

UNAMI Herald

Volume 6, Issue 1

January — February 2019



الأمم المتحدة - العراق
United Nations Iraq

Women's Advisory Group on Reconciliation and Politics in Iraq inaugurated in Baghdad

Baghdad, 24 January 2019 – The Women's Advisory Group (WAG) on Reconciliation and Politics, which was established in October 2018 with the support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), was officially inaugurated today in Baghdad.

The Group is expected to lobby for the advancement of women's role in politics and making their voices heard. Women continue to be underrepresented and remain excluded from political and decision-making processes in Iraq despite their active role in society. The Group comprises 22 members who have been selected in their individual capacities for their skills and experience. They include human rights defenders, media experts, former politicians and civil society activists, and represent a variety of interests, political backgrounds and regions.

In her remarks, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG) Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert urged the Government to recognise that broad societal representation in shaping the future of Iraq is necessary to ensure sustainable peace, security and prosperity for all of Iraq's citizens.

"At present, the inclusion of women and their direct participation in senior decision-making positions remains very limited. We are yet to see wom-



en being elected to some of the leading positions; for example, Governors or Chairs of Provincial Councils and let's not forget a male-dominated Cabinet," stressed SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert.

She urged Iraq's senior political leadership, including the government, parliamentary committees, civil society partners and other stakeholders to join UNAMI in drawing on the expertise of the Women's Advisory Group.

She further called on men interested in becoming male champions in the fight for gender equality to work closely with UNAMI and the Wom-

en's Advisory Group to design the necessary frameworks for women's inclusion in decision-making structures.

Speaking on behalf of the Women's Advisory Group, Bushra Alubaidi, a lawyer and human rights activists, highlighted that "participation of women in reconciliation and decision-making in state institutions remains limited in Iraq, despite the fact that the country has adopted national and international frameworks empowering women and ensuring women's meaningful role in society and the state. The current Council of Ministers is constituted of men only, and it is a rare practice that governmental entities would consult women's groups on policy decisions and frameworks," said Ms. Alubaidi.

Participants included the Second Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Mr. Bashir Haddad, the Prime Minister's Advisor on Reconciliation, Mohammed Salman, the Director-General of the Women's Empowerment Directorate at the Council of Ministers, Dr. Ibtisam Aziz, the head of the Sunni Endowment, Dr. Abdulateef Al-Humeim, Parliamentarians and Members of Provincial Councils, government officials, members of the Judiciary, members of the diplomatic community, as well as civil society activists and academics.



In this edition ...

Briefing to the Security Council by SRSG for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, on the situation concerning Iraq

New York, 13 February 2019 – The United Nations Security Council deliberated situation concerning Iraq at its 8462nd meeting. Here is the text (as prepared) of the briefing to the Security Council by SRSG for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert ... *More on page 3*

Despite falling attacks, ISIL terrorists remain 'global threat': UN report

New York, 11 February 2019 - Though attacks were down last year, a new United Nations report to the Security Council on Monday shows that ISIL is still a global threat, despite evolving into a "covert" terrorism network, with countries continuing to face challenges from the growing scourge of violent extremism.

"Despite the more concealed or locally embedded activities of ISIL cells, its central leadership retains an influence and maintains an intent to generate internationally-directed attacks and thereby still plays an important role in advancing the group's objectives," explained Vladimir Voronkov, who heads the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)... *More on page 6*

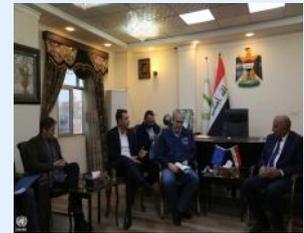


The First Lady of Iraq and the UN SRSG visit the UNFPA-supported Women Shelter in Baghdad

Baghdad, 20 February 2019 – On 20 February, the First Lady of Iraq, HE Sarbagh Salih, the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG), Ms Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the representative of the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Ali Al-Helou, the Political Counsellor at the Canadian Embassy, Mr Andrew Turner, the Director-General of the Women Empowerment Department, Dr Ibtisam Aziz, and the UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Oluremi Sogunro, visited the shelter for women survivors of gender-based violence in Baghdad... *More on page 19*

The European Commissioner visits UNFPA-supported Primary Health Clinic and Women Centre in Mosul

Baghdad, 21 February 2019 – The European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management (ECHO), Mr Christos Stylianides, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium and Minister of Finance and Development Cooperation, Mr Alexander De Croo, visited Hammam Al-Aleel camp for internally displaced persons in Mosul where they visited the UNFPA-supported Primary Health Clinic (PHC) and Women Centre. *More on page 20*



On her first visit to Basra, UN Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert says the UN is committed to assisting the people of Basra

Basra, 18 February 2019 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, paid a visit to Basra to hear firsthand from local officials and civil society their views and concerns regarding the situation in the governorate in southern Iraq. *More on page 9*



Continued winter assistance needed for displaced and vulnerable Iraqis: IOM

Erbil, 15 January 2019 – As winter temperatures set in, accompanied by winds and rain, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq has completed the three-month distribution of 25,000 winter non-food item kits. Consisting of heaters, blankets and jerry cans, the kits meet the most urgent needs of 150,000 vulnerable individuals across the country... *More on page 28*



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

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

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

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

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

Briefing to the Security Council by SRSG for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, on the situation concerning Iraq

New York, 13 February 2019 – The United Nations Security Council deliberated situation concerning Iraq at its 8462nd meeting. Here is the text (as prepared) of the briefing to the Security Council by SRSG for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert:

Mr. President,
Distinguished members of the Security Council,

I am honoured to brief you today for the very first time in my capacity as the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of UNAMI.

As you know, the collaborative spirit between the leading parliamentary blocs four months ago allowed the consensual nomination of Mr. Adel Abdul-Mahdi as the Prime Minister-designate, including a notably smooth transition of power from former Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi.

However, to date, the Government of Iraq remains incomplete. Four ministerial positions are still vacant, with three of them (Interior, Defence and Justice) being subject to fierce disagreements among political blocs.

Within this context, multiple parliamentary sessions have been adjourned, interrupted or boycotted over the past months. And as a result, the implementation of the government programme has made little headway and parliamentary committees have yet to start their substantive work.

As we speak, the Iraqi parliament is in a one-month recess and will only reconvene in early March.

Long government formation processes are not new, nor unique to Iraq. Other countries experience similar challenges. However, in the Iraq context there is a real urgency to complete the process without delay to enable the government to consolidate the security gains achieved, to focus on rebuilding the country after years of conflict and to ensure a high-quality provision of services for their citizens.

So yes, the slow pace of the completion of the Iraqi government is undoubtedly a great concern. Therefore, I would like to call upon the political actors, once again to overcome political infighting and to demonstrate that political compromise can prevail in the greater interests of the Iraqi people. And in doing so, I would also like to remind them that there are excellent and experienced Iraqi women well-qualified to perform the job.

Mr. President,



Ultimately, the people of Iraq are bearing the brunt of the political stalemate. Bearing the brunt at a time when it is critical to address their needs and demands for better services with water and electricity as the most pressing ones. At a time when it is critical to address reconstruction, justice, corruption, employment as well as economic and social development. At a time when the Iraqi citizens ought to be able to rely on strong democratic governance and viable state institutions.

So yes, it is high time for Iraqi leaders to shift focus from factional politics, and to invest efforts in addressing the immediate needs of the Iraqi citizens as further delays could give space to significant repercussions on the stability of the country.

On a more positive note, I am pleased to inform you that the 2019 Federal Budget Law was approved by Parliament on January 23. Prior consultations as well as effective cooperation, made this achievement possible.

The good news is that it does demonstrate that space for constructive political dialogue and partnership is out there. And I truly hope that we will see lots more of it in the months to come.

The 2019 budget allocations for some key development sectors, such as electricity, do reflect the government's efforts to improve the delivery of basic services. But still, allocations for reconstruction in liberated areas are far less than the actual needs. Moreover, Iraq's state finances remain strongly reliant on oil sector revenues and thus very vulnerable to fluctuations in oil prices.

Another positive step is last week's

decision of the Council of Ministers to convert the Government Programme into an implementation plan, with clear timelines and an overview of the allocated financial resources. This will allow for close monitoring of progress as well as accountability.

Additionally, I would like to welcome the steps taken by government to address corruption by putting in place preventive measures. Within the last month, the Prime Minister chaired three meetings of the Supreme Council for Corruption which aims to unify efforts to combat corruption by any party or person, regardless of their post or position.

The fight against corruption will not be an easy one, but it is a much needed one as corruption is vast and pervasive at all levels in Iraq. It is a much-needed fight in order to revive public trust and to facilitate the provision of basic services.

During our meeting in Najaf last Wednesday, Grand Ayatollah Sistani also underlined the urgent need to show progress in fighting corruption.

Mr. President,

Turning to relations between Baghdad and Erbil, I would like to welcome the agreement reached on January 16 between the Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government to unify customs duties, including the removal of internal customs checkpoints between the Kurdistan Region and other areas of Iraq. This decision is an important step in reinforcing Iraq's unity. A speedy implementation of this agreement should now be a priority for both sides.

Moreover, the finalisation of the 2019

Briefing to the Security Council by SRSB for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, on the situation concerning Iraq (continued)

federal budget guaranteed federal funding for salary payments to Kurdistan Region civil servants and Peshmerga forces. And I would like to call upon both, Baghdad and Erbil, to capitalise on this positive momentum to overcome their differences and reach long-term, durable solutions on other outstanding issues.

There is little to report on the government formation within the Kurdistan Region, as to date, negotiations continue. In my meetings with Kurdish leaders, both in Erbil and Sulaimaniya, I emphasized the need to expedite the government formation in order to serve the needs of the people of the Kurdistan region soonest. Some developments seem to be unfolding though, with a possible session of the Kurdistan Region Parliament to be held on 18 February.

Mr. President

During this reporting period, Iraq's leadership has made significant efforts in recalibrating its external relationships, reaching out to many international, regional and neighbouring partners and in addition to boosting diplomatic ties, promoting cooperation in the fields of (for example) reconstruction, security, water management, economy and business. Important as strength abroad and strength at home is a package deal indeed.

During this period, Iraq has also received high-level international delegations seeking to engage with the new Iraqi leadership. And I truly hope that support for sustainable stability in Iraq will continue to be on top of the regional and international agenda building upon mutual interests and in accordance with the principles of respect for Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity and good neighbourly relations.

Mr. President,

Security remains a concern. Although terrorist activities have decreased, dur-

ing the past month attacks have been carried out against both civilians and the Iraqi Security Forces.

In short: despite its military defeat, ISIL continues to pose a security threat to Iraq and the region. And it goes without saying, we will continue to work with the Iraqi authorities as well as with our partners in the International Community to counter ISIL activity and its ideology through our good offices and programmes on community reconciliation and social cohesion.

Another concern relates to armed groups and/or criminal formations operating out of State control and also expanding their economic and social control in Iraqi daily life. Regardless of their affiliation, the government needs to take quick measures to reform its security sector and act resolutely against these groups and their activities.

As you are also aware, Turkish military airstrikes on alleged Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) targets near the Iraqi-Turkish border in northern Iraq have been condemned by the authorities in Iraq as violations of Iraq's sovereignty. I regret the loss of civilian lives and the loss of civilian livelihoods during these operations. It is important that both the Governments of Turkey and Iraq accelerate their efforts to resolve this, as well as other issues of mutual concern through bilateral dialogue.

Mr. President,

Following a series of meetings with parliamentary committees and the Council of Ministers, the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) has formally recommended that Iraq's Provincial Council elections take place on November 16.

During my meeting with IHEC early January, the Board of Commissioners emphasized the importance of UN technical assistance and expert advisory support as they address upcoming challenges, including an inclusive participation of voters, successful deployment of election technologies, as well as public acceptance of electoral processes and outcomes.

UNAMI will continue to provide the requested technical assistance and support to IHEC. However, in preparation for these elections a number of steps will need to be taken - urgently - by the Government of Iraq and the relevant institutions such as the formal confirmation of the polling date, finalisation of the electoral law and timely allocation of an adequate electoral budget to

ensure the secure, safe and orderly conduct of the Provincial Council elections.

Mr. President,

The military defeat of ISIL provides the opportunity for a more structured and focused support by UNAMI to the government's efforts to promote accountability for human rights violations and to ensure that the rights of all citizens are promoted and protected.

Within this context, I would like to emphasize that promoting a more consistent adherence to international standards of due process and fair trial is of the greatest importance. An impartial and transparent process of judicial accountability - for the gross violations of human rights by ISIL - will prove crucial in rebuilding social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

Equally important is the need to strengthen community cohesion and to counter collective community blame as it undermines the legitimate efforts of the government to ensure accountability for individuals responsible for these gross human rights violations. Moreover, marginalization of one group over another, leaves communities vulnerable to extremist messaging.

Mr. President,

As part of UNAMI's efforts to advance equal opportunities and strengthen women's participation in all political processes, I launched (on January 24) the Women's Advisory Group on Reconciliation and Politics. The Group is an inclusion mechanism, which will act as an independent source of expertise and advice for UNAMI as well as others.

At present, the inclusion of women - and their direct participation in senior decision-making positions - remains very limited. I therefore renew UNAMI's call on the political leaders to fulfil the many pledges made during the electoral period and thus to appoint women in senior decision-making positions.

Mr. President,

The United Nations and its humanitarian partners have finalised the 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Iraq and will soon launch the Humanitarian Response Plan, in close cooperation with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government.

This year, the humanitarian community will focus on meeting the needs of 1.75 million vulnerable Iraqis including IDPs living both in and out-of-camp settings, returnees in areas of severe



Briefing to the Security Council by SRSG for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, on the situation concerning Iraq (continued)

need as well as host communities that have been strained by years of armed conflict. And the needs are vast indeed! The 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan seeks \$700 million from donors and contains specialised programming to address protection, which remains the overarching humanitarian priority in 2019. Humanitarian programming will, of course, be implemented alongside recovery and stabilisation efforts.

While significant efforts are underway to reconstruct infrastructure and restore basic services it will take many years and billions of dollars to rebuild the country. And Iraq will - undoubtedly - need the continued attention of the international community to make this transition successful and sustainable.

Thanks to the generous support of the international community, the UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilisation exceeded \$1 billion at the end of 2018. However, more than 600 projects in UNDP's portfolio remain unfunded, and a gap of \$338 million still exists. In other words: additional funds are needed including contributions by the Government of Iraq, which does acknowledge the quick impacts and efficiency of this programme.

It goes without saying that the UN Country Team (UNCT) continues to assist the Government of Iraq in meeting the needs of its citizens. Some examples from the past few months include:

- the provision of medical kits and supplies to save lives (WHO);
- the digitisation of Iraq's largest social safety net: the Public Distribution System (WFP);
- the provision of food entitlements (WFP);
- the clearance of explosives from residential buildings that enable people to return to their homes (UNMAS); and
- the finalisation of a reconstruction plan for Mosul (UNESCO and UN Habitat).

The UN system also continues to support the Government of Iraq in the implementation of some key reforms such as in the security sector.

During my visit to Mosul a couple of weeks ago, I witnessed the important contribution of the UNCT projects, assisting the government in the rehabilitation of houses as well as the restoration of water plants, both essential needs (shelter + water) for the return of life to this war-torn city.

As you know, mine action organisations engage in life-saving work, allow recon-

struction projects to take place, and manage the threat of IEDs on a daily basis. I cannot stress enough the importance of this effort. And we must all make everything possible to ensure this critical humanitarian work is carried out without delay. Further action is required by the Government of Iraq to overcome certain challenges in facilitating these activities, including timely and predictable accreditation for civilian operators whose work is crucial to enable safe returns as well as access to basic services.

Mr. President,

Since the Kuwait International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq in February 2018, the Iraq Recovery and Resilience Programme (RRP) has been rolled out, with 53 projects in four areas: (1) governance and service delivery, (2) livelihoods, (3) protection, and (4) reconciliation.

The Programme is national in its coverage and has a two-year budget of \$1 billion. Resource mobilisation efforts are ongoing, with over \$300 million pledged so far for projects, and I would like to encourage other donors to contribute.

More broadly, further progress was made in establishing a Multi-Donor Trust Fund in collaboration with UNDP's Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office to manage contributions to the RRP.

The creation of this Trust Fund has been closely coordinated with the government's Executive Committee for Recovery, Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank, and other development partners to reduce duplication and maximize results.

Mr. President,

With your permission, I would like to turn now to the twenty-first report of the Secretary-General on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives.

Let me - first of all - emphasize my

determination to engage with this file. In my first official visit to Kuwait 10 days ago, I emphasized once again the importance of this file under UNAMI's mandate. Indeed, the families of the missing deserve clear and full answers regarding the fate of their loved ones.

And while UNAMI continues to assist the governments of Iraq and Kuwait on this important humanitarian issue I would like to call upon member states to strengthen their support, for example through the procurement of field equipment, the provision of forensics, anthropological training as well as capacity-building for Iraqi and Kuwaiti technical teams.

The return of valuable Kuwaiti property last November was a positive and long-awaited step. And I encourage the Iraqi government to continue its search for the still missing National Archives.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to underline that the atmosphere of despair during the period of ISIL occupation has given some way to hope and optimism for the future. However, one cannot shy away from the fact that the road to well-deserved long-term stability in Iraq will be far from easy.

Realism and great determination will be necessary in facing the challenges ahead, also on our side. Obvious ownership and engagement of all Iraqi components will prove crucial, political will a precondition, taking pride in a shared history and a common future a necessity. And yes, continued support from the International Community will be of paramount importance.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to UNAMI - and UNCT staff for their dedication and commitment. I am truly delighted to be working with them and I look forward to reporting back to you on (I hope) some substantive achievements over coming months.



Despite falling attacks, ISIL terrorists remain ‘global threat’: UN report

New York, 11 February 2019 -

Though attacks were down last year, a new United Nations report to the Security Council on Monday shows that ISIL is still a global threat, despite evolving into a “covert” terrorism network, with countries continuing to face challenges from the growing scourge of violent extremism.

“Despite the more concealed or locally embedded activities of ISIL cells, its central leadership retains an influence and maintains an intent to generate internationally-directed attacks and thereby still plays an important role in advancing the group’s objectives,” explained Vladimir Voronkov, who heads the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT).

“This is exacerbated by the challenge of foreign terrorist fighters who either are leaving conflict zones, or those who are returning or who are about to be released from prison. In this context, radicalization in prison settings, is seen as a particular challenge in Europe and Iraq,” Under-Secretary-General Voronkov added.

He said that so-called “frustrated travelers” were adding to the complexity of the threat, namely fighters who’d failed to reach main battlegrounds, but been diverted instead elsewhere, either by ISIL commanders or of their own volition.

The report notes that the “centre of gravity” of the organization, known in the Arab world as Da’esh, remains in Iraq and Syria, with up to 18,000 remaining in the ranks, including some 3,000 foreign fighters.

“In terms of ISIL’s financial strength, the report notes that despite some loss of revenue due to territorial setbacks,



ISIL could sustain its operations through accessible reserves, in cash or investment in businesses, ranging between \$50 and \$300 million. ISIL cells are also reported to generate revenue through criminal activities”, explained Mr. Voronkov.

The document, the eighth report on ISIL – which proclaimed its so-called caliphate across northern Syria and Iraq in 2014 - was prepared on behalf of the UN Secretary-General by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, in close collaboration with the UNOCT and other UN entities and international organisations.

After being driven from its city strongholds of Mosul and Raqqa, intense fighting in recent months has left

Da’esh defending a small enclave against US-backed fighters in eastern Syria, close to the Iraqi border. According to news reports, around 600 terrorist fighters continue to battle with coalition forces, which have labelled this the “final battle” to crush ISIL.

Challenges faced by Member States
The UN analysis shows that Member States continue to face tremendous challenges across the world in tackling the threats posed by ISIL, with the threat level continuing to expand. This is especially true in North, West and East Africa as well as in Central Asia. Training camps have been identified in Afghanistan, and in South-East Asia, where women and youth are increasingly mobilized for terrorist operations across the region.

The head of CTED, Michele Coninsx, highlighted three of those major challenges faced by Member States:

- The “destructive legacy” left in Syria and Iraq, most noticeable in the high number of families who remain internally-displaced due to the destruction of homes and infrastructure overall: She noted that “reconstruction will take many years and will require significant resources, as will restoring and reconciling communities after so many years of conflict.”

- The growth in the number of terrorist suspects and offenders in custody: The risk posed by such prisoners is difficult to assess and manage.

- ISIL’s ability to exploit new technologies and find innovative ways to finance itself and find new recruits: Ms. Coninsx noted for example the risks linked to anonymous technologies like blockchain and cryptocurrencies, and other internet-based ways of avoid-



Despite falling attacks, ISIL terrorists remain ‘global threat’: UN report *(continued)*

ing detection.

The UN’s support to Member States

For several years, various parts of the UN have supported Member States in the fields of prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration (PRR) of former fighters; international judicial cooperation; countering terrorist financing; border management and law enforcement; countering terrorist narratives and engaging communities to prevent violent extremism.

Specifically, explained CTED’s Executive Director Coninx, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and

UNOCT are leading a joint project to provide tailored capacity-building assistance to prison staff.

In the Lake Chad Basin, she said CTED and UNODC are working to provide Member States with technical expertise to develop comprehensive strategies to prosecute, rehabilitate and reintegrate persons associated with the Boko Haram extremist group.

Other initiatives include the development of a practical guide for requesting electronic evidence across borders, and the deployment of a specialized consultant to support Iraq in its efforts to de-

velop a holistic and comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy.

“The Secretary-General has stressed that despite recent successes against ISIL / Da’esh and its affiliates, the threat posed by returning and relocating fighters, as well as from individuals inspired by them, remains high and has a global reach,” stressed Mr. Voronkov. “I would therefore emphasize, the recent ISIL losses should not lead to complacency at any level,” he concluded.

By UN News Center

Statement by the President of the Security Council on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait

New York, 19 February 2019 - At the 8463rd meeting of the Security Council, held on 19 February 2019, in connection with the Council’s consideration of the item entitled “The situation between Iraq and Kuwait”, the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

“The Security Council recalls its resolution 2107 (2013) on the Situation between Iraq and Kuwait and all its previous resolutions and presidential statements addressing the issues of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and the return of Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, and takes note of the reports of the Secretary General pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 2107 (2013).

“The Security Council commends the ongoing efforts by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in the implementation of resolution 2107 (2013). The Security Council expresses its full support for the Special Representative and Head of UNAMI Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs for UNAMI Alice Walpole in their efforts to resolve outstanding issues related to Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and the return of Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, and urges them to continue engagement on these issues. The Security Council expresses deep gratitude to former UNAMI SRSR Ján Kubiš for his tireless efforts to fully implement resolution 2107 (2013).

“The Security Council welcomes the strong bilateral relations between Iraq and Kuwait and commends the Government of Kuwait’s continued support for Iraq in its efforts to achieve stability, and welcomes Iraq’s

efforts to fulfill all remaining obligations in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions.

“The Security Council further Welcomes the ongoing cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait in the search of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, and the positive efforts by the Iraqi Ministry of Defense on this important humanitarian endeavor and encourages the Iraqi government to continue with these efforts in the same constructive vein and to ensure that all appropriate institutional, financial and technical support is made available to facilitate future activities and further encourages the international community to provide the necessary advanced and innovative technical equipment to Iraqi authorities to assist in identifying burial locations in accordance with best practices.

“The Security Council shared the views expressed by the Secretary General in his reports that ascertaining the fate of missing persons and providing answers to their grieving families depend on steadfast commitment, action and the adoption of new and innovative ways to push the issue forward.

“The Security Council expresses its strong support for the perseverance of the members of the tripartite mechanism and its Chair, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in their effort to locate the remains of the missing persons. The Security Council notes the latest meeting of the Technical Subcommittee of the Tripartite Mechanism on 11 December 2018 and the Tripartite Commission on 13 December, and welcomes in this regard the additional information provided to the ICRC by France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern

Ireland, and the United States of America that might help to identify potential burial locations, as well as the formal adoption by the Technical Subcommittee of the ICRC’s Review Project Report, as an important contribution towards progress on the issue. The Security Council encourages the two countries, consistent with resolution 2107 (2013), to collaborate closely through the tripartite mechanism to achieve further concrete results.

“The Security Council notes with regret that there remains 369 cases of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals still unresolved and that no human remains have been exhumed since 2004. The Council reiterates its deepest sympathy to the families of the missing and expresses its condolences for the lives lost.

“The Security Council welcomes the sustained commitment of the Government of Iraq to return all remaining Kuwaiti property including the national archives and acknowledges the important steps taken recently by the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait to reinvigorate this file and welcomes in particular the handing over of a consignment of Kuwaiti property by His Excellency Dr. Barham Saleh, President of the Republic of Iraq, during his recent visit to Kuwait on 11 November 2018 to meet His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait. The Security Council encourages the Iraqi government to continue its search for the missing property, in particular to reinvigorate its search for the missing Kuwaiti national archives.

