

# UNAMI Herald

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## Iraq: UN report on ISIL trials recognizes efforts and raises concerns

**Baghdad, 28 January 2020** – A UN report published today on the trials conducted under Iraq’s anti-terrorism laws recognizes the considerable efforts taken to ensure accountability for the atrocities committed by ISIL fighters, yet raises serious concerns about unfair trials placing defendants at a serious disadvantage.

The report is based on independent monitoring of 794 criminal court trials of defendants mainly associated with the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL/Da’esh) from 1 May 2018 through 31 October 2019, conducted with the full support of Iraq’s High Judicial Council.

The joint report\* by the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the UN Human Rights Office acknowledged that judicial proceedings against ISIL defendants were generally conducted in an orderly manner, were well organized, and judges were routinely prepared with investigation files.

It however found that violations of fair trial standards placed defendants at a serious disadvantage compared to the prosecution – with ineffective legal representation and limited possibilities to present or challenge evidence. “The over-reliance on confessions, with frequent allegations of torture that were inadequately addressed – while constituting a human rights violation in itself – further added to the concerns,” the report added.

Prosecutions under the anti-terrorism legal framework mainly focused on ‘membership’ of a terrorist organization, without distinguishing between those who participated in violence, committed international crimes, and those who joined ISIL for survival and/or through coercion.

“A fair and just criminal justice system is a central element to the democratic way of life, and key to building trust and legitimacy, and promoting and protecting human rights”, said the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet. “Those responsible

for widespread atrocities against the Iraqi population must be held to account for their crimes, and it is important that the victims see that justice is delivered. At the same time, those accused have the right to a fair trial, and these standards must be strictly applied.”

The report called on judicial authorities to conduct a thorough review of trial and sentencing practices with a view to strengthening criminal justice procedures, in line with the Constitution of Iraq and the State’s obligations under international law.

“Robust safeguards for detention, due process and fair trials not only

demonstrate commitment to justice: they are a necessary building block for resilience. We are well aware that a variety of grievances, including unfair trials and detainee abuse, have been exploited in the past by ISIL to fuel its violent agenda”, said the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert.

\* The full report “Human Rights in the Administration of Justice in Iraq: trials under the anti-terrorism laws and the implications posed to justice, accountability and social cohesion in the aftermath of ISIL” is available at: <https://bit.ly/2t2qN7m>

**Human Rights in the Administration of Justice in Iraq:  
Trials under the anti-terrorism laws and implications for justice,  
accountability and social cohesion in the aftermath of ISIL**



United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq  
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
January 2020  
Baghdad, Iraq

## In this edition ...

### **Amid ongoing protests and violence, UN urges stepped up efforts to break political deadlock**

**Baghdad, 30 January 2020** – With ongoing violence and rising casualties in the context of protests and ahead of further planned demonstrations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, is urging stepped up efforts to break the political deadlock and press ahead with substantial reforms, warning that the use of force costs precious lives and will not end the crisis... *More on page 3*

### **UNFPA, UN Women reiterate call to protect girls in Iraq from FGM**

**Baghdad, 6 February 2020** – Today, on the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, we reiterate our call to the relevant authorities in Iraq, especially the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, to work together to end FGM through the implementation of the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Communication for Behavioural Impact (COMBI) plan: Ending female genital mutilation means empowering women and girls to be healthy, stay in school, make choices and contribute to the economy, as committed by the Government of Iraq at the Nairobi Summit...



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### **Iraq: UN expert calls for increased efforts to address the situation of IDPs**

**Baghdad/Geneva, 27 February 2020** – A UN human rights expert urged Iraq to redouble efforts to address the human rights concerns of internally displaced persons (IDPs), especially children, calling for increased measures in humanitarian assistance, development, social cohesion and reconciliation... *More on page 12*

### **WFP and the Iraqi Ministry of Education relaunch school feeding**

**Baghdad, 13 February 2020** - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and its implementing partners in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE), WFP have relaunched its school feeding programme, following the successful 2018 pilot in West Mosul... *More on page 19*

### **UNESCO, Free Press Unlimited and the Ministry of the Interior launched an initiative to protect the lives of journalists**

**Baghdad, 27 January 2020** - Following the killing of two journalists in Basra on 10 January 2020, UNESCO Iraq Office and Free Press Unlimited (FPU) in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists organized a meeting with Iraqi journalists to discuss the measures aimed to protect them in light of the latest incident... *More on page 10*



### **United Nations extremely concerned about the impact of bureaucratic constraints leading to reduced humanitarian access to 2.4 million Iraqis in need of assistance**

**Baghdad, 16 January 2020** - Marta Ruedas, the Humanitarian Coordinator for the United Nations in Iraq, expressed her strong concern today over the suspension in granting access letters to humanitarian actors carrying out critical missions in support of Iraq's vulnerable people. Such permissions were previously issued every 30 days by a mandated governmental body. However, since November 2019, aid deliveries throughout Iraq have slowed considerably, due to the discontinuation of previously agreed-upon access authorization procedures, and the absence of viable alternative mechanisms... *More on page 16*

### **Two years after ISIL defeat, some Iraq children still not in school - UN report**

**Geneva, 17 February 2020** – A United Nations report published today finds that some children in Iraq are still unable to receive education in the aftermath of the territorial defeat of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant over two years ago, saying they cannot access schools or obtain key civilian documentation necessary for enrolment in state schools... *More on page 13*

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

## Secretary-General is deeply concerned with the recent escalation in the Gulf

**New York, 3 January 2020** - Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General – on events in the Gulf: The Secretary-General has consistently

advocated for de-escalation in the Gulf. He is deeply concerned with the recent escalation.

This is a moment in which leaders must exercise maximum restraint. The

world cannot afford another war in the Gulf.

Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General

## UN Iraq Representative urges renewed push for reform, calls for demonstrations to remain peaceful

**Baghdad, 20 January 2020** – With public demonstrations across many parts of Iraq in their fourth month, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, is urging a renewed push for reform and expressing concern about ongoing human rights violations. She emphasizes the importance of pressing ahead to meet the needs of the Iraqi people: building resilience at the state and societal level is challenging but essential work.

“In recent months, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis from all walks of life have taken to the streets to voice their hopes for better times, free from corruption, partisan interests and foreign interference. The killing and injury of peaceful protesters, combined with long years of undelivered

promises, have resulted in a major crisis of confidence.”

Two months after the Prime Minister announced his resignation, political leaders remain unable to agree on the way forward. While there was public acknowledgement by all actors that urgent reform is needed, it is now high time to put these words into action and to avoid further derailing of these protests by those pursuing their own objectives, not wishing well for this country and its people.

“Any steps taken so far to address the people’s concerns will remain hollow, if they are not completed. Domestic unity, cohesion and determination are urgently necessary to build resilience against narrow partisan interests, foreign interference and/or criminal elements which actively seek to hinder Iraq’s stability.”

The recent escalation in regional tensions has understandably taken much attention away from urgent unfinished domestic business. However, geopolitical developments must not eclipse the rightful demands of the Iraqi people. This will only further fuel public anger and distrust.

The Special Representative urges the Iraqi authorities to do everything to protect peaceful demonstrators. “Violent suppression of peaceful protesters is intolerable and must be avoided at all costs. Nothing is more damaging than a climate of fear. Accountability and justice for victims is critical to building trust, legitimacy and resilience.” She calls on protesters to remain peaceful, avoiding counterproductive violence and destruction of property.

## Amid ongoing protests and violence, UN urges stepped up efforts to break political deadlock

**Baghdad, 30 January 2020** – With ongoing violence and rising casualties in the context of protests and ahead of further planned demonstrations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, is urging stepped up efforts to break the political deadlock and press ahead with substantial reforms, warning that the use of force costs precious lives and will not end the crisis.

“The continuing loss of young lives and the daily bloodshed is intolerable. At least 467 protesters have been killed and over 9,000 injured since 1 October,” lamented the Special Representative.

“A recent increase in the use of live ammunition by security forces, reported shootings by unidentified gunmen at protesters and the continued targeted killing of demonstrators and human rights defenders are alarming. It is imperative that the Iraqi authorities protect the rights of peaceful protesters and ensure that all use of force complies with international standards.

Equally important is full accountability: the perpetrators of unlawful killings and attacks must be brought to justice.”

A climate of fear and distrust will bring nothing but further damage. Political action and progress in the search for solutions must replace indecisiveness to deliver on the many promises and intentions. Building resilience at the state and societal levels is the only way forward to draw the people out of despair and into renewed hope, the Special Representative emphasized.

“Many have sacrificed everything to have their voices heard. Solutions are urgently needed. Iraq cannot afford the ongoing violent oppression nor the political and economic paralysis.”

The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) has consistently monitored the human rights situation in the context of the demonstrations. Since the beginning of the protests in October, it issued three reports\* documenting human rights violations in the periods from 1 October to 9

December and presenting recommendations to the authorities. Since 17 January, UNAMI has recorded at least 19 demonstrators killed and over 400 injured by security forces in Baghdad, Basra, Dhi Qar, Diyala, Diwaniya, Karbala and Wassit. Preliminary information attributes most deaths and injuries to the use of live ammunition and the impact of tear gas canisters, while additional injuries occurred as a result of security forces beating demonstrators with sticks. Most violence used by security forces occurred in the context of attempts to clear roadblocks or disperse demonstrators.

In Baghdad, efforts by security forces to clear the Mohamed Qassem highway and areas in the vicinity of Tahrir Square using live ammunition and tear gas resulted in at least 11 deaths and 53 injuries. In Nasiriya, Dhi Qar on 25 and 26 January, security forces fired live ammunition and tear gas canisters causing at least three deaths and injuring over 100 protesters. Similarly, in Basra, in the early morning of 25

## Amid ongoing protests and violence, UN urges stepped up efforts to break political deadlock *(continued)*

January, security forces demolished more than 20 tents set up by protesters as part of a sit-in and forced the protesters out of the area. In Karbala, security forces also used violence against protesters, resulting in at least 4 deaths and injury to over 150 others. In Diyala, the use of live ammunition by security forces resulted in the first death attributed to this cause and context in the governorate and injured at least four others.

There were cases of unidentified armed men shooting protesters. This happened on four consecutive nights in Basra from 21 to 25 January, killing two protesters and injuring nine others. In Nasiriya, on the night of 26 to 27 January, a group of armed men of unclear affiliation shot live ammunition at protesters in Haboubi Square, killing at least one protester and injuring four

more, and set fire to several protestor tents.

Targeted killings continue against demonstrators and activists. Since 1 October, at least 28 incidents have taken place in which persons associated with demonstrations, either as participants, journalists covering the protests or prominent activists, have been targeted by armed men or improvised explosive devices, resulting in 18 deaths and the injury of at least 13 others. The cases include the targeted killing of two Dijlah Television reporters in Basra on 10 January. In Missan alone, credible reports indicate seven incidents in which civil society activists were shot at by armed men, resulting in two deaths and the injury of five others.

UNAMI also continues to track and monitor reports of physical attacks

against demonstrators, including stabbings, cases of missing demonstrators and activists, and incidents of threat and intimidation.

Stressing the futility of violence in responding to the protests, Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert said all efforts should instead focus on how to fully implement reforms and initiate a constructive dialogue to tackle the country's problems in a spirit of unity.

"It is high time to restore confidence by setting aside partisanship, acting in the interest of the country and its people. Hard work and goodwill gestures will resonate with the people, and will be met in kind, strengthening the country's resilience as it seeks to emerge stronger from this crisis."

\*links to the three previous reports: <https://bit.ly/2OevRx0>

## UN Representative welcomes designation of new Iraqi prime minister, urges swift action to deliver on reforms, accountability

**Baghdad, 1 February 2020** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, welcomes the designation of a prime minister, Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi. She urges swift action to deliver, first and foremost, on substantial reforms and fulfil the rightful demands of the people for justice and accountability.

"Iraq urgently needs to move forward. The prime minister-designate faces a monumental task: rapid Cabinet formation and parliamentary

confirmation to press ahead with meaningful reforms addressing popular demands, delivering justice and accountability."

The road ahead remains fraught with difficulties. Progress will require that all actors support the work of the prime minister-designate in the service of the people of Iraq. The commitments expressed in the statement of the prime minister-designate address many demands of the peaceful protesters. While this is surely a welcome and encouraging sign, the Iraqi people will

ultimately judge their leadership on results and accomplishments.

The United Nations has called time and again on all stakeholders to rise above partisanship and place the national interest first. Now is the time to act. Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert urges to spare no effort in drawing Iraq out of its crisis. The United Nations will continue to support the Iraqi people and their government to build a more peaceful, just and prosperous Iraq.

### UNAMI on Twitter

Tweets by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert:

**Baghdad, 3 January 2020** - We urge all parties to exercise maximum restraint in order to avoid another

devastating cycle of violence and regional instability. For too long, Iraq has been a theatre for different power

competitions. Iraqis deserve stability and peace. Cool heads must prevail.

**Baghdad, 8 January 2020** - Recent missile attacks in Erbil and Anbar governorates only escalate conflict, and

again violate Iraqi sovereignty. Senseless violence has predictable effects. We call for urgent restraint and

a resumption of dialogue. Iraq should not pay the price for external rivalries.

**Baghdad, 9 January 2020** - Regional security developments should not eclipse domestic priorities and reform

demands. The people's voice, expressed peacefully, must be heeded. Killings, kidnappings, use of live ammunition

and threats against protesters must stop; perpetrators to be held accountable.

**Baghdad, 16 January 2020** - "Sincere wishes for a speedy recovery and

continued good health to His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Al-Sistani.

May his reason and wisdom continue to inspire us all."

**Baghdad, 25 January 2020** – Unaccountability and indecisiveness are unworthy of Iraqi hopes,

courageously expressed for four months now. While death and injury tolls continue to rise, steps taken so far will

remain hollow if not completed. The people must be served and protected, not violently oppressed.

**Baghdad, 3 February 2020** – Freedom of expression must be protected for all Iraqis without fear of

intimidation. Threats against those expressing their opinions undermine momentum towards meeting the

people's rightful demands and prolong the crisis.

## UNAMI on Twitter

Tweet by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert:

**Baghdad, 6 February 2020** - SRSG Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert strongly condemns the violence and high

number of casualties in Najaf last night. Protection of peaceful protesters should be guaranteed at all times, not

when it is too late.

## UN Representative Hennis-Plasschaert deplores use of hunting guns, renews call for protection of demonstrators

**Baghdad, 17 February 2020** - UNAMI continues to receive credible allegations of peaceful protesters targeted by "hunting guns" on the road between Al Tahrir Square and Al Khilani Square in Baghdad in the evening of 14, 15 and 16 February, injuring at least 50. Reportedly, a number of security personnel were also injured, including by pellets from hunting guns, stones or Molotov cocktails. Allegations on the use of

similar kinetic impact projectiles were received from Karbala as well, causing injuries to over 150 protesters in the month of January alone.

The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, strongly condemns the use of hunting rifles with birdshot, which caused (yet again) high numbers of casualties in recent protests.

She calls on the authorities to prevent

the use of force and to hold those responsible for the abuse of force accountable: "The continued pattern of the use of excessive force, with ambiguously identified armed groups and unclear loyalties, is a grave security concern that must be tackled urgently and decisively. Peaceful protesters should be protected at all times."



## Political Consultations



**Baghdad, 05 January 2020** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Mohammed al-Halbousi. They discussed the recent security developments in Iraq as well as the need to address the Iraqi people's legitimate demands for change. Photo courtesy of the CoR.



**Baghdad, 06 January 2020** – The President of the Republic, H.E. Barham Salih, received today in Baghdad the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert.

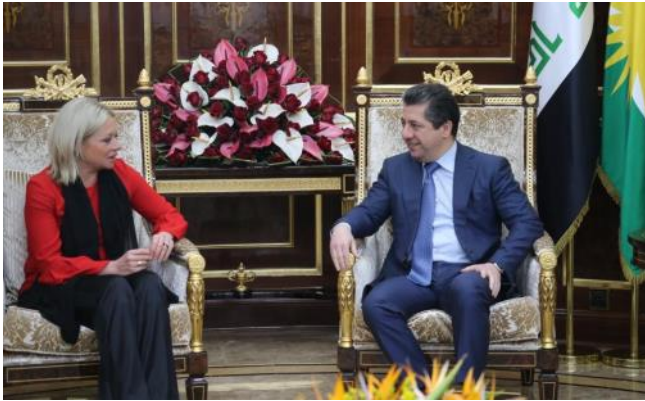
They discussed the current political developments in the country and the region. SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert reiterated the United Nations' support for Iraq's security and stability as well as the need to undertake reforms that would address the Iraqi people's legitimate demands for change. Photo courtesy of the Office of the President.



**Baghdad, 06 January 2020** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Iraqi Prime Minister, Mr. Adil Abdul Mahdi. During the meeting, in which they discussed the recent security developments in Iraq, SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert reiterated the United Nations' support for Iraq's security and stability. Photo courtesy of the Office of the Prime Minister.



**Erbil, 13 January 2020** – The President of the Kurdistan Region, Mr. Nechirvan Barzani, received today in Erbil the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. They discussed the current developments in the country and the region, as well as the need to address the legitimate demands of the Iraqi people.



**Erbil, 13 January 2020** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today in Erbil with the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region, Mr. Masrour Barzani. They discussed the current developments in the country and the region, as well as the need to address the legitimate demands of the Iraqi people.



**Doha, Qatar, 18 January 2020** - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, was received today in Doha by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, H.E. Sheik Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. They discussed issues of mutual concern, emphasizing the importance of dialogue to de-escalate regional tensions. Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar.



**Baghdad, 28 January 2020** - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, visited the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) headquarters in Baghdad to meet with the new Commissioners. Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert congratulated them on taking up their posts and reaffirmed UN support for free, fair and credible elections.



**Baghdad, 30 January 2020** - Special Representative of United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met the Governor of Kirkuk, Rakan Saeed al-Jubouri, today and discussed the political and security situation in the governorate as well as humanitarian and reconstruction efforts. Photo courtesy of the Office of Kirkuk Governor.



**Baghdad, 30 January 2020** - Special Representative of United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met the Head of the Finance Committee of the Iraqi Parliament, Dr. Haitham al-Jabouri, and discussed the economic and political developments in Iraq, as well as the efforts made by the Finance Committee to address the demands of the Iraqi people. Photo courtesy of the Head of the Finance Committee.



**Baghdad, 4 February 2020** - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi. They discussed the current political situation, with an emphasis on the transition to a new government and ways to facilitate the process. On 3 February, the Special Representative met with the Prime Minister-designate, Mr. Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi.

## SRSB discuss government formation with Prime Minister

**Baghdad, 26 February 2020** – The Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Adil Abdul-Mahdi, received today the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. They discussed political developments in Iraq and efforts to form the new government, as well as the United Nations' continuing support for Iraq's stability.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the PM.



## Gender

## UNFPA welcomes contribution from Canada for women and girls' health and rights in Iraq



**Baghdad, 30 January 2020** - The Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) has contributed CAD 20 million in support of UNFPA's humanitarian response focusing on life-saving assistance aimed at alleviating

the suffering of women and girls across Iraq.

The three-year contribution will support UNFPA works in providing emergency obstetric care, and sexual and reproductive health services, in ensuring protection from and

responding to gender-based violence and in providing health services, supplies and medication, dignity and reproductive health kits to women and girls affected by the crisis in Iraq.

Dr Oluremi Sogunro, UNFPA Representative to Iraq, thanked DFAT for their trust, saying: "We are grateful for Canada's generosity. The needs of women and adolescent girls, especially in displacement camps, remain acute. With the new funding from Canada, UNFPA will expand its interventions aiming at meeting the reproductive health needs of women and girls as well as preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence."

The Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development has been a steady partner to UNFPA humanitarian intervention since 2015. With the current contribution, the total amount of CAD 54.9 million dedicated to UNFPA's humanitarian initiatives in the field.

## Results off the research on child marriage in humanitarian settings analyzed at a workshop

**Erbil, 5 February 2020** - Last year, UNFPA with Johns Hopkins University and Women's Refugee Commission conducted a research on child marriage in humanitarian settings (phase II), with funding from the European Regional Development and Protection Programme (#RDPP).

Earlier this week, UNFPA and the research team held a two-day workshop in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to analyze and review the qualitative findings and the contributing factors to this harmful practice.



## UNFPA, UN Women reiterate call to protect girls in Iraq from FGM

*Statement by UNFPA-UN Women on the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation*

**Baghdad, 6 February 2020** - While living in a world free of violence is a right to all, more than 200 million women and girls across the world have been forced to undergo the painful practice of Female Genital Mutilation. Female Genital Mutilation is not only a practice rooted in gender inequality, but is also a practice that limits girls and women from realizing their rights and potential in health, education and income.

In 2019, world leaders gathered at the International Conference for Population and Development in Nairobi, Kenya, to make bold commitments to transform the world by ending all maternal deaths, unmet need for family planning and gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls by 2030. Six out of ten commitments made were to address gender-based violence and harmful practices, including the elimination of female genital mutilation.

Yet in 2020, 4.1 million girls remain at risk of being cut.

In Iraq, more specifically in the Kurdistan Region, UNFPA estimates that 10 per cent of girls aged under 14 could have been cut in 2018, the average age of cutting being five years old. In addition to being unnecessary and painful, this harmful practice has

no health benefits for girls whatsoever. In fact, girls who undergo female genital mutilation face short-term complications such as severe pain, shock, excessive bleeding, infections, and difficulty in passing urine, as well as long-term consequences for their sexual and reproductive and mental health.

With only a decade remaining for achieving SDG Target 5.3, which calls for the elimination of harmful practices including female genital mutilation by 2030, we need to galvanize the global movement to accelerate efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation.

Today, on the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, we reiterate our call to the relevant authorities in Iraq, especially the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, to work together to end FGM through the implementation of the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Communication for Behavioural Impact (COMBI) plan:



Ending female genital mutilation means empowering women and girls to be healthy, stay in school, make choices and contribute to the economy, as committed by the Government of Iraq at the Nairobi Summit.

Dr Oluremi Sogunro, Representative, UNFPA Iraq  
Dina Zorba, Representative, UN Women Iraq



## Meeting on the roll-out of the clinical management of rape (CMR) protocol organized by UNFPA

**Baghdad, 17 February 2020** - If left unaddressed, sexual violence and particularly rape have severe negative physical, mental and social consequences for the survivors as well for their families and the larger community.

UNFPA with the support of Canada in Iraq and the European Regional Development and Protection Programme for Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq (#RDPP II) conducted a meeting on the roll-out of the clinical management of rape (CMR) protocol.

During the meeting, twenty health workers, GBV practitioners, and representatives from the Ministry of Health exchanged expertise on the successes and lessons learnt on the CMR protocol roll-out.





## UNFPA and partners discuss the Family Planning strategy and develop a multiyear action plan for its implementation

**Baghdad, 19 February 2020** - UNFPA conducted a two-day workshop this week with the support of Canada in Iraq and SIDA with the goal to finalize the Family Planning strategy and develop a multiyear action plan for its implementation.

Family planning is not about limiting birth.

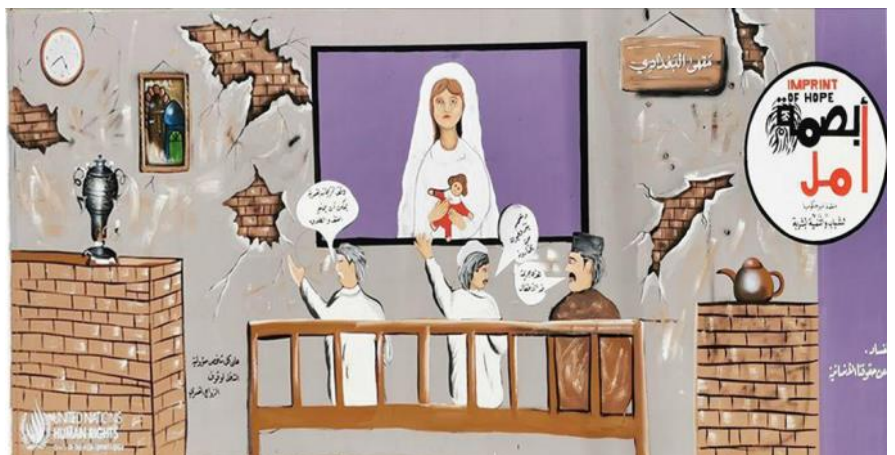
Family planning is about: spacing birth, ending preventable maternal death, reducing neonatal mortality, empowering women, helping men make-informed choices when it comes to their families. Family planning is a human right.



## Human Rights

### UNAMI HRO supported art projects, where human rights issues of concern to Iraqi people are portrayed on murals

**Baghdad, 15 January 2020** — Towards the end of 2019, UNAMI Human Rights Office supported art projects, where human rights issues of concern to Iraqi people are portrayed on murals across seven governorates. Issues addressed included domestic violence, child marriage, discrimination and corruption. Murals were commissioned in Anbar, Najaf, Karbala, Mosul, Missan, Nassiriyah, Basra and Baghdad, with the aim to foster a discussion about human rights in the public space.



### UNESCO Director-General condemns murder of journalists Ahmed Abdul Samad and cameraman Safaa Ghali in Iraq

**Paris, 27 January 2020** - The Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay, has called on Iraq to ensure that those responsible for the killing on 10 January of television reporters Saafaa Ghali and Ahmed Abdul Samad are brought to justice.

“I condemn the murder of television journalist Ahmed Abdul Samad and cameraman Safaa Ghali,” said the Director-General. “I call on the authorities to pursue investigations into these killings and ensure that their perpetrators are brought to trial. Targeted attacks on media workers present an intolerable threat to press freedom and to free and open debate.” Ahmed Abdul Samad and Safaa Ghali, were shot while driving away from

protests in the southern Iraqi city of Basra which they had been covering for Iraqi satellite television channel Dijlah TV.

UNESCO promotes the safety of

journalists through global awareness-raising, capacity building and a range of actions, notably in the framework of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.



## UNESCO, Free Press Unlimited and the Ministry of the Interior launched an initiative to protect the lives of journalists

**Baghdad, 27 January 2020** - Following the killing of two journalists in Basra on 10 January 2020, UNESCO Iraq Office and Free Press Unlimited (FPU) in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists organized a meeting with Iraqi journalists to discuss the measures aimed to protect them in light of the latest incident.

During the meeting, MoI representative Saad Maan, on behalf of the Minister of Interior, Yassin Al-Yasiri, launched the second hotline "171" to be the tool of contacting the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) by journalists in Iraq if police support is required. The hotline is based in the Special Investigation Unit, which was established under the project "Breaking the Silence: Enhancing Public Accountability on Freedom of Expression and the Safety of Journalists in Iraq"

UNESCO has also supported radio programmes focusing on the safety of journalists (e.g. "Media and Security"), and established the "5555" hotline, dedicated to the protection of journalists, in cooperation with CMC and the Ministry of Interior.

The Ministry of Interior provided information on the dynamics of the attacks on journalists and media professionals covering the recent demonstrations. Saad Maan the director of media and public information at the MoI stated that "the



MoI is investigating the crimes that were committed against the 2 journalists in Basra, the special investigation team was assigned by the minister to reveal the circumstances of the murder" UNESCO expresses its deep concern for the attacks against journalists' in Iraq.

The UNESCO-supported national monitoring mechanism of attacks against journalists confirmed 42 attacks on journalists and 37 cases of media workers being impeded from covering protests in Baghdad and provinces around the country.

Media representatives called the Ministry of Interior to assure protection for local and international media institutions in Iraq. Mr Maan, expressed the ministry's readiness to provide special and fast protection by dispatching security forces to any media that is threatened or at risk once they call 171.

UNESCO Iraq Office has been spearheading the implementation of

the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, in close cooperation with the Iraqi authorities, media representatives, as well as national and international specialized NGOs.

This hotline for journalists was established by UNESCO Iraq with the Ministry of Interior, with funding from the Dutch government, as part of the project breaking the silence: enhancing public accountability on freedom of expression and the safety of journalists in Iraq. Partners include the Communication Media Commission and the Iraqi National Committee to Protect Journalists and Combat Impunity.

UNESCO Iraq Office is building the capacity of the investigative unit for journalists' cases at the Ministry of Interior, as part of the procedures that form the mechanism of protecting journalists and combating impunity in Iraq, including the hotline 5555 and the hotline 171.

## OHCHR: "We are alarmed at the escalation in violence in the central Iraqi city of Najaf"

**Geneva, 7 February 2020** - Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Marta Hurtado, delivered the following press briefing note on the developments in Iraq:

We are alarmed at the escalation in violence in the central Iraqi city of Najaf on 5 February when supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr allegedly shot dead anti-Government demonstrators. This latest incident again raises serious concerns about the Government's ongoing inability to fulfil its obligation under international law to protect demonstrators from attacks by so-called 'militia'.

On 5 February, witnesses said armed men affiliated to Muqtada al-Sadr shot

at protesters in Sadreen square in Najaf. At least seven people were killed and over 75 others injured, and demonstrator's tents were set on fire. The incident followed an earlier attempt to "storm" the protest site on 3 February. While police attempted to de-escalate the situation initially, security forces were ultimately unable to protect protesters.

On 6 February, armed men affiliated to Muqtada al-Sadr attacked protesters in a square in the nearby city of Karbala with automatic rifles, batons and knives, shooting at and injuring two demonstrators and one police officer. They beat three protesters and tore up tents. The Iraqi army was reportedly present but did not intervene and Riot



Police were called.

We reiterate our call on the Government to ensure the safety of peaceful protesters at all times.

## Iraq: UN expert calls for increased efforts to address the situation of IDPs



**Baghdad/Geneva, 27 February 2020** – A UN human rights expert urged Iraq to redouble efforts to address the human rights concerns of internally displaced persons (IDPs), especially children, calling for increased measures in humanitarian assistance, development, social cohesion and reconciliation.

“The 2014-2017 conflict with the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has resulted in the displacement of about 6 million people. Over 4 million have since returned to their places of origin, a development in which the policies of the Government of Iraq have been instrumental,” Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, said at the end of a visit to the country.

“However, this needs to be further complemented with building the conditions to ensure that they can resume normal lives. Absent these conditions, a large number of these returnees risk falling back into secondary displacement.”

While commending the Government for the measures it has already taken, the expert said that the assistance needs of the remaining 1.5 million IDPs remain acute. She called for durable solutions for IDPs and for a national peace and reconciliation plan.

“The Government announced its intention to return all IDPs home by the end of the year. However, numerous obstacles remain, including destroyed and damaged housing, contamination of lands by mines, restrictions on the freedom of movement and lack of livelihood opportunities. Returns have to be safe, informed, voluntary and dignified; and IDPs have the right to decide whether they will return home, integrate where they currently are, or settle elsewhere.

“Among the most tragic legacies of the ISIL conflict I have witnessed during my visit is the situation of internally displaced children – a generation traumatized by violence, deprived of education and opportunities,” Jimenez-Damary said.

“I am very concerned at the extent to which internally displaced children in and out of camp settings are deprived of education. Unable to enroll in the formal education system due to lack of civil documentation or restrictions on movement, a generation of marginalized children is emerging.”

The UN expert expressed concerns about the numerous barriers faced by IDPs to obtain and renew the civil documentation they need to access basic services, education, healthcare and social security benefits, housing, land and property rights, and freedom of movement.

She also highlighted the situation of ethnic and religious minorities (or “components” of Iraqi society as many prefer to be called) displaced due to persecution in territories controlled by ISIL, specifically highlighting the plight

of Yazidis. “They have suffered enormous losses and human rights violations, and most of them have remained in camps for many years. All alternatives for their durable solutions must be considered with the communities themselves.”

Jimenez-Damary also expressed concerns about the situation of families perceived as affiliated to ISIL. “These families face widespread discrimination by authorities and communities. They have been subject to threats, harassment and violence, both in areas of displacement and in areas of origin, and they have been deprived of basic services including health care and education.”

During her nine-day visit, from 15 to 23 February 2020, the expert met with Government representatives at the national, regional and local levels, UN agencies, civil society, humanitarian and development actors, and other key national and international stakeholders. She also met with IDPs in and out of camp settings.

Her full findings and recommendations will be included in a report to the Human Rights Council.

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End of Mission Statement by the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, upon conclusion of her official visit to Iraq – 15 to 23 February 2020 – is available:

In English at

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25608&LangID=E>

In Arabic at

<https://www.ohchr.org/AR/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25608&LangID=A>



## Two years after ISIL defeat, some Iraq children still not in school - UN report

**Geneva, 17 February 2020** – A United Nations report published today finds that some children in Iraq are still unable to receive education in the aftermath of the territorial defeat of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant over two years ago, saying they cannot access schools or obtain key civilian documentation necessary for enrolment in state schools.

The Right to Education in Iraq: The legacy of ISIL territorial control on access to education is jointly released by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The report is based upon 237 interviews and group consultations with children, youth, parents and teachers in areas that were controlled by Da'esh/ISIL until their territorial defeat in December 2017.

Several of those interviewed said that they could not move freely in and out of IDP camps due to restrictions on their movement, preventing them from daily activities such as attending schools outside the camps. One boy from a displacement camp in Ninewa Governorate said: "There is no future in the camp anyway, what am I going to do here? Why do I need an education for this life? It has been so long since we were at school, our minds feel closed to learning, some of us can no longer even read and write. We have no support to overcome these things. Even if I could take the exams, I would not pass them. I don't see a future for myself."

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said the importance of the right to education for children and young people cannot be overstated. "When the full enjoyment of this right is impaired for any reason, their lives and futures are severely impacted," she said. "Inclusive, quality education is not just a right in itself but it is essential for the full realisation of a range of other human rights. Education literally has the power to transform lives and make dreams come true."

While acknowledging the steps taken by the Government to ensure access to education, the report identifies two main challenges specific to the community. Firstly, the absence of appropriate programs aimed at reintegration of students into the state education system, particularly given that many have suffered a significant time gap in their schooling. Secondly,



the impact that limited access to civil documentation is having on school enrolment. The report indicates that these issues have been compounded by the fact that many adolescents have now reached an age that where traditional primary or junior education may no longer be appropriate, that there are an insufficient number of schools or accelerated learning programmes, inadequate teaching hours, and movement restrictions.

The report calls on the Government of Iraq to take measures to overcome existing administrative and security clearance challenges for children to obtain civil documentation and to revise existing provisions of accessible forms of education for children who have missed years of education due to ISIL control.

The report was shared with the Government of Iraq and integrates comments received from the Ministry of Education, annexed to the report.

"Access to education must be guaranteed for every Iraqi child," said Danielle Bell, Chief of UNAMI Human Rights Office. "Alternatives for those who missed out on their school years due to conflict must be found."

For the English version of the report, please visit <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/2020-02IraqRightEducationreport.pdf>

For the Arabic version of the report, please visit [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/2020-02IraqRightEducationreport\\_AR.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/2020-02IraqRightEducationreport_AR.pdf)



**The Right to Education in Iraq**

Part One: The legacy of ISIL territorial control on access to education





**Baghdad, 12 January 2020** - Special Adviser Karim Khan QC met with H.E. Stephen Hickey, the United Kingdom Ambassador to Iraq. The Special Adviser gave the ambassador an update on UNITAD priorities for the coming months and progress on investigations into crimes committed by Da'esh against minority communities in Iraq.



**Baghdad, 13 January 2020** – A fruitful meeting was held between Special Adviser Karim Khan QC and H.E. Ambassador Tredene Dobson, New Zealand Ambassador to Iraq, in which they discussed avenues for further cooperation to support UNITAD in its mandate to hold Da'esh perpetrators accountable for their crimes in Iraq.

## Denmark and UNITAD sign agreement to enhance investigative and forensic capacity in Iraq

**Baghdad, 14 January 2020** - The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to implement a project aimed at strengthening the capacity of Iraqi courts, judicial system and forensic capacity, with whom UNITAD works in the implementation of its mandate pursuant to Security Council resolution 2379 (2017).

The Danish contribution of approx. USD 800,000 (5 million DKK) will fund a training and mentoring programme (2020-2021) that UNITAD will deliver for investigative judges in key courts across the country, and forensic experts, as part of their ongoing cooperation with the Investigative Team. The training programme will be informed by a comprehensive assessment of training needs, so that the developed training modalities are tailored to address specific challenges faced in Iraq.

Incoming UNITAD National Professional Officers, who work on an equal footing with international staff, will also benefit from the investigative and analytical training under this project, enabling them to get quickly up to speed with the work of the Investigative Team, and acquire new skills that can be employed in their daily activities.

In connection with the Danish support, the Danish Foreign Minister, Jeppe Kofod, stated "Important that we maintain focus on the long-term goals – not least in the present situation. It is my hope that the Danish support provided through UNITAD will strengthen transitional justice in Iraq, and thereby contribute to heal the wounds inflicted by ISIL on the Iraqi society. The Danish support for capacity building of the Iraqi judicial system will contribute to the ambitions voiced by both the Iraqi government and the people of Iraq for a society based on the rule of law".

Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC

thanked Denmark for its support and stressed "that enhancing Iraqi capacities is part of UNITAD's mandate and directly feeds into the Investigative Team's work to ensuring accountability for ISIL individuals responsible for the most serious crimes and delivering justice to victims. Through holding fair trials, in which incontrovertible evidence is presented to national courts, can we expose the baseless ideology of ISIL, establish justice for victims from all Iraqi communities and prevent revisionism."

Ultimately, by enhancing investigative and forensic capacities in Iraq, this project ensures the collection of evidence on the ground meets the highest international standards, and contributes towards strengthening rule of law in key areas impacted by the crimes committed by ISIL.

The Danish contribution to the UNITAD Trust Fund is provided through the Peace and Stabilization Fund as part of the Syria-Iraq Peace and Stabilization Program (2019-2021).

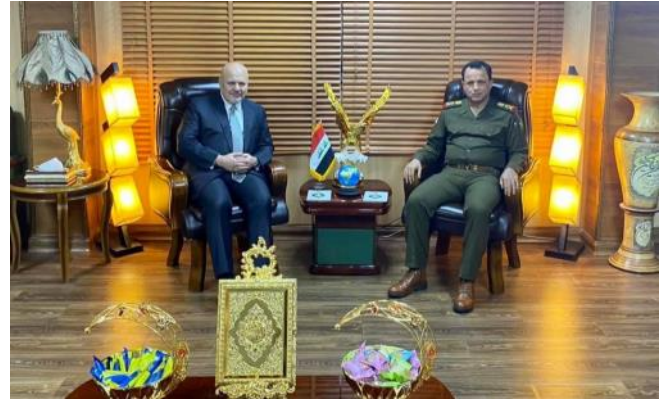
## UNITAD donated state-of-the-art technological equipment to the Medico-Legal Directorate and Mass Graves Directorate

**Baghdad, 17 January 2020** - As part of its mandate to investigate Da'esh crimes, UNITAD and Special Adviser Karim Khan QC were pleased to donate state-of-the-art technological equipment to the Medico-Legal Directorate and Mass Graves Directorate today. This equipment is essential for gathering and analyzing evidence from mass grave sites and crime scenes.





**Baghdad, 21 January 2020** - Special Adviser Karim Khan QC met with the President of the Supreme Judicial Council, H.E. Judge Faiq Zidan, to discuss the way forward on the practical and theoretical trainings UNITAD will deliver to help build the capacity of local investigative judges in Iraq.



