

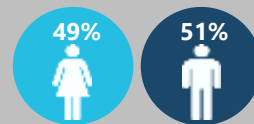


SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Iraq Country Brief March 2021

In Numbers

259,200 people assisted
in March 2021



USD 3.58 million distributed through cash-based transfers

USD 43.1 million six months net funding requirements (May – October 2021)

Operational Context

In Iraq, intermittent conflict continues to aggravate the poverty rate and threaten livelihoods. Following the return process that began in 2018, the situation and needs of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees remain precarious. WFP Iraq’s assistance focuses on saving lives and protecting livelihoods – supporting the Government of Iraq’s social safety nets towards zero hunger. The challenges of rebuilding infrastructure, providing basic services, promoting social cohesion, creating jobs, developing skills, and progressing towards gender equality whilst maintaining security have impeded the country’s efforts to make progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 2: Zero Hunger.

WFP’s Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2020-2024 in Iraq has an all-encompassing goal of supporting the Government of Iraq to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, shifting WFP’s role from implementer to enabler. This is critical in the transitioning from immediate crisis response to greater resilience, and longer-term peace and development. Mainstreaming gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive programming is also key.

The first case of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 was recorded in Iraq in February 2020. Given the ongoing cases reported by the Ministry of Health, and the decision taken by the Iraqi government to limit gatherings, WFP and its partners continue to take additional measures to safeguard the health and wellbeing of people assisted.



Operational Update & COVID-19 Response

- In March, WFP delivered cash and food assistance to 188,921 IDPs and 69,085 refugees, and 1,194 returnees and people from vulnerable communities through resilience building initiatives.
- The COVID-19 situation continues to worsen with reported cases and fatalities on the rise. Curfews and movement restrictions as well as school re-closures across Iraq remain in place. WFP continues assistance to vulnerable households in camps. It was noted that IDPs who had moved back to Sinjar continued to return to camps in Duhok governorate. In the last week of March, 273 people arrived in Duhok IDP camps. Similar movements were observed in Jeddah-5 camp in Ninewa governorate. Local authorities approved their entry into the camps, and WFP reintegrated the households into its monthly food assistance programme through cash-based transfers.
- WFP continues its support to food insecure rural populations through Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) activities, to promote the resilience of smallholder farmers through community assets rehabilitation and capacity strengthening. In Basra, WFP continues resilience building projects in collaboration with the partner Action Against Hunger and the Directorate of Water Resources and Directorate of Agriculture. Partners were selected for new rounds of field level agreements.
- To support economically vulnerable families in urban areas, WFP began preparations for the launch of a new round of Urban Livelihoods activities in 2021, prioritizing those who were directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. These initiatives will support the households to start or expand their small and medium businesses enabling them to generate a sustainable income. The planned locations for these projects are Ninewa, Basra, Thi-Qar and Misan.
- Under the partnership with the Ministry of Trade to digitalize the national Public Distribution System (PDS) for food rations, preparations to launch the “Tamwini” (“My Food Ration”) mobile app across all of Najaf governorate are almost complete. The app will enable people to safely update their data at home. WFP purchased 25,000 smartcards for the first phase of the roll-out to households. These smartcards are enabled with biometrics, for secure registration, and verification when people redeem their entitlements.

Population: **39 million**
(Ministry of Trade, 2019)

Poverty rate: **31.7%** (Ministry of Planning, World Bank, UNICEF, 2020)

2020 Human Development Index:
123 of 189 (lowest)

1.21 million IDPs (IOM)
244,760 Syrian refugees in Iraq (UNHCR)

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Photo Caption: In March, WFP, UNHCR and the World Bank took part in a side-event as part of the fifth Brussels conference on Syria, which this year marked 10 years since the start of the Syrian crisis. Some children have known only a life of displacement, of “outside.” WFP/Mohammed Abbas

Country Strategic Plan (CSP, 1 January 2020–31 December 2024)	
Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions 2020-2024 (in USD)
522 m	179 m
Total Requirements for 2021	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (May – October 2021)
135 m	43.1 m

Strategic Result 1: Access to food (SDG Target 2.1)

Strategic Outcome 1 (SO 1): Crisis-affected people in Iraq, including IDPs and refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises throughout the year

Focus area: Crisis Response

- Activities:**
- Provide unconditional food assistance to IDPs, refugees and other crisis-affected people.