“The Security Council expresses its intention to remain engaged on these important issues.”

SRSJ Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert visit to Sulaymania



the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) could provide assistance within the framework of its mandate.



Sulaymania, 27 January 2019 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSJ) Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert met today with senior political leaders from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), Kurdistan Islamic Union (KIU) and the Change Movement (Gorran), including the Governor of Sulaymania. She discussed the current political, security and economic situation in the Kurdistan Region (KRG) and Sulaymania in particular. The SRSJ also discussed ways in which



SRSJ Jeannine Hennis-Plasschaert visited Mosul

Mosul, 28 January 2019 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSJ) Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert met with local authority members in Mosul including the Deputy Governor, the Provincial Council Chair, his Deputy and a number of Provincial Council Members, as well as the Mayor of Mosul.

SRSJ Hennis-Plasschaert discussed ways in which the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the United Nations in general can assist the local authorities and people of Ninewa in their efforts to return their lives to normal. The SRSJ also discussed ways of enhancing and strengthening cooperation and coordination with the local authorities for UN activities in the area.

Later, SRSJ Hennis-Plasschaert visited a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) housing project in the old city of Mosul where she interacted with homeowners and saw a water treatment plant project. She also attended a United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) clearance demonstration and met with the team working on demining efforts.



SRSJ Jeannine Hennis-Plasschaert visited Mosul (continued)

In her meetings with the local authorities, SRSJ Hennis-Plasschaert also underlined the importance for UNMAS to be allowed to continue with the clearance of unexploded ordnance from

Mosul without further delay, in coordination with the local authorities, to create a safe environment for the return of the citizens of Mosul.

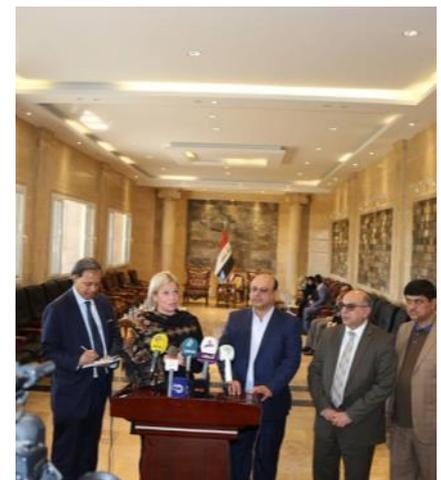
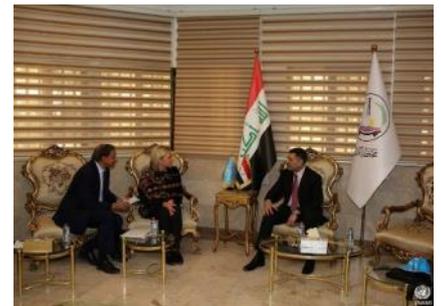


On her first visit to Basra, UN Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert says the UN is committed to assisting the people of Basra

Basra, 18 February 2019 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, paid a visit to Basra to hear firsthand from local officials and civil society their views and concerns regarding the situation in the governorate in southern Iraq. During her one-day visit, the first to the governorate since she assumed her responsibilities as UN Special Representative for Iraq two months ago, Ms. Plasschaert met separately with the Governor, Mr. Asaad Al-Eidani,

Chairman of the Provincial Council, Mr. Sabah Al-Bazzouni, and also held a discussion with representatives of civil society and demonstrators. Basra has seen a series of protests in the last year, in particular by young Basrawis demanding improved public services, jobs, and an end to corruption. In remarks to journalists, the Special Representative said her visit was to get an insight into the situation in Basra in terms of economic development, the state of services and efforts to address the needs of the people. “The UN is

committed to work with the authorities in Basra to make life every year a bit better here.”



The leadership of UNAMI, UNITAD and UN Country Team in Iraq continued intensive political consultations.



Baghdad, 05 January 2019 – The Prime Minister of Iraq, H.E. Adil Abdul-Mahdi, received today the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. They discussed the Government’s programme and UNAMI’s support in this regard.

Photos courtesy of the PM Office.



Baghdad, 05 January 2019 –The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, visited today the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) in Baghdad where she met with the Head and members of the Board of Commissioners. They talked about the functions of the Commission as a constitutional institution that manages and regulates the electoral processes in Iraq and is one of the important pillars in the democratic process.

SRSR Hennis-Plasschaert expressed UNAMI’s continuous support to IHEC in its efforts to complete its procedures through the provision of the necessary expertise, especially with regard to the upcoming provincial council elections. Photos courtesy of IHEC.



Baghdad, 06 January 2019 - This morning, the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, attended ceremonies on the occasion of the 98th Anniversary of the founding of the Iraqi Army.

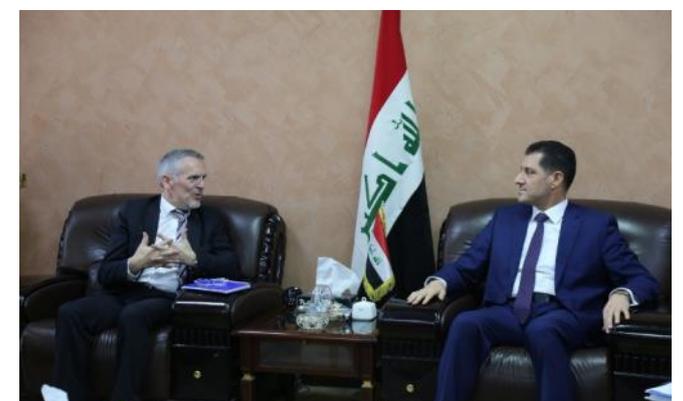
Photo courtesy of the Office of the President of the Republic.



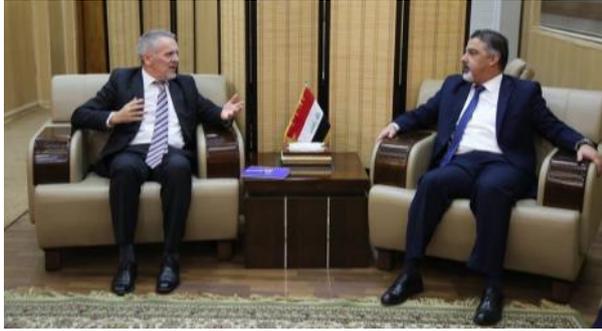
Baghdad, 06 January 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met with the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Iraq, Iraj Masjedi. They discussed the current political and security situation in Iraq and the Region stressing at the same time the cooperation both sides extend to the Government of Iraq in supporting the country and its people.



Baghdad, 08 January 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Secretary General of the Arab Project - National Axis Alliance, Mr. Khamis al-Khanjar. They discussed the latest political developments in the country.



Baghdad, 08 January 2019 - IOM Iraq Chief of Mission, Gerard Waite, met with the Minister of Planning, Mr. Nuri al-Dulaimi, to discuss various topics, including post-displacement and voluntary return to retaken areas.



Baghdad, 08 January 2019 - International Organization for Migration (IOM) Chief of Mission, Mr. Gerard Waite, met with Iraqi Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Mr. Basem Al-Rubaie, at the Ministry's headquarters in Baghdad.

Mr. Waite expressed IOM's gratitude for the ministries long-standing support for the work of IOM in Iraq and reviewed IOM's current collaborations with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The two discussed future projects and the relevance of the organization's vision.

Mr. Al-Rubaie expressed appreciation for IOM's efforts and willingness to cooperate with IOM, especially the Ministry's support for programs to assist displaced persons and returnees in retaken areas and to solve challenges related to voluntary returns.



Baghdad, 12 January 2019 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Mr. Fuad Hussein. They discussed the current political and economic situation in Iraq, including the government's reconstruction efforts and steps to adopt a decentralized governance system.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Finance.



Baghdad, 14 January 2019 – The Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, Mr. Mahdi al-Allaqi, received today the United Nations Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team for Accountability of D'aesh, Mr. Karim A.A. Khan QC. They discussed cooperation between the two sides in the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 2379 (2017) to collect and document crimes, advocate accountability, achieve justice and prosecute perpetrators of the horrendous crimes.

Photo courtesy of the Council of Ministers.



Samara, 15 January 2019 – The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, met today with the Mayor of Samara, Mahmoud Khalaf Rihan, who informed her about the political, economic and security situation in the city.



Tikrit, 15 January 2019 – The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, met today with the Salah-Din Provincial Council Chair, Ahmed Abdul-Jabar al-Karayem. They discussed the latest political and security developments in the province.



Tikrit, 15 January 2019 – The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, met today with the Governor of Salah-Din, Amar Jabr Khalil, to discuss the latest political and security developments in the province.

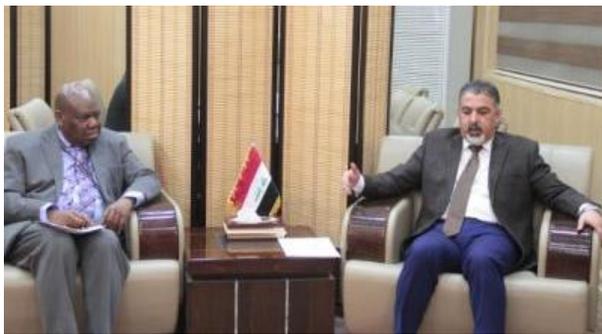


Baghdad, 15 January 2019 – Dr. Oluremi Sogunro, UNFPA Iraq Representative, met with Mr. Kyung Wook Jang, the Korean ambassador in Iraq, to express appreciation to the Government of Korea for its support of \$ 1.75 M to UNFPA in Iraq in the last two years, enabling the humanitarian response in the fields of reproductive health and gender-based violence.



Baghdad, 16 January 2019 - Ms. Marta Ruedas, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (DSRSG) and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, met today with the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, Dr. Mahdi Al-Allaq. They discussed international support for humanitarian, development, and reconstruction needs. They agreed on continuing broad donor participation in the Executive Committee for Recovery, Reconstruction, and Development to ensure coordination and information sharing. They also discussed the work of UN-HABITAT and UNESCO in finalizing a plan for the reconstruction of Mosul's Old City.

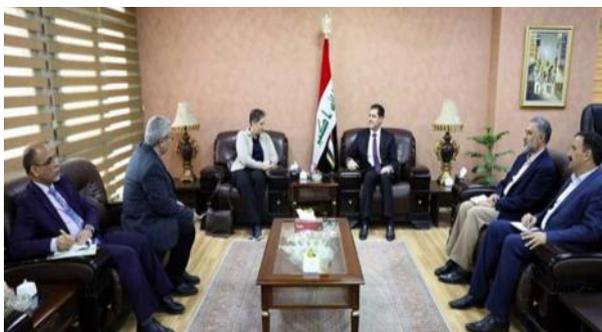
Photo courtesy of the General Secretariat of the Iraq Council of Ministers.



Baghdad, 17 January 2019 – The Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Dr. Bassem al-Rubaie, met today with the United Nations Population Fund representative in Iraq, Dr. Oluremi Sogunro, and discussed possibilities of cooperation.



Baghdad, 20 January 2019 -IOM Iraq Chief of Mission, Mr. Gerard Waite, met with the Iraq Minister of Migration and Displacement, Mr. Noufal Bahaa Moussa, to discuss topics related to the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme for Iraqis from abroad, and the return of IDPs to their areas of origin.



Baghdad, 21 January 2019 - Ms. Marta Ruedas, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (DSRSG) and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, met with the Iraqi Minister of Planning, Nouri Sabah al-Dulaimi. They discussed the UN long-term engagement with the Ministry on development of Iraq, and the Ministry's key priorities for 2019.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Planning.



Baghdad, 21 January 2019 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (DSRSG) and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ms. Marta Ruedas, met today with the Minister of Migration and Displacement, Mr. Noufal Bahaa Moussa. They discussed the situation of the displaced persons in Iraq and possibilities to help them.



Baghdad, 23 January 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Saudi Arabia to Iraq, Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Shammari. They discussed the current political and security developments in Iraq and in the region stressing on the need for continuous cooperation both sides extend to the Government of Iraq in supporting the country and its people.



Baghdad, 24 January 2019 - The Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, Dr. Mahdi Al-Allaq, received the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative a.i., Mr. Gerardo Noto. During the meeting Mr. Noto noted that “following an important streamlining and strengthening of UNDP Integrated Reconciliation Project, a new strategy has developed, supported by important donors such as Denmark, to achieve social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in Iraq in a more effective and inclusive way with a focus on the most affected communities in the liberated areas to facilitate the return of IDPs and strengthen host communities”.

Photo courtesy of the Council of Ministers.



Baghdad, 29 January 2019 – The Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers of Iraq, Dr. Mahdi Al-Allaq, received the Special Adviser of the United Nations Investigative Team for the Accountability of Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), Mr. Karim A. A. Khan QC, to discuss the ongoing cooperation between the two sides according to the mandate set by the United Nations Security Council.

Photo courtesy of the Council of Ministers.



Baghdad, 29 January 2019 - The Secretary General of the Iraqi Council of Ministers, H.E. Mahdi Al Allaq, met with UNICEF Representative in Iraq, Mr. Peter Hawkins. They discussed the upcoming publication of the 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6) on the well-being of children in Iraq.

Photo courtesy of the Council of Ministers.



Baghdad, 31 January 2019 – UNDP Country Director a.i., Gerardo Noto, met today with Dr. Mohammed Salman Al-Saadi, Chair of the National Council on Reconciliation. They discussed possible UNDP support to the reconciliation process and community social cohesion in Iraq.



Baghdad, 31 January 2019 - UNDP Country Director a.i., Gerardo Noto, met today with the member of the Iraqi Council of Representatives Ahmad Al-Jabouri. They discussed UNDP Stabilization Programme in Diyala.



Kuwait City, 3 February 2019 - Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, received today in Kuwait City the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. They discussed UNAMI's activities in line with its mandate relating to the file of Kuwaiti missing persons and property. UNAMI in its observer status at the Tripartite Commission Mechanism has been facilitating the efforts for a resolution of the remaining outstanding issues on this file.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.



Kuwait City, 3 February 2019 - His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received at Bayan Palace the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert.

They discussed the developments in the region including UNAMI's activities in line with its mandate relating to the file of Kuwaiti missing persons and property, reiterating UNAMI's readiness to assist in solving all outstanding issues between Iraq and Kuwait.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the Prime Minister of Kuwait.



Baghdad, 4 February 2019 – His Excellency President of the Republic of Iraq, Dr. Barham Salih, received today the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. They discussed the political and humanitarian situation in the country, highlighting the important role of the United Nations in supporting the democratic process in Iraq and in helping to provide aid and assistance to displaced persons and the return of IDPs to their homes.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the President.



Baghdad, 5 February 2019 – His Excellency Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, Mr. Adil Abdul Mahdi, received the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. They discussed the political and humanitarian situation in the country.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the Prime Minister.



Baghdad, 5 February 2019 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met this morning with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway, Ms. Ine Eriksen Soreide. They discussed the current political and humanitarian situation in Iraq and possible ways how Norway can support United Nations efforts in the country to achieve sustainable development for the benefit of Iraqi people.



Najaf, 6 February 2019 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert was received in Najaf by His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Sayyed al-Sistani. Discussions focused on combatting against corruption, strengthening government functions and improving public services. His Eminence Sistani stressed the need for the return of IDPs and the reconstruction of ISIL-affected areas.

Photo: Courtesy of the Office of His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani.



Baghdad, 7 February 2019 – The Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Mr. Mohammed al-Halboosi, received in Baghdad the Senior Political Affairs Officer of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Mr. Mohammed al-Najjar. They discussed means of cooperation between the Parliament and UNAMI technical support for the Parliament.

Photo courtesy of the Media Office of the Parliament Speaker.



Geneva, 8 February 2019 - Ambassador Mouayed Saleh, Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), met with Ms. Agnès Marcaillou, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) Director, and Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager at UNMAS Iraq, and discussed the operations of Mine Action in the liberated areas in Iraq.

Photo courtesy of the PM of Iraq to UNOG.



New York, 11 February 2019 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met with Ambassador Mohammed Bahr Al-Uloom, Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations. They discussed the political situation in Iraq and UN efforts to help the country in achieving sustainable peace and development.

Photo courtesy of the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the UN



Baghdad, 11 February 2019 – His Excellency President of Republic, Barham Salih, received UNITAD Special Adviser Karim Khan QC, where he expressed full support for the mandate of UNITAD to support domestic efforts to hold ISIL accountable by collecting, preserving and storing evidence of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed by the group in Iraq, to ensure the broadest use before national courts.

The President and the Special Adviser agreed on the importance of evidence-based judicial process in the promotion of accountability for ISIL crimes.



New York, 12 February 2019 – The Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, Ambassador Mohammed Bahr Al-Uloom, received today Ms. Dina Zorba, UN Women Country Director in Iraq, at the Iraqi House. They discussed the role of UNW in empowering the Iraqi women and the programs that will be implemented to achieve this.



New York, 12 February 2019 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met with Ambassador Sima Bahous, Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations. Discussions focused on the recent political and security developments in Iraq, as well as on the activities and work of UNAMI and the UN Country Team in Iraq.

Photo courtesy of the PM of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.



New York, 13 February 2019 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, attended a luncheon hosted by the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations in New York, at which fruitful discussions were held. Participants reaffirmed continued international support for the work of UNAMI and the UN Country Team.

Photos courtesy of the PM of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.



Baghdad, 16 February 2019 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, and the Deputy Special Representative and Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas, attended today in Baghdad the session of The Civil Crisis Management Cell in the Reconstruction Working Group, chaired by the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, Dr. Mahdi al-Allaq. At the session achievements of the parties supporting the reconstruction and stabilization of the liberated areas were discussed.



Baghdad, 17 February 2019 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met today with Dr. Nassar al-Ruba'ee, Head of the Political Bureau of the Sadrist Trend. They discussed the current political situation in the country stressing the need for the government formation to be completed as soon as possible. As such, the new Government could focus its attention into providing basic services for the people of Iraq, fighting corruption and ensuring good governance for all Iraqi citizens.



Baghdad, 17 February 2019 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ms. Marta Ruedas, and the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, Dr. Mehdi Al-Alaq, discussed the Cost-Sharing agreement between Iraq and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Once signed, Iraq will become the 28th contributor to the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS). The agreement is expected to be signed before end of March 2019.

In addition, UN DSRSG/RC/HC Ruedas and CoM SG Al-Alaq discussed the upcoming meeting of the Stabilization Working Group (SWG) – one of the key working groups for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, scheduled to take place (for the first time) in Baghdad, in mid-April 2019.

Photo courtesy of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.



Baghdad, 19 February 2019 – The Iraqi Foreign Minister, Mohamad A. Alhakim, received Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General. They discussed the political developments in the country and the UN efforts to support Iraq. The discussion focused on the need for effective state institutions and the fight against corruption, including the formation of the Supreme Anti-Corruption Council.

Photo courtesy of MoFA.



Erbil, 20 February 2019 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas, met the Kurdistan Region Interior Minister, Karim Sinjari. They exchanged views on a wide range of issues related to humanitarian and development affecting the region. DSRSG Ruedas reassured the Minister of the UN's commitment to continue its support to the Region in addressing these issues, especially its readiness to work with the Government of Iraq in finding durable solution for IDPs unable to return to their areas of origin.

Photos courtesy of the Joint Centre for Crisis Coordination, KRG.



Baghdad, 21 February 2019 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met with the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, Mr. Mahdi Al-Allaq. During the meeting they discussed the cooperation between UNAMI and the Iraqi Government on projects to restore stability and to reconstruct the liberated areas in Iraq, including humanitarian and demining activities in Mosul. They also touched upon capacity building for Iraqi ministries.

Photo courtesy of the Council of Ministers.



Baghdad, 21 February 2019 - UNICEF incoming Representative for Iraq, Ms. Hamida Ramadhani, presented her credentials today to Mr. Saywan Barzani, Head of the Protocol Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Baghdad, Iraq.

Gender

UN Women Iraq convenes workshop to enhance women parliamentarians’ capacities

Beirut, Lebanon, 21 January 2019 - UN Women Iraq organized a workshop aiming to help strengthen capacities of Iraqi women parliamentarians in the Lebanese capital Beirut.

A total of 44 participants, including First Deputy Speaker of Parliament Dr. Hassan Karim Al Kaabi, Interim head of Iraqi Women Parliamentarians Caucus Ala Talabani, Mayor of Baghdad Dr. Thikra Alwash, Iraqi Ambassador to Lebanon Ali al Amri were present at the workshop, which also brought together the representatives of eight civil society organizations.

Dr. Kaabi praised parliament’s partnership with UN Women Iraq and called for more efforts to help empower women and enable them to carry out their role in serving their country.

He also underlined the need to integrate women in leadership and decision-making positions by introducing proper long-term sustainable policies within the government and other state bodies.

The workshop constituted an opportunity to enhance women capacities to engage in leadership, peacebuilding and reconciliation processes and to promote networking and coalition building among MPs and women organizations.

The workshop has been organized to respond to requests by women MPs to be trained in various subjects that include public speaking, communication, negotiations, leadership, basic legal knowledge, parliamentary roles and tasks, international treaties as well as

instruments pertaining to women’s rights.

The workshop, which also familiarized participants with means to build relations between parliamentarian, civil society and the governmental institutions, utilized the efforts of experts in various fields of knowledge.



UN Inter-Agency Gender Task Force (GTF) met in Baghdad

Baghdad, 22 January 2019 - The UN Inter-Agency Gender Task Force (GTF) held today its regular meeting with the participation of 18 gender focal points representing UN agencies in Iraq. The Iraq GTF is chaired by UN Women and co-chaired by UNDP and UNAMI. The meeting included a presentation of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women and Girls by UNFPA, an orientation on Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by UNAMI and finally a presentation of the IOM 'Project on Reparations for Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)'. The Gender Task Force is a platform focused on sharing knowledge, building capacities and involving participating UN agencies in strategies and programs related to gender equality. The meeting was held in Baghdad and video linked to Erbil.



Protecting girls in Iraq from Female Genital Mutilation

Baghdad, 06 February 2019 - Hadiya was mutilated at the age of five: "I was so scared that day; my mother took me to a room where I was cut. I bled so much and cried all night long. I still have pains to date, 20 years later".

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is one of the most inhuman acts of gender-based violence in the world.

On the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, we reaffirm our commitment to end this violation of human rights, so that girls who are still at risk of being mutilated do not experience the same pain as Hadiya.

According to the UN-supported 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) for Iraq, a total of 7.4 per cent of girls get mutilated every year. Although the numbers are relatively low in comparison to the region, one is too many: our goal is to protect all girls from such harmful practices.

In some identified areas of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where FGM still occurs on a higher rate, the UN is working with government institutions and local NGOs to prevent such harmful practices through awareness campaigns.

Female Genital Mutilation is known to be harmful to girls and women in many ways: it is painful, traumatic, and causes immediate and permanent health consequences. For instance, babies born to women who have undergone FGM are prone to having a higher rate of neonatal death.

Dr Oluremi Sogunro, Representative, UNFPA Iraq
Peter Hawkins, Representative, UNICEF Iraq
Dina Zorba, Representative, UN Women Iraq

Women's economic empowerment is essential to promote women's engagement in reconstruction and recovery of the country

New York, 13 February 2019 - At the meeting of the UN Women Executive Board held in New York, UN Women Iraq presented its work on capacity development, Women, Peace, and Security National Action Plan and humanitarian work in Iraq.

Ms. Dina Zorba, head of UN Women in Iraq, stressed that Iraq national action plan for women's economic empowerment is essential to promote women's engagement in reconstruction and recovery of the country.



The First Lady of Iraq and the UN SRSG visit the UNFPA-supported Women Shelter in Baghdad

Baghdad, 20 February 2019 – Women subjected to violence often look for a haven: the women shelters provide refuge to survivors of gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence. In Iraq, UNFPA supports five women shelters across Iraq run and managed by the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs in the Federal Government and in the Kurdistan Regional Government. On 20 February, the First Lady of Iraq, HE Sarbagh Salih, the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG), Ms Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the representative of the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Ali Al-Helou, the Political Counsellor at the Canadian Embassy, Mr Andrew Turner, the Director-General of the Women Empowerment Department, Dr Ibtisam Aziz, and the UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Oluremi Sogunro, visited the shelter for women survivors of gender-based violence in Baghdad.

During the visit, they met with the survivors currently residing in the shelter who shared their stories, journeys, and heartbreaks. The three officials also discussed with the shelter management the challenges the survivors and staff come across.

Commenting on the visit, HE Salih called on the government, the international organisations and the civil society organisations to work together to put an end to violence against women across Iraq.