**Baghdad, 22 January 2020** - Special Adviser Karim Khan QC praised the leadership of Lt. Gen. Al-Allak and the work of the Directorate of Military Intelligence in collecting battlefield evidence. The importance of preserving it for use in fair trails was highlighted during their discussions. Special Adviser Karim Khan and members of UNITAD met again with Lt. Gen. Saad Mezher Al-Allak today, and appreciated the warm welcome they received. During the visit, they learned more about the efforts and sacrifices of the Directorate of Military Intelligence in countering Da'esh.



**Baghdad, 27 January 2020** - Special Adviser Karim Khan QC was received today by His Eminence Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Hasan Al-Taha, Chairman of the Iraqi Jurisprudence Council. Both emphasized the need for proper accountability of Da'esh perpetrators based on concrete evidence and fair trials. They also discussed the importance of highlighting inter-faith unity across Iraq in the condemnation of Da'esh, and that it would constitute a significant step in ensuring accountability and justice for victims.



**Baghdad, 27 January 2020** – The Special Adviser Karim Khan QC met with His Beatitude Louis Raphael Sako. Both reaffirmed the need for inter-faith unity across Iraq in condemning Da'esh, and supporting the victims of these crimes. The Special Adviser noted that UNITAD is intensifying its efforts to investigate the crimes committed against the Christian community in Iraq, and has benefit from the guidance of His Beatitude.



**Lalish, 1 February 2020** - Special Adviser Karim Khan met with His Holiness Baba Sheikh Khurto Hajji Ismail. The SA underlined the commitment of UNITAD to continue to effectively investigate crimes committed by ISIL against the Yazidi community, and discussed ways of further supporting survivors.



**Baghdad, 4 February 2020** - Special Adviser Karim Khan was delighted to receive Lt. Gen. Saad Mezher Al-Alak, Head of the Directorate of Military Intelligence at UNITAD Headquarters today in order to discuss ways in which their strong cooperation can be further enhanced in pursuit of accountability for ISIL crimes in Iraq. Signifying the strong relationship between UNITAD and the Department of Military Intelligence, a palm tree presented by Lt. Gen. Al-Alak was planted at UNITAD Headquarters. Special Adviser Khan emphasized that this ceremony reflected the importance of further deepening the roots of their cooperation.

## UNITAD seeks to ensure that the most vulnerable victims of Da'esh crimes are able to come forward with their accounts and contribute to the delivery of accountability

**Baghdad, 12 February 2020** - As the world commemorates the International Day against the use of Child Soldiers, UNITAD reaffirms that children should be seen first and foremost as victims, that children are not collateral damage of conflict, and underlines its commitment to ensure that those members of Da'esh most responsible for the crimes committed against children are held accountable. In the conduct of their criminality, Da'esh indoctrinated and weaponized children, exposing

many to unimaginable violence and abuses. Reflecting the importance of exposing the full nature and scale of these crimes, UNITAD has established a specialized unit, the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Children Unit (SGBVCU). As part of its work, the SGBVCU ensures that UNITAD is able to engage effectively with children who have both witnessed and in some cases been forced to participate as perpetrators of Da'esh crimes; focusing on the best interest of the child. The

SGBVCU works in tandem with UNITAD psychologists, as well as other qualified support providers and counselors in order to deliver effective, specialized assistance to children and women, including those who have suffered from conflict-related sexual violence. In doing so, UNITAD seeks to ensure that the most vulnerable victims of Da'esh crimes are able to come forward with their accounts and contribute to the delivery of accountability.



**Baghdad, 19 February 2020** – The Special Adviser Karim Khan QC was encouraged by today's meeting with Iraq's National Team on Mass Graves headed by Mr. Mohamad Taher Tamimi and pleased that an agreement was reached to send first identified Yazidi remains to Kojo by March 15. A further announcement will be made on February 27, 2020.



**Baghdad, 20 February 2020** - In his meeting today with H.E. Barham Salih, President of the Republic of Iraq, Special Adviser Karim Khan welcomed the President's continued strong support for UNITAD's work in holding Da'esh criminals accountable for their crimes. They discussed the importance of commencing the return of identified Yazidi remains to Kojo, and underlined the need to move forward in adopting legislation to allow for the prosecution of Da'esh perpetrators for crimes that may amount to crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide in Iraqi courts.

## Humanitarian

### UNHCR, through partners, continues to implement its “Cash for Winter” programme

**Dohuk, 5 January 2020** - UNHCR, through partners, continues to carry its “Cash for Winter” programme to support refugees and Iraqi internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps and urban areas in Duhok Governorate.

This programme will financially support vulnerable families to tackle harsh winter conditions in Duhok Governorate where, especially in the mountainous areas, temperatures drop below freezing.

Across Duhok Governorate, UNHCR aims to assist nearly 7700 refugee and displaced Iraqi families through the mobile money transfer mechanism. The



refugee families will receive 480,000 IQD, while Iraqi displaced families will receive 240,000 IQD.

UNHCR would like to thank donors for

their generous contributions that have enabled us to provide cash and in-kind assistance to address winter needs in a timely manner.

## United Nations extremely concerned about the impact of bureaucratic constraints leading to reduced humanitarian access to 2.4 million Iraqis in need of assistance

Baghdad, 16 January 2020 - Marta Ruedas, the Humanitarian Coordinator for the United Nations in Iraq, expressed her strong concern today over the suspension in granting access letters to humanitarian actors carrying out critical missions in support of Iraq's vulnerable people. Such permissions were previously issued every 30 days by a mandated governmental body. However, since November 2019, aid deliveries throughout Iraq have slowed considerably, due to the discontinuation of previously agreed-upon access authorization procedures, and the absence of viable alternative mechanisms. Unless partners are allowed to immediately resume full, unimpeded movement of their personnel and supplies, humanitarian operations in Iraq may come to a complete halt within a matter of weeks. Hundreds of thousands of people across the most conflict-affected areas face going without food, medicine, and winterization materials during the coldest months of the year.

"Our operations are at risk," said Ms. Ruedas. "Without predictable, continual access authorization, humanitarian aid is in danger of rotting in warehouses, putting lives in jeopardy and wasting badly-needed donor funds."

Prior to the current impasse, the humanitarian community in Iraq had long been governed by an agreed-upon access mechanism through which aid



organizations were granted monthly letters which allowed them to pass through checkpoints without interference from security actors. Letters were granted after a thorough application and vetting process, which was fully adhered to by the United Nations and NGO partners in Iraq. As of the first week of January 2020, access letters for almost all humanitarian actors had expired, and no new authorizations had been issued. A survey of NGO partners carried out in January 2020 to ascertain the impact of the administrative impasse

indicated that 90 per cent of respondents reported that the lack of national access authorization procedures has directly affected their operations. Respondents also reported that since the beginning of December 2019, more than 2,460 humanitarian missions had been cancelled or prevented from reaching their destinations. It is estimated that approximately 2.4 million people in need have been affected by the restrictions on humanitarian movements.

During 2019, the humanitarian community in Iraq operated under a US\$700 million coordinated plan which aimed to assist 1.75 million IDPs, returnees and poor host communities in need. More than 100 partners carried out operations in over 1,300 locations throughout northern and central Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. As of 31 December 2019, the plan had attracted 92 per cent of its requested funding, indicating strong donor support and confidence, and had reached more than one million people targeted under the plan. In 2020, the humanitarian community seeks \$520 million to continue its vital work.

"We request that the Government of Iraq provide clarity on the procedures for granting access authorizations for humanitarian organizations, and allow us to resume delivering aid effectively and efficiently for the people of Iraq," said Ms. Ruedas.





## A sewing and designing course at the Vocational Training Centre in Basra organized by IOM

**Basra, 30 January 2020** - "This course helped me overcome my fear of using the sewing machine. I learned the basics of sewing and have already started applying my new skills by creating simple clothes for children and women. I am very happy that I joined this free course," said Afaf, a 46-year-old mother of five from Basra.

Afaf is part of a group of 10 female heads and young women who participated in a sewing and designing course at the vocational training centre in Basra. Training courses include hairdressing and cosmetics, computer skills, and English language classes are

being offered to an additional 38 students.

These courses are part of the project "Mentorship and Training for Women Empowerment and Female Heads of

Household Vocational and IT Education", implemented by IOM and supported by Mitsubishi Corporation in collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.



## UN agencies in Iraq support the return of IDPs to their places of origin

**Baghdad, 1 February 2020** - "It feels good to be back home, despite all the challenges and the fact that I lost my daughter and two grandchildren when we left this home three years ago", says **Ahkam**.

Ahkam told us how difficult life has been after the liberation of Mosul, but one thing that she is glad about is the help she received from Qatar Fund for Development to rehabilitate her home and making it livable again.

She showed us a photo of her home before rehabilitation and said there is a big difference now. With the cash for shelter support, she received from UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, with the cooperation of human-appeal.org and Blumont, she ended her displacement and went back to her life. She is back with her son and her grandchild Obeida, who is back in school.

**Ahmed** returned to Mosul after 3 years of displacement! He is a steel welder and a blacksmith.

He loves to work with steel and prepare steel moulds for concrete casting used



in construction, he feels that in some way he is contributing to the rebuilding of Mosul.

UNHCR and partners have provided many returnee families with cash for shelter so they can fix their damaged homes and supported quick impact projects that help rebuild infrastructure so that people go back to their homes and communities and restart their lives again.

"Being a housewife kept me away from the outer world, I had no skills or experience and was living in a depressed life. I attended the sewing training conducted by UN-Habitat and Peace Wind Japan, we were taught and trained practically and now I have learnt to design and tailor, I was provided with a sewing machine, cloth, tools and accessories.

Now, I can call myself a tailor, I have tailored for my friends, relatives, and my brother's wedding accessories, I have also learned to tailor the Kurdish traditional dress," says **Aisha Habo**, beneficiary in Zanjilli, West Mosul under the project titled "Support to

Reconstruction and Peacebuilding of Liberated Cities in Iraq", funded by the Government of Japan.

"My house was destroyed, the entire water network for my house was broken which left me with no access to water, and I did not have the financials to rehabilitate my house due to the war conflict in the region. My house was selected by UN-Habitat for rehabilitation, and now it is rehabilitated, an entire new water network is installed in my house.

**UN-Habitat** not only rehabilitated our houses but also conducted vocational training with Peace Wind Japan for men, women, youth, and those who are jobless in the neighborhood. And now these trainees have new skills, experience, and even jobs in many different fields such as Plasterers, Carpenters and Electricians," says Basam Husain, Beneficiary in Zanjilli, West Mosul under the project titled "Support to Reconstruction and Peacebuilding of Liberated Cities in Iraq", generously funded by the Government of Japan.



## Supporting dreams of success and great careers in the future

**Erbil, 7 February 2020** - "I love my school, I want to be a Kurdish language teacher when I grow up," says Asia 11, a Syrian refugee in Erbil.

Over 900 refugee and host community children attend the Van school in Mamzawa in Erbil.

Many of the students from both communities we spoke to want to be teachers as they are impressed by their teachers and love their school.

The Van school was rehabilitated by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency with water and sanitation systems, added classrooms, furniture, whiteboards and desks. Warm colours were chosen to



appeal to young children. Not only do they share classrooms, but

also share dreams of success and great careers in the future.

## IOM organized and conducted a suicide awareness raising session in Hassan Sham U3 camp for IDPs

**Baghdad, 4 February 2020** - According to statistics from the Ministry of Health, suicide is slowly increasing in Iraq, especially in IDP and returnee communities.

IOM is conducting a series of capacity building activities in different governorates to raise awareness of suicide, preparedness and prevention.

Participants from local organizations, the government and NGOs will improve their knowledge of causes and warning signs, and learn how to deal with cases to prevent suicide. After the workshops, the participants will in turn be able to raise their awareness of the topic in their own communities, and support people and families who have been through this experience.

The first round of the trainings took place in Duhok governorate and was followed by a series of awareness raising sessions in Shekhan, Sharya and Qadia.

Last Thursday, IOM organized and conducted a suicide awareness raising session in Hassan Sham U3 camp for IDPs that was attended by community leaders and influential people from the camp.

The day began with an interactive session between the participants and the facilitators during which misconceptions about prevention and response to suicide cases were challenged, and participants' personal experiences were discussed and analyzed. This activity was followed by a simulation session where the participants discussed the procedures that could be followed in case of an emergency in the camp and had the chance to apply the knowledge they learned to deal with suicide under supervision of the facilitators.

These awareness raising and simulation sessions are part of several capacity building activities organized

across the country, where participants from local organizations, the government, NGOs, and IDPs will improve their knowledge of the causes and warning signs, and learn how to deal with cases to prevent suicide. These sessions were preceded by a three-day training in the camp, developed to address service providers' needs in the camp.

This activity was supported by the British Consulate General in Erbil.



## Shirley helps refugee and displaced children to learn

**Erbil, 5 February 2020** - Shirley is an educator from Brazil.

She has been working for 6 years in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. She left her country and decided to stay to help refugee and displaced children learn.

She opened the Hope Space for children with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency support at Kawergosk Syrian refugee camp.

Hope Space is a safe environment for children to play and learn. She deals with children aged 3-6. Even troubled children have a chance to improve and learn.

She believes that children learn to engage better with other children and adults through quality preschool programs through the Montessori

methods. This helps to build a strong foundation for the child's physical, mental, emotional, and social development that prepare them for a

better future.

She told us, "All that it takes is love and compassion".

Thank you Shirley!



## WFP welcomes contribution from the Republic of Korea to support vulnerable people in Iraq

**Baghdad, 6 February 2020** - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has received a US\$1 million flexible contribution from the Republic of Korea to provide food assistance for vulnerable internally displaced families in Iraq.

The South Korean contribution will help meet the food needs of some 53,400 internally displaced people (IDPs) for one month. Many people are still unable to return home, facing significant challenges such as lack of security, employment opportunities and services in their areas of origin.

“The Republic of Korea, an exceptional example of transformation from recipient to donor, has always sought to give back to the international community for all it has received,” said Jang Kyung-Wook, Republic of Korea Ambassador to Iraq. “We hope our contribution supports the efforts made by WFP to help IDPs rebuild their lives

and regain economic independence.”

WFP is prioritizing IDPs in camps in nine governorates across Iraq. They will receive assistance through cash-based transfers (CBT), which gives people the freedom to buy the food they need based on their dietary needs and preferences.

“WFP is grateful to the Republic of Korea for this timely contribution and its ongoing and generous support,” said WFP Representative in Iraq Abdirahman Meygag. “Flexible – or unearmarked – funding allows WFP to prioritize programmes in Iraq in most need of urgent support, and we hope other donors will follow suit. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Republic of Korea.”

Flexible funding represents just five percent of the total resources provided to WFP in 2019.

Over the past year, WFP continued to work closely with the Ministry of

Migration and Displacement (MoMD) to ensure value for money in the use of government and donor resources. WFP topped-up rations distributed by MoMD in IDP camps with food or cash assistance. By the end of 2019, this complementary approach led to savings of US\$6.2 million in cash assistance, plus 1,900 tonnes (US\$1.2 million) of food assistance. The savings are being used in 2020 to continue prioritizing those most vulnerable.



## WFP and the Iraqi Ministry of Education relaunch school feeding

**Baghdad, 13 February 2020** - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and its implementing partners in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE), WFP have relaunched its school feeding programme, following the successful 2018 pilot in West Mosul.

Under the School Feeding Programme, WFP is distributing fresh meals to 330,000 children, in 1,200 primary schools across the country during the academic year. The simple meal provided ensures the children have enough energy to start the school day. The schools were selected in coordination with the Ministry of Planning. The programme covers 11

governorates across the country including Mosul, Basra, Anbar and Diyala.

Although over two years have passed since the areas controlled by the Islamic State were retaken, the education system in Iraq is still recovering from decades of underinvestment and instability.

“The school feeding programme for 2019-2020 is the start of a new, comprehensive, and long-term initiative which reflects the value we place on our dear students and helps us fulfil our obligation to provide students with a suitable school environment, especially in the context of the current situation that the country is

regularly,” said WFP Country Director in Iraq Abdirahman Meygag.

The school meal includes a bottle of water or fruit juice, fresh Iraqi bread, cheese and a piece of fruit. This balanced meal provides the energy that school children need to focus during classes. In addition, all the food is purchased from local suppliers, bakeries, fruit markets and small businesses. This strengthens the capacity of small business owners, facilitates the creation of hundreds of livelihood opportunities in areas where the programme is implemented, and invigorates national and local food systems.

“The school feeding programme is the cornerstone of the education and health system in any country. There is no education without health, and no health without nutrition. To complete this cycle and achieve this goal, there should be a rich, nutritious and balanced food basket, appropriate for Iraqi students. School feeding is a natural right, that should be fulfilled by the state,” said Head of Environmental Awareness and School Health Dr Fawzi Rajab Tawfeeq.

WFP continues to work in coordination with sister UN agencies and partners to ensure that education and learning have a lasting impact on the future of Iraq’s children, improving their opportunities, health and wellbeing, and boosting equality.



experiencing,” said Senior Chief of Research, Ministry of Education Dr. Ali Salman Hassan.

“Education is a powerful tool for young generations. It can help them develop their country and the world. By providing children with fresh, nutritious meals at school, WFP supports their growth and nutritional intake, as well as encouraging their families to send them to school

## Fighting the weather elements



**Baghdad, 13 February 2020** - The International Organization for

Migration (IOM) distributed 436 non-food item parcels to displaced families in Bzibes camp. The families cannot return to their homes, and many of their houses were destroyed during the conflict with ISIL. The parcels include mattresses, gas cookers, kitchen sets and other items to help make the winter's cold temperatures more bearable for IDPs.

The winter kits are funded by EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid - ECHO.

The latest storms in Kurdistan Region

of Iraq brought severe cold, winds and snow.

Some damage occurred to some tents which we replaced in Bardarash refugee camp.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency provided camp residents with winter cash support and winter kits that include heaters, tent lining and insulation.

Thanks to UNHCR partner Peace Winds Japan, who are distributing kerosine fuel for cooking and heating to camp residents.

## IOM Iraq organized a social activity for young people in Tel Afar

**Baghdad, 16 February 2020** - "The people in this community were separated by years of displacement. Sadness and hopelessness overshadowed us after all what we went through," said Fakhri Abraham, who was displaced from Tel Afar, Ninewa Governorate, during the ISIL conflict.

On Sunday 9 February, IOM Iraq's Community Stabilization Unit organized a social activity for young people in Tel Afar; the participants met in the morning to start preparing a meal. Later in the day, after playing in a football tournament organized by IOM, they ate lunch together.

"Now that we are back, through these kind of activities, we can communicate and form strong bonds away from all the differences we have in society," said Fakhri, who has since returned to his

area of origin.

Five existing teams from around Tel Afar were invited to play in the football tournament; for this event, the teams were mixed to create new, diverse groups. This was done to encourage the young participants, from different ethno-religious backgrounds, to interact and come together in a friendly

space to build resilience in the community.

"We removed all the communication barriers that existed between us. Now I have friends from the surrounding areas and villages too," added Fakhri, whose team won the tournament.

This activity with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.



## The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights for IDPs Ms. Jimenez-Damary visited IOM's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support center in Hassan Sham camp

**Baghdad, 20 February 2020** - The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights for Internally Displaced Persons, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, is visiting Iraq. On 18 February, Ms. Jimenez-Damary joined the International Organization for Migration's community stabilization team on a visit to IOM Iraq's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support centre in Hassan Sham camp, Ninewa Governorate.

Group discussions were held with female IDPs in the camp and participants discussed the challenges and obstacles they face as residents of the camp, as well as those that prevent them from returning to their areas of origin.

