



SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

## WFP Iraq Country Brief December 2020

### 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 on 24 February. 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 are taking additional measures to safeguard the health and wellbeing of people assisted.



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

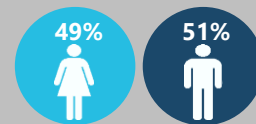
Poverty rate: **22.5%**  
(World Bank, 2017)

2019 Human Development Index:  
**123 of 189** (lowest)

**1.22 million** IDPs (IOM)  
**241,682** Syrian refugees in Iraq (UNHCR)

### In Numbers

**366,517 people assisted**  
in December 2020



**43.98 MT** of in-kind assistance distributed

**USD 3.16 million** distributed through  
cash-based transfers

**USD 36.1 million** six months net funding  
requirements (January – June 2021)

### Operational Update & COVID-19 Response

- In December, WFP reached 227,105 IDPs and 70,796 refugees; and 68,616 returnees and people from vulnerable communities through Food for Assets (FFA), Urban Livelihoods, EMPACT, and monthly food and cash assistance programmes, in 12 governorates.
- As of 31 December, up to 15 IDP camps and informal sites were closed, consolidated or re-classified as informal settlements, with 34,694 individuals departing from these sites. Four IDP camps remained open in federal Iraq at the end of December in Anbar and Ninewa, in addition to the IDP camps in Kurdistan Region. WFP continues to closely monitor the closure of camps and will work in coordination with government and other partners to ensure continued support to IDPs and returnees affected by the closures.
- WFP maintains a stock of locally procured contingency ready-to-eat food packages (Immediate Response Rations) prepositioned in Erbil to help respond to families' emergency food needs when required. Part of the stock will be prepositioned in strategic locations for use when required.
- On 19 December 2020, the Iraqi central bank devalued its currency by about 22% against the US dollar. The central bank reduced the official rate to IQD 1,450 (Iraqi dinar) per US dollar. WFP VAM analyses observed a 14% increase in prices during the first week following the devaluation, while the price of the food basket was 16% higher during the second week in comparison to the week before devaluation.
- WFP's urban livelihoods projects, responding to the loss of employment caused by the COVID-19 crisis, drew to completion in Baghdad, Basra, Ninewa and Wassit. The project assisted more than 11,700 head of households with temporary income and supported the community infrastructure in the targeted areas where hundreds of roads were cleaned, public parks rehabilitated, 100 schools revamped, and service buildings including health centers, an orphanage, a public library and a center for the disabled renewed. WFP continues its work with cooperating partners to complete the ongoing rural livelihoods activities and hand over assets created to the local government and the community members. A call for partnerships for 2021 was launched to select the cooperating partners to scale up and complement FFA interventions.

**Photo Caption:** WFP's urban livelihoods activities launched in August 2020 to support people who have lost their income in urban settings due to COVID-19 related restrictions has reached 11,7000 heads of households in Baghdad, Basra, Ninewa and Wasit. WFP/Khansaa Ghazi

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## Country Strategic Plan (CSP, 1 January 2020–31 December 2024)

Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)
<b>473 m</b>	<b>158 m</b>
Total Requirements for 2021	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (January – June 2021)
<b>95 m</b>	<b>36.1 m</b>

### 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.

- The 2020 roll out of WFP's Empowerment in Action (EMPACT) programme is at its final stage where 415 participants engage in the hybrid advance and Microwork, which supports income generation in various online international platforms. Plans are underway for a new cohort for 2021 aiming to potentially include over 2,300 participants.
- Discussions between WFP and the Ministry of Trade (MoT), Ministry of Interior (MoI) and Council of Ministers continued as part of the planning for the integration of the various ministries' databases. WFP will also proceed with the roll out of the Tamwini mobile application in Najaf in the first quarter of 2021.

- Following the reopening of schools at the end of November 2020, WFP and the Ministry of Education resumed on 20 January the school feeding (SF) programme which has been suspended since March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- WFP and UNICEF continued preparations for the kick-off of the joint unconditional cash transfer programme in support of the transition of schoolgirls from primary to lower secondary school expected to commence in early 2021.
- In late December, WFP published a new school seeding survey report, in partnership with UNICEF on the perceptions of parents about their children returning to school. The report revealed that around 94% of parents interviewed preferred their children to learn in-person in school, 92% confirmed their support to sending children back to school as schools re-opened; while a majority (60%) preferred their children to return straight away.
- In early December, WFP held information sessions for its cooperating partners on conflict sensitivity in WFP's operations, outlining requirements for partners in carrying out operations with WFP. The sessions outlined WFP's view of conflict sensitivity, clarifying the purpose of WFP's focus on the conflict sensitive approach to its programming and explaining the importance of its integration into cooperating partners' project design.
- A telephone survey to assess the potential for WFP's School Feeding programme to have wider positive impacts on social cohesion was conducted amongst almost 900 respondents, including Headmasters and teachers of all schools in Al-Ba'aj, Ninewa, Daquq and Kirkuk where SF is implemented in two districts. Parents of beneficiary children as well as community members were also interviewed. The outcomes of the survey are expected at the end of January 2021.

## Monitoring and Assessments

- WFP's Hunger Monitoring System found that around 3.3 million people, representing 8.5 percent of the total population, had insufficient levels of food consumption (30 December), an increase of around 700,000 individuals compared to the previous month. Meanwhile, the number of households using crisis or above crisis-level food-based coping mechanisms increased, reaching 11.2 percent in comparison to 12 percent on 31 November. The most common coping strategies remained relying on less expensive food or borrowing to meet food needs.

## Funding and Pipeline update

- WFP requires an additional USD 36.1 million to ensure that operations can continue without interruption through June 2021.

## Donors

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