“There is an urgent need for the enactment of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, which will prevent and respond to domestic violence in Iraq. The UN will work with all parties concerned to get the bill adopted by the Council of Rep-



resentatives,” said Ms Hennis-Plasschaert.

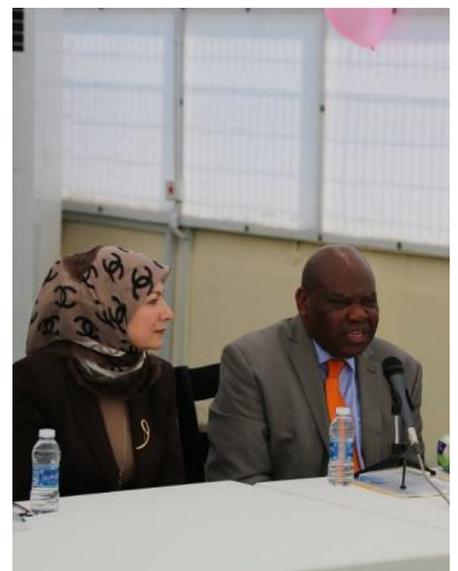
Discussing the dangers of gender-based violence on communities, Mr Turner said: “Domestic violence against women, children, or men threatens Iraq’s stability and economic development. That is why it is a priority for Canada to work with the Government of Iraq, the United Nations, and UNFPA to help address the problem.”

“Every woman deserves to feel safe, secure, and empowered. The women shelters not only provide protection but help survivors build their lives again and become advocates for women’s right. Our goal at UNFPA is that, one day, gender-based violence will be eradicated and there will be no need for women shelters,” added Dr Sogunro.

The shelter, the first of its kind in Central and Southern part of the country, is located in Baghdad and consists of 10

bedrooms, one room for counselling, one room for psychosocial support and can accommodate up to 80 survivors.

UNFPA is able to support the five women shelters across Iraq thanks to generous contributions from the Government of Canada and the European Regional Development and Protection Programme for the Middle East (RDPP).



UN Women Iraq supports meeting of gender experts

Baghdad, 20 February 2019 - UN Women Iraq offered support to convene the Focus Group meeting of gender experts on national standards for gender mainstreaming in policies, founded by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

The meeting was held today at Al-Nahrain Center for Strategic Studies in Baghdad.

UN Women also held a training workshop for participants on gender mainstreaming in program and policy development, including gender analysis, gender-sensitive indicators and monitoring and evaluation.



The European Commissioner visits UNFPA-supported Primary Health Clinic and Women Centre in Mosul



Baghdad, 21 February 2019 – The European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management (ECHO), Mr Christos Stylianides, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium and Minister of Finance and Development Cooperation, Mr Alexander De Croo, visited Hammam Al-Aleel camp for internally displaced persons in Mosul where they visited the UNFPA-supported Primary Health Clinic (PHC) and Women Centre.

During the tour, Mr Stylianides and Mr De Croo met with community leaders, clinic staff, and women who have received treatment at the Primary Health Clinic. The clinic provides basic reproductive health consultations, including gynaecological, antenatal, postnatal and family planning for the internally displaced persons in Hammam Al-Aleel camp.

Their next stop was at the Women Centre where staff briefed them on the

services provided for women and girls in the camp. These services mainly focus on case management through a confidential survivor-centred approach, a close follow-up and referrals when

needed, scheduled educational sessions, trainings and community sensitisation, as well as recreational and skills-building activities.

The EU has been a strategic partner to UNFPA in Iraq since 2015 with a total contribution of EUR 21 million supporting the Fund's reproductive health and gender-based violence interventions.

With additional funding looming in the horizon, UNFPA will continue the integrated package of gender-based violence (GBV) and reproductive health (RH) services it provides to women of reproductive age in selected primary health clinics and women centres in Iraq.

As of 1 February 2019, UNFPA had only received 29 per cent of the required funding, a total of US\$ 6.4 million out of the US\$ 22 million required for its 2019 humanitarian interventions in the country targeting 700,000 individuals with reproductive health services and 400,000 persons with the gender-based violence response.



“UN Mechanisms for the Protection of Women and Minorities” trainings held in Sulaimaniyah and Duhok



Sulaimaniyah/Duhok, 25 December 2018 – The Erbil Human Rights Office (HRO) of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) successfully ran a two-day training, titled “UN Mechanisms for the Protection of Women and Minorities”, for a number of participants from NGOs and the Directorate of Following-up Violence against Women in Sulaimaniyah and Duhok (16-17 and 23-24 December 2018). The participants represented civil society organizations, being activists and advocates of women and minorities rights in the Kurdistan Region. The course, which trained 24 participants (16 women and 8 men) in Sulaimaniyah and 25 participants (12 Women and 13 Men) in Duhok, aimed at enhancing the knowledge of participants on the United Nations human rights protection system, conventions and tools concerning women and minorities, and relevant international and domestic laws in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. The course also examined issues such as gender and sexual based violence and conflict-related sexual violence.

“We appreciate the role of the UNAMI Human Rights Office to open such productive and informative courses for us, activities that enhance our capacities and increase our knowledge of the UN mechanisms and provide us with further understanding of protection tools for women,” said Mohammed Wahdudin, Director of Media and Relations at the Directorate of Follow-up Violence against Women in Sulaymaniyah. Ms. Parwar Ibrahim, from Kurdistan for All organization, meanwhile noted: “I would like to thank UNAMI for this training. It was truly significant since it was my first time being involved in an intensive human rights training, I gained very fruitful information. In addition to this, the participant groups belonged to NGOs and the public sector, a structural mixture which helps to bring in coordination and cooperation

between both groups thereby jointly working to reach suitable solutions for the existing violations against women.” Mr. Abdulrahman Taib from Roshingary Organization for Practicing Democracy in Duhok highly appreciated the training content stating: “the course truly enriched our knowledge and performance in addressing sexual and gender based violence from International Human Rights perspectives. It will undoubtedly bring in improvements in NGOs and relevant public sectors approach in that end.”

UNAMI HRO Human Rights Officer, Mr. Zito Siany opened the courses by noting that the presence of NGOs, Human Rights activists and officers of the Directorate of Follow-up Violence against Women are tremendously significant in defending women rights and preventing violence against them.



Human Rights Committee of the Iraqi Council of Representatives received a delegation from the UNAMI Human Rights Office

Baghdad, 13 January 2019 - The Human Rights Committee of the Iraqi Council of Representatives receives today a delegation from the UNAMI Human Rights Office and discusses the Law on domestic violence and the reasons for its delay and quick solutions to its adoption.



Netherlands Human Rights Tulip for Iraq awarded to Ms. Rawan Salim Hussein

Baghdad, 20 January 2019 - The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has awarded the 2018 Netherlands Human Rights Tulip for Iraq to Ms. Rawan Salim Hussein. The Dutch Ambassador to Iraq, H.E. Matthijs Wolters, offered her the award today in a ceremony in Baghdad. Deputy Special Representative and Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Marta Ruedas, Chief of the UNAMI Human Rights Office, Ms. Danielle Bell, several representatives from the United Nations Country Team in Iraq, the diplomatic corps, members from national and international human rights non-governmental organisations, civil society and activists also attended the award ceremony.

Rawan Salim Hussein is a 17-year old children and women rights activist from the Iraqi province of Babyl. She has, among others, led a campaign to support displaced children in Babyl called "Be with Us and Not Neglect Us," providing educational, physiological, and recreational programs designed to provide

comfort to displaced children traumatized by conflict. Rawan also leads the Lazem advocacy campaign which seeks to empower women and girls through education.

Additionally, she has advocated for the improvement of welfare services and social rights through vlogs, advocacy campaigns and public statements. She continues to do so despite being subjected to social and legal challenge.

The Dutch Human Rights Tulip for Iraq is an annual acknowledgment by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to an

individual or organisation that demonstrably has made a unique contribution in human rights in Iraq.

The award includes a budget of EUR 10.000 for a project to promote human rights and participation in an Influentials program in the Netherlands, which brings together human rights activists from around the world. It also intends to send a message of support from the Kingdom of the Netherlands to human rights defenders in Iraq and the around the world.



Legal status of women and children with family ties to ISIS suspects discussed in Baghdad

Baghdad, 22 January 2019 - UN Women, in partnership with the Legal Committee of the Cross Sector Task Force on UNSCR 1325 and the Women Empowerment Organization (WEO), held a consultation meeting on the legal status of women and children with family ties to ISIS suspects.

The session started with welcome remarks by Mr. Amir al-Kanani, Legal Advisor to the President of Iraq, and an outline of the importance of tackling this issue, which the government has expressed keenness to resolve with the aim of coming up with satisfactory solutions and recommendations.

Ms. Dina Zorba, UN Women Iraq Country Representative, confirmed UN Women commitment to support the government and civil society on the implementation of the women peace and security agenda. Ms Zorba also expressed UN Women commitment to provide technical support to the justice sector professionals to enable them to better respond to cases of gender-based violence, and specifically conflict-related sexual violence.

"The terrible crimes committed by the terrorist organization ISIS were not limited to the destruction of the infrastructure of the areas that they con-

trolled, but also contributed to destroying the human and social fabric," Ms. Zorba said, calling for the collaboration of efforts to address the resulting situation and addressing humanitarian issues.

The participants in this consultation meeting represented different provinces, including Erbil, Baghdad, Mosul, Al Anbar, Dohuk, Diwania as well as organisations and sectors that included the Country Sector Task Force 1325, the Judicial Authority, the Ministry of Justice, the Human Right Commission, judges, academia, and civil and society organizations.



The meeting was very well attended by more than 70 representatives of the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, justice sector, defence and security, international cooperation agencies and civil society organizations. It comes as a part of the support that targets justice professionals nationwide with a particular focus on Diyala (Baghdad); Sulaymaniya; Salahaldeen; Ninawa (Mosul); as well as Erbil and Dohuk (KRI) where the justice system is both under immense pressure and is facing a big case-load related to the legal status of women and children with family ties to ISIS suspects.

Workshop on promotion of international, national and regional legal standards for refugee protection held in Erbil

Erbil, 7 February 2019 - UNHCR Iraq and the Department of Foreign Relations (DFR) of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) organized today a workshop for KRG's Ministries of Interior, Justice and the Higher Judicial Council, with the objective of promoting international, national and regional legal standards for refugee protection and reinforcing coordination between UNHCR and key government counterparts. The workshop was chaired by Falah Mustafa, Head of DFR, and Bruno Geddo, UNHCR Representative in Iraq.



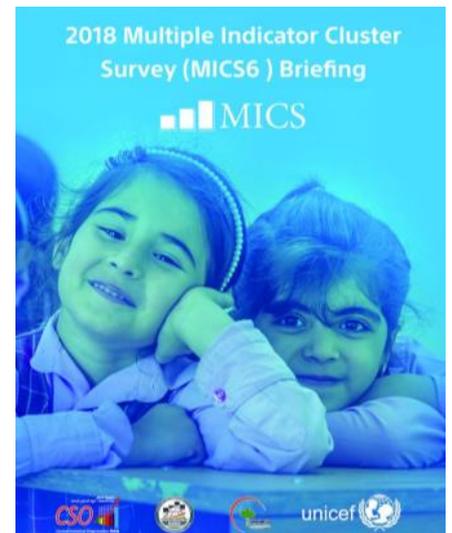
2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6) published

Baghdad, 16 February 2019 - The survey is the sixth round of Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) surveys carried out by the Central Statistical organization and the Kurdistan Regional Statistics office in coordination with the Ministries of Health in the Center and in Kurdistan Region and with the technical and financial support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). This survey is one of the most important tools for monitoring and measuring progress in the rights of children and women. It provides a picture of the situation of women and children in Iraq.

The MICS is based on internationally approved scientific methodologies. It is representative of the population of Iraq,

with a representative sample at the national and governorate levels of 20,520 families throughout Iraq. The survey used 228 interviewers from statisticians and medical doctors to gather information directly from selected households in the sample and over fifty days of actual fieldwork.

The survey is available at <https://bit.ly/2RKJD9A>



UNAMI Human Rights Office conducts monitoring visits to Juvenile Centre and IDP camp in Tikrit City

Tikrit, 19 February 2019 - The Human Rights Office (HRO) of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) conducted detention monitoring at the Juvenile Detention Centre of

Tikrit City, to look at the different aspects of detention of juvenile offenders and to assess their adequacy vis-à-vis international standards. UNAMI-HRO also visited the Al-Karama IDP Camp

at the outskirts of Tikrit City to monitor the situation of the IDPs residing at the camp and discuss issues affecting its residents.



Mr. Karim A.A. Khan QC, Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD meets with His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani

Najaf, 23 January 2019 - Mr. Karim A.A. Khan QC, Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team to promote accountability for crimes committed by Da'esh / ISIL (UNITAD), was received today in Najaf by His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani. Mr. Khan briefed him on the mandate and initial activities of UNITAD. They were united in the need for Da'esh to be held accountable for their crimes and the important role that UNITAD has to play in this regard.

The Special Adviser emphasized that people from all parts of Iraq, from all communities and ethnic groups, suffered from myriad criminal acts by Da'esh. The Special Adviser highlighted that women, including those victims of sexual and gender-based violence, should be encouraged to come forward and give their accounts to UNITAD. This view was also supported by His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani. In this regard, the Special Adviser underlined that the identity and privacy of witnesses would be fully protected by the Investigative Team in

accordance with international standards.

The Special adviser also drew attention to the plight of children born from rapes and that communities should be encouraged to welcome and support both mother and child who are, in different ways, victims of terrible crimes by Da'esh. Mr. Khan finally intimated that he intends to visit all religious

leaders in Iraq to convey the same message in order to foster solidarity, compassion and cohesion amongst the various parts of Iraq and to create an environment conducive to the work of the Investigative Team and the imperative of accountability that meets international standards for Da'esh crimes.

Photo courtesy of the Office of His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani.



H.E. Sheikh Dr. Al-Taha, UNITAD call for Iraqis with information related to Da'esh crimes to share with investigative team

Baghdad, 30 January 2019 - His Eminence Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Hasan Al-Taha, Chairman of the Iraqi Jurisprudence Council, received a delegation from the United Nations Investigative Team for the Accountability of Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) at the Abu Hanifa Mosque, led by Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team Karim A. A. Khan QC.

His Eminence welcomed the investigative work UNITAD is undertaking in Iraq, and acknowledged the efforts being

made to support affected members of the Sunni community, along with others, who were subject to illegal occupation by Da'esh. Both sides emphasised that all Iraqis have suffered extensively, whether directly or indirectly, due to the crimes of Da'esh. It was also underlined that there must be no hierarchy of victims, and that every individual who has suffered international crime at the hands of Da'esh deserves that crime to be investigated.

The Special Adviser also drew attention to the plight of children born from rapes, and that communities should be encouraged to welcome and support both mother and child who are, in different ways, victims of terrible crimes by Da'esh.

His Eminence Sheikh Al-Taha and his companion clerics expressed their commitment to using all platforms available to them to encourage Iraqis to share information with the UNITAD investigative team. The Special Adviser stated: "His Eminence the Sheikh and the other senior clerics here are unanimous in their view that UNITAD deserves support. A promise was given, that from the pulpits of the mosques, among the communities, the message will go out that members of the Sunni community who have suffered at the hands of Da'esh, or have knowledge relevant to Da'esh

crimes, should give statements or information to the investigative team, so that there may be accountability."

Referencing the safety and security concerns that many Iraqis may have in giving evidence, the Special Adviser affirmed that UNITAD protects the witnesses and those giving information, in line with international standards, commenting:

"UNITAD is committed to the safety and wellbeing of those that share information or evidence. We will make sure that their privacy is fully respected, so that proper criminal cases can be built to ensure that those who are responsible in Da'esh are properly identified, and then subject to fair trials.

"His Eminence and UNITAD were unified in agreeing that women should be encouraged to come forward to share their testimony. UNITAD includes a dedicated female-only unit, so that women may have every confidence in cooperating with the investigation."

UNITAD is committed to representing all victim groups as per its mandate, and has already met with groups from faiths and ethnic groups affected, including leadership from the Government, as well as the Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, and the Baba Sheikh Khurto Hajji Ismail.



Chaldean Patriarch calls for unity among Iraqis of all faiths, calls for Iraqis to support UNITAD's investigative work against Da'esh crimes

Baghdad, 3 February 2019 – The Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church, His Beatitude Cardinal Mar Louis Raphael I Sako received a delegation from the United Nations Investigative Team for the Accountability of Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) on Thursday, led by the Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team Karim A. A. Khan QC.

The Special Adviser explained the mandate set by the United Nations Security Council to collect, preserve, and store evidence in Iraq of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide committed by Da'esh. The Special Adviser also outlined UNITAD's responsibility to work with survivors, in recognition of their right to accountability for crimes committed against them, or against their families. UNITAD's work is carried out with full respect for the sovereignty of the Government of Iraq and its stakeholders.



The Cardinal expressed the importance of co-existence, explaining how Christians, Muslims, and members of other ethno-religious communities in the country have always worked together for the collective good, especially in difficult times.

The Cardinal and fellow senior clergy shared their support for UNITAD's work in Iraq, and called for Iraqis of all faiths to unite in the spirit of human kindness and generosity of spirit to share information relating to Da'esh crimes with the investigative team.

UNITAD Special Adviser Karim A. A. Khan QC addresses Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS

Washington D.C., United States, 6 February 2019 – UNITAD Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team Karim A. A. Khan QC addressed the opening session of the ministerial meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS (ISIL/Da'esh) in Washington D.C.

Special Adviser Khan briefed the gathering on UNITAD's mandate to collect and analyse information of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide committed by ISIL. The Special Adviser thanked the Government of Iraq for its ongoing cooperation and support, acknowledging that effective working relationships have already been established with relevant national authorities.

The Coalition meeting was chaired by United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. During his opening remarks, Secretary of State Pompeo welcomed the hard work already undertaken by the UNITAD team towards the goal of accountability for ISIL in Iraq.

His Excellency the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Iraq, Mohamed Ali Al Hakim, in his opening address to Ministers, also welcomed UNITAD's efforts to collect evidence that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Iraq.

Nobel Laureate and survivor of ISIL crimes Nadia Murad was also in attend-

ance. Special Adviser Khan took the opportunity to thank Ms. Murad for her work and advocacy on behalf of victims. He emphasised that UNITAD will continue to work tirelessly with survivors to ensure that the international community delivers on its commitment to accountability for the crimes they have suffered. The Special Adviser outlined ways in which States may continue to support UNITAD's work, including through the provision of financial support, secondment of national personnel, and the transmission of evidentiary material.

During the meeting, His Excellency Dr. Mutlaq Al-Qahtani, Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State

of Qatar for Counterterrorism and Mediation, announced that Qatar will host an international conference later this year aimed at strengthening global efforts to hold ISIL accountable of their crimes, pursuant Security Council resolution 2379 (2017). The Special Adviser thanked Qatar for its invitation, which will serve to enhance the collective efforts of Member States and UNITAD in holding ISIL members accountable for their crimes.

The Coalition affirmed in its outcome document that ensuring members of ISIL are held accountable for their crimes in a manner respectful of due process and the rule of law is critical to its degradation.



UNITAD Khan meets Foreign Minister Alhakim

Washington, D.C., United States, 11 February 2019 – Iraqi Foreign Minister, Mohamad A. Alhakim, met in Washington with Mr. Karim Khan QC, head of the Investigation team on crimes of Da'esh in Iraq.

The meeting discussed the role of the UN investigation team in collecting and storing evidence that criminalizes Da'esh terrorist gangs and keeping them in Iraq to ensure the rights of Iraqi victims of different faiths, ethnicities and sects in the liberated areas and the Iraqi martyrs who sacrificed themselves for their land and people.

Mr. Khan emphasized that the investigation team has a specific mandate in accordance with the Security Council resolution and will act accordingly and

will not deviate from it to search for and document Da'esh organized crime

to achieve justice and prevent criminals from escape.



Special Adviser Khan participated in the experts meeting on the Yazidi Memorial of Remembrance hosted by UNESCO

Baghdad, 18 February 2019 - The Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD), Mr. Karim A. A. Khan QC, participated in the experts meeting on the Yazidi Memorial of Remembrance hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cul-

tural Organization (UNESCO) at the Prime Minister's Guest House. The meeting was chaired by Mahdi Al-Allaq, Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, and convened national authorities, including Mohammed Al-Tamimi, representatives from the Yazidi community, including Sheikh Nayef Jasim Qasim and Nadia's Initiative, and international and national

experts, to discuss the conceptualization of a memorial in remembrance of the crimes committed by Da'esh/ISIL in Kojo, Sinjar District.

The Special Adviser expressed full support for the memorial, stressing that "memorialisation needs to include positive stories of people having helped victims from across different communities to demonstrate the solidarity of Iraq." The Special Adviser reiterated that "justice is a process that takes time and as this process is evolving the nature of memorialisation continues to change," adding that the form memorialisation of crimes committed by Da'esh/ISIL will assume has to be "based on consultations and engagement with victim groups." He further stressed the need for criminal investigations and the right of victims and survivors to truth and meaningful accountability, adding that memorials represent an integral part of the right to redress.



UNITAD Special Adviser extends condolences at passing of Yazidi Emir Tahseen Said Beg

Baghdad, 29 January 2019 - The Special Adviser of the United Nations Investigative Team for the Accountability of Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) Karim A. A. Khan QC today extended his sympathy at the passing of the Emir of the Yazidi community, Tahseen Said Beg, in Hanover, Germany. The Special Adviser stated:

"It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of the Emir of the Yazidi community, and we offer our sincere condolences to the Emir's fami-

ly and loved ones, the Yazidi religious leader, Baba Sheikh, as well as all Yazidis.

"While we extend our sympathies on the passing of the Emir, we must also pay tribute to his role in the assistance of survivors of recent crimes targeting the Yazidi population and salute his steadfast devotion to his leadership position and to members of the Yazidi faith, which stretches back over 70 years.

The Special Adviser emphasised that

the Yazidi community has suffered greatly at the hands of Da'esh / ISIL, and that the Emir and his family have played a key role in supporting the Yazidi survivors. He continued:

"In uniting at this time of loss, we are inspired to persevere in our collective commitment to the pursuit of accountability and justice for those who have inflicted harm upon members of this faith as well as against other communities."

UNITAD Khan emphasized the value of establishing an undeniable evidence-based record capable of withstanding the scrutiny of criminal trial proceedings as an effective measure in countering the narrative of violent extremism of ISIL (Da'esh)

Baghdad, 20 February 2019 - Speaking at the Fourth Conference on Countering Da'esh Propaganda and Ideology held today, the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD), Karim A. A. Khan QC, emphasized the value of establishing an undeniable evidence-based record capable of withstanding the scrutiny of criminal trial proceedings as an effective measure in countering the narrative of violent extremism of ISIL (Da'esh).

The meeting was hosted by Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi and convened international and national senior officials to formulate a strategy to counter ISIL (Da'esh)'s propaganda, recognizing that despite ISIL (Da'esh)'s loss of territory, its ideology continues to represent a threat.

The establishment of UNITAD demonstrates a commitment of the Government of Iraq and a concerted effort by the Security Council and the interna-

tional community to ensure the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed by ISIL (Da'esh) based on international law. The pursuit of justice and accountability, Mr. Khan underlined, can be an effective too capable of exposing ISIL (Da'esh) crimes and thereby countering their false narrative and ideology of hate and intolerance.

The Special Adviser stressed the need to put aside political, ethnic, religious and other differences and to come together under the common banner of humanity in order to prevent a resurgence of ISIL (Da'esh) ideology and to ensure the right of survivors and victims to justice as an essential means of securing sustainable peace.



Humanitarian

UNHCR distributed vital medicines to Palestinian refugees in Iraq

Baghdad, 3 January 2019 - Thanks to the generous contribution from the People's Republic of China, UNHCR Iraq, in collaboration with the Islamic Relief Iraq, has distributed vital medicines to hundreds of Palestinian refugees living in Baghdad and Ninewa to treat chronic diseases.



Continued winter assistance needed for displaced and vulnerable Iraqis: IOM

Erbil, 15 January 2019 – As winter temperatures set in, accompanied by winds and rain, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq has completed the three-month distribution of 25,000 winter non-food item kits. Consisting of heaters, blankets and jerry cans, the kits meet the most urgent needs of 150,000 vulnerable individuals across the country.

IOM's winterization assistance reached 13,000 displaced households in camps, thousands of displaced families in informal settlements, and thousands of others who have returned to their home communities.

"Although displaced households are continuing to return to their home communities, those remaining in camps or informal settlements are often the most vulnerable and have little to protect themselves against the cold winter conditions," said Gerard Waite, IOM Iraq Chief of Mission.

In partnership with local governmental authorities, IOM prioritized distributions in hard-to-reach or insecure areas where other humanitarian partners are not present, such as in communities bordering Syria and in Qayrawan and Hatra, in Ninewa governorate.