The visit comes while Iraq still has an estimated 1.4 million individuals in

displacement, many of whom are unable to return to their areas of origin due to community tensions, security concerns, mental health and

psychosocial distress connected to the conflict with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and other social cohesion challenges.



## A large-scale cleaning campaign organized by IOM Iraq at Amriyat al-Fallujah camp

**Baghdad, 23 February 2020** - Mustafa and 225 other IDPs participated in a large-scale cleaning campaign organized by IOM Iraq at Amriyat al-Fallujah camp. The purpose of the campaign was two-fold: to make the camp conditions more sanitary and to support the participants financially with stipends for the cleaning activities.

"Living in a clean camp is a necessity; it will control the spread of diseases. As they say, prevention is better than treatment. When I see the camp clean, I feel safe," said 20-year-old Mustafa,

who lives in Amriyat al-Fallujah after being displaced from Ramadi, Anbar Governorate.

The cleaning campaign was supported by EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid – ECHO.



## Migrations

### IOM Iraq conducts an awareness campaign about the risks of irregular migration

**Kirkuk, 31 December 2019** - IOM partnered with the University of Kirkuk to hold an awareness-raising seminar, to distinguish facts from myths. Over 70 students learned about the risks of irregular migration, hopefully helping them to make safer choices after their graduation. This project was supported by Embassies of Germany and The Netherlands in Iraq.



### Migrants' stories

**Sulaymaniyah, 14 January 2020** - Azad Ali, a 40-year-old from Sulaymaniyah Governorate, owned a construction contracting firm and was managing several construction projects for the government, when several financial crises hit the region and left many companies bankrupt.

"I went into debt. The government didn't have money to pay for the work we had done, so I didn't have enough money to pay the sub-contractors," said Azad.

Azad and his wife are both engineers. They had a good life, were respected members of their communities, and enjoyed their work. When they went into debt, the unpaid sub-contractors started threatening them, and they felt that their lives were in danger.

"They threatened my family. I was very worried that they might hurt my two children, so I decided to abandon the life I had built here and take my family to Germany. This decision was a hard one, but we had no other choice," said

Azad.

Azad didn't even think of contacting smugglers, as he knew the risks he would face and the dangers of the journey. Instead, he applied for a tourist visa; visas were granted for the whole family, and they travelled by plane to Germany in November 2017. They immediately applied for asylum.

Although Azad had previously visited Europe and had a good grasp of what life would be like in Germany, living in a camp made him realize that there was a huge difference between going there as a tourist, and being a migrant in a camp.

"Staying at camps is not like staying at hotels; the camp was in a horrible



## Two years after ISIL defeat, some Iraq children still not in school - UN report

condition and I had to share rooms and bathrooms with strangers. If you've left a good life in your country, Europe becomes harder to cope with as a migrant," said Azad.

Azad found it difficult to live in those conditions for too long. He started looking for ways to pay his debts so he could go back and live safely in his country.

"I liquidated my company and sold all my belongings to pay my debts. It was a hard decision, because I had created that company from scratch, but I had to do it in order to go back home," Azad explained.

When they expressed a desire to leave, Azad and his wife were met with resistance from everyone, including their children's school teachers who begged them to stay.

"Everyone wanted us to stay, including my lawyer, who refused to help me with the paperwork for weeks, hoping we would change our minds," Azad said. "Although we were flattered by their concern, we knew that going back was best for us, especially since the threat on our lives was gone."

With support from IOM, Azad came back to Iraq in November 2018. IOM also found him a job in an engineering consultancy company, and paid for his first month's salary.

"My wife and I were very happy to return. The children, at the beginning, were not; they missed their friends and teachers in Germany, but they soon forgot and adapted," Azad said.

Azad now earns a stable income, but plans to open a construction company soon.

"I believe people can create whatever they want; all they need is a strong will and dedication. I may have fallen with the financial crises, but I'm sure I will get up one day," Azad concluded.

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**Nihad Jaafar**, a 27-year-old from Gundki village in Dahuk Governorate, was a policeman in Iraq.

Nihad was based in Kirkuk's oil fields, a regular target for ISIL and other armed groups. He witnessed battles with ISIL firsthand, and saw many of his friends and colleagues get injured or worse, lose their lives.

"I didn't want to end up like my friends. I wanted to have a good life, away from violence and battles, so in 2015, I decided to emigrate to Germany," Nihad explained.

"I was really hoping I would get a job



and support myself in Germany, so that I could finally live in peace," he added.

Nihad had saved some money from his years as a policeman, and he was ready to spend all of it on his journey to Europe. He contacted a smuggler and paid him to get help reaching Germany. However, Nihad didn't have a passport to travel to Turkey and start the journey from there, as Iraqi migrants normally do.

"I didn't want to wait six months for a passport, I wanted to get out as soon as possible, so I paid the smuggler extra money to take me to Turkey," Nihad said.

After arriving in Turkey, Nihad started an arduous journey, sailing to Greece on the dangerous waves of the Aegean Sea in a small boat with nine others.

"Watching the endless expanse of water as we were sailing made me regret my decision; many people had tried to cross that sea and perished," Nihad explained.

When Nihad and his group reached a Greek island, they met with members of an organization that helps migrants travel to Europe regularly, to avoid the risks of crossing borders and being manipulated by smugglers. Four days later, the group received official travel papers and crossed legally through several other countries, eventually reaching Germany.

"I was extremely happy to be in Germany. I stayed at my friend's house for two days to rest. I was also very excited to apply for asylum and spend my life in that country," Nihad said.

Nihad was then taken to a refugee camp, where he realized that living conditions were harsher than he expected. But he thought he would not have to stay there for long, and that his asylum would be granted.

"I knew the conditions in camps were difficult, but life there was worse than what I thought. The first two camps where I lived had several big halls full

of migrants from all over the world. People slept next to each other, which led to a lot of disputes over space," Nihad recalled.

Despite the tough living conditions, Nihad liked the country and the people he met, and he hoped to find a job and support himself. He enrolled in a three-month language course, learned the language and started looking for jobs.

"I didn't want the government to pay my expenses, I wanted to work and provide for myself," Nihad said. "I told people that I would do any type of work, but there was nothing. It was very shocking, I thought Germany would have many jobs for someone like me."

After a year and a half in Germany, Nihad felt that he wasn't progressing in life and he was extremely tired of the same routine that occupied all his time.

"I went to parks with my friends every day. I felt very unproductive and stuck," Nihad said. "I wished someone would have told me about life in Germany, I wouldn't have spent all my money and travelled thousands of miles to be walking in parks."

In addition to facing an uncertain future and tough living conditions, Nihad also felt bad that he had left his parents and three sisters at home.

"One of my sisters suffers from cerebral palsy, and I didn't want my parents to carry the burden alone while I was doing nothing in Europe," Nihad explained.

Nihad returned to Iraq in May 2017, with support from IOM. He was very happy to be with his family again and help them take care of his sister. However, Nihad found out that he had been discharged from his old job as a policeman, and finding another job was not easy.

"I am unemployed now. I regret having gone to Europe, I spent all my savings, lost my job, and didn't get anything in return," Nihad concluded.

## Stitches and scissors: stories of hope from a Kirkuk Tailoring Factory

**Kirkuk, 20 January 2020** - A typical morning in the Baba Gurgur Tailoring Factory finds the seamstresses hard at work — moving busily from one machine to another to sew fine clothing for children, men and women. Between the stitches and the scissors are stories of hope, perseverance and self-fulfillment.

**Waheed:** “I’m a tailor and the founder and owner of Baba Gurgur tailoring factory in Kirkuk. I have loved sewing ever since I was a child. My dream was to own a sewing factory, so I worked hard to make my dream come true.

“I opened my first tailor shop in 1985 but only sewed a few pieces, all simple, because I was new to the market.

“My business flourished during the sanctions against Iraq in 1990. As a result of the international trade embargo imposed on Iraq and the weakness of domestic production, it was hard for Iraqis to buy new clothes. So, we sewed and produced our own.

“The economic situation deteriorated in 2005 following political instability and in-fighting. Then, when ISIL took control of areas around Kirkuk in 2014 and the city came under attack, the business took another hit. The government neglected the industrial sector, which heavily affected all local businesses, including mine. Before the crisis, my factory produced uniforms for the army and the police, in addition to medical bedsheets and a wide range of textiles, all for domestic use. But the factories stopped production one after the other, and employees had to search for new jobs, particularly with the government.



“On the other hand, because our industry weakened, foreign clothes and products invaded the market at very competitive prices, further impacting my business, to the point where I had to lay off most of my employees and keep only three. I also had to sell my machines to pay the rent and buy simple raw materials to keep work going, but that didn’t help. Eventually, my business collapsed, and I had to close it.”

“One day, as I despaired, I came across an announcement on social media. It was posted by IOM, about the Enterprise Development Fund (EDF). When I read the conditions, I thought that this was my chance to bring back my business to its golden age, so I rushed to their offices and filled out the application form.”

“A few days later my phone rang; it was an IOM staff member. They wanted to visit my shop and interview me. A few months [after the interview] I received a grant and used it to move my shop to a new building in Kirkuk’s city centre. I contacted my former employees and asked them whether they would like to return; looked for new employees, especially women; and bought a new embroidery machine as well as other equipment. Business went back to normal, and I began making money again. Shortly afterwards, I started receiving requests for uniforms from various customers, which increased my income and profit, and that of my employees too.”

“IOM didn’t just help me [restart my business]. The organization has also contributed to the local economy, improved living conditions for my employees’ families and enhanced social cohesion between IDPs and the host community, by creating opportunities for them work together and interact for many hours every day.”



**Mustafa:** “I used to work with my father, who sewed traditional Arab men’s outfits (Dishdasha) in Anbar. After an ISIL attack on our area, we left everything behind and fled to Kirkuk. My father’s health deteriorated; he was unable to work and provide for us, so I started searching for a job in Kirkuk, and finally learned about Waheed’s sewing factory. I applied for a job, confident in my skills as a tailor, but I soon found out that I knew nothing of modern machines and equipment.

“I learned fast and specialized in tailoring jackets and sewing t-shirts. Now I have a good income to help my family and I am enrolled in a private

institute in the hope of finishing my secondary studies, and maybe, one day, studying fashion and design. What matters is that I have a job. I feel like my dream is becoming a reality, one step at a time.”

**Shaima:** “I am a very shy and quiet girl. I have three sisters and for a long time my brother was the family’s only breadwinner, after my dad passed away. I graduated from the faculty of agriculture and was looking forward to being employed in the public sector to support my family and help my brother. I looked for jobs for a long time but couldn’t find any, until one day our neighbor visited us and told my mother that a local sewing factory was looking for employees.

At the beginning, my mother was against the idea of me working for the private sector, mainly because I have a degree in agriculture, but she decided to visit the factory and check its situation before making a decision. She was impressed by the friendly and respectful atmosphere of the place, so it didn’t take her long to give me her consent, and I was hired although I knew little about sewing and embroidery.

The factory owner taught me how to use the embroidery machine and I now use it like a professional. This job has provided us with an additional income, and we are now stronger in the face of difficulties. While many of my friends just sit down at home waiting for a government appointment, I have an income and a wonderful job.”

**Nazzanin:** “I used to sew women’s clothes in Kirkuk’s Qadisiyah neighbourhood, I had an old sewing machine. Most of my customers were poor and unable to pay in cash. My husband has a small tea stall in the marketplace, so it was hard for us to pay rent and other expenses.

I heard about the sewing factory, applied and got hired. I thought I knew a lot about sewing, but it became clear to me that there was still a lot to learn, particularly how to handle those big machines and huge scissors. However, I learned fast and made 900 school skirts in two months.

The Baba Gurgur Tailoring Factory is supported by EDF, an initiative co-funded by The Kingdom of the Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Story by: Sazan Gawdan with contributions from Avand Hasan/IOM Iraq - Photo credit: Anjam Rasool/IOM Iraq

## Workshop focused on assessing the current state of migration governance in Iraq held in Erbil

**Erbil, 26 January 2020** - Officials from the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government and IOM met in Erbil last week for a workshop focused on assessing the current state of migration governance in Iraq. This meeting, of the Technical Working Group, identified ways that migration can be managed to benefit Iraq — including engaging the Iraqi diaspora, as one example. The Technical Working Group will propose a strategy in 2020 for using migration to achieve national development goals. This workshop was supported by European Commission - Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid.



## New IOM report - The protection of victims of trafficking in Iraq: review of the applicable legal regime and assessment of related practices in the field

**Baghdad, 4 February 2020** - IOM recently completed the implementation of a 24-month project entitled “Supporting availability and access to specialized services for victims of trafficking and individuals at risk through the provision of basic assistance and technical support of first responders.”

Funded by the US Government’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, the purpose of the project was to assess protection needs, identify gaps and challenges, and subsequently enhance the protection response for victims of trafficking and populations at risk, in and out of camps, across Iraq.

In this framework, IOM launched a research project aimed at analyzing Iraq’s Law on Trafficking in Persons

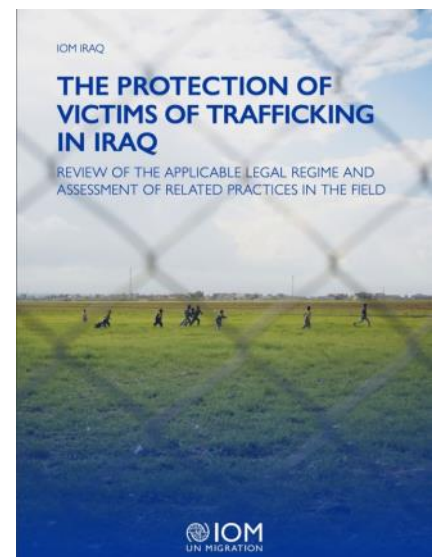
(Law No. 28 of 2012) and its implementation. The author of the report served as a Legal Analyst within the Protection and Counter-Trafficking Unit of IOM mission in Iraq from May 2019 until August 2019.

The purpose of the consultancy was to analyze the compliance of the law with international standards, in theory, and to the extent of available, in practice. The analysis will aid in understanding how effective the law is in addressing counter-trafficking needs and identify legal and operational gaps in peace time and war time. A thorough review of the Iraqi law and its interplay with other branches of national laws – notably criminal and residency law – was conducted.

The research has also aimed at assessing the extent to which protection

is available to victims of trafficking and people at risk of trafficking. It is an essential precondition to the development of effective strategies to contemplate any revisions to the law, rules or regulations, relating to the provision of protection and assistance to victims of trafficking. The report also provides a basis for IOM and other counter-trafficking actors in Iraq to self-reflect and adapt current projects.

The report is available at [https://iraq.iom.int/publications/protection-victims-trafficking-iraq-review-applicable-legal-regime-and-assessment?fbclid=IwAR1DZkcQW8QHjWEsON8QPsi7hsrA9IU38vx\\_gA17VPz4fqHFW0tD-KKsg7w](https://iraq.iom.int/publications/protection-victims-trafficking-iraq-review-applicable-legal-regime-and-assessment?fbclid=IwAR1DZkcQW8QHjWEsON8QPsi7hsrA9IU38vx_gA17VPz4fqHFW0tD-KKsg7w)





## The inter-agency working group on census held its monthly meeting

**Baghdad, 22 January 2020** - The inter-agency working group on census held today its monthly meeting presided by the Resident Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas, and attended by heads and representatives from different UN Agencies, in presence of the head of the Central Statistical Office (CSO) and the Executive Manager of the Census. Discussions focused on the preparations for the 2020 census, the challenges and the partnerships between the Federal Government, the Kurdistan Regional Government and the UN to ensure people's interest are at the centre of the census implementation.



## Provision of clean drinking water to 400 vulnerable households in Yathrib

**Baghdad, 20 January 2020** - In early January 2020, UN-Habitat has launched the extension of the potable water network to connect the underserved and conflict-affected Bohishma residential area, located to the east of Yathrib Sub-district centre in Balad District, Salah Al-Din Governorate.

The aim of the initiative is to support the sustainable return of displaced inhabitants and the recovery of the rural town of Yathrib through an area integrated project that provides clean drinking water to some 400 vulnerable households, benefitting approximately 3,500 individuals, that today are obliged to draw water for domestic purposes from nearby non-potable irrigation canals.

The water works, undertaken by its NGO partner Humanitarian Relief Foundation in close coordination with the Municipality and Water Directorate, are being conducted in parallel to the delivery of an itinerant Community Health & Hygiene Awareness-Raising Campaign.

The campaign seeks to improve water storage methods, sanitation practices, and personal and food hygiene to reduce the incidence of water-related illnesses, infections and diseases particularly among children and elderly.

This initiative is undertaken under the EU-funded programme 'Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development', implemented by UNDP in partnership with UN-Habitat.



## Community-driven rehabilitation of Al-Yarmouk park in conflict-affected Mosul



**Mosul, 26 January 2020** - Following an intensive community consultation process and widely attended participatory design sessions hosted by Mosul Municipality last November, in mid-January 2020 UN-Habitat launched the first physical intervention of the planned two-year rehabilitation of Al-Yarmouk Park, located in West Mosul.

The transformation of Al-Yarmouk Park has the potential to become the core of a wide range of public initiatives, sport activities, environmental actions, art events and recreation that will benefit all Mosul citizens and will play a crucial role in the creation of socio-economic value, improved health and quality of life, as well as an unique opportunity to

enhance social inclusion, cohesion and peacebuilding in an area that was deeply affected by the recent conflict. The proposed rehabilitation works have started with the repair of the boundary wall and its fence, and will include the construction of two sports courts, intensive planting and revegetation, the creation of new walkways and a running track, the installation of several playgrounds for children and youth, picnic pavilions, seating areas, kiosks, an amenities for disabled.

The project will also contribute to improving the livelihoods of people living in Sikak, Matahah, Maghreb and Yarmouk, as community members – including women – will be employed for rehabilitation activities to be implemented through NGOs and local



contractors.

This initiative is undertaken under the EU-funded programme 'Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development', implemented by UNDP in partnership with UN-Habitat, in close coordination with Mosul Municipality.



## Enhancing co-existence in Erbil

**Erbil, 28 January 2019** - UNHCR, in cooperation with KRG authorities and partners, has opened Sharistan Public Park in Qushtappa Sub District in Erbil. The event was attended by Mr. Ibrahim Shekhhat, the Mayor of Erbil District; and Mr. Rabar Salih, the Mayor of Qushtappa.

Through cooperation and support by UNHCR, the Municipality was able to reopen the park after it went through rehabilitation, maintenance and installation of new facilities, lights, a children's area, walkways, an irrigation system and wooden benches.

This project aims at enhancing co-existence, and providing the local community and refugees and displaced with a green space where they can interact, their children can play and the park may contribute to greening the environment.



## The Kurdistan Region of Iraq to develop Vision 2030 supported by UNDP

**Erbil, 03 February 2020** – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's Ministry of Planning, in order to provide strategic guidance and technical support for the development of KRG Vision 2030. Held in Erbil on 03 February 2020, the signing reaffirms the Region's commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Minister of Planning at the Kurdistan Regional Government, Dr. Dara Rashid Mahmud, said: "The people of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq have been through a lot in the past years. They deserve a better life and upgraded social, economic and environmental conditions. We are confident that our strategic partnership with UNDP will provide us with the necessary tools and means to achieve sustainable development in a way that meets the aspirations of our people."

Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq, Ms. Zena Ali Ahmed, said: "The global Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development emphasizes that no one should be left behind. This is precisely what we are working to achieve in Iraq by this expanded partnership with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The

foundations for this work were established through our earlier cooperation, including the previous support to KRG Vision 2020. Only through sustainable development will the Region and Iraq realize sustainable peace and justice."

The MoU provides a framework for cooperation to implement and monitor progress towards the SDGs in the Kurdistan Region, as part of broader efforts to achieve the SDGs in Iraq. It focuses on strengthening the institutional and analytical capacity of relevant stakeholders, including to

meet the challenges of transitioning from a crisis to a sustainable development context.

