial hardship. However, when we attain universal health coverage, we will ensure that people affected by mental health issues are not left behind. Mental health needs in Iraq remain enormous. Although the government

and partners have developed a national mental health strategy and plans, most people do not have access to quality mental health services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought out more than ever, how mental health is integral to the overall well-being. Restrictions on movement and gathering, job losses, deaths of loved ones, and widespread COVID-19 infections have affected people’s mental well-being. There are reports of upsurges in intimate partner violence and suicides including among youth and adolescents. During this COVID-19 pandemic, WHO is working with the government of Iraq, and with partners to include mental health care as part of the continuity of essential health services. The Organization is also providing psychosocial support skills training for first responders.

Estimates globally show nine mental health workers per 100,000 people. In Iraq, this falls well below the global average to less than 2 per 100,000 people. Among this workforce, one third are non-professional workers, meaning there is a severe shortage of psychiatrists and psychologists.

WHO is working with the government of Iraq to provide culturally appropriate, evidence, and community-based mental health and psychosocial support services to the most vulnerable population groups. In this task sharing

strategy, primary health care workers are trained and then supervised in managing common mental disorders.

Today, WHO calls on partners and communities to promote social interventions by strengthening peer support, re-integrating long-stay patients into communities, and equipping caregivers with the knowledge and resources to better support people with mental disorders. I also call on employers to invest in staff wellness programs and training in psychological first aid. WHO remains committed to responding to the mental health and psychosocial needs of the Iraqi people and will continue providing the needed support to scale up services to cope with emerging needs. WHO will continue to advocate for prioritizing mental health as an essential component of health services in Iraq.

Each and every one of us needs to maintain our mental health. We can all take some basic steps to improve this by getting plenty of sleep, eating healthy food, avoiding alcohol, exercising, socializing, and developing strategies to manage stress and anxiety. Finally, I ask every person to invest in your mental health and well-being and support those around you.

After all, there is no health without mental health!”

IOM Iraq is supporting the Kirkuk Directorate of Health to provide better mental health services

Kirkuk, 18 October 2020 - According to mental health officials, anxiety, depression, and other cases of mental health disorders have increased considerably in Kirkuk considerably since the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdown measures began. IOM Iraq is supporting the Kirkuk Directorate of Health to provide better mental health services.

“The number of people suffering from anxiety, depression and mental disorders increased 4-5 times - due to the fear of contracting this emerging disease on one hand, and due to the change in people’s condition from isolating themselves at home on the other hand. What made the situation worse was many people lost their jobs,” said Dr. Ayoub Abdulhamid, Head of the Mental Health Department for Kirkuk DoH, during an event in Kirkuk to mark World Mental Health Day.

During the two-day event, awareness

sessions, short videos, and plays were presented on mental health and its impact on society, in order to raise awareness about the issues and mobilize efforts in support of mental health. These activities were organized by the Kirkuk DoH in cooperation with IOM.

He added that Kirkuk DoH has formed a Committee for the Psychological Recovery Cell that will work on

channeling the community efforts through the formation of voluntary committees for psychosocial support (in coordination with civil society organizations). The committee will also train workers in psychological support units and form rapid response committees to provide direct services during their visits to patients’ homes.

This project was funded by the German Federal Government.



IOM Iraq held the first meeting of the technical mental health and psychosocial support sub working group in Salah al-Din

Baghdad, 20 October 2020 - IOM Iraq recently held the first meeting of the technical mental health and psychosocial support sub working group in Salah al-Din Governorate, in coordination with the Salah al-Din Department of Health. A mental health official at the primary health care level, an official of the Human Rights and Gender Unit and representatives of local NGOs participated in this meeting, as well as local workers in the field of mental health and psychosocial

support.

This meeting aimed to activate the mental health sub working group to increase coordination between Salah al-Din's Directorate of Health and the organizations operating in the governorate and ensure that services reach the beneficiaries. Periodic follow-up meetings will be planned, to review progress and common objectives. This project was supported by the German Embassy in Iraq.



Environment

Iraq launches National Adaptation Plan process for climate change resilience

Baghdad, 16 September 2020 – The Government of Iraq, in partnership with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), has launched a process to develop a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to build the country's resilience to climate change.

The NAP process aims to reduce vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change, especially in developing countries, through strategic planning based on projections of future climate change. NAPs are seen as one of the most important mechanisms for adapting to climate change.

The three-year project, funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) with over USD\$2.5m, will support Iraq to formulate and implement its NAP, with a particular focus on strengthening institutional, technical and financial capacities to ensure that medium- to long-term adaptation needs are integrated into national development planning.