Of the 1.8 million persons who remain displaced as a result of the conflict with ISIL, over 500,000 are in camps and 140,000 live in critical shelter arrangements (informal settlements, schools or religious or abandoned buildings). More than four million people previously displaced have returned to their homes since mid-2015, but many continue to live in precarious conditions.

As people return home, many have found their personal belongings stolen and their houses damaged. With massive destruction in areas of return and limited economic opportunities, return-



ee households are exposed to the harsh effects of winter and are unable to afford items to cope with the cold.

The provision of humanitarian assistance in areas of return is therefore critical to support the reintegration of returning displaced families and other vulnerable households in conflict-affected communities.

"After being displaced for a year and a half in the city of Kirkuk, we returned to our village, which was destroyed by ISIL. Everything was damaged, including our house and shop, which was our only source of income. We had to start our life from scratch, while our deteriorating financial condition and cold weather forced us to use firewood as a heating source during the chilly winter nights. We are very happy to receive these items, now we will have a heater to stay warm," said Nora, a mother of four children, at a distribution in Al Abassi district, Kirkuk governorate.

"Despite the success of this winter re-

sponse operation, we are extremely concerned for the many Iraqis who remain in displacement who will have to endure another harsh winter in camps and in sub-standard shelters," said Alberto Preato, Head of IOM Iraq's Preparedness and Response Unit.

"This year we are piloting innovative approaches to housing reconstruction and cash-based humanitarian assistance to enable displaced families return to their home communities," he continued.

IOM's winter non-food item kits are funded by the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

As more displaced families attempt to return home, IOM remains committed to supporting the Government of Iraq to seek durable solutions for vulnerable displaced persons and address needs of conflict-affected communities throughout the country.

German delegation visits Domiz Refugee Camp

Erbil, 19 January 2019 – Today, UNICEF hosted a German Foreign Affairs delegation led by German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) Country Manager, Ms. Almut Knop. The delegation visited a child protection centre UNICEF is running with the Department of Labor and Social Affairs for the Kurdistan Regional Government at Domiz refugee camp. It is one of many projects UNICEF is doing with generous support from the Government of Germany.



President Salih contributes to the UNHCR Winter Challenge

Baghdad, 24 January 2019 - UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency is very grateful to the President of Iraq Barham Salih for his generous contribution to its Winter Challenge campaign and for raising awareness on the critical needs of thousands of displaced families exposed to harsh winter conditions in the country. UNHCR in Iraq aims to assist more than 655,000 internally displaced Iraqis and 228,000 Syrian refugees through the distribution of household items and cash assistance to mitigate the impact of the low temperatures, heavy rains and snow.

UNHCR is honoured by this engagement at the highest level and would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank the President, and everyone who has contributed to this cam-



paign, for their example of humanitarian commitment to vulnerable families

who are still suffering the hardship of displacement.

German delegation visited IDPs on Mount Sinjar

Erbil, 27 January 2019 - Thousands of families from the district of Sinjar remain displaced in camps and urban settings in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, unable to return to their homes due to prevailing security concerns, damage to their homes, widespread unexploded ordnance contamination, loss of livelihoods, and a lack of services.

In addition, around 2,300 families who sought refuge from ISIL on Mount Sinjar in 2014 remain displaced on the mountain top. Living conditions in the informal settlement are poor, with IDPs facing particular hardship during the cold winter months. A delegation from the German Consulate in Erbil visited the district of Sinjar, including Sinjar town and the IDP settlement on Mount Sinjar, on behalf of the German Embassy in Baghdad. IDPs and returnees in Sinjar town, as well as families still displaced on the mountain, told the German delegation, alongside improved security, their principle needs include access to livelihoods, the rehabilitation of homes and infrastructure, and the

restoration of health and education services and water and electricity networks. With support from Germany, IOM is rehabilitating 6 kilometers of Sinjar Center's main water network, reaching 4,500 individual beneficiaries. A German diplomat said: "Germany is committed to the stabilization and reconstruction in Sinjar in order to enable displaced families to return with safety and dignity. IOM is making an

important contribution to improving health, livelihoods, and shelter in Sinjar, but a lot of work remains to be done by all of us."

IDPs and returnees told a delegation from German Consulate in Erbil, that alongside improved security, needs include access to livelihoods, rehab of homes and infrastructure, restoration of health and education services, water and electric supply.



UN Women organizes workshop for Madad programme implementing partners

Erbil, 28 January 2019 - UN Women Iraq Country Office organized a monitoring and evaluation workshop for seven implementing partners (IPs) benefiting from the EU-supported Madad Programme, "Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities in Iraq, Jordan and Turkey."

The workshop included sessions on the IPs data collection activities that took place in 2018 and addressing challenges faced and the way forward for 2019. The workshop provided a space for UN Women to ensure consistency in reporting, harmonization of data collection tools and efforts of IPs.

The results of a baseline survey con-

ducted by Madad IPs in 2018 were also presented during the workshop. The survey aimed at obtaining detailed information on the overall situation facing the programme's female beneficiaries in Iraq, such as demographics, livelihoods and socioeconomic status, women empowerment and GBV.

UNHCR donated a shovel truck to the mayoralty of Tuz Khurmatu

Tuz Khurmatu, 29 January 2019 - As part of its continued support to the Federal Government of Iraq in its reconstruction efforts, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency donated yesterday a shovel truck to the mayoralty of Tuz Khurmatu, an area that has experienced multiple displacement, and where a number of communities are returning to rebuild their homes.

“Arabs, Kurds, and Turkmen in Tuz Khurmatu are trying to set a good example for an inclusive Iraq. This shovel truck will help clearing the debris of war in the city. We want it to be a symbol of Tuz Khurmatu moving on towards a better future”, said UNHCR Representative, Mr. Bruno Geddo, during his meeting with the Mayor of the city, Dr. Hasan Zain.



IOM is supporting IDP families in Sinjar with a cash-for-work project



Dohuk, 30 January 2019 - “We fled Qahtaniyah to Khanke, Dohuk, when ISIL tacked our village in 2014. But being in displacement away from home was very difficult for us, so we returned to live on Mount Sinjar; although we live in harsh conditions, we feel more comfortable here because it is our land and we are closer to home. I have seven children; my three-year-old daughter needs an operation. She has undergone three operations so far. I had some

sheep but sold them to pay for her treatment. Now I am saving the money I earn through this cash-for-work project to pay for her fourth operation,” said Barkat Khudur Micho. Barkat and more than 2,300 other families from towns and villages around Sinjar currently live on Mount Sinjar in tents. IOM is supporting these families with a cash-for-work project that includes cleaning schools, streets and municipality buildings, rehabilitating

hospitals and tents, and flood mitigation measures in return for cash.

“I have two children; one of them has a disability. We have been living in a tent on Mount Sinjar since 2014. We used to work in farming before ISIL attacked our village and pushed us onto the mountain, where we don't have many livelihood opportunities to cover our needs. My husband goes to Duhok as a daily paid worker to support the family, but what he earns is not enough. Participating in this cash-for-work project allows me to support my family as well. With the money I earn here, I buy milk for my child, medicine and other items for the household,” said Basima Dakhil, from Til Uzer village. Over 2,300 families still live in displacement in Mount Sinjar.

Over 225 women and men are benefiting from a cash-for-work project in Sinjar's centre and Mount Sinjar. The project includes cleaning schools, streets and municipality buildings, rehabilitating hospitals and tents, and flood mitigation measures in return for cash.

This project is funded by USAID - US Agency for International Development.

Official registration of asylum seekers and refugees in Duhok Governorate has just started

Dohuk, 3 February 2019 - With the support from UNHCR Iraq, the Permanent Committee of the Ministry of Interior of Iraq (PC-MOI), in collaboration with the Residency-Department of Duhok, started the official registration of asylum seekers and refugees in Duhok Governorate.

This comes after extensive discussions between UNHCR and authorities from both the Iraqi Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government to agree on the modalities of implementation of the registration of asylum seekers and refugees throughout the coun-

try, including in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The registered individuals will be granted a PC-MOI ID card. This ID card will serve as an official recognition of their status which legalizes their residency and facilitates their freedom of movement and access to public services throughout the country.



Vocational training opening perspectives for IDPs

Karbala/Qaraqosh, 4 February 2019

- "When we displaced from Telafar to Karbala in 2014, I did not know anyone here. I went through rough times because of our displacement and felt a great emotional vacuum," said Najah, 46.

"A couple of years later, IOM visited our house and told me that IOM organized sewing courses I could attend. I gathered the courage to participate and made many friends and acquaintances there. After I graduated from the course, I opened a sewing small business and I now have many clients from my neighborhood. Having friends and a job improved my psychological state and I finally started adapting to the neighborhood where I live," added Najah, who attended an IOM sewing course in Karbala Governorate.

"My journey with story writing started after I participated in the blogging course organized by IOM. I needed to add spark to my life and to express my ideas and emotions; I found all this during the course," said Hawar'a, a 20-year-old who displaced from Telafar to Karbala.

"Now I can share my thoughts, express myself and transmit positive messages that can contribute to encouraging young people to take the path that is right for them.

I hope that these activities continue, and I am planning to write a book to disseminate my thoughts and writings on social networks," added Hawar'a.

"Working here has lifted our spirits; we come here to support our families but most importantly, we enjoy being and working together," said Rana.

Rana and 25 other women from Qaraqosh were trained in quilt making by IOM and Prosperity Catalyst with sup-



port from U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. IOM supports returnee women in Qaraqosh through training courses in sewing and embroidery.

"Learning to make quilts was a difficult journey! When I first joined the course I did not even know how to hold the needle; I did not know anything about sewing or embroidery. I did enjoy the process, though, as we learned more each day until we became professional quilt makers. Making a small quilt takes one day, but a big one might take up to a week. I enjoy making quilts and I receive a salary in return for my work, which I can then use for my family needs. My son suffered an eye injury and I was ablated pay for his treatment from my salary. This has had a positive psychological impact on me. I love this place and the work we do here," said Shethor.



Over 160,000 displaced children protected from harsh winter in Iraq (UNICEF)

New York/Baghdad, 7 February 2019 – As cold winter weather sweeps across Iraq, UNICEF has provided warm clothes to over 160,000 internally displaced and refugee children, including those in hard-to-reach areas such as Sinjar, where UNICEF has maintained a strong presence since violence escalated in 2013.

“Although fighting has subsided in Iraq, an estimated 1.85 million people, including 825,000 children, remain displaced,” said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director. “One-third of all displaced children live in camps, in poorly insulated tents, often with no winter clothes or shoes. These children have little protection against flooding and the bitter cold, putting them at risk of illness, hypothermia and death.”

As part of UNICEF’s winter response, over 100,000 displaced children in camps in Anbar and in and around Mosul received supplies to keep them warm. Winter support has also included vulnerable Syrian refugees through the innovative use of vouchers.

In mountainous areas like Sinjar, temperatures drop below freezing, exposing children and pregnant mothers – many of them living in camps - to the elements. UNICEF is helping keep these vulnerable minorities warm: Nearly 50,000 Yazidi children and over 2,500 pregnant Yazidi mothers living in the area received coats, boots, hats, gloves, sweaters and trousers.

“We all need to do the best we can to make sure that vulnerable families do not spend another winter out in the cold in camps or in temporary shelters,” Fore said. “Now that the violence has subsided, and a new government is in place, Iraq has a unique window of opportunity to rebuild the country for all its children, so that they can live in peace and harmony.”



Sweet taste of survival and resilience



Dohuk, 10 February 2019 - Each of the three women was going about her normal life when ISIL overran Sinjar, forcing them to run for their lives, fleeing the wreckage of their villages for the distant promise of a safe haven.

Along the way, they faced unimaginable levels of horror, uncertainty and despair.

Now, after more than four years of a transformative journey of survival, the trio of Malika Sha’aboo, 32, Safa Faisal, 28, and Shireen Haidar, 30, work together to run a kitchen and café at Qadiya camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) near the city of Dohuk in

northern Iraq.

The women did not know one another until they attended an IOM course on livelihood training.

“Our love of cooking was all we had left of our previous lives, after all those months of hardship. It was perhaps the only gift we could use to have hope again,” said Shireen, mother of six, from Tel Ezeir, a Yazidi town situated south of Mount Sinjar.

When ISIL fighters began their onslaught in Sinjar in August 2014, Shireen and her extended family were among those who fled en masse from the area.

After being briefly held by ISIL in a nearby village, Shireen and her family escaped to Mount Sinjar, where they spent a few weeks besieged on the mountain top. They were finally evacuated from the mountain and found shelter in an unfinished building in Zakho for six months before reaching Qadiya camp in mid 2015.

Malika and her family, from Khanasor, did not have such a lucky escape. As they did not have a car, they were forced to flee on foot. ISIL caught up with them, captured them and killed Malika’s father-in-law. Malika and her remaining family members finally managed to flee ISIL through Syria, traveling to Zakho before ending up at Qadiya camp.

Most of Qadiya camp residents are from the district of Sinjar, an overwhelmingly Yazidi area, but the camp is also home to other ethnoreligious groups.

ISIL’s attack and occupation of Sinjar and other parts of Iraq has shattered the already fragile relationships between groups, but in Qadiya camp, Muslim women like Safa live and work alongside their Yazidi friends.

A mother of three girls from Zummar, north of Mosul, Safa once studied law at Dohuk University but did not complete her degree because she got mar-

Sweet taste of survival and resilience *(continued)*

ried. Having the experience of higher education, Safa said, helped her to work as a volunteer with NGOs since arriving to Qadiya camp.

"We have fallen down several times in the last four years, and every time we got up again stronger," Safa recalls, her eyes filling with tears of sorrow. "Now we are full of hope in this new journey of running a business."

All three women agree that despite their years of displacement, outrage and despair, they have also had the opportunity to develop strong personal bonds in their temporary home, Qadiya camp, and this bond has now given life to an exciting new business venture.

"I was not a self-confident person, but when I approached IOM as a volunteer cooking trainer, I found myself," said Shireen. "IOM gave us this opportunity to get to know each other and develop a new skill to establish our business."

The IOM training course on livelihoods, attended by the three women, were funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), with the overall goal of contributing to psychosocial wellbeing and improving access to income-generating opportunities for vulnerable and displaced women in Dohuk and Ninewa. The project targeted a group of 1,000 women, 70 percent of whom from the Yazidi community.

During the training, Malika said, the women learned new business skills including ways to reach out to customers, dealing with budgets and developing marketing strategies.

For Shireen, the main takeaways of the training were small but important de-

tails. "Before attending the training, we had no idea how to market our business or how to deal with products' shelf life," She said.

"For example, now we know that when the expiry date of a product is approaching, as a marketing strategy, it's time to sell two products for the price of one, before being forced to let it go for free."

"In the framework of this project, IOM's support included initial training and ongoing coaching and mentoring, as the women used small grants to put their skills into practice," said Siobhan Simojoki, head of IOM's Community Stabilization Unit.

"Iraqi families who survived ISIL's atrocities have suffered immeasurably. In IDP camps and host communities in Dohuk, IOM is providing mental health and psychosocial support, while also empowering women to meet the needs

of their families and seeking to restore hope in their community. We are extremely grateful for the support provided by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation – especially as there are significant gaps in the funding available to provide mental health and psychosocial support and other services to Yazidi and other IDPs," added Simojoki.

The trio of women have decided to call their café "Sweets of Hope".

"We also have plans for the future. Once our areas of origin are secure and prosperous enough for us to go back, we will expand the brand in our three areas of origin," Shireen said.

"For now, it's time to recruit our husbands to work in and support the kitchen," Malika added, laughing.

Story by Nima Tamaddon/IOM Iraq



IOM Social Cohesion workers and a group of volunteers organized a surprise visit to the nursing home in Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 11 February 2019 - Habiba Mirza lost all her family members long time ago; so have most of the elderly who live at Kirkuk's nursing home. Residents of the nursing home do not normally receive visitors other than their ombudsman; they have not felt the warmth of being home, among family and loved ones for a long time, so a friendly visitor is always a source of joy and excitement.

IOM Social Cohesion workers and a group of volunteers organized a surprise visit to the nursing home. They had lunch with the elderly residents, played music, and sang and danced with them.

"This is an unforgettable day for me. I cannot express how happy spending time with these wonderful young people

has made me. God bless them all. They brought joy, fun and happiness to our hearts," said Habiba.

IOM Social cohesion activities in Kirkuk are supported by Netherlands Consulate General in Erbil.



UNHCR stands with refugees and displaced Iraqis to tackle winter

Baghdad, 12 February 2019 - Winter conditions in Iraq are harsh, especially for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in tents in the mountainous areas of the Kurdistan Region, where temperatures drop below freezing level. Throughout the winter season, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is aiming to reach 154,950 refugee and IDP families in camps and urban areas, to provide them both with in kind and cash support.

UNHCR's programme is designed to give families the option to buy what they need to shelter from the elements and keep themselves warm. The fami-

lies benefiting from this programme are particularly vulnerable. Many of them have exhausted their resources, and rely on humanitarian assistance.

"My husband lost his job and we did not know how to afford the things we need for the cold months" said 45 year-old Najiba Mahmood, a Syrian refugee residing in Domiz-1 camp in Dohuk Governorate. "With the cash I have been given, I will purchase what I need to keep myself and my family warm." Refugee families in camps and urban areas received a one-off cash grant of USD 400, while IDP families living outside of camps received USD 200. In

all, 87,813 Syrian refugee and IDP families received their one-off cash grant as of end of January 2019. Cash grants are delivered through a mobile wallet, which is created by the financial service providers when registering identified refugees and IDPs. Individuals can then cash out the grants through certified mobile money agents. Hotlines have been set up to allow beneficiaries to seek assistance or report any complaints or problems faced in receiving their grants.

Through its partners, UNHCR also distributed core relief items (CRIs) such as blankets, plastic sheets, jerry cans for kerosene, and heating stoves. The distribution of CRIs began in November and as of end of January 378,434 persons had been reached, comprising of 309,054 IDPs and 69,380 refugees.

"Living under a tent is not easy, all the more so in cold weather. UNHCR is reaching a record number of persons in need with winter cash and core relief items across Iraq. This will make their living conditions more bearable, allowing them to continue being productive throughout the winter" said UNHCR Representative in Iraq, Mr. Bruno Geddo.



New findings show lack of durable solutions for displaced Iraqis

Erbil, 12 February 2019 – Five years after the start of the ISIL crisis in Iraq, more than 1.8 million people remain displaced. While most internally displaced persons (IDPs) living outside of camps initially saw their living conditions improve in the years immediate after displacement, now many live in a state of limbo – often working in the informal labour sector, still crowding extended families into small living spaces and relying on funds from family members or government pensions. These are the findings of the latest round of an ongoing, multi-year study the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Georgetown University have conducted with nearly 4,000 internally displaced families living out of camps.

Access to Durable Solutions: Three Years in Displacement is the report being released today (12/02), the third round of the survey since the IOM/Georgetown study began in 2015. Each year, IOM enumerators conduct interviews with the families on eight criteria that contribute to what the humanitarian community has defined as durable solutions for IDPs: safety and security, living standards, employ-

ment, housing, family separation and reunification, documentation, participation in public affairs and access to justice.

"These IDP families have found ways to meet their basic needs, but they have done so by lowering their standards of living or depending on others by borrowing money and receiving aid or charity," said Georgetown University Professor Rochelle Davis.

"Over time, we see that people are surviving, but primarily by resorting to these short-term or crisis-driven solutions rather than long-term, sustainable solutions," she continued.

The study also shows that the sense of safety and security among IDPs has significantly increased in the past three years and more people claim to have confidence in state-run institutions to pursue and achieve justice, rather than tribal or religious authorities.

Interestingly, throughout their time in displacement, IDPs have increased their participation in both civic groups and local reconciliation initiatives in their areas of displacement but overall participation remains low (an increase of 4 per cent to 13 per cent). In contrast, among the returnees surveyed in

this same study, 20 per cent participate in local reconciliation efforts in their areas of origin.

The study also indicates that 75 per cent of IDPs live in rented accommodation throughout their period of displacement.

"While approximately four million IDPs have returned to areas of origin, or have moved to other locations, about 1.8 million remain displaced. They have proven to be highly resilient yet remain vulnerable and in need of continued support from the humanitarian community," said Gerard Waite, IOM Iraq Chief of Mission.

A displaced father from Ramadi, Anbar Governorate, now living in Basra who participated in the study said: "My situation improved a lot in the past five months because I became known for being a professional carpenter. This has supported my family's income. Before finding this work, we had no new clothes, no education, and sometimes no healthcare. Therefore, in these times we are blessed with enough income to provide our basic needs."

Please see related video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnqMJLC6M6k>

Australian delegation visited an IDP camp in Karbala

Karbala, 19 February 2019 - Together with IOM Iraq staff, a delegation from the Australian Government visited an IDP camp in Karbala. The camp hosts 120 families who were displaced from Ninewa, Kirkuk, and other areas during the ISIL crisis. The delegation also visited a Youth Centre and discussed the needs of families who have been unable to return to their homes with IOM Iraq beneficiaries.



Australian delegation visited Qaraqosh, spoke about challenges to achieve peaceful coexistence

Qaraqosh, 25 February 2019 - A delegation from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs in Canberra, along with representatives of the Embassy of Australia in Baghdad and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), visited Qaraqosh, a diverse town in the Ninewa Plains, and spoke to community and religious leaders about challenges to achieving peaceful coexistence in the post-ISIL context. The delegation also visited Hassan Sham IDP camp and spoke with IDPs about barriers to return

to their areas of origin. With support from Government of Australia, IOM is working to re-establish trust and strengthen social cohesion in Ninewa and other conflict-affected areas, with a view to preventing re-emergent crises and further displacement and outward (irregular) migration. IOM's programming is based around the principle of inclusivity and seek to promote the social and economic empowerment of people with disabilities.



Cleaning up a camp

Fallujah, 25 February 2019 - IOM's Camp Coordination Camp Management Team, funded by the European Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), in Amriyat Al Fallujah Camps in Anbar Governorate conducted a large-scale cleaning campaign in the camp.

"Before this project, the bathrooms and the camp in general were not in good conditions because we did not have cleaning materials. We used to clean only with water but this was not enough. Receiving the cleaning materials allowed us to improve the cleanliness of the place and protect our children from many diseases," said Suaad, a displaced mother of

nine children from Al Qaim.

Many displaced women and men participated in the campaign as part of the cash-for-work initiative.

"The cleaning materials we received were very useful and contributed to making the camp a cleaner place to live in. We sometimes bought cleaning materials, but they are very expensive, so we could not afford them often. This caused the spread of many communicable diseases and affected our children's health. Moreover, with the money we have received through the cash-for-work initiative, we can buy some of our needs," said Reham, who displaced from Al Qaim in 2014 and has six children.



UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq Ms. Ruedas visited humanitarian facilities in Sulaymaniyah

Sulaymaniyah, 26 February 2019 - The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq and Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Marta Ruedas, visited Sulaymaniyah's Ashti camp and toured the World Health Organization (Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office) Primary Health Clinic where UNFPA supports a reproductive health clinic that serves more than 700 individuals per week.

The UN official also visited the Canada in Iraq-funded Women center and met with women attending an awareness session on forced marriages. She asked them about the difficulties they face, their needs, requests, and expectations.

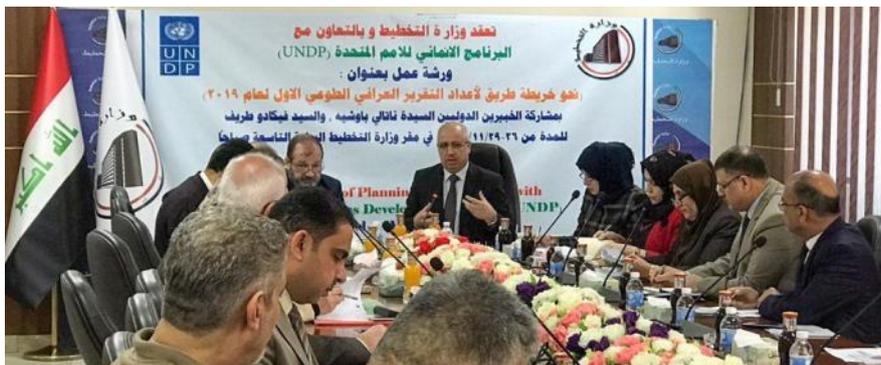


Rapid communications on flood preparedness workshops held in Erbil

Erbil, 18 December 2019 - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized two workshops in Erbil on 17 and 18 December 2018 about rapid communications on flood preparedness including risks, awareness, collaboration, and requirements in significant disasters, further presented Lessons absorbed from recent floods. The workshops targeted 45 employees and officials from Nineveh and Salahuddin governorates and conducted under UNDP Iraq's Environment, Energy, and Climate Change (EECC) programme with support from US Agency for International Development (USAID).