Vision 2030 will be aligned with the new Government Programme 2019-2023, addressing reforms, service delivery, freedoms, democracy and coexistence, economy and finance, among other priorities.

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Detailed information about the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs can be found at [www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org](http://www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org)



## IOM Iraq, in coordination with Basra's Chamber of Commerce, organized an orientation session for business owners who have received Enterprise Development Fund grants

**Basra, 3 February 2020** - IOM Iraq, in coordination with Basra's Chamber of Commerce, organized an orientation session on 3 February for business owners who have received Enterprise Development Fund (EDF) grants.

They were given information about compliance with Iraqi labour laws and the sector's required standards.

"I have learned about the Iraqi labour laws that can support and protect local businesses and employment," said Asa'd. He runs a carpentry workshop in Basra that employs six people, including three recent hires through the EDF. "This session has also provided us with useful information on labor rights, and health and safety in the workplace," he added.

From September 2018 to February 2020, a total of 1,457 new job opportunities were created in Iraq

through the EDF, including 38 in Basra. The EDF project is supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

It contributes to economic recovery and private sector development in Iraq through tailored support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).



## Duhok to establish first solar energy park

**Duhok, 04 February 2020** –Duhok will soon have its first solar energy park in a major step towards becoming a low-carbon governorate, setting an example on sustainable renewable energy to follow in Iraq. On 04 February 2020, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a letter of agreement with the Governorate of Duhok to establish a pilot solar park that will provide a minimum of two megawatts of electricity within two years. The European Union (EU) provided US\$2 million of funding for this project under the UNDP programme “Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development.”

Governor of Duhok, Mr. Farhad Atrushi, said: “Our commitment to take climate action, deliver affordable, clean energy to the citizens and address electricity shortages remains as strong as ever. Under the Duhok Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), we pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Establishing the first solar park in Duhok will contribute to achieving this goal and meet the needs of the market. We are grateful to the EU and UNDP for helping to make this happen. We look forward to purposeful partnerships with the private sector for green energy for present and future generations.”

Duhok experiences serious deficits in electricity and has over 1000 electricity generators that are causing chronic air



and noise pollution. According to the Sustainable Energy Action Plan that was developed under the Local Area Development Programme (LADP II), Duhok foresees the installation of solar parks to provide up to 40 megawatts of clean electricity by 2030.

Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Iraq, H.E. Ambassador Martin Huth, said: “This intervention will not only improve access to energy for the population in Duhok Governorate but will also ensure that this energy is green. In Europe, we are strongly determined to tackle climate change and succeed in our recently launched green deal, becoming the world’s first climate-neutral continent by 2050. And I am delighted that we are able to support KRI in its own sustainable energy deal”.

Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq, Ms. Zena Ali-Ahmad, said: “We are encouraged by the Governorate of Duhok’s commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and providing green

energy to its citizens. Establishing a solar park will stimulate the economy through private sector investments, create more jobs in green economy, and above all reduce pollution. The project will represent the first introduction of solar energy supply on such a scale in Iraq.”

The programme Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development aims at contributing to the stability and socio-economic development of Iraq by enhancing democratic governance at the local level. It is working to improve the ability of selected governorates to efficiently manage local government and public services. Economic growth and job creation are prioritized, with a focus on green projects, involving youth and women, in addition to enhancing the living conditions of returnees and in conflict affected areas.

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The programme fact sheet can be downloaded at <https://bit.ly/2Wlw17e>.

## Community consultation for the rehabilitation of damaged houses in Mosul through a programme funded by the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the ‘Madad Fund’

**Mosul, 6 February 2020** - Currently in Mosul, UN-Habitat is working together with the Municipality of Mosul to launch activities to strengthen resilience of returnees and local authorities and help them recover from the conflict.

To ensure voices of community members, including women and youth, are heard and reflected in the programme implementation, UN-Habitat conducted community consultation sessions on 5 and 6 February 2020.

The purpose of the sessions were to prepare for launching the first phase of the rehabilitation of 147 houses with major and severe damages in Al Shifaa neighbourhood in Mosul.

This initiative is undertaken under the programme titled “Strengthening the Long-Term Resilience of Subnational

Authorities in countries affected by the Syrian and Iraqi Crises” funded by the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the ‘Madad Fund’. In addition to rehabilitation of war-damaged houses, the programme will

include the rehabilitation of the water network with the objective of providing clean drinking water to vulnerable families in Al Shifaa and Zanjili neighbourhoods in the conflict-affected Mosul.



## Bagera farmers market going strong

**Dohuk, 9 February 2020** - After nearly 5 months since the opening of the Bagera farmers market, UNESCO Iraq office is happy to announce that the market is going strong with a huge amount of support from the urban residents of Dohuk. The residents are quickly finding the Bagera farmers market “the place” to find all of their locally grown and manufactured wares. Weekly there are 18 regular vendors selling their wonderful products. “This is a great achievement, they’re doing a wonderful job of developing and growing the farmers market” said Paolo Fontani, UNESCO Representative in Iraq.

There is a permanent venue being prepared now, where the farmers market will be more secure and will have the ability to prosper and flourish. There are plans to replicate this model

of the farmers market in other regions of Kurdistan.

“I’m very happy to see that the market is progressing!” said Jwan, a frequent



shopper at the market. “The community has benefited a lot; I think this should be implemented in other areas as well”.

The farmers market has been a wonderful success and has provided a great practical aspect to UNESCO’s original cottage industries agricultural program piloted earlier in the year that saw 15 women farmers complete a 6-month program covering: back yard gardening and community farming, marketing, logistics, packing and labeling, developing a business plan, applying innovative practices, process innovative practices, process horticultural products, project based learning.

The initiative is funded by the European Union with support from the Directorate of Agriculture and UNESCO.

## Mosul at the World Urban Forum

**Abu Dhabi, UAE, 11 February 2020** - How can local governments attract and harness resources to implement community-led public spaces initiatives? With the support of EU Delegation in Iraq, Mosul Municipality hosted World Urban Forum 10 Side Event - “Making Places for All: Community-driven rehabilitation of open-air public spaces in the Arab Region”, with interventions from Mosul in Iraq, Mina in Lebanon and South

Sinai in Egypt. Mr. Sabri Abdullah of Mosul Municipality described the challenges of clearing the streets of Mosul from the war debris, repairing its basic infrastructure and rehabilitating its gardens and parks, in a context where public spaces have an important role in social reconciliation and job creation.

The challenges of defining what are the key cultural elements that need to be considered during the reconstruction of the Old City of Mosul were discussed by Mr. Sabri Abdalla of Mosul Municipality at the #WUF10 event “Culture, the creative industry and their impact on urban recovery and resilience”. The panel is constituted by a diverse set of planners, prominent cultural experts and post-conflict recovery practitioners from Africa, Latin America and Central Asia.

These activities were facilitated by UN Habitat Iraq.



## Innovation and job creation in Sulaymaniyah

**Sulaymaniyah, 11 February 2020** - IOM granted seed funding to young entrepreneurs to launch their tech businesses during #StartupDemoDay. IOM recognizes the private sector is an engine for growth thus places it at the forefront of its strategy to support recovery and development in Iraq. This activity was supported by Five One Labs, GIZ and Asiaccell.



## UNHCR Iraq continues to provide legal support to IDPs

Erbil, 12 February 2020 - "I am happy with the birth of my son and I have a birth certificate for him with the help of the UNHCR and all I ask my son to live a better life than our current life in the future," says Mohammed, who lives in one of the Iraqi IDP camps in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

The UNHCR has provided legal aid through its partners to thousands of displaced Iraqi families, including assistance in obtaining documents and documents, either because of their lack of earlier issue or loss as a result of the crisis.



## CMC and UNESCO discuss rural access to ICTs

Baghdad, 13 February 2020 - Iraqi Media and Communication Commission held a meeting with UNESCO to discuss a project aiming at providing access to information and communication technologies to rural areas in the country. The initiative aims to establish 18 ICTs centers for rural communities in Iraqi

governorates as a component of the Iraqi vision 2030 for Digital Inclusion.

The project, supported by CMC, is part of the CMC "DUM strategy" that was developed in 2018 with support from UNESCO Iraq Office.

CMC and Cellphones operators will support the task and UNESCO will lend its expertise to the project.



## UN-Habitat values voices of the communities!

Baghdad, 17 February 2020 - Consultations with community representatives of Sinjar Municipality, including women, men, youth and government officials, have been concluded on 12 February 2020, as part of the larger series of consultations being conducted by UN-Habitat Iraq in Erbil, Mosul, Sinjar, Dohuk and Sumel. Community representatives have expressed their needs, expectations and opinions and these voices will be incorporated in the upcoming rehabilitation of war-damaged houses and water infrastructure across the five municipalities. In Sinjar, 200 houses

with major and severe damages will be rehabilitated in the neighborhoods of Al Shuhadaa, Rozh Halat, Krtk, Weran Shar and Al Nasir. This initiative, which also includes the connection of rehabilitated houses to an upgraded water networks is undertaken under the programme titled "Strengthening the Long-Term Resilience of Subnational Authorities in countries affected by the Syrian and Iraqi Crises" funded by the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the 'Madad Fund'.

People who live in the target communities know what they need the

most and consequently, UN-Habitat continues to engage target beneficiaries throughout the planning and implementation stages.



## The Ministry of Planning launches the National Youth Employment Programme in Najaf

Najaf, 18 February 2020 - The Ministry of Planning has launched a programme to develop the competencies of young men and women in Najaf Governorate. The national initiative aims to provide 120,000 job opportunities for the Iraqi youth, in partnership with the private sector.

The conference was organized under the patronage of H.E. the Minister of Planning, Dr Nuri Sabah Al-Dulaimi. The Governor of Najaf, Mr. Louay Al-Yasiri and the Country Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

(FAO), Dr. Salah Hajj Hassan were in attendance along with women members of the House of Representatives, and public and private sector representatives.

In his welcoming address, H.E. Dr Sabah revealed the Ministry's collaborative endeavors with the private sector to create job opportunities through soft loans from the Central Bank of Iraq, and private and external banks. He called attention to the prominent role of Iraqi youth during recent demonstrations, which has motivated the formulation of this

programme. H.E. also called on national and international entities to support joint initiatives with the private sector in an effort to enable Iraqi youth to meaningfully engage as active citizens in support of the country's development.

During the conference, Mr. Luay Al-Yasiri, Governor of Najaf stressed on the importance of this programme as a valuable investment in the capabilities of young people to build Iraq, pointing out that the pioneering ideas of the youth in general and Najaf in particular can leave a positive impact

## The Ministry of Planning launches the National Youth Employment Programme in Najaf *(continued)*

on society and advance economic reality. On behalf of FAO, Dr Salah ElHajj Hassan expressed FAO's appreciation of the efforts that will help Iraqi youth secure jobs. "This programme will contribute to securing opportunities for local and rural development, and thus the development of the Iraqi economy as a whole. The project will also expand cooperation among different sectors that will help create a suitable environment for investments in addition to raising the efficiency of national capacities and knowledge in various fields," explained Dr. ElHajj Hassan.

"These efforts will guarantee greater opportunities for success in agriculture, encourage the participation of young people and foster women's participation in rural development," added Dr. ElHajj Hassan. He also highlighted the importance of linking this initiative



with the ongoing transformation of agriculture from sectorial to services for the protection of local food production, which was initiated by his Excellency the Minister of Agriculture. He also confirmed that FAO is committed to supporting the Government in agricultural projects, Dr. Ismail Al-Aboudi, Coordinator of

the National Youth Employment Project, emphasized that the objectives of these efforts are aimed at developing the private sector through medium-sized projects, providing job opportunities, addressing discontinued activities and strengthening the partnership led by the Ministry of Planning with the private sector.

## UNFPA Iraq launches its new country programme document 2020-2024



**Baghdad, 20 February 2020** – The Government of Iraq, represented by the Ministry of Planning, and UNFPA launched the Fund's third Country Programme Document (CPD) for 2020-2024, at the Ministry of Planning's premises on 20 February 2020.

The CPD, which was developed in collaboration with the Government of Iraq, United Nations agencies, human rights institutions and civil society organizations, is in harmony with the country's priorities as outlined in the Iraq Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Iraq National Development Plan (2018-2022) and the Iraq Vision 2030. It also focuses on the four outcomes of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Iraq (2020 -2024).

Through this CPD, UNFPA will work to strengthen national capacity for the provision of high-quality integrated sexual and reproductive health services, especially for the most vulnerable populations. The efforts will be directed towards increasing the national capacity for creating demand of reproductive health services, including the request for information to enable the population to make informed decisions related to their sexual and reproductive health. The next five years, will ensure that young people have the skills and ammunition to exercise leadership and participate in sustaining peace as per UNSC resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace or Security. Furthermore, UNFPA with donors and partners will help improve the capacity of the government, human

rights institutions, local civil society organizations and communities to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, including in humanitarian settings. Moreover, the partnership with the government, academic, experts, and the civil society will aim at improving the national population data systems for better availability, analysis and creation of evidence-based programmes.

Speaking at the event, his Excellency Minister of Planning, Dr Nouri Al-Dulaimi said: "Country programmes documents have contributed to preparing and building the capacities of Iraqis in many ways. The support received in providing integrated services and access to information, in empowering young people to exercise leadership and participation in development projects at the national and local levels, in reducing and addressing gender-based violence, and in providing technical support to improving data and data collection to draft people-centred policies and strategies in line with the goals of sustainable development 2030.

"We look forward today to continue our partnership with UNFPA within the framework of its new CPD for 2020-2024 which will be the stepping stone to enhance and strengthen population dynamics in Iraq," he added.

On his part, UNFPA Representative,

## UNFPA Iraq launches its new country programme document 2020-2024 (continued)

Dr Oluremi Sogunro, said: “This third country programme tells the story of the long history of cooperation between UNFPA and the Government and People of Iraq. We look forward to this new era of work where we will strive to strengthen national capacities, in particular of health systems and woman machineries, to address emerging development and humanitarian needs, and to ensure that no one is left behind.”

“Women and girls count; their rights

are inherent to them, are owed to them; and if we invest in them, the world and all of the 17 sustainable development goals will advance forward rapidly as a result,” he continued.

The ceremony, which was attended by Dr Ali Shukri, Senior Advisory to the President of the Republic, representatives of key ministries and government entities, Governors, partners and civil society members, was preceded by a signing of a memorandum of understanding

between the Ministry of Planning and UNFPA for the disbursement of IQD 6 billion from the Government of Iraq to UNFPA support to the 2020 Population and Housing Census.

The event will be followed by a stakeholder meeting on 23-24 February where UNFPA will develop with donors and key partners the implementation framework of the country programme document to serve more efficiently the population of Iraq.

## The Government of Iraq allocates IQD 6 Billion (US\$ 5 Million) to UNFPA for the 2020 Census

**Baghdad, 20 February 2020** – The Ministry of Planning will contribute IQD 6 billion (US\$ 5 million) to UNFPA in support of the technical and procurements requirements for the Census.

On 20 February, the Minister of Planning, Dr Nouri Sabah Al-Dulaimi, on behalf of the Government of Iraq, and UNFPA Representative in Iraq, Dr Oluremi Sogunro, signed today a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between both parties as part of US\$ 17.2 million allocated for the technical requirements and expertise needed for the implementation of the 2020 Housing and Population Census.

“This memorandum of understanding is part the Ministry of Planning’s strategy to unite national and international efforts towards ensuring that the Census is executed on time and in line with its developmental goals,” said Dr Al-Dulaimi, adding that the Census will provide accurate data which will enable the Government to put in place evidence-based policies to improve the livelihoods of the Iraqi citizens and move forward towards achieve



sustainable development in Iraq.

The Minister thanked UNFPA for its continuous efforts and support to the Ministry of Planning’s projects in Iraq, commending the valuable partnership.

Dr Sogunro expressed his gratitude for the Government’s trust in UNFPA: “We thank the Minister for his trust and today we reiterate our commitment to

continue the provision of all the technical expertise, as well as human resources and procurement needed for the success of the census.”

“UNFPA has always called for people-centred and evidence-based policies and strategies, therefore, we believe that the success of this census is imperative for the future of Iraq,” he concluded.

## Dutch delegation visits Fallujah with UNDP

**Baghdad, 24 February 2020** - Mr. Tsjearnd Hoekstra, Chargé d’Affaires of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Iraq, joined UNDP team in Fallujah to visit some of the critical infrastructure rehabilitated with the Dutch support and those still in need of investment to return to pre-ISIL capacities.

Since 2016, UNDP has completed more than 160 projects in Fallujah to help facilitate the return of those displaced by ISIL conflict and improve access to services for those who remained.

UNDP thanks The Netherlands for its commitment to Iraq Stabilization.





## FAO establishes a joint framework for the development of agricultural sector in Iraq

**Baghdad, 23 February 2020** – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in partnership with the Ministries of Planning, Agriculture, Health and Environment and Water Resources establish a multi-sectoral platform for the planning, implementation and follow up of agriculture, water and environment programmes and policies in Iraq. The initiative will improve coordination among stakeholders for planning and implementation of programs aiming at enhancing the socio-economic status of farming communities according to national priorities and plans.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Maher Hamad Johan, Technical Deputy Minister of Planning, Dr. Jassim Al-Falahee, Technical Deputy Minister of Health and Environment, Dr. Mahdi Al-Kaissy, Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture and Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq. Also in attendance was Mrs. Meaad Hatto, Assistant Director General of Planning and Follow-up for the Ministry of Water Resources in addition to a large number of specialists from the four ministries.

In his welcoming notes, Dr. Johan emphasized the importance of reviving the agricultural sector to be a leader in Iraq's economy and maximize its contribution to national production; he also commended the effectiveness of FAO Representation in Iraq in supporting the agricultural sector.

During the meeting, Dr. Al-Falahee highlighted the importance of supporting coordination between the different stakeholders, and the role



played by the Ministry of Environment as a national coordinator to increase the resilience of Iraqi society and its ability to withstand climate shocks. He also extended his appreciation to FAO and the Ministry of Planning for embracing this framework for joint cooperation.

Dr. Al-Kaissy stated that Iraq's agriculture sector has mitigated unemployment in the country during years of instability, despite the fact that the oil sector constitutes the highest percentage of domestic production among economic sectors in Iraq. He also praised FAO interventions in the agricultural sector that have improved self-sufficiency, particularly the promotion of fish farming.

Mrs. Hatto indicated that the Ministry of Water Resources has prepared a strategy for water and land resources, which represents a road map for the development of water resources and infrastructure up to 2035, this strategy, will ensure water security and meet food security, energy and

environmental protection demands. He added that the current state of the water sector would result in a deficiency in meeting the water needs of the agricultural sector, amounting to about 11 billion cubic meters annually, which constitutes a threat to stability and civil peace.

Dr. ElHajj Hassan stressed on the importance of establishing a joint framework through an effective, innovative and sustainable mechanism for coordinating the development of the agricultural sector in Iraq. This framework will guarantee optimal investment of resources in supporting sustainable agriculture growth to achieve food security, employment generation and climate change resilience.

The meeting concluded with an agreement to examine the priorities of each ministry in detail and align the plan with the strategic plans of each ministry in addition to setting a date for the next meeting to agree on each priorities according to each ministry's vision.

## Hospitals and bridges: Major sites re-open in Ramadi highlighting city's recovery



**Baghdad, 25 February 2020** –The Government of Iraq re-opened two

major infrastructure projects in Ramadi following their rehabilitation

by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The re-opening of Ramadi Maternity Hospital and the Palestine Bridge marks a significant moment for the recovery of the city after years of ISIL occupation.