The project launch event was held virtually on 16 September, in the presence of the Ministry of Health and Environment in Iraq, the Nationally Designated Authority (NDA) committee, representatives of other Iraqi ministries, the National Committee on Climate Change, local non-governmental organizations, and representatives from UN organizations working in the country.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Jasim Humadi, Deputy Minister of Health and Environment in Iraq and National Focal Point of GCF, said: "According to the GEO-6 report issued by UNEP, Iraq is classified as the fifth most vulnerable country in the world to decreased water and food availability and extreme

temperatures, which will negatively affect food security, water security, social security and health security in Iraq. This project will support national efforts that focus on increasing Iraq's adaptive capacity, increasing the resilience of affected sectors, increasing the awareness and preparedness of rural communities, supporting youth and women, and achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals."

A key aspect of Iraq's NAP process is to identify, assess and bridge existing gaps in climate knowledge, as these gaps constitute barriers to long-term climate planning across local, regional and national planning processes. Climate risk assessments will be carried out to identify the livelihoods and sectors most threatened by climate impacts, as well as the most urgent adaptation priorities.

UNEP's Regional Director and Representative in West Asia, Sami Dimassi, noted: "The impacts of climate change on development in Iraq are already being experienced. This new project aims to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change by strengthening the country's adaptive capacity and preparing the ground for

future adaptation planning and projects. UNEP is proud to be the executing entity for the project and remains deeply committed to its core mandate of facilitating environmental governance and working with the Government of Iraq to ensure the NAP process allows for building back better." Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, the UN Resident Coordinator for Iraq said: "The development of this National Adaptation Plan could not be more important for Iraq as it is a country highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The United Nations stands ready to assist Iraq to further strengthen institutional and technical capacities. We will make the best use of the mandates and expertise of our system to deliver as one today and beyond the lifespan of the project." Climate change in Iraq is expected to reduce annual rainfall, which will lead to a surge in dust storms, a reduction in agricultural productivity, and increased water scarcity. These challenges are likely to have serious impacts on the health of the people of Iraq, as well as the agricultural and industry sectors, which contribute significantly to the Iraq's GDP.



Iraq mulls tackling its methane problem and reaping major benefits along the way

Baghdad/Geneva, 30 September 2020 – While Iraq accounts for around three per cent of global oil and gas production, it is responsible for around eight per cent of world methane emissions, according to estimates from the International Energy Agency (IEA). This wasted gas is estimated to be worth USD 1.5 billion.

Following a high-level virtual seminar co-hosted by the Iraq Ministry of Health and Environment and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Iraq's Deputy Environment Minister, Dr. Jassim Humadi, announced that the Ministries of Health and Environment and Oil have agreed to establish an inter-ministerial technical task force to better understand the nature and scale of methane emissions from the country's oil and gas sector.

He added that what Iraq now needs is "to build its capacity in the science of measuring methane and establish a national emissions baseline". To this end, he called for technical support from UN partners and global initiatives including the Global Methane Alliance, to help Iraq set "nationally appropriate methane reduction targets that can be integrated in Iraq's Nationally Determined Contribution to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions" under the Paris Agreement.

"Methane is a highly potent climate pollutant that is responsible for 25 per cent of global warming according to the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It has such a huge climate impact because it can trap 84 times more heat than carbon dioxide over a twenty year period," noted Giulia Ferrini, who coordinates the Global Methane Alliance for UNEP's Energy and Climate Branch.

"We are very keen to have better data about methane and understand how instead of losing massive amounts of methane, we can exploit it to generate much needed electricity for our people and promote use of a new source of cleaner energy in Iraq. This will also help Iraq in implementing its commitments under the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, and fits very well with our vision to focus on increasing the capture of associated gas and encouraging investment in this important sector in the future," the Ministry of Oil said in a statement following the seminar.

"The challenge with monitoring methane is that it's invisible, so specialized equipment and studies are needed to detect and quantify these leaks. UNEP, through its partnership with Norway's Oil for Development Programme and its international methane initiatives and networks stands ready to support Iraq in gaining a better picture of how much gas it is losing and how to reduce the emissions," said Marisol Estrella, Disaster Risk Reduction Coordinator at UNEP's Crisis Management Branch.

The drive to solve Iraq's methane challenge received a welcome boost with the ratification by the Iraqi Parliament of the Paris Agreement on 22 September.

The good news is that reducing methane emissions is a low-hanging fruit with zero net cost; that is 40 percent of emissions can typically be eliminated with readily available technology whose cost would be balanced by the gains in gas production. And this fruit is even bigger in Iraq's case as it can eliminate up to 64 percent of emissions at zero-cost according to IEA analysis.

In addition to the climate and economic benefits, reducing methane emissions would also help alleviate Iraq's chronic air pollution. In oil producing regions such as Basra, methane emissions and particulate pollution from flaring is suspected to worsen respiratory illnesses and contribute to some cancers.



Iraq's environmental sustainability prioritized in new UNEP/UNDP agreement

Manama, Baghdad, 22 October 2020 – The UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) Regional Office for West Asia based in Manama, Bahrain, and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq have joined forces today, signing a four-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that aims to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, particularly the environmental Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The MOU identifies several priority areas that UNEP and UNDP will jointly address including; environmental policy, biodiversity and ecosystems, pollution and waste management, climate change, and supporting the Government of Iraq in its post-COVID-19 response on areas

related to environmental sustainability. UNEP and UNDP share a successful history of collaboration on projects and initiatives at the global, regional and country levels. In late 2019, the two organizations signed a global strategic

partnership which strengthens engagement and collaboration at the institutional level.