UNDP support to Iraqi Government to draft the first Voluntary National Reviews



Baghdad, 23 December 2018 - As Iraq will be presenting its first Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2019 to share its experiences, including successes, challenges, and lessons learned in implementing the SDGs targets, and Agenda 2030 in Iraq, the United Nations Development Programme, in partnership with the Ministry of Planning, organized a training workshop to review and discuss the current and prospective process of preparation of the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR). The event helped raise some consensus on the fact that an important focus of the Iraq VNR messaging should be on Inclusion, participation and leaving no one behind, the stakeholder engagement plan around the SDGs/VNR and beyond in future SDG monitoring exercises. Discussions around the 'VNR preparation roadmap' and discussions on the VNR process were fruitful.

The Government of Iraq, with support from multiple development partners, has engaged in developing new strategies and plans such as National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2022, Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and a Reconstruction and Development Framework (2018-2027) to meet the challenges of transition from a crisis context to sustainable development.

The Government has also engaged in developing a 'Vision 2030' that is aligned with the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), identified and addressed medium and long-term strategic development priorities.

During the training workshop, experts from UNDP Regional Hub, Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development Team in Amman (Dr. Nathalie Milbach Bouché, Team Leader, and Mr. Fekadu Terefe, Specialist) provided the linkage level between the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the NDP and the SDGs and the need to secure coordination between these processes with using the Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) tool. The experts presented preliminary findings of the RIA of the PRS and NDP. These initial findings suggest a significant degree of alignment among the strategic priorities of Iraq vision, plans and the SDGs targets, including a significant focus on three cores economic, environmental, and social. However, there are some gaps, including strengthening the evaluation and monitoring framework at this stage and the inclusion of the PRS beneficiaries themselves in the monitoring of the PRS in line with emerging good practices and SDG 16. This comes at a particular junction where the first Iraq VNR report will be

having one part on how Iraq is integrating poverty and leaving no one behind issues, and their policy and governance frameworks - the PRS, the Social Fund Program along with the SDGs targets and Agenda 2030. Group sessions were organized to discuss these findings, allowing participants to both deepen their knowledge of the SDGs and help them connect the PRS with multi-dimensional SDGs targets through the RIA. Clearly, the workshop provided a renewed opportunity to raise the participants' awareness about the SDGs, the NDP, the PRS itself and the VNR process which could provide an entry point for further communication and appropriation across the Ministry of Planning, and line ministries as well as local levels.

The Deputy Minister of the Planning, Iraq- Baghdad, Dr. Mahar Johan, has said that "we appreciate the usual effort of UNDP in supporting the Government in the preparation process of Iraq first VNR". In addition to that, the Country Director of UNDP - Iraq, Gerardo Noto, has mentioned that "we are happy to support the Government of Iraq to prepare the VNR report as it is the first Iraq VNR as well as it is important to the regional countries to show how SDGs can be implemented in conflict countries such as Iraq". As a follow-up to the workshops, the preliminary findings from the RIAs will be further validated and consolidated by national stakeholders across sectors, also in light of other strategic documents. The analysis shall also help Iraq showcase how the country has gone about integrating the SDGs in its core policy and planning frameworks during the country's Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report at the 2019 UN High-Level Political Forum.

By Sundus Abbas, SDGs focal point, UNDP Iraq.

WFP supports Iraq in modernizing its public distribution system

Baghdad, 9 January 2019 – The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Government of Iraq have launched an initiative to digitize the national public distribution system (PDS). The first phase of digitization will reach nearly 1.3 million people in and around Baghdad and Dohuk.

The PDS is Iraq’s biggest social safety net, providing food entitlements to almost the entire population in Iraq reaching 39 million people.

WFP is providing technical support to the government as it starts using identification technology and a citizen database to reduce processing time, improve services and maximise resources.

“The initiative guarantees the most efficient use of government resources and ensures that the intended citizens receive their food entitlement,” said WFP Country Director and Representative in Iraq Sally Haydock. “We’re using digitization to better serve Iraqi citizens through this key social safety net.”

With WFP’s support, the government will move to a digitized system where citizens’ data is safely encrypted, stored and the security is enhanced using fingerprints or iris scans. This will allow the government to identify and remove



duplicate records as well as conduct biometric verification at the time of food collection. The new system replaces the current paper-based system.

WFP is also designing a mobile application, myPDS, that people can use to collect their entitlements as well as to update their family information about births, deaths and marriages – at their convenience, using personal smartphones.

“The ministry is working on updating data as we put in place technology-

based solutions that address people’s needs,” said the Iraqi Minister of Trade Mohammed Hashem Al-Ani at the launch.

WFP is partnering on the initiative with the Iraqi Ministry of Trade. Modernizing the PDS is one of the priorities of Iraq’s National Poverty Reduction Strategy (2018 - 2022). WFP’s partnership with the Iraq Ministry of Trade dates back to the early 1990s when WFP established a database for the Public Distribution System.



Kirkuk development programs discussed with the Governor

Baghdad, 21 January 2019 - The Governor of Kirkuk, Mr. Rakan Said Al-Jubouri, met with Dr. Mohammed Siddiq Mudawi, Head of the Stabilization Program, UNDP. During the meeting, they discuss the plan of the United Nations Development Programme for the year 2019 and the mechanism of listing projects and the speed of implementation.



UNDP facilitate national discussions to prioritize the environmental dimensions of Iraqi vision 2030

Baghdad, 22 January 2019 - Launching a roadmap to prioritize environmental SDG targets and indicators in Iraq is highly important for the Government of Iraq, taken in consideration the current baselines, environmental risks, trends, synergies and trade-off with other SDG targets, in line with the Implementation Framework of Environmental Dimension of SDGs in the Arab region.

UNDP Iraq and the Ministry of Planning organized a workshop to prioritize and localize the environmental dimensions of the SDG targets and indicators for the national contexts of Iraq with focus on Goal 2: Zero Hunger, Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation, Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy, Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production, Goal 13: Climate action, Goal 14: Life below water, and Goal 15: Life on land. This initiative came at a particular juncture, as Iraq will be presenting its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) report, at the High-Level Political Forum in 2019, to share its experi-

ence with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The two-day workshop (October 24-25, 2018) organized in Baghdad and engaged about 32 professionals and representatives from different ministries on assessing and discussing the necessary environmental SDG targets, to reflect national priorities of the National Development Plan (2018-2022) and Iraq draft Vision 2030, with the SDGs targets and indicators. During the workshop, expert from UNDP Regional Hub in Amman, (Dr. Walid Ali, Regional Climate Change Specialist) familiarized participants with matrix analysis tool to be used as facilitation technique to identify a narrow set of high priority environmental SDG targets and indicators. The tool was also shown the environmental dimensions of SDGs and the interactions with other SDGs including SDG 1, 5, 6, and 16.

Participants were divided into four environmental SDG working groups to discuss the applicability, baseline of environmental SDG targets and indica-

tors for Iraq using the analysis matrix. Each group worked on identifying the interactions between environmental SDGs targets and indicator based on the National Development Plan 2030 and using the analysis matrix. Each group presented the preliminary findings of the analysis to implement further actions related to high priority environmental SDGs.

The Deputy Minister of the Planning, Dr. Mahar Johan, said: "This workshop conducted in close cooperation with UNDP and it is part of series workshops that aim to support the Iraqi government on launching environmental SDG targets prioritization and interlinkages with other SDGs targets, as Iraq is preparing the voluntary national report (VNR) at the High-level Political Forum to be submitted in 2019". This workshop is a roadmap for environmental SDGs targets prioritization in Iraq to emphasize the effects of the environmental SDGs targets and indicators on other SDGs".

The environmental SDGs findings from the analysis matrix will be further analyzed and consolidated by national experts across sectors, also in light of other strategic documents. Findings will be disseminated and used to further harmonize Iraqi National Vision 2030, with the environmental SDGs. The outcome of the workshop would play a crucial role to help Iraq facilitate implementation, monitoring, reporting and accountability of the environmental dimensions of the SDGs. The analysis shall also help Iraq showcase how the country has gone about implementing environmental SDGs in its core policy and planning frameworks during the country's Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report at the 2019 UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).

By Sundus Abbas, SDGs focal point, UNDP/Iraq.



In-depth study on Agriculture sector of KRI done by UNDP and FAO

Baghdad, 18 January 2018 - To mobilize high-caliber international expertise to support priority initiatives in the KRG's reform plan, UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform -KRG (FFER-KRG) in collaboration with UN-FAO conducted In-depth study on Agriculture sector of KRI – focusing on agriculture products, value chain, irrigation and water management. The team conducted more than 600 interviews with

farmers, grocery shops, customers, butchers, women selling their product on roadsides covering four Kurdistan Governorates.

FFER-KRG mobilize expertise for initiatives aimed at transforming and diversifying the Kurdistan Region's economy to increase resilience to threats and crises in communities. The Facility is operating under the leadership of the KRG's Ministry of Planning.



The innovative role of NGOs in deriving informal data for SDG16 indicators

Baghdad, 28 January 2019 - Iraq is one of the developing countries which has a lack of data availability for several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), organized two workshops on how NGOs can have effective role in gathering selected SDGs indicators data. This initiative came after series of meetings with NGOs and the Iraqi Government representatives towards enabling the social inclusion environment, as Iraq will present its first Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) report at the UN High-Level Political Forum HLPF in 2019, to share its success and challenges in localization of the 2030 Agenda goals and targets.

The workshops aimed to raise the awareness level of NGOs in the field of SDGs, in particular, SDG 5, as well as emphasize the importance of the partnership between NGOs and the Government on the preparing process of the first Iraq VNR report, and on leaving no one behind. Although the local NGOs have a distinguish role in drafting shadow reports, such as (Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW and Security Council resolution (1325), they faced a huge gap on tackling different issues from SDGs perspective.

The six-day workshops (November 20-22, and December 6-8, 2018) organized in Baghdad engaged about 34 representatives from different national and international NGOs across Iraq, with multi working backgrounds. The workshop assessed and discussed the roles of NGOs in the SDGs localizations, in order to meet the country's challenges of the transition from a crisis context to sustainable development.

After a brief presentation of SDGs, with a significant focus on SDG5 and SDG16 targets and indicators, the participants were divided into three working groups to discuss the applicability, needs, gender equality, peace, justice and good governance. These working groups allowed the participant to deepen their knowledge of the SDGs, raising awareness about SDGs implementation and help them to connect their own activities as non-governmental players with Agenda 2030.

Based on deep discussions on the role of civil society in peace building and in drafting the national framework for



recovery and development, Participants set the priorities and mechanisms which are related to the economic empowerment of women, gender equality, and promote the establishment of peaceful societies. They agreed to establish NGOs Alliance under the title "Sustainable Development Network 2030" which will be working on promoting sustainable development goals in different governmental and non-governmental sectors. This initiative emphasized the importance of involving NGOs with the government, particularly, with Ministry of Planning to participate in the preparation process of the development plans and strategies, as NGOs can provide support and technical assistance through communication and coordination.

The Chief of Hawa Organization for Relief and Development, one of the main local NGOs partner with UNDP, Buthinaa Mahomuad said: "we commend the usual effort of UNDP to support the NGOs on launching a roadmap for SDGs localization in Iraq, to be integrated with the Government as NGOs were unaware of the importance of Agenda 2030". In addition, SDGs focal point in UNDP -Iraq, Ms. Sundus Abass mentioned that: "our prioritized target is to domesticate SDGs successfully in Iraq, which should be done through leaving no one behind and especially the NGOs".

The first activity that had been launched by the Sustainable Development Network 2030, on January 2019, was the informal data collection for SDG 16 indicators. As Facebook is one of the most used social media platforms in Iraq, it had been used by the network to gather data related to SDG 16 indicators, through a questionnaire form that had been prepared via the

national VNR committee. The Sustainable Development Network 2030 developed the questionnaire form and published it to various local NGOs, youth, and academia pages on Facebook with an encouragement for the audience to share their experience. more than 1000 people respond to the questionnaire within the first three weeks of January 2019. The collected data was sent to the Central Statistics Bureau to analyze it and send it back to the VNR committee, to be used for first Iraq VNR, which is considered as the first action towards the establishment of the principles of leaving no one behind in the country.

By Dr. Sundus Abbas, SDGs Focal point – UNDP Iraq



Minister for the Middle East announces new UK aid package to help Iraq rebuild infrastructure and boost economy

Baghdad/London, 29 January 2019 - A new UK aid package is to help the Government of Iraq to reinvigorate its economy and rebuild hospitals, schools and other vital infrastructure, allowing Iraqis displaced by conflict to return home and restart their lives, UK Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt announced during a four-day visit to Iraq.

The UK is the first donor to the newly formed Iraq Reform and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF), following close cooperation between the Department for International Development (DFID), the Government of Iraq, the World Bank, Germany and other international partners to develop the fund.

The fund will:

- encourage innovative approaches and provide technical assistance to the Government of Iraq as it reconstructs areas affected by conflict, including the rebuilding of houses, schools, hospitals, factories and roads.
- provide opportunities to utilize UK and international expertise to help the Government of Iraq to carry out vital reforms that will make

the country more business friendly.

- help unlock Iraq's economic potential, generate jobs, boost potential for enhanced future trade with the UK and other international partners and lay the ground-work for long-term peace and stability following the conflict with Daesh.

In addition to tackling Iraq's long-term recovery and reconstruction, Mr. Burt also announced further support to help meet the immediate humanitarian needs of the 1.8 million people still displaced from their homes within Iraq, and a boost for stabilisation efforts to ensure vital services such as healthcare and electricity are reinstated quickly in places such as Mosul.

£16 million will be allocated to the Iraq Reform and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF), run by the World Bank, from DFID's budget. The IRRF will support Government of Iraq-led reconstruction efforts following the destruction caused by the conflict with Daesh, and support the implementation of longer term economic reform.

£6.9 million will be allocated to UNDP's

Funding Facility for Stabilisation in Iraq from the UK Government's Conflict, Security and Stability Fund (CSSF). It will directly support the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure in areas of Iraq liberated from Daesh. This will include hospitals, school, power plants and roads destroyed in the fighting.

£10 million will be allocated to UN OCHA's Iraq Humanitarian Pooled Fund from DFID's budget. It will support the ongoing humanitarian response, providing for the immediate needs of vulnerable people in Iraq displaced by conflict. It will help deliver clean water, medicine, shelter and a wide range of additional services to people living within temporary camps. Since 2014, UK aid in Iraq has provided 4.1 million people with life-saving healthcare, 2 million people with safe water and sanitation, 836,500 people with shelter and more than 408,000 people with food.

UK aid has provided £252.5 million in humanitarian support and over £110 million in stabilisation funding to the people of Iraq since 2014.

A training and consultative workshop on Green Climate Fund (GCF) held in Erbil

Erbil, 31 January 2019 - From 29 - 31 January 2019, UNDP Iraq supported a training and consultative workshop on Green Climate Fund (GCF) in Erbil for 28 senior staff from the Ministry of Health and Environmental as well as other key ministries and departments of the Government of Iraq.

The workshop was intended to support

the Government of Iraq develop its GCF Country Programme and is expected to; increase the understanding of the government's role and responsibilities to access and utilize GCF resources in designing, implementing, monitoring and closing adaptation and mitigation proposals; and, develop high quality and gender responsive GCF

Country Programme.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Jassim Al-Falahi, the Deputy Minister of Health and Environment said: "Iraq is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and therefore remains a priority country for international funding programmes". He acknowledged UNDP's essential role in supporting the Government of Iraq in identifying climate change challenges and designing appropriate programmes to tackle these challenges.

Speaking for UNDP, James Duku stated that: "Environmental protection and sustainable energy remain core to UNDP's mandate and that UNDP looks forward to continue supporting the Government of Iraq in strengthening national capacities to access, track and manage climate change financing effectively, with particular attention to the requirements of the GCF and other climate financings for the benefit of its people."

This workshop was organized and facilitated by UNDP's Environment, Energy and Climate Change (EECC) programme.



Restoration of reliable electricity supply in Mosul underway

Mosul, 4 February 2019 - In West Mosul a 132Kv mobile sub-station has just been energized for the 1st time! A key step in restoring reliable electricity for 750,000 people. This sub-station will feed two others currently being rehabilitated by UNDP in West Mosul, restoring reliable power to Al-Sinaea Ayman and Al-Haramat neighborhoods.



Canada's support to enhance the security and stability of Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon and ensure accountability in Syria

Ottawa, Canada, 6 February 2019 - The Government of Canada has just announced additional contribution to UNDP's stabilization efforts in Iraq. Today's announcement is part of Canada's Middle East engagement strategy, which includes \$205 million in stabilization and security programming. Canada's objective is to significantly contribute to the Global Coalition's efforts to dismantle and defeat Daesh, restore stability and promote regional security. Projects announced by the Government of Canada:

Funding Facility for Stabilization in Iraq

Implementing partner: United Nations Development Programme

Funding: Additional \$3 million for 2018 to 2019

The Funding Facility for Stabilization

provides the Government of Iraq with a mechanism to address the local population's immediate needs in communities that have been liberated from Daesh. The project supports four areas of engagement: 1) rehabilitation of essential infrastructure, 2) support for income-generation opportunities (including grants for small businesses), 3) conflict prevention in liberated communities, and 4) capacity support for local governments. This commitment is in addition to earlier contributions totaling \$13.6 million.

IED clearance in critical infrastructure sites of Ninewah and Anbar

Implementing partner: U.S. Department of State

Funding: Additional \$2 million for 2018 to 2019

Canada will contribute an additional \$2 million to support U.S. Department of State efforts to clear improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in liberated areas from Daesh in the governorates of Ninewah and Anbar. This additional funding will help address Daesh's deadly explosive remnants of war legacy, which is a major obstacle to the return of displaced persons and the delivery of assistance by both stabilization and humanitarian actors. This commitment is in addition to previously announced commitments of \$5.7 million.

This brings Canada's total contribution to CAD \$16.6 million, supporting @UNDP in its efforts to rehabilitate essential infrastructure and restore basic services in communities liberated from ISIL control.

UNHCR and WFP presented the initial recommendations to identify and mitigate the risk of abuse of power by private-sector service providers in the distribution of cash assistance to vulnerable populations in Iraq

Baghdad, 8 February 2019 - Last week, UNHCR Iraq and World Food Programme presented the initial recommendations to identify and mitigate the risk of abuse of power by private-sector service providers in the distribution of cash assistance to vulnerable populations in Iraq, as part of a joint global project. The event brought together many actors involved in the provision of humanitarian cash-assistance, including the Government, Donors, NGOs, and financial-service providers including banks and mobile money operators. The participants had the opportunity to debate about existing measures and potential actions to be

undertaken to continue mitigating risks of abuse of power in cash assistance in Iraq.

Cash assistance has steadily grown in importance and has become an integral part of the humanitarian response in Iraq. In areas where markets are functioning and accessible to beneficiaries, unconditional cash provides an efficient way to meet the needs of the most vulnerable displaced population, it allows refugees and displaced people to prioritize their spending based on their needs. As such, it is very important that all actors involved in the distribution of monetary assistance continue monitoring their exercises closely to

ensure all measures are in place to reduce all types of risks related to abuse of power.

As part of its continued support to the Federal Government of Iraq in its reconstruction efforts, UNHCR together with the World Bank and WFP is supporting the Ministry of Planning in establishing a Social Protection Forum, and has been working with members of the Cash Working Group, UN agencies and the World Bank in providing capacity building to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) to support a gradual absorption of needs-based assistance into the Iraqi social welfare system.

UNDP Iraq supported peace and advocacy training for 300 imams

Baghdad, 11 February 2019 – UNDP Iraq supported peace and advocacy training for 300 imams through Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) leads the early recovery and resilience agenda in Iraq by supporting employment and income generation through local NGO partners. In addition, UNDP supports central and local authorities in leading the crisis response and in the rehabilitation of basic social infrastructure, particularly in those areas where the return of displaced people is possible. Finally, UNDP seeks to pre-empt gross human rights violations, reduce risks of gender based violence, and foster social cohesion amongst diverse communities in developing tools to mediate and resolve conflicts.

The Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) for 2014-2018 is a critical contribution to this and focuses on areas that are not (or so far not sufficiently) covered by other humanitarian clusters or agencies.

UNDP thereby strongly complements the primarily life-saving and shorter term activities carried out by other humanitarian partners through this multi-sectoral, integrated programme strategy that has sustainability and resilience-building at its core. Activities are implemented in close collaboration

with local counterparts, as a critical basis for ownership and to contribute to longer term resilience of communities. "Religious Imams are leaders and have societal value, capacitating them can have a significant impact over a huge part of the society," said Dr. Ali, religious teacher in Mosul.



Knowledge-sharing session on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Kirkuk, 13 February 2019 - The Development Coordination Office (DCO) of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) hosted a briefing session on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for National NGOs (NNGOs) based in Kirkuk. A total of 25 participants representing the NNGOs attended the session, which aimed to raise awareness of the NNGOs based in Kirkuk on the SDGs and Agenda 2030.

DCO highlighted that the SDGs build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and aim to go further to end all forms of poverty. The SDGs are unique in that they call for action by all countries, rich-, middle-, and poor-income to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of



socio-economic needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. DCO outlined the integrated nature of the SDGs and how various partners and their actions can create synergies and linkages among them. DCO informed that this session is a part of series of sessions on SDGs and Agenda 2030 held for UN agencies and focal points of sub-national clusters operating in Kirkuk. Participants found the briefing very interesting and requested additional sessions for other NNGOs. The participants emphasised that overall responsibility for implementation for the SDGs and Agenda 2030 lies with the Government and recommended additional sessions to be scheduled for counterparts working in the Governorate of Kirkuk.

Launching the National Index on Anti-Corruption Initiatives

Baghdad 17 February 2019 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Jointly with the Commission of Integrity and the Federal Board of Supreme Audit organized the first pre-consultation workshop, to advocate, sensitize and collectively refine the National Index on Anti-Corruption Initiatives.

The workshop was attended by all the Inspector General's Offices of the Iraqi Ministries to discuss the Anti-Corruption National Index development and the implementation of the workplans, the overall methodology, the role of the inspector general's offices to support the respective ministries and public entities in the implementation process, in addition to identify the criteria to select the corruption practices to be targeted by the index. the im-

plementation is scheduled to start by the second quarter of the current year 2019.

The National Index is an innovative policy tool that aims to catalyze self-developed anti-corruption initiatives to counter corruption practices in the public sector, through institutionalizing the corruption prevention measures and approaches, with target to root out corruption causes and close any loopholes in the business processes/procedures. This activity came as part of UNDP commitment to support the respective government entities including the Commission of Integrity, the Federal Board of Supreme Audit and the Inspector General Offices to fight corruption pursuant to the MoU signed between UNDP and the Iraqi government in 2016 to assist the investigative and



audit bodies in their efforts to combat corruption. This support is provided by UNDP through the Funding Facility for Economic Reform-Federal and with generous contribution from Netherlands earmarked for the National Index on Anti-Corruption Initiatives.

With generous EU funding, empowered local communities and improved governance are within reach in Iraq

Erbil, 20 February 2019 – Hundreds of thousands of people in Iraq will benefit from two new projects funded by the European Union's Regional Trust Fund, MADAD. Launched today in Erbil, the projects aim at empowering local communities and improving governance in areas affected by conflict.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) are implementing a project together, and VNG International of the Netherlands is implementing another project. Minister of Planning at the Kurdistan Regional Government, Dr. Ali Sindi, stated: "The EU-UNDP support will help our societies recover much faster, and our local governance be revamped in line with our local and national plans. This is what our people need, now."

Programme Manager of MADAD, Mr. Ryan Knox, said: "The EU has been heavily involved in local governance and local development for quite a number of years. The first two phases of the Local Area Development Programme (LADP), the ongoing Municipality granting scheme in Kurdistan Region, and now the forthcoming project on supporting recovery and stability through local development – all these illustrate the steadfast commitment we have towards Iraq and cements our partnership with the Iraqi people. In tangible terms we want to assist the authorities in weaving back together the social contract of this country, to reconstruct cities and towns, to make



areas safe for the return of those who have had to flee their homes and to allow communities to heal and prosper."

In turn, Head of UNDP Office in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), Ms. Isabela Uribe, said: "The most vulnerable communities in Iraq have suffered enough in the past years. It is time for change. With the support of the EU, improved livelihoods and jobs are now within reach. We are grateful for this strategic partnership. Together we are making a lasting difference in the daily life of Iraqis."

"Essentially, the MADAD Regional Trust Fund enables UN-Habitat to work hand-in-hand with governorate and municipal officials to address the housing needs of the most vulnerable families affected in the targeted Governorates. We owe it to these families to rebuild their homes, and their lives, as quickly as possible," said Head of UN-Habitat Iraq, a.i., Ms. Yuko Otsuki.