Strategic Result 4: Sustainable food systems (SDG Target 2.4)

Strategic Outcome 2 (SO 2): Targeted communities, including farmers, have enhanced livelihoods and increased resilience to shocks by 2024

Focus area: Resilience building

- Activities:**
- Provide livelihood support, asset creation and climate adaptation activities, including capacity strengthening, to targeted farmers and communities.

Strategic Result 5: Capacity strengthening (SDG Target 17.9)

Strategic Outcome 3 (SO 3): National and subnational institutions have strengthened capacities and systems for targeting and assisting food-insecure vulnerable people by 2024

Focus area: Resilience Building

- Activities:**
- Provide institutional capacity strengthening to government officials and partners.
 - Provide support to government officials and partners in enhancing information technology for managing PDS modernization and in strengthening the safety net component of the government social protection system.

- Following the re-closure of schools in February due to the pandemic, WFP continued door-to-door hygiene and nutrition awareness sessions reaching more than 150 vulnerable families and their children. WFP and its partners also carried out learning activities and games with the children and their parents while distributing hygiene kits and educational stories on hygiene and nutrition to households. In addition, seven focus group discussions with enrolled girls and boys, their parents, headmasters, and girls out of school were conducted in Basra as part of the joint WFP-UNICEF Girls Education Pilot Project.
- On 25 March, WFP participated in the joint side event with the World Bank and UNHCR, co-hosted with Germany and the US, as part of the fifth Brussels Conference on “Supporting the future of Syria and the region” co-chaired by the European Union and United Nations. WFP presented the Syrian refugee response, and the

impact of COVID-19 on food security in Iraq. The conference marked ten years since the start of the Syrian crisis.

- On 31 March, a workshop with the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and Ministry of Trade was held to discuss a joint programme to reform social protection. The workshop and joint programme were the culmination of a consultative process with partners including the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and International Labour Organization (ILO) and will be funded by the European Union. It puts forward an actionable roadmap for 2021-2025 to implement the Government of Iraq’s vision to reform social protection as outlined in the White Paper.
- The social protection workshop participants emphasized that COVID-19 and the associated socio-economic impacts caused sharp increases in poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity in Iraq and highlighted the urgent need to strengthen the social protection system and accelerate reform. The joint programme builds on lessons learned from the Government response to COVID-19 and the new reform vision, including expanding coverage and integrating social protection schemes and services at the strategy, programme, and information management system level. The programme and reform will prioritize the vulnerable and the poor, focusing on children, youth, women, elderly, persons with disability, displaced people, and ensuring their equitable access to social protection and services that enable them to break free from poverty.
- The next steps following the workshop include the development of a workplan for the first two years and the launch of the Social Protection Programme. Additionally, in collaboration with the international partners, the three Ministries will launch a ‘sector coordination mechanism’ to ensure effective collaboration and complementarity with national and international stakeholders.

Monitoring and Assessments

- WFP’s Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping work is ongoing to establish a new online Dashboard and system to effectively support monitoring.
- The [Iraqi Dinar devaluation and the price of the food basket](#) report was published in Arabic. WFP also continues to publish [joint reports](#) with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Bank on the impact of COVID-19 on food security.

Funding and Pipeline update

WFP requires an additional USD 43.1 million to ensure that operations can continue without interruption through October 2021.

Donors

WFP would like to thank all partners for their contributions including Belgium, Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, the Government of Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Switzerland, United States, the World Bank, Private Donors and Individual Donors through ShareTheMeal.