UNEP and UNDP share unique and complementary attributes. While UNDP has a strong country presence



Iraq's environmental sustainability prioritized in new UNEP/UNDP agreement *(continued)*

and access to a wide range of stakeholders and sectoral policy, UNEP is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, it has a deep-rooted science foundation, and a strong normative mandate that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

Since 2009 UNEP in West Asia and UNDP in Iraq have worked on a large portfolio of projects, including supporting Iraq with its reporting obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, and developing a National Environment Strategy and Action Plan that outlined the scale of environmental degradation in Iraq, its root causes and impacts, and necessary next steps. As one of the signatories to the Paris Agreement in 2016, Iraq continues to priorities climate change adaptation and mitigation

measures in its environmental planning and is committed to adopting a green vision and implementing green programmes.

Today's agreement puts UNEP and UNDP firmly on a path to supporting Iraq's progress towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

From his side, the Regional Director and Representative of UNEP in West Asia, Mr. Sami Dimassi, highlighted that "UNEP is committed to forging a strong collaboration with UNDP in Iraq to support the country in addressing environmental challenges while supporting the Government and the people of Iraq to build back better after the COVID-19 pandemic. UNDP has a successful track record in Iraq, and today, I am pleased that we have joined forces towards achieving a sustainable environment for all".

"Iraq faces a number of environmental challenges – from water scarcity, to rising

temperatures, to pollution, to environmental degradation due to years of conflict and neglect. Tackling these challenges in a complex setting like Iraq cannot be done alone, so we are proud to join UNEP and support the Government of Iraq in securing a healthy, sustainable environment, now and for future generations," says Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq, Ms. Zena Ali Ahmad.

"Without increasing efforts to decelerate the climate crisis, the Iraqi population will not be able to live prosperously in the future. The goal of the SDGs of leaving no one behind, especially SDG 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy, and SDG 13 Climate Action are of particular importance for Iraq. I am pleased to see that UNEP and UNDP are increasing their activities in order to help Iraq and its population" says Resident Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Irena Vojackova-Sollorano.

Culture

Work begins on rebuilding Al-Tahera Syriac Catholic Church in the old city of Mosul

Mosul, 10 September 2020 - The restoration and rehabilitation of the Al-Tahera Church in the Old City of Mosul is well underway.

In close coordination with local authorities, UNESCO concluded the first phase of activities by clearing the rubble and UXOs from the complex as well as securing the project site for reconstruction.

The reconstruction work is quite complex as large parts of its arcades were destroyed, as well as its external walls. Local contractors, under the supervision of skilled experts, are doing the work.

Furthermore, the open bidding to select a design proposal for the reconstruction of the Church and annexed cloister is currently launched, with subsequent development of related implementation program for the actual execution of the works.

Noura bint Mohammed Al Kaabi, Minister of Culture and Youth of the UAE, said:

"This step sends a message of hope to the community in Mosul that has always been an incubator for religious and intellectual discourse. Through our restorative efforts with UNESCO, the UAE aims to rebuild various places of worship and allow displaced Moslawis to return to their homes. Mosul has

always been a place of tolerance and coexistence before several historical, religious and heritage sites were destroyed by extremists."

Al Kaabi pointed out that the reconstruction of Al-Tahira Church does not only cement Mosul's position as a hub of rich cultural heritage, but also restores religious diversity that the old city is known for. "The UAE's restoration project seeks to empower Moslawi youth by creating job opportunities, providing vocational and technical training, and enhancing the capabilities of craftsmen in the field of preservation of cultural heritage through a strategic project that is being implemented in cooperation with ICCROM."

An iconic symbol woven into the history of Mosul, Al-Tahera Church was built in 1859 and opened in 1862. The Church is located in the heart of the old city, formerly defined by the Ottoman city walls on the west bank of the Tigris River, opposite ancient Nineveh. Its multiple altars, dining room and two sacristy rooms set it aside from other churches of the same period.

UNESCO is fostering reconciliation and social cohesion in Mosul through the restoration and reconstruction of emblematic historical sites as part of UNESCO's led international initiative



"Revive the Spirit of Mosul". UNESCO Representative to Iraq, Paolo Fontani, added that "the rehabilitation of this church is important not only because of its value as cultural heritage, but also as a testimony to the diversity of the city, a proud crossroads of cultures and a peaceful haven for different religious communities over the centuries." This project is funded by the United Arab Emirates and beyond the rehabilitation of architectural landmarks, it includes:

- On-the-job training for young professionals
- Strengthening the capacities of craftspeople (masons, carpenters, stone carvers, metalsmiths, etc.)
- Job creation opportunities
- Technical and vocational education



Baghdad, 10 September 2020 - Paolo Fontani, UNESCO Representative to Iraq, met with the Minister of Culture, Dr. Hassan Nadhem, to discuss details of next steps towards reconstruction of Al-Nouri Mosque and other historic buildings in the Old City of Mosul.