Ramadi Maternity Hospital is a large, 260 bed, modern medical facility – one that will provide over 400,000 women in Anbar with specialized maternity services. As the only such facility in Anbar, the hospital will serve women from areas as far away as Heet, Haditha, Anah, Rawa and Al Qaim. UNDP carried out major work at the hospital, including the rehabilitation of operating theatres, labour wards, water

## Hospitals and bridges: Major sites re-open in Ramadi highlighting city's recovery *(continued)*

and electrical systems and doctor's accommodation.

"Today marks an important day for Ramadi. After many difficult years, this great city is back on its feet. Access to healthcare is one of the foundations of strong societies, and UNDP is proud to be working to improve health services across the areas that suffered under ISIL with the support of our generous donors", says UNDP's Resident Representative in Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad.

The rehabilitation of the hospital was funded through a significant contribution by the Federal Republic of Germany, through KfW Development Bank.

"On behalf of the German Government KfW Development Bank is proud to finance a host of projects in Iraq. Projects range from the rehabilitation of basic and critical infrastructure including hospitals, electricity, roads and bridges, to support for small and

medium enterprises and assistance to livelihoods", said KfW Country Director, Dr. Anna-Christine Janke.

The nearby Palestine Bridge also suffered extensive damage during the battle to dislodge ISIL, and several of its parts were either partially damaged or completely destroyed. As the largest bridge in Anbar, it spans over 500m and measures three lanes wide on each side. The complex rehabilitation of the bridge was undertaken by UNDP, beginning in 2018.

"Bridges don't just connect roads; they connect people and communities. This bridge serves as critical passageway for residents of Ramadi and an integral gateway to Greater Anbar. UNDP's commitment to restoring these vital pieces of infrastructure is clear, with 11 bridges across Anbar now completed", adds Ms. Ali Ahmad.

At the request of the Government of Iraq, UNDP established the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) in June



2015 to facilitate the return of displaced Iraqis, lay the groundwork for reconstruction and recovery, and safeguard against the resurgence of violence. Based on priorities identified by the Government of Iraq, FFS helps quickly repair essential public infrastructure, boosts the capacity of local government, provides short-term employment opportunities and helps to build cohesive communities.

To date, UNDP's Funding Facility has completed more than 2,300 projects in key critical areas of Anbar, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Kirkuk and Ninewa.

## Directorate of Planning in the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources and FAO discuss veterinary services in Kurdistan Region



**Erbil, 27 February 2020** – The Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources-Directorate of Planning in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), has held a consultation meeting on improving animal health services. The objective of the meeting was to discuss FAO programs and support to strengthen national veterinary institutions as a key instrument for enhancing rural livelihoods.

Speaking on behalf of the Ministry, Dr. Ghazi Faeq Haji, Director General of Planning, stated that FAO programs in the KRG are of great importance to the agriculture and livestock sectors. He also expressed the Ministry's readiness

for increased collaboration with FAO on vaccination campaigns to control Endemic and Cross-Border Epidemics that negatively affect animal production in the country.

Moreover, Dr. Haji praised FAO's role in supporting disease surveillance especially that livestock vaccination campaigns have been limited in KRG due to financial crises. He also stressed on the importance of mutual coordination to include other stakeholders and donors.

FAO's Country Representative for Iraq, Dr. Salah ElHajj Hassan commended the Government of Kurdistan for taking the initiative in organizing this meeting. He informed the meeting that FAO received funding from US Defense

Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) to control and reduce the international movement of animal diseases threatening livestock production, food security and nutrition, food safety and health and the environment in Iraq and KRG. He expressed FAO's commitment to strengthen the capacity of veterinary services to detect, diagnose and report highly pathogenic animal diseases.

Dr. ElHajj Hassan also highlighted that FAO supports the Kurdistan Region initiative to move forward with sustainable growth that ensure agriculture and rural livelihoods improvement, poverty reduction as well as build resilience to climate change through institutional capacity building. The DTRA project targets three governorates; Duhok, Nineveh and Anbar, and will strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of Iraqi veterinary services for effective surveillance and control of zoonotic and transboundary diseases in order to protect livestock from losses and reduce serious threats to human health and safety.

The meeting was attended by specialists from the Veterinary and Research Departments of the Ministry and Senior Officials from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Iraq.

## Property and land dispute cases in Ninewa Governorate are being peacefully solved through mediation

**Baghdad, 27 February 2020** - Outstanding result of over 80% of cases registered to solve property and land disputes in Hamdanyia and Telkeif districts of Ninewa Governorate have been successfully solved through mediation process, facilitating reconciliation and peacebuilding in the region.

UN-Habitat, in partnership with Caritas Czech Republic, implemented an initiative in these two districts titled "Mediation and Peaceful Resolution of Housing, Land and Property Disputes", which ran from July 2019 to February 2020.

During the closing ceremony on 20 February 2020 in Hamdanyia to mark the successful completion of the initiative, Mr. Muslim Qazimi, UN-Habitat's Housing, Land and Property Rights Coordinator, thanked local authorities for "their support and trust throughout the process that have contributed to build valuable institutional knowledge and capacity in mediation and social cohesion in communities where mediation was not a practice in the past."

Targeting housing, land and property disputes, and with a special focus on the support to ethnic and religious minorities, mediation is one of the most

innovative mechanisms in Iraq that aims at empowering members of the community to solve their conflicts in an amicable way.

For the first time in Iraq, 14 young people, including 6 females, from the local communities have successfully completed a specialized training on alternative mechanisms of conflict resolution also known as mediation based on international standards and became certified Community Mediators. As a result of the successful training and despite the challenges that mediators faced while working on diverse property dispute cases, the achievements were remarkable and the positive impact in the communities is evident with 286 out of 343 received cases solved with support from the project.

During the ceremony, the Community Mediators shared their stories and challenges faced throughout the process, describing the difficulty to explain the new mediation approach to the community members as the hardest part. Another big challenge for them at the beginning was to explain how peaceful resolution of conflict works, what are their roles when addressing a dispute, and what are the benefit for all involved parties. Female Mediators were also concerned about how the community

would perceive them, with some even worried that their own families would not be supportive.

"The professional training that we received improved my self-confidence and communication skills. It also helped me to be more courageous. As a result, I knew how to deal with challenges during cases applying the knowledge and skills acquired from the amazing international mediator who trained us," said Saly Mattu Bham, one of the 14 Community Mediators.

Both male and female Mediators worked closely to address any gender-related perceptions and show that they were all working as equals in a team. As for the families, they are all now the Mediators' main supporters.

The achievements of the Community Mediators are even more valuable knowing that they were addressing complicated cases in very heterogenous communities, while they themselves come from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Trained to apply international standards on mediation, and along with very clear principles of neutrality and impartiality, Community Mediators have in a short time earned people's trust, which allowed them to address conflicts that could not be solved through other channels.

### Security Sector Reform

## IOM Iraq partnered with Yale Law School's Center for Global Legal Challenges to study the effects of IOM's Community Policing Programme

**Baghdad, 25 February 2020** - IOM Iraq partnered with Yale Law School's Center for Global Legal Challenges to study the effects of IOM's Community Policing Programme, aimed at improving safety and security by building trust and cooperation between Iraqi civilians and law enforcement institutions. This study includes two waves of a door-to-door household survey conducted before and after the implementation of the Community Policing Program in three communities: Baradiyah (Basra governorate), Hamdaniyah (Ninewa), and Jubeil (Anbar). The baseline survey, of 911 respondents, was conducted in July 2019.

The study includes data from household surveys of random samples of Iraqi citizens conducted before and after the implementation of the CP Program in three communities; the communities vary significantly in their

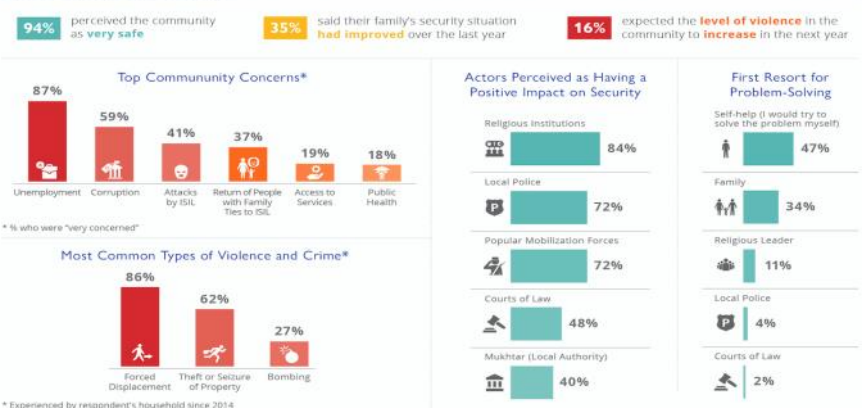
geographical locations, demographic compositions, and exposure to the recent conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

As Iraq's Interior Ministry works with IOM to integrate community policing methods throughout the state security

apparatus, this study offers lessons learned about the effects of the CP Program in diverse contexts.

In Hamdaniyah, 57% of survey respondents would not allow a female family member to report a problem to the police on her own.

#### PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY



## Denmark grants additional USD 4.4 million for explosive hazard management in retaken areas of Iraq

**Baghdad, 15 January 2020** – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of DKK 29.5 million (over USD 4.4 million) from the Government of Denmark to further enable stabilization and humanitarian efforts through explosive hazard management in retaken areas of Iraq. With this contribution UNMAS will be able to better support the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of displaced communities, as well as permit rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts to proceed. UNMAS in Iraq is working closely with the United Nations system and the Government of Iraq to enable humanitarian and stabilization efforts by providing survey and clearance activities of explosive hazards. As part of its response to the mine action needs of the country, UNMAS also undertakes risk education initiatives targeting vulnerable women, men, and children who live in retaken areas. This ensures that local citizens are informed of the dangers posed by explosive hazards, and are aware of suspicious items. In addition, UNMAS also works with the Government of Iraq to provide technical support to the Ministry of Interior and national mine action authorities with trainings on Explosive

Ordnance Disposal/Improvised Explosive Device Disposal and Explosive Hazard First Responder. In connection with the Danish support, the Danish Foreign Minister, Jeppe Kofod, stated: "Denmark has been a long-time supporter for UNMAS and their important work in Iraq. It is my hope that the additional Danish support will facilitate the return of IDPs to areas previously taken by ISIL and help to stabilise Iraq. Denmark remains committed to the long-term stabilisation efforts in Iraq." "Through its continuous support and close collaboration with UNMAS, the Government of Denmark is helping to

reduce the threat posed by explosive hazards, including improvised explosive devices, to the Iraqi people, thereby enhancing community safety and facilitating the return of displaced people to their homes," said Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Senior Programme Manager.

The Government of Denmark is an essential contributor to UNMAS explosive hazard management activities in Iraq. This latest contribution brings to DKK 148 million (more than USD 22 million) the total amount of funds donated since 2016. Additional donations are planned for 2020 and 2021.



## UNMAS dedicated to the national capacity enhancement

**Baghdad, 17 January 2020** - One of UNMAS Iraq's national Associate Programme Support Officers, Ruaa, recently participated in the 'Leadership for Programme Support and Administrative Functions' training course in Turin, Italy.

The course was first composed of diverse webinars on the UN leadership framework, emotional intelligence as well as leadership behaviour and culture. Different sessions were then organized for the 30 participants of the second part of the course, including exercises on leadership styles, self-assessment and core values, among others.

"This course helped me to understand how to develop my self-leadership skills and how to apply a design-thinking approach in my day-to-day work [...] It taught me new approaches to manage issues and helped me to think outside of the box. I also learnt how to engage with my team members and colleagues

to bolster their efficiency and help them to engage more openly with the management team." said Ruaa.

UNMAS Iraq would like to thank Italy

for hosting this training course as well as Germany, the European Union and the Czech Republic for their support to capacity enhancement activities.

### Leadership Skills for Programme Support and Admin Functions



UN Campus - Turin | 27-29 November 2019

## Swedish diplomats visit Mosul



**Mosul, 18 January 2020** - UNMAS, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), recently hosted a Swedish delegation

comprising the Ambassador of Sweden to Iraq, Mr. Lars Ronnås, and the Counsellor of Development Cooperation at the Embassy of Sweden in Iraq, Mr.

Christoffer Burnett-Cargill, to Mosul. Sites visited included an UNMAS risk education session at a local school, the Al Shifa Hospital Complex, where Da'esh was once headquartered, and an UNMAS clearance site in the Al Maedan district, among others.

The delegation received an extensive briefing on current activities and were able to see mechanical assets and search and clearance teams at work. This was followed by an update on rehabilitation works from UNDP representatives.

UNMAS would like to thank the Kingdom of Sweden for its continuous effort in facilitating safe environments for vulnerable communities and enabling stabilization and humanitarian initiatives in Iraq.

## UNMAS informs French diplomats on their activities in Iraq

**Baghdad, 19 January 2020** - Last week, Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Senior Programme Manager, met with two representatives from the French Embassy in Baghdad, Mr. Patrick Laberche, Internal Security Attaché and Ms. Chloé Baudreux, Political Advisor.

This meeting was an opportunity to give an overview on UNMAS Iraq activities to Ms. Baudreux, who recently started her position and who will support stabilization efforts, including mine action initiatives funded by the Government of France. Mr. Lodhammar emphasized the challenges the clearance teams face in an urban environment and explained how the programme is focusing more on national capacity through training and technical support.



The French government continues to support UNMAS Iraq and has recently contributed an additional EUR 600,000

to explosive hazard management activities in the country. Thank you France!

## UNMAS organized the workshop focused on integrating gender in risk education activities

**Baghdad, 18 January 2020** - UNMAS recently held a three-day workshop for 12 staff members of the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) aimed at supporting the Risk Education and Media Department with the tools and knowledge required for enhancing its monitoring and evaluation in a gender-responsive manner.

The workshop focused on integrating gender in risk education activities, ensuring that the needs of girls, boys, women, and men are taken into consideration.

Commenting on the workshop, Rana Sherwanee, Head of DMA's Risk Education and Media department, said: "This was a crucial workshop as it

focused on developing media and risk education activities to ensure that all activities are conducted in a gender-responsive manner. We will work to incorporate these new tools in our

activities for the year 2020."

UNMAS would like to thank DMA for their efforts and cooperation in facilitating explosive hazard management activities in Iraq.



## France renews its commitment to enabling safe returns in retaken areas of Iraq through explosive hazard management

**Baghdad, 26 January 2020** - The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) welcomes an additional contribution of EUR 600,000 (approximately USD 670,000) from the Government of France dedicated to explosive hazard management activities that aim at enabling returns in retaken areas of Iraq.

The presence of explosive hazards, including improvised explosive devices in areas retaken from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Daesh, will continue to impede security and stability efforts until they are cleared and rendered safe. Explosive hazards are not only blocking reconstruction efforts in retaken areas but also deterring people from returning home, particularly in areas affected by intense or prolonged military action. More than 1.4 million civilians are still displaced in Iraq due to the recent conflict and unsafe conditions to allow their return.

The Government of Iraq maintains explosive hazard management capacities within a number of government entities and established mine action authorities, though the demand for assistance exceeds the resources available. With this additional contribution from the Government of France, UNMAS will further develop a nationally-led response to the threat of explosive

hazards, including the provision of explosive hazard management in areas prioritized for stabilization and humanitarian response, technical advice to national and regional authorities as well as risk education.

All projects implemented by UNMAS Iraq are gender mainstreamed and promote gender equality. Among other measures, the programme introduced in 2019 mixed search and clearance teams in Sinjar. This initiative is a step closer to empowering women in mine action and is facilitated by the government of France.

Commenting on the contribution, the French Ambassador to Iraq, M. Bruno Aubert said: « France considers the clearance of retaken areas as a priority to ensure that the right conditions are

in place for displaced persons to return home. We want to renew our commitment to the Iraqi population regarding this essential matter and support the excellent work of UNMAS in Iraq »

“France is supporting explosive hazard management activities conducted by UNMAS Iraq for the second year. Clearance is still a critical step before any rehabilitation work can take place, and enables the safe, dignified and voluntary return of displaced communities. Such outcomes are only possible thanks to the generous contributions of donor countries and UNMAS Iraq is very grateful for the support provided by the Government of France.” stated M. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Senior Programme Manager.



## UNMAS discuss with the representatives of the Ministry of Health and Environment its activities

**Baghdad, 28 January 2020** - UNMAS Senior Programme Manager, Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, recently met with the Iraqi Minister of Health and Environment (MoHE), Dr. Jaafar Allawi, the Deputy Minister of MoHE, Dr. Jassim Al-Falahi, and the Director-General of the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA), Dr. Khalid Rashad to discuss tasking and coordination mechanisms between the Government of Iraq and UNMAS.

During the meeting, Mr. Lodhammar provided updates on the current status of UNMAS activities in country, as well as future projects. In addition, Mr. Lodhammar provided an overview of the funding landscape in Iraq as of the new year and discussed a possible contribution from the Iraqi government to the mine action sector in the near future.

UNMAS Iraq would like to thank the MoHE and DMA for their commitment to creating an environment free from

explosive hazards and enabling the safe, dignified and voluntary return of displaced communities.



## The Federal Republic of Germany provides additional contribution to UNMAS explosive hazard management activities



**Baghdad, 29 January 2020** – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of EUR 2 million (approximately USD 2.2 million) from the Federal Republic of Germany for the survey and clearance of explosive hazards in support of humanitarian and stabilization initiatives.

The conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq has resulted in complex and extensive explosive hazard contamination and displaced 5.8 million of people since 2014. Explosive hazards present a significant risk for individuals returning to their communities, as well as those providing the initial response, especially in urban areas where explosive items are buried in rubble and debris from collapsed buildings. The continued threat of destabilization

is significantly heightened through the presence of explosive hazards, particularly in residential and rural communities. This ensures that a continued de facto battle continues, resulting in lives lost with no enemy in sight. The legacy of ISIL will continue to live on as long as explosive hazards are scattered in houses, neighbourhoods and across communities, posing a threat to citizens set on rebuilding their lives post-ISIL occupation.

With contribution from the Federal Republic of Germany, UNMAS, through its national and international implementing partners, will continue to work to mitigate the threat posed by explosive hazards through explosive hazard management activities. This is not exclusive to clearance only; it also means that risk education is comprehensively integrated to

maximize the impact on communities. This contribution from the Germany will significantly further support UNMAS explosive hazard management activities in Iraq, enabling the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) as well as a secure environment for returnees. Commenting on the contribution, Mr. Heiko Maas, German Foreign minister, said: “Without demining, life cannot return. UNMAS’ de-mining and training activities are a crucial contribution to efforts of the Iraqi government and the international community to enable IDPs to return to their homes. We are proud to support them. UNMAS creates corridors for peace. In order to keep these corridor open, Germany remains committed to the stabilization of areas liberated from Daesh.”

“As our largest donor, the Government of Germany has been pivotal to enabling and supporting UNMAS explosive hazard management activities throughout Iraq. In Fallujah, Kirkuk, Mosul, Ramadi, and Sinjar, schools, hospitals, bridges, water treatment plants etc. have been cleared to enable rehabilitation works by the Government of Iraq and other humanitarian actors. In some villages, critical infrastructure has been cleared so that families can resume their livelihoods without fear of encountering explosive hazards”, said Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Senior Programme Manager.

## Belgium, Italy and Slovakia contribute to humanitarian clearance in Iraq

**Baghdad, 5 February 2020** – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is continuing its life-saving work in Iraq. UNMAS is grateful for the support it received from three generous donors. The Governments of Belgium (USD 1.6 million), Italy (USD 784,000) and the Slovak Republic (USD 18,750), donated more than USD 2.4 million to ensure that explosive hazard management, training and technical support and risk education activities will advance in 2020.

The presence of explosive hazards, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in areas retaken from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Da’esh, continues to endanger the lives of women, men, girls and boys and hinder the return of the 1.4 million people who are still

unable to go home.