Unit Manager for Europe, Middle East and North Africa at VNG International, Dr. Arne Musch, added: "VNG International (the Netherlands), PCPM

(Poland) and KL (Denmark), agencies and colleagues from EU member states, are happy and honoured to help connect the issues of displacement and return, to the issue of urbanisation, thereby helping subnational governments and service providers."

The project implemented by UNDP and UN-Habitat focuses on strengthening the long-term resilience of Erbil, Dohuk, Sulaimaniyah, and Ninewah. The four governorates were largely affected by the refugee and IDPs crisis. Nearly €10 million of EU funding will go towards improving housing and generating job opportunities with the objective of benefiting internally displaced people, Syrian refugees and host communities.

The project implemented by VNG International, PCPM and KL will focus on spatial planning, selected service sectors and the preparation of selected investments in these services in Duhok and Ninewah. The project will combine capacity building with concrete pilots. The projects are scheduled to be launched in Mosul on 21 February 2019.

50 million euros (USD 56 million) from EU to support Iraq stabilization and reconstruction as EU Commissioner, Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and UN Deputy Special Representative tour projects in Mosul

Mosul, 20 February 2019 - Seeing firsthand the impact of the assistance provided to help the people of Mosul recover from the devastation of the conflict with Da'esh (ISIL), a joint European Union-United Nations delegation toured stabilization and development projects in the city of Mosul in Ninewa Governorate, northern Iraq, and relief activities in Hamam al Alil IDP camp, bringing with it promises of additional support from the EU to the tune of 50 million euros (USD 56 million) for post-conflict recovery across Iraq and continued support to humanitarian response and development projects.

The delegation comprised European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Mr. Christos Stylianides, accompanied by the Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium and Minister of Finance, in charge of the Fight against Tax Fraud, and Minister of Development Cooperation, Mr. Alexander De Croo, and Ms. Marta Ruedas, the Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General and the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq.

On 19 February, the delegation called on the governor and the Provincial Council chair before touring the city, stopping at a primary school being run and rebuilt with the support of UNICEF and a WASH project run by the International Committee of the Red Cross in eastern Mosul, and a hospital supported by WHO in West Mosul, in conjunction with city authorities. Infrastructure, public services and the education system have been hard hit in the city due to the conflict, and their revival is necessary to ensure sustainable recovery and prevent any resumption of conflict, as well as to provide an opportunity for a better future for the next generation. At the Al-Sanaded primary school for girls in Mosul, the delegation met with parents and teachers, toured a sports field and an arts room. WHO is providing psychosocial support for the returnees in the city, and its programmes have been so well received that people from faraway areas were coming to seek assistance.

On 20 February, the delegation travelled to Hamam al-Alil where they toured a UNFPA-supported clinic for reproductive health, an IMC shelter for women victims of gender-based vio-



lence, co-financed by the Iraq Humanitarian Fund, and a UNICEF WASH services centre and water treatment unit.

“Daesh has been defeated on the battlefield but we must continue fighting against their poisonous ideology. We must address the root causes of this conflict and respond to the basic needs of all affected Iraqis. Otherwise, we may risk winning the battle on the ground but fail in the peace, with new cycles of violence,” the EU Commissioner said, announcing that the EU will provide 30 million euros (USD 34 million) to the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan allocated for Iraq. Speaking to journalists during the tour, the Commissioner added: “The European Union will continue to support all aspects of the crisis in Iraq, supporting Iraqi authorities, and showing tangible solidarity with the Iraqi people for as long as it takes.

The Commissioner also announced that another €20 million (USD 22.5 million) in development funding will contribute to the reconstruction of the country's cultural heritage, as well as the creation of jobs and opportunities for vulnerable youth.

Despite the end of the conflict with ISIL, its consequences continue to affect Iraq, with liberated areas in need of rehabilitation of houses, infrastructure and services. 1.8 million Iraqis remain displaced while an estimated 6.6 million will continue to need some kind of humanitarian assistance in 2019, with over half of those in Ninewa Governorate alone. In addition, Iraq hosts 250,000 Syrian refugees, mostly

in the Kurdistan Region. It is estimated that 5.5 million people need health support and 2.6 million children need access to education. Education is integrated into broader assistance, to cover children's physical and mental health, psychosocial support and protection aid.

Deputy UN Special Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator Ruedas said: “We have already supported a lot of the reconstruction of the health infrastructure, not just in east Mosul but also in west Mosul. With regard to the return of the displaced population, if they cannot return to their places of origin then some solutions have to be found to make sure that they are able to find their way to normal life outside of the camps. We in the UN will be working with the institutions of the government to make that happen.”



UN-Habitat and UNDP launched a project to strengthen the long-term resilience of subnational authorities in countries affected by the Syrian and Iraqi crises



Baghdad, 21 February 2019 - The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) today officially launched in Ninewa Governorate the “Strengthening the Long-Term Resilience of Subnational Authorities in Countries Affected by the Syrian and Iraqi Crises” project, funded by the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian and Iraqi Crises, the EU “Madad” Fund.

The project aims to improve the resilience of host and refugee population in communities impacted by the Syrian and Iraqi crisis, through strengthened

local multi-level governance system, and improve access to basic services, affordable housing and income in Ninewa Governorate, Erbil Governorate, and Dohuk Governorate. The project is proposed to target more than 427,000 direct beneficiaries.

H.E. Mr. Nawfal Hamadi Al-Sultan, Governor of Ninewa, extended his sincere appreciation and gratitude to the European Union for this generous funding and reiterated the government’s full commitment to work, cooperate and coordinate with UN-Habitat and UNDP following previous successful projects.

Dr. Erfan Ali, Deputy Regional Director of UN-Habitat Arab Region, comment-

ed that this project will benefit both Mosul and Sinjar municipalities through the provision of technical and financial assistance for the rehabilitation of damaged houses as well as the surrounding water and sanitation infrastructure, and support to address housing, land and property rights of the returnees and displaced persons.

Ms. Isabela Uribe, Head of UNDP Erbil office, stated: “I am very happy to be in the liberated city of Mosul once again. With UN-Habitat and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), we are undertaking two projects in Ninewa Governorate and Mosul city and we are determined to provide the community the best services.”

Mr. Arne Musch, Representative of VNG International, also implementing a complimentary project in Ninewa funded by the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian and Iraqi Crises, the EU “Madad” Fund, expressed the determination to work with the United Nations agencies to rebuild the resilience of the Iraqi community through various projects, assuring that they will continue to help local governments and municipal service providers to connect the issue of displacement and returns to the issue of urbanization.

Iraq Zero Hunger Strategic Review

Baghdad, 21 February 2019 - With support from WFP, the Government of Iraq implemented this Zero Hunger Strategic Review (ZHSR), under the lead of Dr. Mehdi al-Alak, Secretary General of the Iraq Council of Ministers. The process was a consultative and country-led exercise that provided a comprehensive analysis of the challenges Iraq faces in achieving SDG 2; identified gaps in policies and in-

country institutional capacities needed to achieve the SDG 2 targets; and examined the adequacy of national and international resources for addressing food and nutrition security. The review identifies critical constraints and presents relevant recommendations and cost estimates for achieving food and nutrition security by 2030. This, in turn, will inform the WFP Country Strategic Plan and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2020-2024.

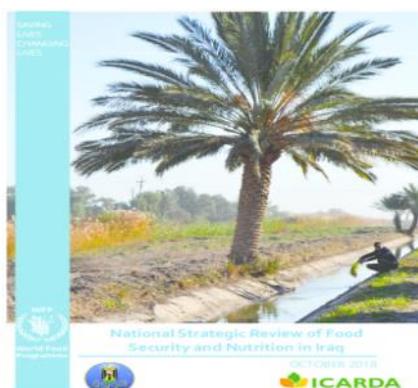
Here are the excerpts of the Executive summary of the Report:

The Government of Iraq has committed to the internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 2 which aims to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.” The National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition was undertaken under the leadership of Dr. Mehdi Al-Alak, Secretary General of the Iraq Council of Ministers, to

formulate a set of policies, institutional changes and investments to achieve SDG 2. An Advisory Committee comprising relevant government institutions helped guide the process and review the various proposed actions. Work was coordinated with the efforts of the National Food Security Committee, which was set up in February 2017, under the guidance of the Iraq Minister of Agriculture. The World Food Programme (WFP) provided help and support throughout the strategy formulation process.

The current situation: food and nutritional security in Iraq

Iraq has made significant progress on several human development and health indicators. Its per capita GDP has also been growing at a modest but steady rate of around 4 percent per year in constant prices. Overall food supplies are adequate – both in terms of calories and protein – with average dietary energy supply standing at 110 percent of adequacy level for the period 2016–



Iraq Zero Hunger Strategic Review (continued)

2014, and an average protein supply of around 65 g per capita/day.

However, there continue to be challenges with respect to food security and nutrition. The number of undernourished people increased from 6.5 million in 2002 to 10.1 million in 2016. There was a high child wasting rate, with poor nutrition status among children aged 59–6 months and among women, particularly, those of reproductive age (CFSVA, 2016). Nutrition-related illnesses were also high, particularly among women and children. In 2008, the obesity prevalence in Iraq reached an alarming 22 percent for men and 36 percent for women.

The value of imports of the main food groups in Iraq declined from USD 2.985 billion in 2009 to USD 1.187 billion in 2015. However, the demand for imported food continues to grow, as local agricultural production fails to keep pace with population growth, which is 2.5 percent annually. Import dependency remains high for most of the country's strategic agricultural commodities.

Factors driving food and nutrition insecurity

Poverty, which is one of the main drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition, remains high. About 22.5 percent of Iraqis live below the national poverty line – estimated at Iraqi dinars (IQDs) 105,000 (USD 84) per month – with the proportion reaching 40 percent in some areas. In addition, another 30 percent of the population is extremely vulnerable with a high risk of falling into poverty and food insecurity.

Widespread government intervention in food systems also discourages the development of a competitive private agricultural sector, transparent markets and diversified smallholder farming systems. The government pays high prices for some domestic crops, which distorts farmer incentives. Large feed subsidies are provided in the livestock sector, but imports remain high for livestock-based commodities, such as milk and poultry. Gender inequality and gender inequity remain critical issues due to the female role in nutrition and food security. The denial of equal learning opportunities impacts the ability of young girls and women to maintain independent and sustainable livelihoods. Low literacy and a lack of empowerment opportunities are driving high population growth, which is reflected in large family sizes, high economic dependency and a high proportion of children born to adolescent girls. High unemployment – 13 percent at national level, but 23 percent among

youth in both rural and urban areas – also drives food and nutrition insecurity in Iraq.

Pillars for achieving SDG 2

In order to achieve SDG 2, the Government of Iraq intends to initiate actions under five pillars.

Pillar 1: Improving safety net instruments. The two major existing safety net programmes – the Public Distribution System (PDS) and Social Safety Net (SSN) – will be reviewed and merged. Key changes will include: better targeting with a strong focus on the poor; a move from physical supply to cash transfers or vouchers, where appropriate; and better monitoring and evaluation. The change will be phased in over a three-year period.

Pillar 2: Enhancing sustainable agricultural production. This pillar would include a medium-term (three-year) programme to revive agriculture in conflict-affected areas. There will also be a major five-year investment programme to address structural problems such as: poor and damaged infrastructure; limited agriculture and livestock support services; and the low technical and training levels of farmers. Improvements will also be made along the value chain, with the promotion of climate-smart agriculture; protection of natural resources, including land and water; and the reclamation of degraded land. Enhanced credit will be provided to farmers for diversifying to high value crop and livestock products.

Pillar 3: Addressing the triple burden of poor nutrition. This will be addressed through a nutrition-sensitive, integrated approach, including building awareness, especially among youth and women, of the importance of having: diversified and nutritious diets; seasonal and locally produced products to eat; access to clean drinking water and hygiene; and adequate food preparation and storage. Mother and child nutrition activities should be implemented at school level to: i) enhance health and nutrition education and community involvement; and ii) facilitate a number of basic services for children. A well-designed school feeding programme should be put in place with effective oversight and coordination. A special programme should address nutritional related issues in conflict-affected areas.

Pillar 4: Increasing employment, especially among youth and women. Actions will be launched to strengthen skills of youth and women through vocational training as well as more formal one- or two-year diploma programmes. An agriculture and rural investment fund will

be established to help set up small and medium-sized businesses.

Pillar 5: Reforming marketing, trade and pricing policies. A review of the current trade and pricing policies will be conducted in order to identify potential gaps and reforms that, in turn, will allow the private sector to play a greater role in agricultural investment and production, trade, storage and marketing. In addition, the opportunities for benefits from coordinated trade policies with other national food security and investments programmes will be explored.

Costs

The implementation of the five action areas is expected to require an average annual investment of IQD 1,588 billion (USD 1.3 billion). The bulk of the costs would be for high priority repair and upgrading infrastructure for the agriculture sector. Other investment costs relate to: creating an efficient system for the monitoring and evaluation of the social safety net; creating awareness and addressing the burden of food insecurity; generating employment for youth and women; and reviewing trade and pricing policy review. In addition to investment costs, there also will be an annual recurrent cost of IQD 2767.0 billion (USD 2.3 billion) of which IQD 2386.2 billion (USD 2.0 billion) would be required to cover the operation costs of the Social Safety Net. In comparison, the present system costs USD 1.6 billion for the PDS and USD 1.2 billion for the SSN. It is anticipated that the government will cover a significant proportion of the investment costs, particularly for the repair and rehabilitation of agriculture and rural infrastructure. However, strong efforts will be made to involve the private sector – both domestic and international – through various public-private partnership programmes or joint ventures. In the case of recurrent costs, the USD 2 billion for the operation of the Social Safety Net would be borne by government – with funds mainly from the savings that will result from the reform and streamlining of the current system.

Oversight arrangements

Implementation of the Zero Hunger programme will be overseen by the committee formed and headed by the Secretary General of Council of Ministers.

Full text of the Review can be found at [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000102716/download/?_ga=2.222191135.687016664.1551252755-1236295149.1545235170)

0000102716/download/?_ga=2.222191135.687016664.1551252755-1236295149.1545235170

New initiative: UNDP Country Accelerator Labs Network

Baghdad, 24 February 2019 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is building the world's largest, fastest learning network of Accelerator Labs to deploy new approaches to emergent development problems. These labs will accelerate development impact and augment existing capabilities of the Multi Country Office. Creating a network of Country Accelerator Labs offers a unique opportunity to test new approaches for addressing complex development issues. Labs offer a 'safe' space where partners can explore unconventional and even radical ideas to inspire change and create new opportunities. This lab is an investment to generate strategic arguments for doing development differently and renewing UNDP's capacity to address frontier challenges. UNDP Iraq Country Office was selected for being among the 60 UNDP Accelerator Labs! The Country Accelerator Labs are a three-year global initiative with a high level of ambition, driven by an innovative approach built on the best of current thinking. The initiative responds to the widespread recognition that business-as-usual will not take us to the world we want in 2030 and beyond, and that the development community looks to organizations like UNDP to propose new ways of operating that radically reimagine and shape 21st century development.

The Labs will use three protocols – solution mapping, experiments and

collective intelligence - to surface and reinforce locally sourced solutions and to dramatically expand the set of options to solve problems. Through direct innovation and texting and network learning, the network of labs will provide the opportunity to create a variety of paths to address any given goal at scale and in many locations. The success of this institution-wide innovation initiative depends on mobilizing a wide array of dynamic partnerships to contribute knowledge, expertise and resources and translate those into top notch advisory and support.

UNDP Iraq Country Office is looking

for curious, quirky and fun, innovative and out of the box natural strategic thinkers. Someone who understands systems, the good, the bad and the ugly, and is capable of working within bureaucracies to make change, leverage technology to extend, enhance and multiply exploration, discovery and execution and be a committed agent of change for finding solutions to complex development problems. Someone who is looking forward to become a part of a large global organization exhibiting United Nations value. For more information, please visit the web site: www.iq.undp.org/jobs.



Security Sector Reform

Workshops about the effects of substance abuse and its impact on society organized by IOM

Baghdad, 8 January 2019 - IOM's Community Policing project, funded by

the German Federal Government, aims at contributing to enhance peace and



security in Iraq by strengthening trust and cooperation between people and law enforcement actors, raise awareness and skills to implement a community policing model across the country.

A group of youth, women and men from diverse backgrounds participated in workshops about the effects of substance abuse and its impact on society, organized by the Community Policing Forum of Al Khadraa neighborhood in Kirkuk.

Community police officers, policemen from the anti-drug department and a number of psychiatrists, delivered lectures to educate youth on the risks of drug abuse. The campaign also included the distribution of leaflets and painting awareness slogans on the walls of schools.

IOM Iraq supports development of Community Safety Plans

Baghdad, 6 February 2019 - Community safety plans are an important part of rebuilding trust between law enforcement authorities and the community. They are developed under IOM's "Community Policing in Liberated Areas" programme, funded by the Govern-

ment of Canada.

In Khanaqin, Diyala Governorate, IOM together with law enforcement officials supported the design of a community safety plan to tackle drug abuse, online harassment and reckless driving. All those who participated in the exercise

are part of a Community Policing Forum.

For their community safety plan, Community Policing Forum in Khanaqin ran three workshops for over 70 community members and five awareness raising sessions for over 570 students.



Mine Action

Statement on allegations concerning two historic churches in Mosul

Baghdad, 17 January 2019 - On 14 and 15 January, the Hammurabi Human Rights Organization (HHRO) published on its website statements accusing, but not directly naming, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) Iraq, and G4S, its implementing partner, with "crimes no less grievous and insolent than the crimes of Daesh" in conducting explosive hazard clearance without church authorization "in a barbaric and arbitrary manner with utter disregard for the holy and religious sanctity" of two historic churches in the Hosh al-Khan area of the Al Maedan district, Mosul. UNMAS Iraq take these allegations seriously, welcome further investigation and are continuing to support and work closely with the government of Iraq on this matter. UNMAS Iraq has invited HHRO and officials of the Syriac Catholic Archbishopric in Nineveh Plains as well as other relevant Iraqi authorities to meet in person to carefully consider the facts relative to their statements and hope they will offer to correct the record when known. UNMAS is keen on safeguarding all archeological, religious and historical sites during the conduct of its assess-

ment and clearance operations and works closely with the Iraqi State and religious authorities to ensure this national treasure is secure and safe to prevent any additional damage to that inflicted by the terrorists and the conflict.

To date, UNMAS Iraq and G4S teams have cleared and safely removed from the church site, 53 suicide belts, 74 munitions of various types, seven Improvised Explosive Devices, and assorted ammunition and materials such as home-made explosives. The site and the

accumulated debris remain heavily contaminated with explosives and will require further clearance.

UNMAS Iraq notes that, since beginning explosive hazard clearance in Mosul in November, 2017 through December 2018, UNMAS Iraq has completed 1,500 clearance tasks resulting in the removal of approximately 48,000 explosive hazards of all types, heretofore without any complaints.

UNMAS conducts all its clearing operations in close coordination and cooperation with the Government of Iraq.



Mosul's '3D contamination' adds to challenges of deadly mine clearance work

Geneva, Switzerland, 7 February 2019 - Demining and other explosives clearance operations are ongoing in former ISIL-held areas of Iraq, but the work is painstaking and even more dangerous because of "3D contamination", the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) said on Thursday.

Government-led military campaigns and conflict to retake Iraq's cities from the extremists, also known as Da'esh, displaced more than 5.8 million people between 2014 and 2017.

Many are still homeless or unable to return home because of what UNMAS calls "significant explosive hazard contamination" linked to airstrikes and improvised explosive devices left behind by ISIL and sometimes even planted on dead fighters.

In Mosul alone, there is an estimated 7.6 million tonnes of debris from the fighting to make safe, UNMAS believes.

In Mosul, "people want to return home, but the Old City of Western Mosul, you cannot return home to...there is nothing", said Pehr Lodhammar, Chief of UNMAS in Iraq.

He added: "We are looking at almost two million people who are still displaced outside of their homes, their towns, their villages and our work is to ensure that they can return. We are also looking at over 100,000 houses - of the 100,000 houses destroyed or damaged - potentially with explosives assets in them."

The update on UNMAS's work - which complements that of the Government of Iraq - coincides with the launch of an online resource showing the status of mine action in 19 countries and territories, along with current funding status and project proposals.

The 2019 Mine Action Portfolio "constitutes a solid and UN-vetted compilation of requests for assistance put together by affected countries", according to UNMAS, with total needs amounting to \$495 million.

The highest funding requirement is in post-conflict zones including Iraq (\$265 million), Afghanistan (\$95 million) and Syria (\$50 million).

Speaking to journalists in Geneva, UNMAS Director Agnès Marcaillou, underlined the importance of her agency's mission to ordinary people caught up in conflict.

"Mine action is about suffering, it's about people waking up at night with nightmares," she said. "It's about kids who have their future jeopardized by disabilities; disabilities being mental



health or physical disabilities. It's about a country that cannot get back on its feet, cannot have all the tools they need to revive their economies because their lands are contaminated."

In Iraq's Mosul - a former ISIL stronghold - much of the Old City was damaged and destroyed during months of door-to-door fighting to drive out the extremists in 2017.

'3D contamination' an additional danger

Countless buildings were also booby-trapped, Mr. Lodhammar explained, noting the additional complications caused by having to work in an urban setting with "3D contamination", rather than a rural location, where mines are usually buried in the ground.

"In 2018 only, we removed close to 17,000 explosive assets," he said. "2,000 of these - it's a staggering amount - were improvised explosive devices; 2,000 devices with pressure plate fuse triggers, trip wires, infra-red devices, anti-lift devices, remote control devices - combinations of the five. This also included 782 suicide belts, many of them actually fitted on fallen ISIS fighters in debris, in rubble."

When clearance operations started 18 months ago, finding unexploded devices was relatively straightforward, as they were scattered on the ground, the UNMAS Iraq chief noted.

Now, the operation is much more complicated, involving the use of camera-carrying drones to assess the dangers, and heavy plant machinery.

"What we are looking at now, is that we have to sift through the debris," Mr. Lodhammar said, noting that it was likely to take at least another eight years before Mosul was cleared of dan-

ger to an acceptable level. "We have to sift through the rubble, we have to use mechanical equipment dig out parts of the rubble, spread it out evenly, inspect it and that takes a lot longer time."

The presence of much larger explosive weapons is also significantly altering the work that UNMAS has to do.

This includes unearthing unexploded bombs dropped by coalition airstrikes against ISIL, which are in many cases buried several metres deep in the earth.

"These are not mines any longer, an anti-personnel mine would have up to 230, 250 grammes of explosives in it," Mr Lodhammar said. "Now we are looking at 10 to 20 kilos. People are getting injured yes, but there is also more of a tendency that people are actually getting killed by those devices rather than injured, because of the explosive weight, and the fact that many of them are within a container that is made of from metal, creating fragmentation."

By UN News Center.



Risk education training held in Erbil

Erbil, 29 January 2019 - The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) recently hosted a risk education training session on explosive hazards for 11 participants representing six local and international NGOs and UN agencies in Erbil, Iraq. During the training, participants had the opportunity to experience a threat environment through virtual reality goggles.



The Government of Sweden increases its support to explosive hazards management activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 10 February 2019 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) welcomes the contribution of SEK 75 million (approximately USD 8.3 million) from the Government of Sweden on mitigating the threat from explosive hazards in support of enhanced provision, facilitation and enablement of humanitarian and stabilization support.

Approximately 1.8 million people are estimated to be internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Iraq, equating to 18 percent of the Iraqis who live in conflict-affected areas, and more than 5 percent of the overall population. According to an assessment carried out in 2018, on average and across affected areas, 22% of IDPs in camps cite explosive hazards as a main reason for not intending to return to their areas of origin, rising up to 52% in some governorates. In addition, 12% of out-of-camp IDPs cite the same. As for those who do choose to return, do so in potentially unsafe environments contaminated by explosive hazards (Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment VI led by the Assessment Working Group and facilitated by REACH, September 2018).

UNMAS Iraq, working in tandem with its implementing partners, continues to maintain a weighted presence in Iraq, especially in the areas liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Through strategic partnerships and engagement of both internal and external stakeholders, and in support of the Government of Iraq and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNMAS has so far cleared over 1,100 sites of critical infrastructure. These include bridges, water plants, power plants, hospitals, schools, etc. that were once the strongholds of ISIL and which were littered with ex-

plosive hazards after their defeat.

With this contribution from Sweden, UNMAS will be able to better support communities with explosive hazard management, risk education, and capacity enhancement initiatives in support of the Iraqi government.

The contribution comes in concert with a recent field visit organized for representatives of the Government of Sweden, including the Swedish Ambassador to Iraq Mr. Pontus Melander, to Sinjar and Kocho in the Sinjar District of the Ninewa governorate. During the visit, the delegation gained a first-hand insight on UNMAS planned clearance activities inside the district's most damaged area, with its scale of destruction and contamination continuing to be prime inhibitors for the safe, dignified and voluntary return of IDPs to their homes.