Basra, 15 September 2020 - UNESCO and SBAH experts, including Mr. Qahtan Al-Abeed, Director of State Board of Antiquities in Basra, visited traditional houses in Old Basra, to be restored as part of the EU funded project to revive Basra Old City.

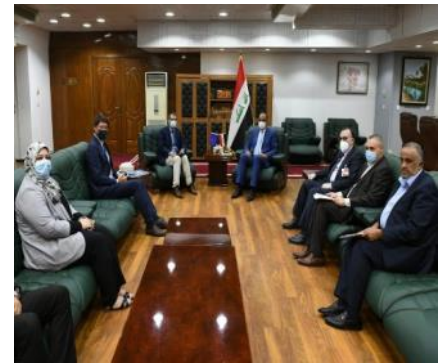
Minister of Culture held a meeting with UNESCO Representative to Iraq and the Ambassador of the European Union

Baghdad, 22 September 2020 - The Minister of Culture, Dr. Hassan Nadhem, met with UNESCO Representative to Iraq, Paolo Fontani, and EU Ambassador, Martin Huth, to discuss the latest developments on the rehabilitation works in the old cities of Basra and Mosul.

The Director of the Basra Department of Antiquities, Mr Qathan Al Abeed, gave a detailed presentation of the heritage buildings for rehabilitation in Old Basra, as well as the heritage

palaces such as Sheikh Khazal Palace in the Nazran region.

The delegation pointed out that the heritage buildings in Basra, especially in the Al-Nazran region, have suffered great damage as a result of wars and neglect, and population overruns have exacerbated these damages, in addition to highlighting the importance of rehabilitating Al-Ashar Canal for its essential impact on the rehabilitation of the rest of the heritage houses nearby.



UNESCO in close cooperation with the Dominican Order starts the preparatory phase for the stabilization and rehabilitation of Al-Saa'a Church

Mosul, 23 September 2020 - In close collaboration with the Dominican Order and other Iraqi relevant authorities UNESCO -- will now start the preparatory phase for the stabilization and rehabilitation of the Conventual Church of Our Lady of the Hour in Mosul. The preparatory phase includes, as priority, the implementation of targeted measures aimed at securing the site, and clearing it from potential unexploded ordonnances, as well as removing rubble derived from the destruction of some sectors of the complex.

With the scope of starting this phase, a joint visit of UNESCO local Team and representatives of the Dominican Order in Iraq has just taken place, in order to jointly analyse the main challenges, identify operational steps and proceed with a smooth implementation plan.

This component is part of the Unesco Initiative to Revive the Spirit of Mosul and will include all the phases of a

stabilization/rehabilitation project (from site clearance and initial survey to the preparation of the detailed design for the actual execution of the works), which will create a unique 'on-the-job training' opportunity for local heritage professionals and craftsmen.

In fact, the actual implementation of this component will be closely integrated with the long-term capacity building program foreseen within the

scope of the Initiative. The rehabilitation of this church is important not only because of its value as cultural heritage, but also as a testimony to the diversity of the city, a proud crossroads of cultures and a peaceful haven for different religious communities over the centuries.

Find out more : <https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/baghdad/projects>





Mosul, 26 September 2020 - His Excellency Iraq's Minister of Culture, Dr. Hassan Nadhem, arrived in Mosul to voice his commitment to the city's renewal. During his visit, Dr. Nadhem toured the Al-Nouri Mosque Complex, The Conventual Church of Our Lady of the Hour (Al-Saa'a), Al-Aghawat Mosque and the old city centre to witness the progress that has taken place on site, in the framework of the UNESCO project to #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul, supported notably by the United Arab Emirates, the European Union and Germany.



Mosul, 14 October 2020 - DSRSG Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, visited Al-Nouri Mosque, Al-Tahera Church, Al Ekhlas Primary School and the heritage houses in the Old City of Mosul to witness the progress that has taken place on site, in the framework of the UNESCO project to #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul.

Revive the Spirit of Mosul: Key step forward, as international architectural competition to rebuild the Al-Nouri Complex to be announced

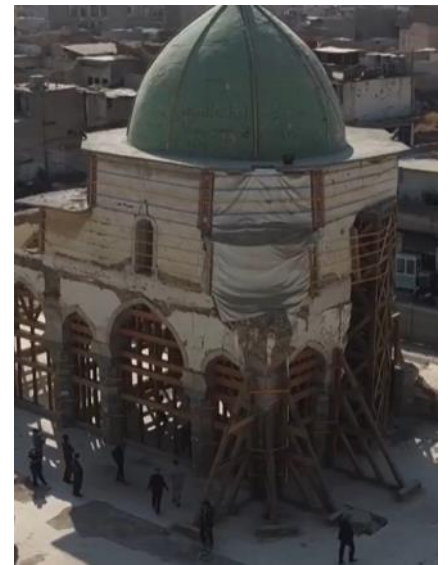
Paris, 21 October 2020 - A key step forward was achieved during the Joint Steering Committee for the reconstruction of Mosul monumental landmarks, Al-Nouri Mosque, in particular. It was agreed that UNESCO launches the International Architectural Competition for the selection of the design of the Al-Nouri Mosque Complex in early November 2020.