Belgium, Italy and Slovakia recognize that the work of UNMAS is necessary to achieve lasting stability in Iraq. As the United Nations launches the “decade of action” to realize the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the path-clearing

work of deminers leads the way for all development in the country. Creating a safe environment enables people to return home, move freely and make productive use of their land.

Mr. Vanden Bulcke, Ambassador of Belgium to Iraq, said: “After Iraq declared victory against Da’esh in 2017,



## Belgium, Italy and Slovakia contribute to humanitarian clearance in Iraq (continued)

everyone discovered with dismay the exact level of contamination left by the terrorist group in the regions they occupied. The priority of clearing the contaminated rumbles, houses and infrastructures became of national interest for Iraq. By supporting the work of UNMAS in mine risk education, clearance and capacity building, Belgium wants to guarantee with its share safe grounds to start reconstructing the country and help the population come back to their houses and their land.”

Mr. Michele Morana, Director of AICS Jordan and Iraq, stated: “The appalling extent of mine-contamination in Iraq, is still producing dreadful consequences

on the health and livelihood of the conflict affected communities. Therefore, Italy remains fully engaged in pursuing the objective of a mine free Iraq and in supporting UNMAS endeavour toward such goal”.

Mr. Lubomir Macko, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic in Beirut, added: “Watching the dramatic events unfolding in today's Iraq we should not forget that many of its people still suffer from the consequences of the conflicts, the main phase of which is already over. Unexploded mines and explosive hazards continue to claim victims among civilians who want to return to their homes and rebuild their lives there. That is why UNMAS's work

in Iraq is extremely important and I am glad that the Slovak Republic could support it by a financial contribution. Iraq is one of the main recipients of Slovak humanitarian aid.”

“Explosive hazards are found everywhere: in infrastructure, schools, hospitals, homes and under bridges. These deadly items not only hinder reconstruction and stabilization efforts, but also impede the return of displaced communities to some kind of normal life. That is why UNMAS work in Iraq remains critical and we are very grateful for the support received by Belgium, Italy and Slovakia.” said Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Senior Programme Manager in Iraq.

## “International legal instruments on women's rights and gender in Mine Action” workshop held in Baghdad

**Baghdad, 8 February 2020** - The Gender Unit of the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) recently gathered at the UNMAS office in Baghdad for a mini-workshop. During the workshop, UNMAS Gender Specialists, Ms. Vaz, and Ms. Almalaki delivered training on International Legal Instruments on Women's Rights and Gender in Mine Action. A presentation by the DMA Head of Gender Unit, Ms. Muntaha, on the role of her team as well as a participatory group discussion on designing a first Action Plan for the Gender Unit were also part of the agenda.

The Action Plan will serve as the vehicle for mainstreaming gender through DMA departments, raising awareness, and developing the capacity



of technical teams. It will also support the implementation of the Gender in Mine Action Guidelines 2019 that are translated and being published in Arabic.

The next steps will be the finalization of the Action Plan, and the

development of the Gender in Mine Action Workshop scheduled for the end of February in Baghdad.

UNMAS would like to take this opportunity to thank the government of Canada for its support to gender mainstreaming activities in Iraq.

## Finish delegation visited Mosul; informed about UNMAS activities

**Mosul, 9 February 2020** - UNMAS Iraq recently hosted a Finnish delegation comprising the Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Finland in Iraq, Mr. Kim Kuivalainen, and the First Secretary of Consular and Administrative Affairs, Ms. Maija Miettinen-Timko, to Mosul.

Sites visited included the Al Shifa Hospital Complex, the former headquarters of Da'esh in Mosul, where thousands of explosive hazards were found. In addition, delegates were able to attend an interactive risk education session for children living in adjacent neighborhoods, as well as visit an active UNMAS clearance site nearby.

At the site, visitors received an extensive briefing on current activities and were able to see mechanical assets and search and clearance teams at

work. They were also able to meet the local commander of the Civil Defense in Ninewa, who works in coordination with UNMAS to respond to critical public and residential contamination.

This visit comes after an introduction meeting in Baghdad, where UNMAS Head of Programme Section, Ms.

Fadwa Benbarek, introduced UNMAS to representatives from the Finnish Embassy.

UNMAS would like to thank the Government of Finland for its support in facilitating mine action activities, particularly risk education initiatives, in Iraq.





## UNMAS Iraq consultations with the Directorate for Mine Action

**Baghdad, 21 February 2020** – UNMAS Iraq visited today the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA). During the visit delegation discussed with hosts support to DMA in developing the national mine action strategy and national mine action standards, provide the special courses for capacity building and how to develop the appropriate plans to attract donors on the topic of victim assistance in coordination with the relevant ministries.



### Healthcare

## “Prevention is better than cure” - delivery of a Child Accident Prevention awareness-raising campaign in Yathrib

**Baghdad, 11 January 2020** - In parallel to the ongoing reconstruction of



the heavily damaged Emergency Unit of the main Medical Centre in Yathrib, Salah al Din governorate, UN-Habitat has successfully delivered in late December 2019 a Child Accident Prevention Awareness-Raising Campaign through its implementing partner RIRP.

The interactive and itinerant sessions were designed by professional medical trainers to cover the most common causes of domestic and outdoor injuries, fractures, disabilities and fatalities that

occur in rural areas such as Yathrib. Over 300 children, teenagers and mothers learned how to avoid electric shocks, burn, traffic accidents, drowning, falls and poisoning, and 250 households have received a small First Aid Kit.

This initiative was undertaken under the EU-funded programme ‘Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development’, implemented by UNDP in partnership with UN-Habitat.

## WHO visits Al Jumhury Teaching Hospital in Erbil to assess its capacity and preparedness for the influenza season

**Erbil, 12 January 2020** - Technical teams from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health in Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRG-I) visited on 12 Jan the WHO supported Isolation Unit in Al Jumhury Teaching Hospital in Erbil Governorate. The visit came to assess the preparedness of the facility and its Isolation Unit capacity to accommodate the seasonal influenza cases which have increased with the decrease of temperature in the region.

As of 12 January, this year, seven H1N1 cases were reported positive by the facility including three deaths identified as one from Mosul, one Syrian Refugee, and one from the hosting community. “I had a fruitful meeting with His Excellency the Minister of Health in KRG on 12 Jan and was pleased to accompany him in a field visit to Al Jumhury Teaching Hospital to evaluate the facility preparedness to deal with the scale up in cases of influenza in the governorate,” said Dr Adham Rashad Ismail Abdel Moniem, WHO Representative in Iraq. “WHO stands



ready to support the Ministry of Health in KRG and build the national health capacities on early detection and response to communicable diseases including all types of seasonal pandemics,” Dr Abdel Moniem Added. Al Jumhury Teaching Hospital is the only secondary health care facility serving the population of Erbil of approximately 940,000 in addition to 222,162 Internally Displaced Population (IDPs) and 124,182 Syrian refugees.

The Isolation Unit in the hospital is one of four units established with the support of WHO in Iraq during the

H1N1 Influenza pandemic in 2009. The other 3 units were established in Baghdad, Ninewa, and Basra governorates within the same period.

WHO has previously supported through a comprehensive provision of medical equipment and supplies in addition to a wide-ranged training program for Erbil Directorate of Health staff as part of the preparedness plan to respond to the influenza pandemic emergency in the region in 2009.

The 10-bed Unit is currently used to treat communicable diseases such as measles, hemorrhagic fever, hepatitis C cases, and many others.

## WHO/MOH-KRG joint program planning for 2019-2020 discussed in Erbil



**Erbil, 12 January 2020** - WHO Iraq technical team lead by WHO Iraq Representative, Dr. Adham Rashad Ismail, held a meeting with Health Minister of KRG-Iraq in Erbil. Meeting aimed at discussing progress in the WHO/MOH-KRG joint program planning 2019-2020 agreed on last year. A set of recommendations were made for both sides action.

## WHO Iraq levels up the delivery of specialized health services for persons with disabilities in conflict-affected governorates

**Mosul, 26 January 2020** –Five years of conflict in Iraq has significantly affected more than 5 million Iraqis who, at one point in time, have left their areas of origin to safer shelters in different parts of the country. Approximately half a million civilians have incurred some level of injury while a few thousand lost one part or more of their bodies.

In 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO)- in collaboration with the national health authorities, partners, and donors- has widened the range of specialized health services for the people with physical disabilities to ensure their easy access to physiotherapy and psychosocial support programs, especially the Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

The endeavor also included motivating the inclusion, participation, and leadership of this vulnerable group in the 2030 Development Agenda.

“WHO, national counterparts and other partners are working hand in hand to ensure that people with disability all over Iraq enjoy fair and easy access to rehabilitation services, assistive technologies, and vocational training to improve their functioning and independence and foster their contribution to social life,” said Dr. Adham R. Ismail Abdel Moneim, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq.

In November 2019, WHO conducted an assessment in Talafar and Sinjar districts of Ninawa Governorate to investigate the flow of WHO supported physical rehabilitation and mental health services in the health facilities serving the communities there.

Hiba, Mohamed, and Hussain- three physical rehabilitation technicians delivering specialized services in the Rehabilitation Unit in Talafar General Hospital- receive a daily average of 20 patients. “Patients are referred to us by

the specialized orthopedic surgeon in the hospital. All referrals require different physical therapies,” explained Mohamed. “We are very grateful to WHO for availing such services for Talafar people. Many here are returnees. We still need additional good equipment and physiotherapy machines to deliver better services,” said Mohamed.

Sabah Khalil from Telafar District told WHO “This is my 3rd treatment session in the facility, my case is improving, though very slow” he said. “But, having this level of physical services available in the district hospital saved us a lot of efforts to travel to the main city for similar care,” Khalil added thanking WHO and its project implementing partner Cordiad for availing this type of services in Telafar General Hospital. Sinjar Hospital, on the other hand, has two big prefabs serving as the Physical Rehabilitation Unit. They were crowded with patients the day of the visit. “We request that WHO and its partners consider giving us a bigger space and better equipment to accommodate the increasing demand for the rehabilitation services in Sinjar Hospital,” said Hassan Amer, a rehabilitation technician with over 15

years of service in Sinjar health facility. We also met with Noria Kamal, a 62-year-old Yazidi woman who shared with us the hard experience of her family’s displacement to Duhok more than four years ago; she is happy to have finally returned to Sinjar. She expressed satisfaction with the medical team and the quality of services provided by the unit. “The staff are very polite and do their job properly,” she said. “But more of such services is still needed especially for old people like me,” she commented.

In 2018, WHO received generous contributions from ECHO, USAID-OFDA, and the Italian Agency for Development Corporation to support the provision of physical and mental health rehabilitation services in Ninewa Governorate. The contribution enabled WHO to address major gaps with effective and sustainable solutions like supporting the rehabilitation centers and providing prosthetics and assistive devices to war-affected people. “It is a collective responsibility to support the persons with disability and drive efforts to boost their inclusion and active participation in community activities to success,” concluded Dr. Abdel Moneim.



## WHO Iraq supported Erbil East Emergency Hospital with a shipment of medical equipment

**Erbil, 30 January 2020** – WHO Iraq supported Erbil East Emergency Hospital with a shipment of medical equipment like bedside tables and patients monitors as part of a consignment of mechanical beds and other supplies delivered to the hospital in November 2019. Shipment is funded by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and State Department Population, Refugees, and Migration Bureau.



## Iraqi Minister of health meets WHO Director-General

**Geneva, 5 February 2020** - Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, met with Iraqi Health Minister, Jaafar Allawi. They discussed ways for WHO to provide support to promote health and serve the vulnerable in Iraq, and noted that conflict in Iraq is affecting the health system and its restructuring.



## WHO provided professional training on statistical analysis

**Baghdad, 12 February 2020** - In line with the comprehensive HIS assessment recommendations, WHO Iraq with the support of MOH trained 21 participants on statistical analysis using SPSS, and established a team to apply statistical analysis to strengthen research capacity to generate decision making evidence



## COVID-19 related consultations held in Baghdad

**Baghdad, 16 February 2020** - WHO Iraq participated today at the scientific symposium organized by the Ministry of Health of Iraq on COVID-19. WHO informed about the measures taken to prevent and control the transmission of COVID-19 infection in cooperation with the ministries of health in Baghdad and KRG.

Part of these measures was activating the thermal cameras at all border crossings and equipping health departments with awareness publications.

WHO also conducted trainings on case definition and management,

community awareness and risk communication during emergencies and epidemics.

WHO Iraq also supported the Central Public Health Lab in Baghdad with a consignment of PPEs.



## WHO hands over a new batch of ambulances to strengthen referral pathway in IDPs and Returnee governorates in Kurdistan Region of Iraq

**Erbil, 17 February 2020** - The World Health Organization (WHO) today handed over a new batch of fully equipped ambulances to the Ministry of Health in Kurdistan Region of Iraq to support the needs of the internally displaced population (IDPs) and hosting community here.

This second batch of 8 ambulances is part of a consignment of 20 fully equipped ambulances procured in 2019 with funds from the US Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) to be distributed to directorates of health in Ninewa, Duhok, Kirkuk, Sala Alddin, Anbar, Erbil, Baghdad, and Sulymania.

Earlier in June 2019, the first batch of 10 ambulances was distributed to provide uninterrupted referral services in 4 governorates of Sala Alddin, Duhok, Erbil and Ninewa.

“The recent conflict in Iraq have impacted the health system and resulted in the destruction and damage of hundreds of ambulances,” said Dr.



Adham Rashad Ismail Abdel Moneim WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq.

“WHO and the local health authorities have identified the problem and proceeded with the deployment of a network of new ambulances equipped with basic as well as advanced medical technology to support service delivery in areas of IDPs and returnees in Kurdistan Region and rest of Iraq. The new donated ambulances will surely save more lives and strengthen the provision of referral and ambulatory services in the country” Dr. Abdel Moneim added.

The IDPs and returnees resettling back in under-recovery areas face difficulties in accessing referral services including the disruption in the referral pathway, using privately rented vehicles without any medical assistance, the long delays at the security checkpoints, and the out-of-pocket expenses.

To date, WHO has donated a network of ambulances to support directorates of health in Ninewa, Duhok, Kirkuk, Sala Alddin, Anbar, Erbil, Baghdad and Sulymania to transport both emergencies and trauma patients to health facilities.

The procurement of the latest shipment of ambulances was made possible with the generous funding from the US Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). An average of 1200 to 1500 patients a month are expected to benefit from this service in each targeted location.

However, WHO would like to express its gratitude to the generous contributions from OFDA and the European Commission Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) for their continuous support to avail primary and secondary health care for IDPs, returnees and host community in Iraq.

## Physical Rehabilitation Services Center for IDPs and hosting community in Duhok inaugurated

**Duhok, 18 February 2020** - The Representative of WHO Iraq and Director General of Duhok Department of Health today inaugurated the WHO supported Physical Rehabilitation Services Center for IDPs and hosting community in Duhok Governorate of Kurdistan Region-Iraq. The Center is run by WHO partner NGO Heevie with funds provided by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.



## Restoring critical healthcare services to East Mosul

**Mosul, 20 February 2020** – The newly-rehabilitated Al Shifa Surgical Center was officially opened by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Iraq today. The surgical center will serve as the primary medical facility for approximately 800,000 people across East Mosul.

This major project included rehabilitating inpatient wards with 24 beds for men and women, two full operating theatres, two intensive care units, and a number of examination and sterilization rooms. A new oxygen generator building will provide high-quality oxygen supply to the whole hospital and can refill oxygen bottles to meet external demand. The facility was rehabilitated with financial support from The Government of The Netherlands.

The Governor of Ninewa, His Excellency Najim Abdullah al-Juboori was joined by UNDP Resident Representative in Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmed, to mark the occasion.

“The Al Shifa Surgical Center is a well-equipped, modern medical facility – one that will provide a huge number of Moslawis with the quality healthcare services they so deserve,” said Ms. Ali Ahmed, Resident Representative of

UNDP Iraq.

“Access to healthcare is one of the foundations of strong societies and UNDP is proud to be working to improve healthcare access across the areas that suffered under ISIL,” added Ms. Ali Ahmed.

Governor of Ninewa, His Excellency Najim Abdullah al-Juboori, noted that “Whilst healthcare facilities in Mosul were providing quality services for many years, the destruction caused by ISIL has resulted in Moslawis having to seek treatment in other governorates.”

“Now, as many doctors return to the city, and with the support of UNDP to reconstruct critical public healthcare

facilities, services will become more affordable and accessible to Moslawis in need.”

The surgical center is a satellite facility of the Al Shifa Hospital Complex, which was used as a Headquarters by ISIL during the occupation of Mosul. The hospital complex was cleared of over 2,000 explosive items in 2017, with the support of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS).

UNDP is working across the liberated governorates of Iraq to improve healthcare services. As a result, 1.8 million people now have better access to healthcare services through the rehabilitation of hospitals and primary healthcare centers.

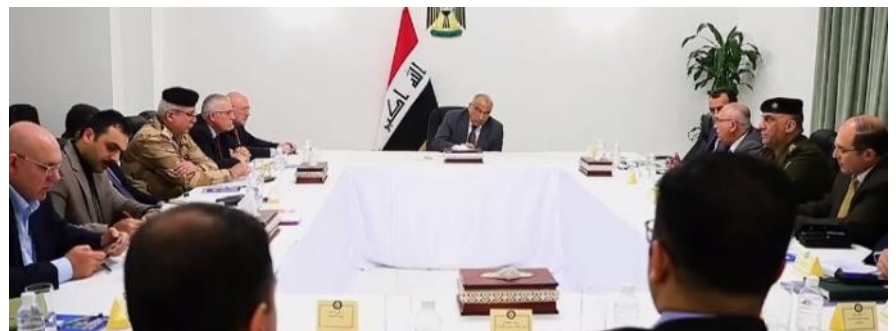


## Office of the Prime Minister of Iraq approved the proposals submitted by WHO Iraq

**Baghdad, 23 February 2020** – During the 5th session of the 55 Committee headed by the Prime Minister and in the presence of the Minister of health, Office of the Prime Minister of Iraq approved the proposals submitted by WHO Iraq representative Dr. Adham Ismail, regarding the necessity of providing the basic requirements to deal with COVID-19. Dr. Adham also showed the epidemiological situation of the Virus in the Eastern Mediterranean countries and the level of cooperation and

support provided by WHO Iraq to supplement the efforts of the Iraqi

government and the Ministry of Health in dealing with COVID-19.



## WHO delivers COVID-19 awareness materials to the most distant points all over Iraq

**Baghdad, 25 February 2020** - Thanks to the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance WHO Iraq has been able to deliver COVID-19 awareness materials to the most distant points all over Iraq with the support of the central Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Health of the Kurdistan Region. Various influential pages have also contributed to their dissemination of awareness

content on social media.

Medical teams from Iraqi Ministry of Health and KRG Ministry of Health continued holding awareness seminars in schools, IDP camps Primary health centers in many governorates, relying on the materials provided by WHO Iraq to raise awareness on COVID-19, thanks to the funds provided by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.



## Ramadi Maternity Hospital opened

**Ramadi, 25 February 2020** – The inauguration ceremony of the Ramadi Maternity Hospital was held today.

“Works included the rehabilitation of operating theatres, labour wards, water and electrical systems, providing over 400,000 women in Anbar with the quality maternity services they so deserve”, said UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Zena Ali Ahmed, in her opening speech during the inauguration ceremony.

Women from all across Anbar now have access to high-quality specialist health services. This major rehabilitation was made possible through the generous support of KfW FZ.



## Culture

### Director of UNESCO Iraq, met with the Minister of culture, Deputy Minister of higher education, representatives from the EU, Department of antiquities of Mosul and Basra and the Sunni Waqf

**Baghdad, 23 January 2020** - Mr. Paolo Fontani, Director of UNESCO Iraq, met with the Minister of Culture, Mr. Abdulameer Al-Hamdani, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Mr. Hamid Ahmad, representatives from the EU, Department of Antiquities of Mosul and Basra and the Sunni Waqf to discuss the ongoing UNESCO projects in Iraq.