His Excellency Mr. Pontus Melander said: "As we have seen firsthand, it is painfully clear how explosive hazards prevent humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and the safe return of internally displaced persons. Sweden

proudly supports UNMAS' critical work, as well as the efforts of the Government of Iraq, with explosive hazards management and demining. These efforts are crucial for both the delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection of civilians, as well as being a precondition for safe reconstruction and returns."

"The severity of explosive hazard contamination in ISIL-affected areas in Iraq cannot be understated. The methods and explosive devices used by ISIL are unlike any we have seen previously. They planted, sometimes very complex improvised explosive devices, across all areas previously under their control. These devices are constituting a threat to returning populations and humanitarian actors, still, and long after ISIL were defeated," said Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager of UNMAS in Iraq. "This new funding from Sweden will go a long way in ensuring that UNMAS can provide the support needed to ensure the safe return of IDPs to their communities."



Explosive hazard management sub-working group meeting held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 15 February 2019 - UNMAS recently participated in the explosive hazard management sub-working group meeting, chaired by European Union Delegation in Iraq, together with the Iraqi Minister of Health and Environment, Dr. Ala Alwan and representatives from mine action stakeholders.



Australia increases contribution to explosive hazards management in liberated areas of Iraq



Baghdad, 18 February 2019 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of AUD 2 million (approximately USD 1.5 million) from the Government of Australia to further enable stabilization and humanitarian efforts through explosive hazards management in liberated areas of Iraq. This brings the current three-year contribution from Australia to a total of AUD 13 million (approximately USD 9 million). The survey and clearance of explosive hazards are a crucial precursor to the commencement of humanitarian and stabilization initiatives, and the demand for assistance still exceeds the resources available. UNMAS in Iraq is working closely with the United Nations system and the Government of Iraq to enable humanitarian and stabilization efforts.

This contribution from the Government of Australia will further support UNMAS explosive hazards management

activities to create safe conditions for the sustainable return of displaced people. It will also improve coordination, engagement and capacity enhancement of relevant government authorities, threat impact assessments as well as clearance and risk education initiatives. This will reduce the risk of explosive hazards in direct support of humanitarian and stabilization planning and delivery, while at the same time increase national capacities to manage the overall threat of newly identified explosive hazards in these areas.

The contribution comes in concert with a recent field visit organized for representatives of the Government of Australia to Fallujah in Anbar Governorate. During the visit, the delegation received a comprehensive briefing on UNMAS clearance activities inside the city's most damaged areas, with its scale of destruction and contamination continuing to be prime inhibitors for

the safe, dignified and voluntary return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their homes.

Australia's Ambassador to Iraq, Dr Joanne Loundes, said "Although much progress has already been made, the huge scale of explosive hazards contamination in Iraq means there is still much to be done. We are increasing Australia's contribution to UNMAS because we are committed to helping Iraq address these challenges and helping displaced families return to their homes."

"Through its continuous support and close collaboration with UNMAS, the Government of Australia is helping to reduce the threat posed by explosive hazards, including improvised explosive devices," stated Mr. Pehr Lohdhammar, Senior Programme Manager for UNMAS in Iraq, "thereby enhancing community safety and facilitating the return of displaced people to their homes."

The Government of Australia is an essential contributor to UNMAS explosive hazards management activities in Iraq. This latest contribution brings to AUD 18 million (approximately USD 13 million) the total amount of funds donated since 2016.



Iraq hospitals start “Kangaroo Mother Care” – the best medicine for preterm and small babies

Baghdad, 28 December 2018 -

Around 1.06 million babies are born in Iraq every year. Unfortunately, about 15,000 babies die before completing one month of life, half of these succumb to complications of prematurity. A preterm is the baby born before completing at least 37 weeks of gestation, while a full-term baby is the one born after completing 37 weeks of pregnancy. Preterm babies are especially vulnerable as their bodies are not ready to maintain body temperature and sometimes the facial muscles are not ready for suckling at the breast. Breathing difficulties and susceptibility to infections is high. These babies need special support for thermos-regulation and feeding of breastmilk. Of all babies born premature, about 15-20% may require incubator care while a majority of clinically stable babies can be easily managed by Kangaroo Mother Care.

Kangaroo mother care (KMC), or skin-to-skin care, is a technique practiced on newborn, usually preterm, infants wherein the infant is held, skin-to-skin, with an adult. Kangaroo care for preterm infants may be restricted to a few hours per day (intermittent KMC), but if they are medically stable that time may be extended. Both mothers and fathers or other care givers can provide kangaroo care. As breast milk feeding is an important component along with skin to skin care, mothers are a preferred care giver for KMC while other family members can support her for doing skin to skin care when mother has to rest or shower.

Iraq is one of the countries following global Every Newborn Action Plan that aspires to bring down newborn deaths to 12 or less for every 1000 live births. The global plan envisages that at least half of stable preterm newborns or babies weighing less than 2000 grams will receive KMC and other supportive care by 2020; and then 75% by 2025. UNICEF Iraq is partnering with Ministry of Health to build health system capacity to end preventable newborn deaths and promote essential newborn care for all babies and small and sick newborn care for those born preterm or suffering complications such as breathing difficulties (asphyxia) and infections (sepsis).

Bringing Kangaroo Mother Care to Baghdad

UNICEF and Ministry of Health have partnered with Al-Elweya Maternity Teaching Hospital in Baghdad to initiate KMC practice. A five-member delegation attended a regional KMC work-



shop in Beirut in 2017, and 25 service providers from the hospital attended three day local courses in Baghdad. The team has started providing KMC intermittently to the babies admitted in intensive newborn care unit from 1st May 2018. The plan is to establish a full time KMC care practice as the team gains more experience and confidence. The hospital will be developed as a national training center for small and sick newborn care to provide mentoring to other tertiary hospital teams. Each tertiary hospital will then coach the district hospital teams in a phased approach to cover all district hospitals by 2020. It is an ambitious plan but very much doable with the leadership of Hospital Director Dr.Ulfat AL Naqash, and by support from Baghdad Ressaafa DOH Focal person Dr.Anwar Mohamed Jasim, ENBC Manager Dr. Maha Rasheed Taha and Director General of PHD Dr. Riyad Abdul Ameer Hussein From Ministry of Health and the new Health Minister, Dr. Alaa Al-Alwan.

Al- Elweya Maternity Hospital complex consists of 10 buildings, and it includes operating rooms and theaters, delivery rooms, patient wards and a section for newborn care and premature infants. The hospital also has an external outpatient obstetric and gynecological clinic, women's health center, pharmacy, emergency rooms, prenatal health center and nursery. Al-Elweya serves more than a million women on the east side of the Tigris River. The hospital had 9594 deliveries for the period 1st May – 30th October 2018 and 495 were identified as less than 2500 gm in weight. 1228 newborns were admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in this time period, since the hospital is a main referral hospital for managing complicated pregnancies at Al-Ressaafa on the east side of Tigris

River in Baghdad.

The hospital is sparkling clean and has a welcoming ambience. The hospital Director Dr. Ulfat Al-Naqash says “the mission of the hospital is to make it a nice place for mothers and their families as they go through the anxious times of pregnancy and child birth.”

UNICEF health and communication sections have provided support to develop posters on Kangaroo Mother Care and brochures for mothers to create awareness (Figure 1, Picture 1). The pediatrician Dr. Wassen Najim, says that KMC babies are visibly peaceful and gaining weight quickly as compared to incubator care. We are also trying to keep the mothers encouraged and happy. The unit has been refurbished with government's own resources to include toilet and shower facilities. New forms and tools have been developed to monitor progress of KMC babies and the outcomes are being closely monitored.

Experience of providing KMC Care for the first time

Al-Elweya Hospital initiated the provision of intermittent KMC starting in May 2018. Dr. Wassen admitted that she initially started with only one hour of KMC to test mothers' acceptance. Now, she extended the intermittent KMC to be provided for 5-6 hours. One of the newborns benefiting from KMC, “Maha”, began weighed only one kilogram when she started KMC at the age of 20 days. After 10 days, Maha gained 300 grams; and after two months, she weighed 1.5 kilograms. She has since been discharged and is coming for regularly scheduled follow up visits to the hospital.

Forty seven eligible newborns have been provided with KMC at Al-Elweya Maternity Hospital since it was initiat-

Iraq hospitals start “Kangaroo Mother Care” – the best medicine for preterm and small babies *(continued)*

ed (Figure 2). Their weight ranged from from 1250 -2000 grams. Of the 47 newborns, 21 of them gained proper weight for age during KMC and only one death was reported. Nearly half of mothers came back for follow up after discharge from hospital.

Fatima is another one of the babies on intermittent KMC. She was born at 25 weeks. Her mother said, “I was so devastated to see her so tiny and fragile but with KMC we are both very happy and she has gained weight. I am admitted to the KMC ward for last two weeks and waiting to go home as soon as possible but at the same time I want my baby to be healthy and safe.”

Challenges during KMC start-up phase

Some of the key challenges in initial start-up phase included the need for a dedicated space, lack of confidence among service providers to counsel mother on KMC practice, resistance from mother or family for extended hospital stay or skin to skin contact. Sustaining momentum and importance of engaging MOH and UNICEF leaders to provide visibility and recognition to the programme was important. The absence of KMC coverage indicator in hospital report was a barrier to regular reporting, which has been overcome with inclusion of newborn specific indi-

cators in HMIS. Improving quality of care for small and sick newborns required regular case reviews and perinatal death reviews to understand modifiable factors. UNICEF Iraq is supporting MOH to institutionalize perinatal death reviews starting from 5 out of eighteen governorates.

Lessons learnt

Involving MOH and hospital team in the initial trainings helped foster cooperation and team spirit

Hospital manager’s commitment and leadership is key to start and sustain the initiative

Keeping KMC within overall management of small and sick newborn care is important for holistic management of the baby

Sharing learnings among UNICEF offices on WhatsApp was helpful together with website resources

Way Forward

Develop the center as a national training hub with the potential to train teams from other countries in the region

Organize study visit /establish tele-mentoring link with University of Pretoria or UNICEF Ghana

Scale up to establish Intermittent KMC in Al-Zahraa Hospital/ Najaf Governorate on progress with support from Al-Elweya Hospital Team and in place

plan to include another Governorate in the north of Iraq soon

Encouraging mothers to connect and form a group like “Premie Love Foundation” which started as a WhatsApp group in Kenya to hospital support for other mothers to do KMC and nutrition counselling at home visits.

Al- Elweya Maternity hospital – A developing centre of excellence

The hospital authorities with UNICEF support are part of an ambitious plan to be recognized as the first Centre of excellence for maternal and neonatal health care in Iraq.

The hospital is the first to start Kangaroo mother care for preterm infants.

Since 2016, the hospital is engaged in quality improvement mechanism through periodic self-assessment check lists and follow-up plans.

The hospital initiated perinatal death reviews in May 2018.

As an outcome of implementation of these three initiatives, with support from UNICEF Iraq on procurement of essential equipment, the pre-discharge NMR in the hospital has declined from 37 per 1000 LB in 2017 to 25 by end of October 2018.

Written by Shaimaa Ibrahim, SM Moazzem Hossain, Nabila Zaka, Ammar Abdulqahar

UNFPA and Spain join efforts to enhance access to psychosocial and mental health services in Iraq

Baghdad, 6 January 2019 - The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) joined efforts with UNFPA to improve access to psychosocial, mental health, and GBV services to women and girls in Iraq through a contribution of €400,000 to the programme.

The conflict in Iraq has had major psychological and emotional consequences on the well-being of women and girls due to the continuous displacement, the traumatic events and the violence experienced.

Dr Oluremi Sogunro, UNFPA Representative to Iraq, expressed his grati-

tude for Spain’s support: “The psychological and emotional wounds of war in Iraq have left thousands of women and girls in need of mental health assistance and psychosocial support. The Spanish contribution will enable UNFPA to improve the capacity and access to these much-needed services, including legal support and referrals, to more than 1,800 women and girls in the country.”

“This contribution will strengthen UNFPA’s mental health interventions through the improvement of the access to psychologists and counsellors who provide vital care and support for women suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD), depression, and severe anxiety,” he added.

Furthermore, the assistance from Spain will ensure the support of the UNFPA-funded survivor centres, Girls and Women Treatment and Support Centres; and Women Community Centres, in particular in improving legal support in hard-to-reach areas of Iraq.



US\$ 2.5 M to improve humanitarian health response for Syrian refugees in Iraq

Baghdad, 8 January 2019 - The World Health Organization (WHO) extends its gratitude to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM) for the generous contribution of US\$ 2.5 million to increase the health security and resilience of Syrian refugees living in Iraq.

In 2018, Iraq continued to host Syrian refugees. It is estimated that about 250,000 Syrian refugees are currently residing in the three governorates of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) namely Erbil, Dahuk, and Sulaymaniyah, the majority of which (64%) lives with the hosting communities.

“There is an urgent need to support the local health authorities in KRI to ensure that Syrian refugees here have access to proper health services,” said Dr. Adham R. Ismail, Acting WHO Representative in Iraq. “Providing comprehensive primary, secondary, referral, and outbreak prevention and response services in the three refugee governorates is a WHO priority for the coming phase; it will indirectly improve the resilience of the refugees and host communities against potential public health emergencies,” he added.

Syrian refugees in Iraq have been given free access to primary health care services whether through camp-based primary health care centers (PHCC) for refugees living in camps or public

health facilities specified for those living with the host communities.

These services have been provided by the directorates of health of Erbil, Dahuk, and Sulaymaniyah in collaboration with WHO and health partners. However, the mass internal displacement of over 3.3 million Iraqis in 2014 had stretched the capacity of the national health authorities and humanitarian partners to continue meeting the needs of refugees and respond to the inflated demand for health care intervention.

As of 2018, WHO has been active in filling the gaps in essential medicines and medical supplies and equipment, improving referral services, and supporting surveillance and water quality monitoring activities in the refugee camp and non-camp settings. According to the 2017 national health reports, the

said DOHs have provided a total of 264,611 consultations to Syrian refugees residing in KRG of Iraq.

The contribution of US\$ 2.5 million from the U.S. BPRM will support the provision of comprehensive primary health care and referral services for around 300,000 Syrian refugees and host communities in KRI. It will also support the healthcare services for the disabled and mentally ill patients in the three mentioned governorates through a comprehensive training program for the national professionals working in the mental health area.

The contribution will also cover the procurement and distribution of essential medicines, and medical supplies and equipment to selected health facilities serving the refugees in target governorates.



Hussein is playing again without pain

Laylan Cam, Iraq, 10 January 2019 - Hussein, 8 years old Iraqi displaced boy living in Laylan-2 Camp, suffered a car accident when he was only 3. Despite undergoing several medical procedures in the past years, his condition did not improve, and he continued enduring severe pain that hindered his ability to play with his friends, which is what he loves most.

While his family tried to help him in different ways, Hussein was left on a more than a year-long waiting list to get the surgery he very much needed. However, with the support of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, in coordination with partner Heartland Alliance, a dedicated team followed up on his case and provided Hussein's family with cash assistance so that he could get his procedure.

UNHCR's team visited Hussein days after his surgery. He was full of joy. “I can now play without pain” – said Hussein with a big smile. “The sole idea

that he can sleep at night without pain makes me extremely happy” – added his mother.

UNHCR continues providing support to displaced Iraqis for urgent lifesaving

needs through the distribution of cash assistance and through the provision of effective protection monitoring to ensure that cases like Hussein's one are identified and referred properly.



Flexible health system in Iraq



Baghdad, 18 January 2019 - Under the auspices of H.E. Dr. Alaa Alwan, the Iraqi Minister of Health, the Preparatory Meeting for the Joint External Assessment was held from 14 to 15 January 2019 in Baghdad.

The meeting was organized in collaboration between the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Iraqi Ministry of Health to train local partners on the tools and process of the Joint External Evaluation. Experts from the WHO Regional Health Emergency Program provided field support to the workforce throughout the country to organize the self-assessment exercise, a basic exercise to measure the capacity and preparedness of the Iraqi health system to respond to public health emergency situations.

"It is our responsibility to promote health security in Iraq through the implementation of the Joint External Assessment," said HE Alaa Alwan, Iraqi Health Minister. "The results of the joint self-evaluation undertaken with partners and donors will be shared to enhance their participation and to mobilize resources," he added.

Dr. Adham Ismail, acting representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq, pointed out that joint self-assessment is not an audit but a voluntary request by the Iraqi Government, bringing together multidisciplinary national partners and sectors in a spirit of openness and transparency. "Once completed, the recommendations of the Joint External Eval-

uation will certainly contribute to the formulation of the health program in Iraq to deal with public health threats and events, and WHO will spare no effort to support the technical areas that need to be strengthened," he said. More than 100 officials and employees from government sectors participated actively for two days, reiterating the effectiveness of adopting a "single healthy" multisectoral approach. They have been trained by WHO experts to conduct a critical assessment of the country's basic capacity levels in effectively detecting and responding to events and public health emergencies. They were also encouraged to identify and compile the reference documents that would eventually be requested by the external group of experts during the visit to the Joint External Evaluation.

Dr. Dalia Samhouri, Director of the Qatar Health Preparedness Program and the International Health Regulations, who conducted the workshop, stressed the great importance of the active and dedicated participation of all concerned sectors. "The valuable contribution of each of you during this preparatory phase will reveal the challenges and comparative advantages of Iraq in health emergencies," she said, "The joint external assessment is an important step in building the basic capacities of the IHR in addressing all risks of threats and detecting them and taking appropriate measures to prevent them.

World Health Organization (WHO) Iraq delivers four trucks loaded with kits and medical supplies to Diyala

Baghdad, 22 January 2019 – Responding to the need of the Directorate of Health in Diyala, WHO with the support of the generous donors, has arranged for a large consignment of

medical kits and medical supplies to support the Directorate. A shipment of four 40-foot trucks of kits and medical supplies was transported on 14 January 2019 to support returnees' districts

in Diyala governorate, 84 kilometers east of Baghdad. As Diyala is one of the crisis affected governorate and in line with the objectives of Humanitarian Response Plan, WHO, in coordination with Diyala health directorate, developed an action plan to support the returnees and the IDPs families in the governorate during 2019.

"This shipment is the first of its kind that was delivered to Diyala and an important step of WHO's intervention in the governorate as part of 2019 plan," Said Dr. Adham Ismail, Acting Representative of WHO Iraq. Dr. Ali Hussain al-Temimi, Director General of Diyala DoH pointed out that the shipment would save the lives of population in the governorate and can be used by mobile clinics offering health care and services to IDPs. "It came in difficult time as the country suffers of lack of



WHO Iraq delivers four trucks loaded with kits *(continued)*

resources to provide the necessary and lifesaving medications, medical equipment and supplies”, Said Dr. al-Temimi.

“We are happy and highly appreciate WHO’s support to our directorate. His Excellency the Governor of Diyala instructed to send a letter of appreciation to WHO and its staff in Iraq for the valuable assistance they rendered. He also urged WHO to continue its work according to the agreed upon plan to provide medicine, construct a health center in far rural area, train staff on statistical programs, create a software to connect health centers with DoH and

MoH, support exceptional campaigns for immunization, provide insecticides and pesticides for vector control in liberated areas and provide assistance to the 3 IDPs camps in Diyala”, added Dr. al-Temimi.

“The support by WHO and partner agencies came as a lifeline for the governorate.” said Mr. Wisam Mohammed Ahmed, Head of Pharmacy Department at the Directorate of Health in Diyala. “It will help the medical staff in hospitals and medical centers to work more efficiently and offer better care to patients.” Mr. Ahmed added.

The consignment included supplement-

ary module pharmaceutical kits, supplementary module equipment, supplementary module renewable kits, traumatological profile/emergency kits, medical supplies support kits, basic units’ w/o malaria, ringer lactate and sodium chloride.

The support to the Directorate of Health in Diyala was made possible through generous contributions from donors and health partners especially The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance - USAID-OFDA and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations - ECHO.

The Iraq Health Cluster held its first Erbil meeting for 2019

Erbil, 23 January 2019 - The Iraq Health Cluster, led by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Co-Lead by the International Medical Corps (IMC), held today its first Erbil meeting for 2019. The meeting was attended by participants from the Ministry of Health of Iraq, MoH Coordination Office between Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Federal Iraq, local and international NGOs, donors, UN agencies and observers.

A number of topics were discussed including the Quality of Care survey (Phase 2) that was conducted by the Health Cluster in the partner-supported camps; the Humanitarian Response Plan 2019; the Global Health Cluster commissioned study titled “Strengthening global capacity for emergency health action”; and the consortium approach which OCHA is advocating for under the Humanitarian Pooled Fund.

The meeting touched upon the Grand Bargain and how to incorporate it into the Cluster Partners’ programming during the transition phase that Iraq is undergoing.

The new Mental Health & Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) Working Group Co-Lead from IMC was also introduced to the Cluster during this meeting.



EU Delegation visited the Karbala Maternity Hospital and the Imam Zain al-Abideen Hospital

Karbala, 24 January 2019 - Providing equipment and rehabilitating maternity wards, delivery rooms and theatres are vital to ensuring mothers have the best care possible during delivery. This week, a delegation of the European Union Delegation in Iraq, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations - ECHO in Iraq, visited the Karbala Maternity Hospital and the Imam Zain al-Abideen hospital, which are supported by UNFPA. During the visit, the delegation listened to the challenges pregnant women faced in Karbala and was briefed on what is needed to provide the best maternal health care to both mother and child.



The health and well-being of women and girls in Iraq is a priority

Baghdad, 27 January 2019 – Mr. Kyrre Holm from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a delegation from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Amman/Baghdad visited the UNFPA-supported reproductive health facility in Khazir camp where they heard from the medical staff there about the challenges women face before, while, and after giving birth in camps.

During the same mission, the delegation visited Hassansham camp where they met Ahd, 16, and other young girls at the UNFPA-supported women centre. Ahd explained that Adolescent Girl Programme compensates for not being allowed to go to school. "My parents won't let me go to school and continue my education", she said. "The sessions help me learn something new about my rights every week", she added.

Earlier this week, a delegation from the Royal Norwegian Embassy and the Embassy of Sweden, visited the UN-

FPA supported Women Centers and reproductive health facilities, funded by the two countries, in the camps for internally displaced people in Duhok, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

UNFPA thanks Norway and Sweden

for their continuous support to the UNFPA interventions in Iraq. Without their contribution, as well as that of the other UNFPA donors, we wouldn't be able to serve women and girls across the country!



WHO organizes a Food Safety and Quality Assurance assessment mission to Iraq

Baghdad, 1 February 2019 – Responding to a request by the Iraqi Ministry of Health and Environment, the World Health Organization (WHO) organized a mission of international experts to visit Iraq and conduct field visits, meetings and a joint workshop on Food Safety and Quality Assurance between 27 – 31 January 2019.

The experts arrived to Iraq to assess the situation of food safety, highlight the gaps and obstacles and submit their recommendations on how to tackle the challenges faced by the food safety system in Iraq. Visits were made to national laboratories at different institutions and health directorates. During those visits, the experts met with Iraqi

officials and assessed the work done in terms of food safety analysis and assessment, lab tests, sampling as well as clearance of tested items. A set of recommendations and groups' work were prepared and discussed during the 2-day workshop in the presence of His Excellency Iraqi Minister of Health, Acting Representative of WHO Iraq, representatives from UN agencies and Iraqi officials from different departments, institutions and academia.

His Excellency Iraqi Minister of Health, Dr. Alaa Alwan, opened the workshop by saying, "It is very important to assess the safety of food and focus on how to control diseases. Food safety is an important issue and a glob-

al problem, which causes the death of more than two million people annually, most of which are children. Those deaths are caused by bacteria, contamination of food by chemicals and pollution that lead to diseases in the gastrointestinal system and kidneys."

Further, His Excellency Dr. Alwan pointed out to the problems in preventing diseases, shortage in human resources and capacity, lack of coordination between different sectors, problems in financing and those related to food safety activities. His excellency confirmed the importance of prioritizing the development of a system that involves all concerned sectors to ensure an objective work plan is in place. His Excellency expressed his gratitude to the World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq, EMRO and Headquarters in Geneva for the timely arranging for the expert's mission and organizing the 'effective' workshop.

"Ensuring food safety is one of the most important measures which WHO is keen to implement in Member States. Such activity helps governments in mitigating the risk of food-borne illnesses and/or health-related conditions. It is also part of International Health Regulations (IHR) developed by WHO in 2005. In Iraq, food safety is one of the top challenges facing the country in IHR implementation. Accordingly, WHO in collaboration with MOH has



WHO organizes a Food Safety and Quality Assurance assessment mission to Iraq *(continued)*

conducted this mission to improve the situation of food safety (as a prerequisite to the successful implementation of IHR) in the country.” said Dr. Adham Ismail, Acting Representative of WHO in Iraq.