The Committee's virtual meeting was chaired by Ernesto Ottone R., UNESCO's Assistant Director General for Culture, and took place with the participation of H.E. Saad Kambash, President of the Sunni Waqf of Iraq, H.E. Hasan Nadhem, Minister of Culture of Iraq, H.E. Noura Al-Kaabi, Minister of Culture and Youth of the

United Arab Emirates (UAE), Mr Zuhair Al-Aaraji, Mayor of Mosul, as well as the Representatives of the Christian Waqf, Safaa Saffo, and of the Provincial Dominican Order, Father Olivier Poquillon.

The President of the Sunni Waqf of Iraq and the Minister of Culture of Iraq reiterated their gratitude to UNESCO and in particular, its team in Iraq for the milestones achieved. The Committee endorsed the building program for the architectural competition.

The competition will allow architects from across the world to contribute to the reconstruction of this important city. In doing so, they can help revive the spirit of Al-Nouri mosque – and the spirit of Mosul itself.



President of the Sunni Waqf of Iraq visited Al-Nouri Mosque

Mosul, 24 October 2020 - The President of the Sunni Waqf of Iraq, Dr. Saad Kambash, visited Al-Nouri Mosque and Al-Aghawat Mosque in Mosul to witness the progress that has taken place on site, in the framework of the UNESCO project to #ReviveTheSpiritOfMosul supported by the UAE and the Government of Germany. He expressed appreciation for UNESCO's efforts to restore the two mosques.



UN supports national exams in the times of COVID-19

Baghdad, 3 September 2020 - UNICEF supported more than 200,000 Grade 12 students in Iraq to take national exams with fogging and sterilization materials and COVID-19 messages targeting students and teachers. This contribution benefited more than 1000 exam centers in Baghdad, Najaf, Anbar, Salaheldin, Babil and Kerbala.

This activity was funded with generous support from Denmark and BPRM.

UNESCO delivers 500 digital thermometers to the Ministry of Education in Baghdad to ensure safe access to the end-of-year exams.

The 11 Azar primary school in Khabat community, Sulaymaniyah Governorate, suffered structural and



service issues that affected the educational environment. IOM Iraq, with funding from U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees,

and Migration, renovated the school to allow more than 950 students from the IDP and host communities to enjoy a safe and healthy education.

E-Learning in Iraq: Embracing modern technologies to overcome Covid-19

Baghdad, 6 September 2020 - Six months after the coronavirus outbreak, Iraq is still recording high number of daily cases. The pandemic imposed a total lockdown during its early months and had a major impact on the educational process in Iraqi universities. This tremendous challenge forced some educational institutions, including the University of Karbala, to find alternative tools to finish the academic semester.

Since the start of 2017, UNDP has been working on implementing the e-learning system in the University of Karbala. It held a series of trainings to develop the skills of workers involved in applying the system and equipping university staff with state-of-the-art e-learning methods and tools, and the technique of developing and delivering e-learning content. Accordingly, the University of Karbala established the first e-learning department and developed the first e-learning platform.

After the Covid-19 outbreak and the nationwide curfew in Iraq, the University of Karbala began upgrading its platform to include handling all subjects and exams online to help students finish their academic year from home.

"The e-learning platform saved me time, effort and money and enabled me to explore new learning techniques and, most importantly, finish my academic year despite the curfew imposed due to COVID-19," says Ahmad Khaled, a student at the College of Tourism Sciences at the University of Karbala.

"It definitely faced some obstacles including poor internet connectivity. However, the platform enabled me to replay lectures many times to better understand them. This helped me invest in my time at home during the

quarantine. I am happy to be able to finish my academic year and do my exams online without interruption," he added.

"After the coronavirus outbreak and closing universities, we were concerned about the impact of the crisis on the future of education in Iraq. Therefore, we began searching for solutions and decided to use our e-platform to finish the curriculum and conduct exams remotely. I am proud we were able to achieve this," says Dr. Mowaffak Kazem, member of faculty at the University of Karbala.

Dr. Mowafak stresses the importance of e-learning in Iraq and ways to use it to develop the Iraqi educational institutions. "Through e-learning, the University of Karbala has managed to establish a base for planning and designing educational policies to transition to e-learning completely as it is the way to develop our education institutions and catch up with the advanced countries in the knowledge field," he says.

The platform includes lectures which are updated on a regular basis and a section for electronic exams which was developed after the COVID-19 outbreak to enable students to do their exams from home.