Mr Fontani presented the work that UNESCO has been doing in Mosul including rubble removal and demining of the Al Nuri Mosque, stabilization measures and documentation and preservation of architectural remains. He emphasized that UNESCO is looking for a broader consensus among the local population and authorities regarding the future reconstruction model of the Mosque and Minaret.

Moreover, during the meeting, the plan of operation for the EU funded project Reviving Mosul and Basra old cities was agreed. The European Union has committed 20 million Euros to promote

social cohesion and preserve cultural heritage in Iraq through the restoration and reconstruction of historic urban landscapes in the old cities of Mosul and Basra. The project will be implemented within the framework of the Revive the Spirit of Mosul flagship initiative launched by UNESCO in February 2018. In addition to the rehabilitation of the old cities of Mosul and Basra, the project will focus on skills development and job creation to promote social cohesion and community reconciliation as well as on the revival of the cultural life by promoting books

and literature, art and artists and cultural events. UNESCO will work closely with civil society and local communities, the Iraqi national and local authorities, notably the Ministry of Culture, the religious endowments offices, the Governorates of Nineveh and Basra on implementing various activities.

UNESCO will work closely with Iraqi authorities on the selection of historical houses in the city of Basra and Mosul that will be reconstructed in order to preserve Iraq's unique cultural heritage.



### UNESCO Iraq Representative met the UAE Minister of Culture

**Abu Dhabi, 29 January 2020** - As part of "Revive the Spirit of Mosul" Initiative, H.E. Noura Al Kaabi, Minister of Culture of the United Arab Emirates, met with UNESCO representative in Iraq, Mr. Paolo Fontani, to discuss the ongoing activities taking place at the iconic Al-Nouri Mosque in the old city of Mosul. The UNESCO team presented progress

that is currently taking place and outlined the future steps that will be taken towards the reconstruction of heritage sites in Mosul.

UNESCO is committed to preserve Iraq's cultural heritage and works closely with partners to ensure historical monuments are preserved for future generations.



## Culture rises from the ashes in Mosul



**Mosul, 06 February 2020** - Hope branches out as the Mosul Book Forum, with the support of UNESCO and “La Guilde européenne du Raid”, organized its second cultural festival in Mosul, Iraq, entitled “Culture from Ashes” at the end of 2019.

Film producer, writer and director, Bayat was thrilled to see cinema come back to the streets of Mosul during the festival. “This activity has achieved a milestone in the process of reviving the spirit of Mosul. I’m very happy that we were able to get together and take part in this event.” Held in Mosul, a city that has seen its culture destroyed

during three devastating years of conflict, the festival brought together a community of artists to showcase Iraqi films highlighting the power of culture to reconcile people and heal a shattered society. Taking this a step further, the film projections were followed by an exchange on the state of cinema in Mosul and the required tools to develop and provide content that is equivalent to the cultural and historical complexity of the city.

The festival also featured a concert by a Moslawi band that echoed the cultural diversity of the city through its music. The power of music and its impact on

the social fabric of society was tangible in an audience looking to reconnect with its city’s spirit through music.

“The event was amazing!” Said Fahad Mansoor, founder and manager of the Book Forum. “I was very impressed with the outcome. It’s a huge step towards developing and enhancing the cultural life in Mosul”.

The festival is one of many cultural events that will take place in Mosul as part of UNESCO’s flagship initiative “Revive the Spirit of Mosul”, which aims at revitalizing cultural life in Mosul, bringing art, culture and heritage to contribute to the renewal of the city.

Mosul is one of the oldest cities in the world. It is one of the largest cities in Iraq, rich in history, heritage, and culture. In Arabic, the name Mosul means “the one that connects,” this well describes the history of the city. For millennia, Mosul was a strategic crossing point on the Tigris River, connecting north to south, east to west. “Through its initiative Revive the Spirit of Mosul, launched in 2018, UNESCO is working closely with the Iraqi government to protect cultural heritage and preserve the identity of the Iraqi people,” added Paolo Fontani, UNESCO Representative in Iraq.

## UNESCO to begin work at Al-Tahera Church in Mosul

**Mosul, 13 February 2020** - UNESCO will soon start reconstruction of the Syriac Catholic Al-Tahera Church in Mosul, Iraq, that was severely damaged in 2017. More than a church, Al Tahera is a symbol of the diversity that has been the story of Mosul for centuries.

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. It already underwent renovation about 100 years after its construction.

The reconstruction work is quite complex as large parts of its arcades were destroyed, as well as its external walls. In addition to the demolition of the remaining portions of its concrete roof, the early stages of work will require clearing rubble and removing landmines from the 650m2 site. Local contractors, under the supervision of skilled experts, are doing the work.

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”. 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.

Students in the departments of archaeology, architecture and

engineering of the University of Mosul will benefit from taking part in the process of restoration of the landmark buildings.

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; and technical and vocational education.

## In Ninewa, UN partners renew their commitment towards inclusive, equitable education access for all children in Iraq

**Baghdad, 26 January 2020** - To mark UN Education Day, partners from the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), UNESCO, UNICEF and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) visited Al Siraj primary school in Ninewa Governorate, on 25 January. They joined the Ninewa Directorate of Education (DoE), parents, teachers and pupils to renew their commitment to the importance of the right to education.

In a discussion with the school community, the partners thanked the DoE, teachers and volunteer staff, and considered the current challenges facing education in Iraq. Al Siraj primary school opened just two months ago, after the previous school in a nearby location was heavily damaged during the conflict with Da'esh/ISIL.

"Approximately 2.5 million children in Iraq are struggling to find adequate learning opportunities. The needs are particularly dire in former conflict areas where the shortage of safe school buildings and teachers continue to severely hamper children's learning," said Paula Bulancea, UNICEF's Deputy Representative in Iraq.

"Education can have a transformative effect on the life of a child, their community and the development of their country. Investing in education is investing in Iraq's future," she added.

"It is important for us to join efforts and address the loss in human capital witnessed over the last three decades, so that Iraq can benefit from the powerful catalyst effects of education: helping combat poverty and inequality, improving health and wellbeing; and overcoming discrimination," said UNESCO Representative in Iraq Paolo Fontani. "UNESCO remains committed to providing support to the education sector in Iraq, so that every Iraqi child can benefit from their right to learn."

Monitoring conducted by UNAMI's Human Rights Office indicates that



children who were denied education while living in areas formerly controlled by Da'esh/ISIL continue to face barriers accessing education. "In post-conflict Iraq, more efforts are needed to enable every Iraqi child full access to primary and high school education, so that no Iraqi child is left behind," said Danielle Bell, Chief of UNAMI's Human Rights Office. Many did not or will not complete high school. Several challenges specific to this community persist, with children having missed out on years of formal education, insufficient numbers of schools or accelerated learning programs, inadequate teaching hours, movement restrictions and access to civil documentation that enable school enrolment.

This month, WFP in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Ninewa Directorate of Education and partner Human Appeal launched the School Feeding Programme in the district of Tel'afar, distributing fresh meals every day to over 80,000 children, in over 200 schools. 1,200 primary schools across the country will be reached this academic year. The meal is made up of fresh bread, cheese, fruit and water or

fruit juice, to ensure the children have enough energy to start the school day.

"School Feeding can help facilitate access to school, increase enrolment and attendance rates and improve the nutritional status, health and cognitive development of children. In other words, school feeding programmes can help get children into school and stay there. Once children are in the classroom, these programmes help them to get the sufficient nutrition and energy to think, learn and grow," said Abdirahman Meygag, WFP Iraq Representative.

At the end of the event, the schoolchildren planted a circle of greenery and flora in the center of their school ground, to symbolize community, environment, and a positive step towards the future. "A strong sense of community and commitment towards providing better education to our children make a vast difference to the impact of any assistance we deliver," agreed all partners. "We remain committed to promote inclusive and equitable access to education to all children of Iraq."





## A computer learning course held at the Vocational Training Centre in Basra

**Basra, 27 January 2020** - "Every time I apply for a job, I am asked for computer skills and hence my application gets rejected. I can't afford private education, so when I heard about these free trainings I decided to participate in a computer course to improve my skills and increase my chances of getting a job," said Zainab, 24, one of 13 young women who participated in a computer learning course at the Vocational Training Centre in Basra.

"I learned computer principles at the beginning of the course, and now I am starting to learn the basics of Microsoft

Office. It's also an excellent opportunity to meet new friends and learn," Zainab added.

Other training courses such as sewing and designing, hairdressing and cosmetics, and English language are available to an additional 40 students. These courses are part of the Mentorship and Training for Women Empowerment and Female Heads of Households Vocational and IT Education project, implemented by IOM and supported by Mitsubishi Corporation, in collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.



## UNESCO supports help the most vulnerable children with PSS sessions, clothing, textbooks and dignity kits



**Erbil, 28 January 2020** - Yara\* from Salah al-Din. She has been displaced to Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, since the ISIL conflict started. She doesn't remember anything about the ISIL period but remembers her days in Salah al-Din. She remembers when she was younger and she would play by the Tigris with her siblings, and how one time her father took them to Tikrit. She misses her relatives there. Her father encouraged her to study and enrolled her in school. She shared, "I want to study to learn to read and write so that people won't make fun of me. My favorite subject is Arabic language." She shared, "the thing I would enjoy most is to return to my home in Salah al-Din."

While Yara has just started her first year in primary school, she says her wish is to be a doctor one day.

Yara is in one of the schools for IDPs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) where World Vision, in a project that is

being funded by the European Union with a technical support of UNESCO, helps the most vulnerable children with PSS sessions, clothing, textbooks and dignity kits.

Muna\*, 10, originally from Shirqat, a town in west of Tigris in Salah al-Din Governorate, is in the first grade.

She remembered her days in Shirqat and shared, "I would play with my

friends and we would go to the playgrounds. I miss my friends Amira, Banuta, and Bisan. I have friends here, but there are only two. They are my neighbors. My dad encouraged me to come to school so that I learn how to write and read. Our lives wouldn't be good if we are not educated. If we learn to read and write it is better so that if someone doesn't know how to read and write I would explain for them. My mom helps me with my homework and I teach my younger brother. I am most happy when I am with my parents and siblings."

Muna continued "My dream is to live a happy life and that Iraq is beautiful."

Muna is in one of the schools for IDPs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) where World Vision, in a project that is being funded by the European Union with a technical support of UNESCO, helps the most vulnerable children with PSS sessions, clothing, textbooks and dignity kits.

\*Names have been changed to protect identity.



## IOM Iraq has been running creative activities for children and youth of the IDP Camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

**Duhok, 26 January 2020** – Today, IOM Iraq organized a day full of creative activities for young people in Kabarto IDP camp and Sharya community center, both in Duhok Governorate. Drawing, dancing and singing were all on the menu, during a day devoted to the arts — including theatre and painting. Children took part in a drawing exercise that led to the award of prizes for all participants: in the form of toy kangaroos knitted by displaced women who took part in vocational courses provided by IOM. For several months, IOM Iraq has been

running creative activities —drawing, painting, and writing lessons — for children and youth of the IDP Camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. These activities and courses aim to encourage an interest in the arts, the environment and different cultures from around the world. The Australian twist on Sunday's event honoured the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's continued support of this and other social cohesion activities across the country, in collaboration with IOM Iraq.



## Empowering the next generation of learners to Revive the Spirit of Mosul

**Mosul, 31 January 2020** - Bricks and mortar will fill in the holes and bring back historic streetscapes, but the healing of Mosul, Iraq, will only be cemented by education, beginning with the youth of today and those that will come tomorrow.

By rebuilding education from the schoolhouse to the curriculum, UNESCO strives to empower the next generation of learners to build stronger and more resilient societies, so that history does not repeat itself.

Here is what we're doing:

To date, 26 trainers, 743 primary school teachers and managers, and 307 parents have completed UNESCO's Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education training. This project, funded by the Governments of

the Netherlands and Japan, is based on a holistic approach that involves children, teachers, communities,



parents and educational staff in the prevention of extremism.

UNESCO, in partnership with Educate-A-Child, is implementing a project that aims at providing access to quality and inclusive education with gender equality for 150,000 out-of-school children in Iraq.

Working in the field of higher education will also be a key to rebuilding the country and its economy. For example, we are working in cooperation with students in the fields of archaeology, architecture and engineering at the University of Mosul, while in the process of rebuilding Al-Nouri Mosque, Al Saa'a and Al Tahera churches. This will create opportunities for technical and vocational education and on the job training for young professionals.

## IOM Iraq — through the community resource centers — recently led a school campaign which included a variety of recreational activities for children and school support packages

**Baghdad, 3 February 2020** - Education is crucial to enhancing quick recovery and development in conflict-affected areas. In support of returnee families whose children's education was interrupted due to displacement, IOM Iraq — through the community resource centers — recently led a school campaign which included a variety of recreational activities for children and school support packages.

In January, IOM Iraq distributed 270 school bags with stationery for students at the Al-Shams School for Boys and the Al-Shatha School for Girls in Al-Fallujah District, Anbar Governorate. "I am happy with the school year and

enjoying my time with my friends at school. It is nice to have a new bag with stationery; I also got crayons and a

drawing book. I am going to have a great time coloring and drawing," said eight-year-old Abdul Rahman.



## Closing event of the TVET Reform Project (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) in Iraq

**Erbil, 19 February 2020** - Since 2015, the TVET Reform Project (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) has been implemented in partnership with PMAC, MoHESR, MoLSA, MoE and MoP in Iraq and KRG-I with support from the European Union.

After 5 years of cooperation, UNESCO

Iraq office, Vincent-Guillaume Poupeau, Head of EU Liaison Office Erbil and 60 participants from line ministries in Iraq and KRG-I met at Divan hotel in Erbil for a final event organized from 18 to 19 February.

They shared outcomes, results and lessons learnt from their experiences through the project.



## EU Delegation in Iraq and UNESCO Iraq visited Middle Technical University (MTU)



**Baghdad, 20 February 2020** - The EU ambassador, His Excellency Martin Huth, and a delegation from UNESCO

visited Middle Technical University (MTU) and met with students and lecturers.

MTU has been a partner in the EU funded TVET reform project which is delivered by UNESCO.

With funds from the EU, the university recently benefited from the equipping of its careers development center with audio visual aids and other resources.

Ambassador Huth, learned first-hand of the struggles and successes of young people trying to access sustainable employment on graduation.

The Ambassador was impressed by the forward-looking approach of the university and was encouraged by the tenacity and enthusiasm of its graduates.

## UNESCO's work to Revive the Spirit of Mosul starts on the benches of school

**Mosul, 21 February 2020** - Al Ekhlas Primary School has been a fixture in the west side of the Old City of Mosul for nearly 60 years. In 2016, the students and their families saw their dreams of a promising future crumble under the weight of war and destruction.

"I was very young when I studied in Al Ekhlas," said 12-year old Ahmed Mohammed Ali, recalling his days at the school, "and I still can't forget the days we were playing, drawing and studying together. When violent extremists took over Mosul we couldn't go to the school because they were teaching us how to kill others."

Following Mosul's liberation, staff and teachers of Al Ekhlas were hosted by another school in 2017, where teachers worked in shifts to keep at least 400 children in class. The rest of the students, especially girls, were relocated to other schools, but not without consequences. Many students dropped out, largely due to the fact that they had to commute to these schools, and getting there was expensive.

UNESCO's initiative to "Revive the Spirit of Mosul" through education does not only address the infrastructural damage, but also the psychosocial impact that the conflict left on children and young people.

Under the project "Voices of the children of Old Mosul", funded by the Government of Japan, UNESCO is working to rebuild schools and empower teachers in their vital role in building peace in the minds of their students and wider community.

Principal Radhwan Abd Ahmed, recognizes that these efforts are encouraging the displaced to return to their city. But this good news requires action. "These increasing numbers cannot fit in the current schools that are already overcrowded, reaching up to 100 students per classroom. We hope that Al Ekhlas will be built again to give the opportunity to our children and encourage them to go back to school."

UNESCO's objective is to ensure that primary schools, run by the Ministry of Education in Mosul, are safe



environments where students can flourish, learn and engage with each other with care and respect – contributing to the long-term prevention of violence and building tolerance and peaceful co-existence. A first milestone was reached in January 2020 when ARCO, Architecture and Cooperation, completed the design of Al Ekhlas. Students, parents and school administrators contributed their ideas for the design through a consultative process.

## SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert hails work of women journalists at Shifa Gardi International Award ceremony

**Erbil, 22 February 2020** – Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, delivered a speech at the second annual Shifa Gardi International Award, established to honour Gardi's memory by highlighting the talent of female journalists on the front line who "bravely report and bear witness to realities that are often underreported."

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert highlighted the particular challenges women face in the field of journalism – not just by conducting dangerous fieldwork, but by challenging gender-based violations "in a field of work that is still mainly masculine".

Here is the full transcript of her speech (as prepared):

"Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
"I called the truth the truth and unfairness unfairness from the day I was born"  
This was written by the classical Kurdish poet Mahwy, who lived from 1837 to 1909. What was true then remains true today.  
It is a great honor to speak to you at this important occasion to highlight the invaluable contribution of frontline reporting.  
Frontline reporting in times of war is crucial. Crucial to expose the suffering on the ground, to pressure all parties to end the conflict, and to lay the foundations for a better future. The world depends on the truth being told.  
But for the truth to be conveyed...we need people to stand up, we need fearless journalists, we need persistence and determination.  
Telling the truth is a tremendous challenge. And one not necessarily appreciated by everybody.  
In the past decade, over 1,000



journalists were killed worldwide. And now, only two months into 2020, already seven deaths of journalists have been registered. Unacceptable, of course. But it is happening.

As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres rightfully stated on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists:

"When journalists are targeted, societies as a whole pay a price. [...] their work and that of their fallen colleagues reminds us that truth never dies. Neither must our commitment to the fundamental right of freedom of expression."

Ladies and gentlemen, in their review of the year of 2019, the organization Reporters without Borders stated that there is an increasing climate of fear that journalists operate in.

This climate affects all journalists, and female journalists in particular. Like their male colleagues, female journalists face serious human rights violations for practicing their profession. But because they are women, these violations often take specific, gender-based forms, including sexual violence, sexualized smear campaigns and workplace discrimination. In a field of work that is still mainly masculine, women often do not to speak out in fear of retaliation,

as a culture of impunity persists.

In these situations, we depend on courageous individuals who take these risks upon themselves and reveal the truth on the ground.

Individuals like Shifa Gardi. She was a pioneer and, just as important: she was an example for many when she left her desk job to report on the liberation of Mosul. Unfortunately, her drive to uncover the atrocities committed by Daesh led to her early demise. She was killed by an explosive device near a mass grave.

Through this award, her legacy lives on: exposing the truth, and shining a light on the human side of conflict with compassion and candor.

This year's winner of the Shifa Gardi award skillfully walks the fine line between telling the truth and taking risks, by listening to her intuition.

Arwa Damon is brave: she often is the first one at the scene. But more importantly, in her reporting, she consistently reminds us all of the impact that conflict has on ordinary people's lives.

Since 2003, Arwa has covered armed conflict in Iraq and the wider region, telling stories that the world needs to hear. Recently, for instance, she visited families who had been displaced by the fighting in Idlib.

And she makes action follow words. She founded the International Network for Aid, Relief and Assistance. An organization that provides life-saving and life-altering medical assistance to refugee children impacted by war.

The world depends on journalists like Arwa. May she - and her colleagues - not tire in reporting reality on the ground. Her brave reporting, with compassion and candor, bears witness to harsh human realities that are too often underreported. Arwa Damon deserves our greatest respect."