The experts made presentations with recommendations to overcome the weaknesses in food safety in Iraq. The recommendations centered on the following key issues:

1. Inter-sectoral coordination;
2. Laws, regulations and implementation of food safety policy;
3. Emergency preparedness and response;
4. Foodborne disease surveillance and response;
5. Food safety monitoring and inspection;
6. Information and communications; and

7. Human resources and finances.

A final report will include all discussions and agreed upon points with inputs from Iraqi counterparts and will be presented to the Ministry of Health soon to proceed with the implementation of a comprehensive and effective food safety programme in Iraq.

Australian delegation visited the UNFPA-supported Women Center

Erbil, 5 February 2019 - Baharka camp is home to 4,745 internally dis-

placed people, including more than one thousand women and girls who face

different kinds of gender-based violence and are of reproductive age.



A delegation from the Australian government and Australian Embassy in Iraq visited the UNFPA-supported women centre where they learned more about the difficulties faced by women and girls in the camp and how important it is for them to keep such centres operating.

The delegation also checked the reproductive health clinic which receives more than 65 women or girls for consultation per day. With the medical staff, they discussed family planning challenges and pregnant women's health.



Reaching women in Mosul, where the shadow of conflict still lingers

Mosul, 7 February 2019 – After the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS or Daesh) captured Mosul in 2014, most of the maternity wards and hospitals in the city were shuttered, leaving hundreds of thousands of women and girls in a grim state. “During the reign of ISIL, we were in a really bad state. We had nothing,” Eman, a mother from West Mosul, told UNFPA.

“ISIL burned the whole hospital down,” said Dr. Ibtihal Jabouri, the director of obstetrics and gynaecology at Al-Khansa Hospital. “When I first saw the delivery rooms and operating rooms and that everything was burned... I couldn't help but cry.”

Today, about a year and half after the fall of ISIL's last stronghold in Mosul, health services have yet to be fully restored. And the need for care is as critical as ever as residents pick of the pieces of their former lives.

Damage that lasts

“When ISIL fighters came to our town, they stayed for two years. We faced hunger and lack of medicines,” said one woman, who preferred to remain anonymous. “They would come to our house, harass my husband, and threaten to

blow up our house.”

Humanitarian organizations moved in to provide services where possible during the conflict.

“UNFPA stepped onto the plate and actually created this hospital out of



Reaching women in Mosul, where the shadow of conflict still lingers *(continued)*

nothing,” said Taryn Anderson, clinical coordinator at Hammam Al-Alil Field Hospital. “This was during the Mosul conflict, when we were relatively close to the front lines, so that any potential patients could evacuate to us for medical care.”

But the damage has long outlasted ISIL’s control.

“There are very limited maternity services in the region. A lot of the facilities have been destroyed through conflict,” Ms. Anderson said.

With partners, UNFPA is supporting midwifery services.

The economic impact of the crisis has left many patients unable to afford essential services.

With local partners, UNFPA is helping to rehabilitate health facilities, including the obstetrics and gynaecology department of the Mosul General Hospital. “Work has been steadily increasing

towards full functionality. Presently, we perform 10 to 12 Caesarean sections daily. Sometimes we have up to 20 to 30 natural deliveries per day,” Dr. Ibrahim said.

UNFPA-supported services are provided for free.

“I was supposed to have a natural childbirth. In the end, the doctors decided to do a Caesarean section because it was best for the baby. If it wasn’t for this hospital, we would not have had anywhere else because we don’t have money,” said Eman, who recently delivered her fifth child.

Psychological trauma

The conflict has cast a long shadow on the residents of Mosul.

“A lot of displaced people arrived with serious psychological trauma,” said Samira, a social worker stationed at a displacement camp outside Mosul.

“When ISIL came, we had to leave on

foot. I was pregnant, and I fled with my son to a nearby camp after my husband was killed by ISIL,” one anonymous Mosul resident recalled. She sought psychosocial support services at a UNFPA-supported women’s centre.

“Before I came to the centre, I was very tired. But when I started coming to the centre, I felt a sense of relief,” she said.

In 2018 in Mosul, UNFPA supported 14 reproductive health clinics and six hospitals in the area, and reached 360,000 women and tens of thousands of girls, men and boys with reproductive health services, including consultations, family planning, antenatal care, and other assistance.

UNFPA also reached over 100,000 women, 71,000 girls, 32,000 men and 29,000 boys with case management for gender-based violence, psychosocial support, adolescent support services, awareness-raising and dignity kits.

A mental health training hall opened in Al Karkh Hospital in Baghdad

Baghdad, 11 February 2019 - In partnership with the Iraqi Ministry of Health, IOM marked the opening of a mental health training hall in Al Karkh Hospital in Baghdad, after IOM rehabilitated the training hall with funding from OFDA.

“The new hall rehabilitated by IOM will enable us to build mental health and psychosocial skills of public healthcare practitioners as we will be able to conduct a range of training courses here,” said Riyadh Al-Rudaini, Mental Health Director at Al Karkh Hospital in Baghdad.

Iraq has experienced multiple wars and crises, the most recent of which the

conflict with ISIL. Violence caused deep psychological trauma, particularly in women and children, and yet unfortunately the country does not have sufficient mental health and psychological support services. Sometimes patients come to the health center, saying they cannot breathe well and experience pain around their heart, thinking they might be suffering from cardiovascular or respiratory diseases. However, their symptoms often have a psychological cause.

“I learned a lot from this training on mental health and psychosocial support. I have a deeper understanding of myself, which means I can better take

care of myself and of patients who come to our primary health centre,” said Ahmed Mohammed Ali, a medical staff from Salamiyah village, Hamdaniyah, Ninewa, who participated in the mental health and psychosocial training provided by IOM, with support from USAID, to medical staff from 12 health centres in Hamdaniyah district. With their newly acquired nonspecialized mental health and psychosocial support skills, funded by USAID - US Agency for International Development, the staff who attended the training will support returnees in their hometowns and villages.



WHO inter-country cooperation yields rich health dividends

Baghdad, 13 February 2019 - Inter-country collaboration between Iraq and Jordan allowed WHO and health authorities in Iraq to rapidly and successfully respond to an increase in cases of acute respiratory infections.

The last week of November 2018 witnessed an alarming rise in the incidence of acute respiratory infections in Suleimaniya Governorate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. By 31 December, more than 35 suspected cases of influenza were admitted to Shaheed Hemin Hospital for Internal Medicine in the governorate, but very few cases had undergone virology lab investigation due to the unavailability of the laboratory medium required to transfer the nasal-throat specimen to the National Public Health Lab in Baghdad.

"The increase in reported cases of influenza was very concerning," said Dr. Sabah Nasraddin Ahmed, Director General of Health in Suleimaniya governorate. "It required urgent investigation to isolate and identify the viral causing agent, but there was a severe shortage of the Viral Transport Medium needed to collect and transport the specimens. Only two samples were sent

to the public health lab in Baghdad, one of which was H1N1 positive, sounding an alarm for a potential disease outbreak in the governorate," he added. Health authorities immediately requested support from WHO in Iraq to procure the Viral Transport Medium from accredited and accessible suppliers in Jordan.

"Despite the holiday season, WHO focal points in Iraq and Jordan coordinated immediately to facilitate the inter-country shipment and deliver the required supplies from Jordan to Iraq," said Dr. Adham Ismail, WHO Representative in Iraq. "Two days of intensive collaboration between WHO teams in Iraq and Jordan successfully ended

with a ready-to-ship consignment of Viral Transport Medium delivered to Shaheed Hemin Hospital ward & Central Lab in Suleimaniya, and also distributed to other health directorates in all Iraqi governorates as preparedness measures."

"This story is just one example of how joint action, collaborative spirit, and dedication of staff can result in successful inter-country cooperation, highlighting that health security knows no borders, and that a health threat in one country requires immediate support and commitment from neighbouring countries and the region," said Dr. Maria Cristina Profili, WHO Representative in Jordan.



European Commissioner visits UNFPA-supported Primary Health Clinic and Women Centre in Mosul

Mosul, 21 February 2019 – The European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management (ECHO), Mr. Christos Stylianides, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium and Minister of Finance and Development Cooperation, Mr. Alexander De Croo, visited Hammam Al-Aleel camp for internally displaced persons in Mosul where they visited the UNFPA-supported Primary Health Clinic (PHC) and Women Centre.

During the tour, Mr. Stylianides and Mr. De Croo met with community leaders, clinic staff, and women who have received treatment at the Primary Health Clinic. The clinic provides basic reproductive health consultations, including gynaecological, antenatal, postnatal and family planning for the internally displaced persons in Hammam Al-Aleel camp.

Their next stop was at the Women Centre where staff briefed them on the services provided for women and girls in the camp. These services mainly focus on case management through a confidential survivor-centred approach, a close follow-up and referrals when needed, scheduled educational sessions, trainings and community sensitisation,

as well as recreational and skills-building activities.

The EU has been a strategic partner to UNFPA in Iraq since 2015 with a total contribution of EUR 21 million supporting the Fund's reproductive health and gender-based violence interventions.

With additional funding looming in the horizon, UNFPA will continue the integrated package of gender-based violence (GBV) and reproductive health (RH) services it provides to women of

reproductive age in selected primary health clinics and women centres in Iraq.

As of 1 February 2019, UNFPA had only received 29 per cent of the required funding, a total of US\$ 6.4 million out of the US\$ 22 million required for its 2019 humanitarian interventions in the country targeting 700,000 individuals with reproductive health services and 400,000 persons with the gender-based violence response.



WHO condemns violence on health workers in Iraq

Baghdad, 26 February 2019 --- The World Health Organization (WHO) strongly condemns the recent attack on a medical practitioner who was physically assaulted while providing medical care to a critically ill 70-year old female in Azadi Teaching Hospital in Kirkuk Governorate on 18 February.

“WHO calls on the authorities in Iraq to ensure the safety of health workers, health facilities, and the sanctity of health care,” said Dr. Adham Rashad Ismail, Acting WHO Representative in Iraq. “Such attacks constitute a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law and deprive the most vulnerable population of children, women, and the elderly of their right to essential health services,” he added.

Health care workers and health facilities in Iraq have been under attack since the crisis escalated in June 2014. In 2018 alone, 42 attacks on health



care were recorded by WHO in Iraq, of which 40% were against health workers.

As people in Iraq, including displaced populations, host communities and returnees continue to require essential,

lifesaving, and trauma services, it is imperative that the government of Iraq ensures that health workers are allowed to work at all times without risk, regardless of location, and that patients and health facilities are protected.

Culture

UNESCO reaffirms its support to the Mosul Book Forum

Paris, 24 January 2019 - The two founders of the Mosul Literary Café went to UNESCO headquarters with a view to discuss opportunities for future cooperation, within the framework of UNESCO's initiative "Revive the Spirit of Mosul".

Nicolas Kassianides, Director of the Cabinet of the Director-General of UNESCO, met with the founders of the Mosul Book Forum, Fahad S. Mansoor al-Gburi and Harith Yaseen Abdulqader, to discuss opportunities for future cooperation. H.E. Ambassador Mahmood Al-Mullakhalaf, Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Iraq to UNESCO, was also present at the meeting. Since its opening about a year ago, Mosul's literary café has established itself as an important intellectual hub of the city, a space of freedom where young Iraqis meet to discuss literature, arts, and music. And resume a cultural and social life banned under occupation. It is also one of the few places where women and men can meet to discuss freely.

"We admire your work, your courage, and your vision. UNESCO wants to help you. The reconstruction of Mosul is one of UNESCO's main priorities, and the Initiative "Revive the Spirit of Mosul" focuses precisely on the human dimension of reconstruction. UNESCO is committed to the rehabilitation of heritage, and to the revitalization of cultural and educational life. We be-



lieve these are the foundations of future peace," Nicolas Kassianides stressed in his introduction.

"We are two young people from Mosul and we simply want Mosul to regain its position on the world cultural map. It is important that this initiative succeeds so that more young Mosulians have access to books and culture, to prevent the return of violent extremism," explained Fahad S. Mansoor al-Gburi. "We need to raise awareness and we need the support of the international community to deliver, translate and buy books, to revive the city's cultural and literary activities."

"Rebuilding monuments and infrastructure is one thing, but we must think about rebuilding minds and mentalities," added Harith Yaseen Abdulqader. Over the past year, the Mosul Literary Café has organized more than 200 events and meetings with writers, artists and musicians. The two men also organized a poetry competition, one of the first ever launched in the country. There are many projects, such as the creation of a children's festival, and a cinema and a cultural center. For all these projects, there is a significant need for funding and support. Photos courtesy of the Book Forum.

UNICEF is helping Iraqi youth heal from violence and trauma

Debaga Camp, Iraq, 31 January 2019 - Iraq's next generation is scarred by a brutal war. UNICEF and partners are giving them the tools they need to resume their lives and build a better future.

For over 70 years, UNICEF has been putting children first, working to protect their rights and provide the assistance and services they need to survive and thrive all over the world.

In Debaga camp, rain slaps steadily on tents where children sit clustered near a space heater, trying to stay warm and dry as winter wafts over northern Iraq. Nearby, a group of over a dozen boys pass a volleyball over the net wildly, as icy winds blow and drizzle wets the concrete they play on. In rooms just beyond the volleyball court, young girls and their mothers circle around a teacher offering a vocational course.

Many of the children have endured terrible violence and trauma in recent years, fleeing from the brutal rule of the Islamic State, or the fighting to oust them. And in some cases, the trauma has carried over into continued violence in the home, school and in the street.

Fortunately, in camps like Debaga in Iraq's Erbil Governate, UNICEF is stepping up to offer support for these children. Through sports activities, education, shelter and psychosocial support, UNICEF and partner organization Terre Des Hommes (TDH) are helping them to heal, grow and live a better life.

Ayad Hamed, a project manager with UNICEF partner TDH, works with at risk youth in the Debaga camp in northern Iraq.

"Five percent of children in camps quit school because teachers are beating them. They often mention emotional violence as a reason too. In Iraq, we've had corporal punishment for many years. Some educational laws have been set to avoid this approach, but headmasters push the practice anyway."

Hamad said that even after children fled the tremendous violence in their home villages and towns, some continue to face forms of violence. He said many children face neglect from their parents — themselves facing the psycho-emotional consequences of violence and instability — who don't show their children enough attention or listen to them. Some children are sent to work to earn money for their destitute families, putting them under undue stress and exposing them to dangers in the



streets.

He noted that a large survey carried out by TDH in November 2018 found that around 40 percent of Debaga camp's children suffer from physical punishments, spending many hours outside of the home to escape the abuse from their parents.

But TDH is working hard to help the children recover their health, both emotional and physical, Ayad said.

"In the camp, we employ psycho-social workers. They identify fifteen children at a time here who experienced major trauma, and we give them five months of psychosocial support. After the first class graduated, they spoke about their experiences. Before, they were feeling isolated and ignored, and had no hope to live. After [graduating] they reenrolled in classes and got involved in TDH recreational and educational activities and started to make friends. Even their parents said they're speaking and expressing more."

Mahmoud, whose name was changed to protect his identity, is 17 and came to Debaga camp from the town of Hawija two years ago. He said he fled from the intense violence of the Islamic State (ISIS), who occupied his town, and the constant air bombardments on Hawija by the Coalition seeking to oust them.

His older brother, with whom he lives in the camp, has been traumatized by the conflict, like so many others. Because of the stress of Mahmoud's own trauma, and that of his brother, they often fight. But Mahmoud says that TDH assistants have helped him and his brother resolve their conflicts peacefully, pointing to one who's been especially helpful, Rahma, who sits beside him during the interview.

Mahmoud, who hasn't attended school since 2007, says he's been joining TDH-organized literacy activities, helping him to gradually pick up where he left

off in his studies years ago.

The educational and entertainment activities also help break out of the emotional turbulence of post-violence trauma.

"TDH organizes workshops on literacy and computer skills and activities like volleyball and soccer. When I'm feeling really stressed thinking [about past events], I join the boys to play some volleyball, and I feel a lot better afterward."

Aziz (name changed), 11, also fled from the Hawija area, arriving in Debaga camp close to two years ago. He wears a sweatshirt hood pulled over his dark brown curls. His father was killed in an airstrike in Hawija, and Aziz himself was hit by shrapnel in the strike. He described the violence he faced since fleeing as a result of his own mother's trauma.

"Sometimes my mom remembers the things we went through [in Hawija], or remembers my brothers or father who are gone, and she gets upset. She screams at me and hits me sometimes," he said shyly.

Speaking about Rahma, and another TDH camp assistant, he said their face-to-face interventions with his mother have been helpful in reducing her bouts of aggression.

"She still gets upset, but now that Rahma and Jivan have come to talk to her, she's become aware of her attitude," Aziz said. "So when she acts out, very quickly she'll apologize."

But it's not only at home. In school, too, Aziz fears the threat of violence. "If there was something we didn't know in class that we were supposed to be studying, or if we spoke in class, teachers were hitting us."

But, ever since THD's interventions, which train teachers to practice positive discipline, the violence has decreased. "Teachers' methods have got-

UNICEF is helping Iraqi youth heal from violence and trauma (continued)

ten gentler. They take care of us. They teach us well. I wasn't able to read before, but with their help, I'm getting there," Aziz said.

Laila Ali, a spokesperson for UNICEF in Erbil, Iraq, says that while much of the headline-grabbing war has died down in Iraq, children still bear the brunt of the violence that remains.

"Although large-scale conflict has ended, children are still at risk. 1.8 million children are still displaced in Iraq. 4 million of them need humanitarian assistance," she said, noting that children have endured incredible trauma in recent years such as being forced to fight, and being used as suicide bombers.

She also noted that because of prevailing attitudes and the traumatic stress incurred through years of conflict, domestic violence is widespread, leaving children without the sanctuary of the home.

"Even in places where children should find refuge, they're still experiencing violence. In these cases, children have been victimized more than once: out in the street, and again at home.

But despite the challenges, UNICEF is not giving up the fight to help children achieve a better future. Ali noted that UNICEF is educating civil society on the harmful effects of domestic violence, working with grassroots groups, religious leaders and social influencers

to speak out about the extremely detrimental short- and long-term effects of domestic violence.

To combat violence against children in schools, UNICEF is training teachers to use positive discipline to explain students' mistakes, instead of resorting to violence as a means of teaching. UNICEF is also connecting teachers and social workers. Teachers are trained how to identify children suffering from stress and trauma incurred through conflict so that social workers can provide early and targeted psychosocial support to students.

Omar (name changed), is 14, from Adlah village in the province of Kirkuk. He has round white teeth and matted brown hair. He says he used to experience violence both in war, and in school.

"Airstrikes hit our villages and killed kids sometimes. We were just terrified of going outside our houses. I couldn't sleep," he said. "In my village, the teachers used to hit the students. Sometimes they even did this in the camp. All this hitting filled me with fear."

Because of the constant threat of harm, Omar was in a state of hypervigilance. He said solemnly, "I was nervous all the time. I was getting upset every time I remembered the past."

But since coming to Debaga, he said that with TDH's help he doesn't suffer



so much anymore — he sleeps better now.

"Thanks to the help of UNICEF and TDH, we get to take computer courses. We play volleyball. Here we learn, and we get to laugh and talk. I feel really good."

Asked what he wants to do once it's safe enough to leave Debaga and return home to Adlah village, Omar thought for an instant, eyes upturned towards the ceiling, then said, beaming, "In the future, I want to become a doctor. I want to heal the wounded and help people in my village."

By Sam Kimball, UNICEF Iraq

Hawkins: "Iraqi children deserve love, not violence"

Baghdad, 14 February 2019—Statement from Peter Hawkins, UNICEF Representative to Iraq, on Valentine's Day:

"Today we celebrate what it means to love and be loved. And no one deserves to be shown that they are loved more than a child. Showing a child love means cherishing them and protecting them from violence.

Here in Iraq, children have been exposed to unimaginable levels of violence over years of sustained conflict and insecurity. And while the war may have subsided, the majority of Iraqi children continue to experience violence inside their homes, schools, and other places that are meant to be safe spaces. According to the 2018 UNICEF-supported Multiple Index Cluster Survey (MICS6), over 80% of all children in Iraq have experienced violent discipline, and almost a third have experienced severe physical punishment, including being slapped on the face, head

or ears, and being hit hard and repeatedly.

Violence hinders a child development and interrupts his or her learning abilities. It scars a child and leads to low self-esteem and emotional stress. It teaches that violence and aggression are acceptable ways to resolve conflict and disagreements.

Violence sends a message to a child that he or she is not appreciated and is

not loved. We asked a child at Hassan Sham Camp for the internally displaced who she loves, and she said "I love my teacher because she's never screamed at me". Another said "I love my mother and father and they love me, that's why they don't hit me."

On this day of love, let's work together to end violence against children in Iraq."



The Government of Japan and UNESCO sign agreement on 'Voices of the children of Old Mosul' primary school project

Baghdad, 18 February 2019 - The UNESCO and the Government of Japan signed an agreement in support of the project "Voices of the children of Old Mosul: the rehabilitation and management of primary schools in historic urban context emerging from conflict". Naofumi Hashimoto, Japan's Ambassador to Iraq and Rory Robertshaw, Officer in Charge, UNESCO Office for Iraq, signed the document in the presence of Dr. Hamid Ahmad, the deputy Chairman of the Prime Minister of Iraq's Advisory Commission (PMAC).

The innovative project lays the ground for participatory design principles in the creation of pupil-centred schools through the collaboration of pupils, teachers, parents architects and designers. One school in the old city of Mosul will be rehabilitated and equipped in line with these principles, serving as a pilot for the project. The project also lays the ground for a holistic approach to the prevention of violent extremism in primary education with the provision of training to support the four key elements that influence the experience of children's learning: parents, teachers, school principals and school policies and procedures.

The project will be implemented in synergy with other UNESCO activities of the umbrella initiative 'Revive the Spirit of Mosul' launched in February 2018 to coordinate international effort to rebuild the heritage and revitalize the educational and cultural institutions of Mosul, in close cooperation with the Government and people of Iraq. This project will have linkages to a pipeline EU project under the Mosul initiative on urban recovery and reconstruction of Mosul's historic urban landscape, a Netherland funded project on Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education in primary schools and the Educate a Child Initiative funded project on improving access to quality and inclusive education with gender equality for out-of-school children.

Conflict and occupation by extremists, have devastated the education sector in Mosul, leaving students and teachers

struggling with physical as well as psychological effects of the war. Re-opening and supporting schools to rebuild the foundations of tolerance and peaceful coexistence are critical factors in determining the return of displaced Moslawis to the city and the revival of educational and cultural institutions. The new project aims to promote tolerance and peaceful co-existence in targeted primary schools in the old city of Mosul, contributing to long term prevention of violent extremism.

Rory Robertshaw, Officer in Charge, UNESCO Office for Iraq said, "The support of the People of Japan is welcome contribution to ensuring children in Mosul receive an enriching educational experience, playing a part in building a more inclusive and resilient city that is emerging from a period of intense and damaging conflict".

Naofumi Hashimoto, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, said, "Japan has recently decided new assistance package for Iraq amounting to 63 million US Dollars including this project as contribution in the education sector. With this package, total amount of Japan's assistance to the people affected by ISIL reaches 500 million US Dollars." The Ambassador also expressed the hope that the project will give the children of Mosul educational opportunities and better prospects for the future. He also reiterated Japan's continued support

for Iraq's nation building efforts, notably through humanitarian assistance and initiatives to improve people's livelihood.

The deputy of the chairman of PMAC, Dr. Hamid Ahmed, said, "In recognition of the devastating impact of ISIL/Da'esh in terms of infrastructural damage as well as psychosocial impact on thousands of young people in Iraq, the Conference "Education after Da'esh" held in Baghdad in March 2017 identified the importance of the role of education in preventing violent extremism and addressing radicalization of youth. It called upon support in developing educational capacity in Iraq to integrate PVE in school programmes and educational policies. The signing of this agreement symbolizes and confirms the continued international support in effect to this agenda of the revival of Iraq's rich historical intellectual and cultural legacies".

The project agreement reinforces the shared commitment of UNESCO and Japan to address the needs of the people of Iraq, especially children, in liberated areas such as Mosul. It comes in the wake of the meeting between UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of 18 October 2018 in Paris, which resulted in the reinforced partnership between UNESCO and Japan and support for the Mosul Initiative.



Timeline

SRSB Hennis-Plasschaert extends deepest condolences on the passing of the leader of the Yezidi community, Emir Tahseen Said Beg

Baghdad, 28 January 2019 – The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine

Hennis-Plasschaert, extends her deepest condolences on the passing of the leader of the Yezidi (Ezidi) community,

Prince Mir Tahseen Saeed Beg.