"We did not expect the pandemic to have such impact on the education process and on our ability to complete the academic year. However, we managed to do it. Doing my exams online was a useful and interesting experience and easier than the traditional methods. The Iraqi education system needs to adopt more advanced methods including e-learning," says Bilal Faisal, one of the students at the College of Tourism Sciences at the University of Karbala



who undertook their exams online using the university's platform.

"This experience contributed to moving the University of Karbala and its colleges to an advanced e-learning stage despite the emergency situations caused by COVID-19," stresses Ali Khaz'al Jawad, faculty member at the university. "I was concerned about the possibility of conducting exams online. However, the trainings we received on using and handling the system helped a lot. Iraq is experiencing many exceptional circumstances including coronavirus. Therefore, we should adopt modern methods to be able to continue the academic year," he adds.

The e-learning platform is part of the E-Learning Development and Support Project which is implemented by UNDP's Iraq Public Sector Modernization Program in partnership with the University of Karbala. The colleges of engineering and sciences were chosen to pilot the project, which was later rolled out to include another 14 colleges. This helped the university develop a plan to adopt an integrated e-learning system and detect the weaknesses and strengths in the available infrastructure and human resources.

UNICEF supported School Based Management teachers training for 21 new schools in Thi Qar

Baghdad, 17 September 2020 - Taking all precautions to prevent COVID 19, UNICEF in close coordination with the Thi Qar Department of Education and the Department of Health supported School Based Management teachers training for 21 new schools in Thi Qar. 80 participants - 35 female participated in

8 days of capacity building focusing on decentralization, SBM guidelines, , community participation and enhanced school governance to improve learning outcomes.

This SBM teachers training was funded with generous support from Government of Germany.



Blended learning

Baghdad, 21 September 2020 - UNICEF, in partnership with Sabe'a Sanabul Organization for Relief and Development (SSORD) and the Directorate of Education, is working with local communities to help children continue learning despite school closures caused by COVID-19, through a new educational approach. Known as blended learning, this innovative method combines home-based learning, self-education, educational tv, and e-learning.

The project is targeting over 20,000 people including the most vulnerable

children, community leaders, parents, caregivers and teachers in Baghdad and Anbar. This includes those living in IDP camps and informal settlements.

UNICEF and its partners are conducting awareness raising campaigns to explain blended education, encourage children to prepare for the new academic year, and ensure the right to education for every child.

With generous support from Germany and BPRM.



The European Commission and UNICEF support governorates and education ministries in developing their educational plans to improve the quality of learning in Iraq

Baghdad, 25 September 2020 – With financial backing from the European Commission and in partnership with UNESCO, UNICEF Iraq is supporting authorities at the governorate level to better plan their educational interventions. This is part of UNICEF's commitment to decentralizing education that empowers education officials, teachers and communities and allows them to tailor learning to children and adolescents' specific needs, thereby delivering quality education.

In addition, UNICEF is also supporting the Federal and Kurdistan regional ministries of education in the establishment of a new digital information management system that not only organizes and stores data but also processes and analyses it and generating various reports on the Education sector that is accessible to all education stakeholders.

Known as Education Management Information System, or EMIS, UNICEF and partners are planning to the roll out this system first in the governorates of in Baghdad, Anbar, Najaf, Qadisiya, ThiQar, Basra, Missan

and Muthana.

“We cannot emphasize enough how important these projects are to Iraq's educational sector. Once rolled out, the new system will give teachers, school administrators, and decision makers ready access to important educational information while at the same time empowering them to take decisions quickly, effectively, and for the benefit of their students,” explained Ms Hamida Lasseko, UNICEF Representative to Iraq.

To date, UNICEF has worked with 11 Educational Directorates, including in Baghdad, Basra, ThiQar and Qadisiya, to build their capacity in evidence-based Analysis and planning. UNICEF also plans to roll out gender-responsive teacher training modules that will be developed by UNESCO.

These interventions are particularly significant in a country like Iraq, where the quality of learning remains below par. In former conflict areas, dropout rates are very high and schools are operating two or three shifts per day, with as many as 60 students per class.

“As children are preparing to go back to learning this fall, our work with our

partners is crucial to addressing many of the education system's shortcomings of education. It will help to ensure that every child is able to receive the kind of education that will improve her or his chances at a better future, and we are grateful to our European partners for supporting us,” added Ms. Lasseko.

UNICEF's work is part of its overall objective to help improve learning outcomes and support equitable and inclusive education for all girls and boys in Iraq by 2021.



TVET Reform in Iraq: Meeting with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to review progress

Baghdad, 5 October 2020 - UNESCO in partnership with the European Union is supporting the Government of Iraq to reform its Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector in order to bring it in line with International trends and standards. Over the last five years, great progress has been made working with the three Line Ministries responsible for TVET, namely the Ministries of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research, and Labour and Social Affairs.

A joint meeting between the Director General of Vocational Training at MoLSA, Mr. Raed B. Jabar, Representative of the European Union and the UNESCO Team took place on 5 October to discuss the recent developments and ongoing activities in TVET in Iraq including the progress of the Draft TVET law through Parliament. It was agreed that the



recent approval by the Council of Ministers of the Technical Vocational Qualification Framework (TVQF) is a vital step forward for the TVET sector, which calls for stronger institutional engagements and partnerships in its implementation.

Director-General Jabar appreciated and welcomed the ongoing cooperation with UNESCO and the EU in the continuation of the reform process with the upcoming TVET Reform 2 programme, also funded by the European Union.

Launch of Education Management Information System Roadmap

Baghdad, 21 October 2020 – As part of a joint effort to modernize education data systems and improve the quality of learning in Iraq, UNESCO and UNICEF today signed a roadmap with the Communications and Media Commission (CMC) for the provision of internet connectivity to over 3000 schools across 10 governorates.

With the financial support of the European Union, UNESCO and UNICEF are supporting the government of Iraq to develop and rollout a new online Education Management Information System (EMIS). EMIS functions as a critical tool to capture and utilize education data for improved education monitoring and planning, and for more effective service delivery at school level.

The availability of quality, relevant education data is pre-requisite for government's ability to improve education through evidence-based policy making at the central and governorate administration level, and to empower the teachers and administrators at school level to make informed decisions quickly and effectively. The new EMIS will organise, store and analyse data, and generate reports according to indicators that respond to the needs of education stakeholders across the sector, and will be rolled out in 11 General Directorates



of Education across 10 governorates. To ensure successful rollout, each school, Directorate of Education at the district level and General Directorate of Education at the Governorate level requires connectivity to the central EMIS application and its data warehouse. The roadmap signed today at the CMC formalises the Commission's generous commitment to provide internet connection to 3000 schools and to housing and maintain the 2 servers hosting the EMIS application and its data warehouse. The launch of this roadmap marks a

critical milestone in UNESCO and UNICEF's support in delivering a fully functioning EMIS by 2022 with required hardware at school, district, Governorate and central levels along with capacities of education stakeholders on the ground to use, manage and maintain the system. This intervention directly responds to the identified need to improve the capacity of the education system and those who work within it and reflect a shared commitment to improved learning outcomes and equitable and inclusive education for all girls and boys in Iraq.

Iraqi youth step up: Future leaders help those in need



Baghdad, 27 August 2020 - Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, Iraqis have witnessed youth stepping up to help those in need across the country. As one of the most youthful countries in the world, this support is vital to vulnerable populations in Iraq during such a critical time.

In July and August, as part of a series of initiatives developed by the UNDP Iraq's youth groups, supported by the Government of Denmark and in partnership with non-governmental organization Wasel Tasel, communities in Anbar, Diyala, and Ninewa governorates received various necessities including water, clothing, hygiene packages, and face masks.

During one initiative, youth from Anbar provided 100 households in Rutba with 20 liters of potable water from 29 July to 02 August. Potable water is hard to come by in the district of Rutba, located in western Anbar Governorate. The city relies solely on well water, which is typically not suitable for drinking.

"We all felt conflicting emotions. I felt sad that the neighborhood, and the city

in general, lacks potable water. It is such a simple basic need. On the other hand, I was happy that we are taking an action to support these families. I wanted to be part of this initiative to support my community and spotlight



this city and its needs," says Mahmoud, youth group member.

The families supported through the youth initiative live below the poverty line, in one of the most disadvantaged areas of Rutba.

"We met one woman who, with tears in her eyes, told us her eight-month-old baby would finally have milk made

with potable water this week," shares Mahmoud.

In a separate July initiative, clothing was purchased and delivered to vulnerable children in Saqlawiyah, Anbar, a city where many people have been declared missing following prolonged conflict. Many families in the city are without an income, meaning that important celebrations such as Eid are often small and lacking key supplies, including gifts for children. Over 100 families were provided with clothing that was purchased as part of the initiative.

Yasmin, a youth group member, recounts entering a household where a mother and her four children are isolating to protect themselves from the virus. "The mother burst into tears. She said she hadn't slept in one week, because she couldn't stop thinking about how to make Eid special for her children. She said she couldn't thank us enough."

In August, initiatives in Diyala saw 500 hygiene kits distributed from 17 to 19 August in Qatoon, Al-Khan, and Al Karnabat. Similarly, in Ninewa on 18 August, 300 hygiene kits were distributed in Al-Shifaa and public areas were sterilized.

Abdulrahman is a 22-year old who works in the street selling tea and coffee in Ramadi, Anbar Governorate. "The coronavirus pandemic and imposed lockdown stopped my business. Now that the curfew has lifted, I can go back to work and feed my family. I would like to see all people wearing masks to protect themselves and their families so that we can keep working."

Further youth group initiatives are planned, and will continue demonstrating the dedication, hope, and empathy of young people in Iraq. Youth are the future and based on the actions of Iraq's younger generations during the coronavirus crisis, the future is bright.



International Youth Day 2020 commemorated in Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 31 August 2020 - 11 men and women volunteers from Wahed Huzairan and surrounding communities in Kirkuk Governorate took part in an activity to commemorate International Youth Day 2020.

The event, entitled "Youth Engagement for Global Action", was organized by IOM Iraq's Mental Health and Psychosocial support team in Kirkuk in coordination with the al-Badir primary health center in Kirkuk. The volunteers, a mixed group of young women and men, led a series of activities to highlight the role of youth in creating safe and positive communities. This included running a COVID-19 prevention awareness



raising campaign, silent theatre performances, and the development and installment of a safe pedestrian crossing for people with disabilities,

children, and the elderly.

The International Youth Day event was funded by the German Embassy Baghdad.



UNAMI offers condolences on death of Yazidi spiritual leader Baba Sheikh: he will be remembered for holding his community together in time of despair

Baghdad, 2 October 2020 - The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) is saddened by the passing of Baba Sheikh, the spiritual leader of the Yazidi community in Iraq and across the world. The Mission expresses its sincere condolences to the Yazidi people and to his family.

Baba Sheikh (Khurto Hajj Ismail) was a uniting figure in the Yazidi community, which was ravaged in 2014 when members of the community were slaughtered, raped, taken captive and sold into slavery by ISIL/Da'esh.

He held the Yazidis together in their moment of despair as the survivors fled their ancestral homes on Sinjar mountain, where many remain displaced to this day. He will be remembered for his tireless efforts to heal the wounds of his beleaguered community.

"I was privileged to call on him last year to discuss the Yazidi cause. He beamed with energy and his soft voice

rang loud when he explained his community's plight, and this left a lasting impression on me," said Special Representative of the Secretary-

General for Iraq Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert.

May his soul rest in peace.



UNITAD: "His Holiness was a source of profound strength and comfort to the Yazidi people"

Baghdad, 2 October 2020 - Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC's statement on the passing of His Holiness Baba Sheikh:

"I am deeply saddened by the passing of His Holiness Baba Sheikh Khurto Hajji Ismail, the Yazidi supreme spiritual leader.

His Holiness was a distinguished leader who, for decades, has worked tirelessly to ensure the cohesion of the Yazidi community. During and following the campaign of terror orchestrated by ISIL, His Holiness was a source of profound strength and comfort to the Yazidi people both in Iraq and abroad. He led the community's embrace of Yazidi women and girls who returned from captivity. In so doing, he has ensured the resilience of the Yazidi people.

His Holiness was a very close friend of UNITAD and our mission to hold ISIL accountable. His commitment to the pursuit of justice, in partnership with other faiths across Iraq, was reflected



earlier this year through his leadership in the adoption of the Interfaith Statement on Survivors and Victims of ISIL. He was a man of great wisdom and we will all miss his guidance and advice.

On behalf of UNITAD family, I would like to extend our heartfelt condolences to the family of His Holiness and to all

Yazidi people everywhere."

On 24 October 2020 the Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC visited the resting place of His Holiness Baba Sheikh Khurto Hajji Ismail, the late Yazidi supreme spiritual leader. He offered his condolences to the late leader's family and Yazidi people and paid tribute to his memory.

Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General visits family of late Yazidi spiritual leader



Sheikhan, 14 October 2020 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and the Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, visited the family of the late Yazidi spiritual leader, Baba Sheikh Khurto Hajji Ismael. She furthermore visited his grave in Bozan, Sheikhan district, to pay her respects.

The Deputy Special Representative emphasized during her visit the need for justice, while recognizing the atrocities committed against all innocent civilians and assuring accountability, reconciliation,

reparation, and healing.

She stressed that the United Nations is exerting all efforts to support the Government of Iraq to provide for the security and humanitarian needs of persons displaced by the armed conflict and to ensure that IDPs can return to their places of origin or find new homes in full compliance with international humanitarian principles including complete personal documentation, return of all properties, access to education, social and medical services, and participation in local decision making.

Speaking during her visit to the late spiritual leader's family, Ms.

Vojáčková-Sollorano said "With great sadness and sorrow, we received the news of his holiness Baba Sheikh's passing. On behalf of the UN family, we express our deepest and sincere condolences to his family and loved ones, Yazidi community as well as all Iraqis. He was a remarkable spiritual leader for all Yazidi in Iraq and across the world and a great man of peace. While we extend our sympathies on his passing, we must also pay tribute to his role in the assistance to survivors of the crimes targeting the Yazidi population and salute his steadfast devotion to his leadership position and to all Yazidis."

"His teachings of forgiveness, tolerance and co-existence are crucial to the recovery of the Yazidi community, especially women and girls. He will be always remembered for his tireless efforts to heal the wounds of his community and we trust that his successor will continue on the path of compassionate leadership," she said, adding "the UN stand in solidarity and ready to continue to provide support and assistance to all ethnic and religious communities including the Yazidi community, especially in providing support to the voluntary return of Yazidi displaced families to their places of origin in Sinjar and its surroundings".