



MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

The last comprehensive Population and Housing Census for Iraq was conducted in 1987. The goal of the census is to obtain objective information on the socio-economic developments and structure of the country since the previous census; to create the information base of demographic and socio-economic data about the population, its distribution by age, gender, nationality, family composition, citizenship, education, sources of livelihood, occupation, migratory activity, living conditions and so on both for the country as the whole and all its administrative and territorial divisions.

For nearly four decades, Iraq has faced violence, war, sanctions and instability. But in the last three years alone, conflict has displaced 3 million people. Many parts of the country were turned into war zones with civilian infrastructure severely damaged or destroyed. At the end of 2018, Iraq announced the beginning of the recovery and reconstruction phase.

In December 2018, with the support of UNFPA, the Government of Iraq elaborated the full Census Project document: the document provides the framework upon which the entire Census of Iraq is based. In April 2019, the Prime Minister, HE Adil Abdel Mahdi, as the Chair of the Higher Population Council approved the 2020 Population and Housing Census for Iraq. Since then, the preparations for the Census began, including regular meetings of the Census Supreme Commission headed by the Minister of Planning, Dr Nouri Al-Sabah al-Dulaimi.

In July 2019, Iraqi Prime Minister, HE Adil Abdel Mahdi, announced the Iraq 2020 Housing & Population Census. For this reason, the Council of Ministers approved US\$ 37 million (44.5

billion Iraqi Dinars) for 2019 and US\$ 59.4 million (114 billion Iraqi Dinars) for 2020. In addition, after several study tours and exchange of expertise with Jordan and Egypt statistical offices and based on the lessons learnt, the Higher Population Council approved the adoption of the E-Census for the 2020 Census, instead of the paper-based count.

Furthermore, the Council of Ministers approved the first amendment of the General Population and Housing Census law no. 40 of 2008. The main amendments include the expansion of the Census Supreme Commission by welcoming more partners and stakeholders to ensure inclusiveness; widen the financial powers given to the Chair of the Commission to expedite the disbursement of the government funds to implement the different phases of the Census. In addition, exceptions granted for relaxing government bidding procedures for the procurement of Census equipment and logistics.

Advocacy efforts were made at the highest level with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to ensure the creation and sustainability of an enabling political environment for the Census. Discussions focused on the non-politicisation of the Census, emphasising the developmental benefits to the population.

A National Blog was adopted as a roadmap for the implementation of the Census. In addition, the work is on-going on the draft questionnaire, the population enumeration and the National Document for Census support and Advocacy. The detailed action plan of the census stages was finalised and the number of individuals needed to support the process has been identified. The Information and Communications Technology team formulated a detailed programme that ensure Iraq relies on its national capacities for the implementation of the e-enumeration.



Inter-Agency Technical Working Group on Census (IATWGC)

The IATWGC conducts monthly meetings to discuss the developments and share relevant updates and agree on the ways forward to ensure the implementation of the 2020 Census.

The IATWGC, led by the Resident Coordinator and chaired by UNFPA Representative, has five major tasks:

- Oversee the timely and quality implementation of the Census plan milestones;
- Provide technical, operational support and comments on key Census tools and procedures to be adopted by the Iraqi government;
- Follow up on timely and quality implementation of decisions adopted by the concerned Census bodies i.e. CSO and KRSO;
- Organise monitoring visits to Census institutions at national, sub-national and governorate levels to oversee progress of work as stipulated in the Census plan;
- Provide publicity and visibility support to Iraq Census.

The UN is providing support to the Government of Iraq through facilitating study tours, exchange of expertise, recruiting international experts such as GIS and Advocacy officer, and providing up-to-date satellite images with accurate resolutions to ensure a comprehensive geographical coverage of Iraq governorates.



Dr Mahdi Al-Allak was appointed in 2019 as the National Consultant for the Population & Housing Census 2020. Prior to leading the Census 2020 implementation, Dr Al-Allak was the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers. He headed the Prime Minister's Office from 2014 until 2016

and was the action Deputy Minister of Planning from 2007 until 2014. He held the position of Head of the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) from 2003 to 2014.



South/South Cooperation: Exchange of Expertise

As part of the south-south cooperation, UNFPA supported two study tours and four exchanges of expertise between the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) and the Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office (KRSO) in Iraq, and the Department of Statistics in Jordan as well as the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) in Egypt.

In May, experts from CSO and KRSO attended a study tour in Cairo, Egypt to discuss the Egypt Census model. The discussions focused on the added value of adopting the E-census, how to preserve the confidentiality of the data collected, the GIS applications needed to the success of the census, among other topics.

In June 2019, the national experts joined a similar tour to Amman, Jordan, to review in depth the framework and structure of the Jordan 2015 census with the Department of Statistics.

The national experts from CSO and KRSO, with UNFPA, participated in a workshop organised by the World Bank on Iraq Health, Social and Economic Survey (IHSES) from 16 to 19 September. The two-day workshop addressed the link between the Census and IHSES and whether data collected through the census could satisfy the intended needs of the IHSES. The participants also discussed the multi-dimensional poverty index at global, regional and national levels as well as the Census' master framework and questionnaire.

On 21 September, the Census team travelled to Amman, Jordan, to participate in the Experts Group Meeting (EGM) on Iraqi Census. The meeting was organized jointly by CSO, the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS) and UNFPA. The participants went over the Census sectoral plans and the progress made, the electronic census implementation mechanism, the challenges, the National Blog for Census advocacy, the census field work mechanism, GIS in Census, telecommunications role in census and the role of media in supporting census.

CSO and UNFPA also organised an experience and knowledge sharing workshop on census with CAPMAS. The workshop which took place from 28 to 31 October, in Cairo, addressed issues of census management, ICT, GIS, and other capacity development topics. The workshop focused on how to cover the existing technical gaps in Iraq and how to further strengthen them locally and with the regional support, based on the 2017 Census in Egypt. Furthermore, CSO and CAPMAS will collaborate on enhancing the technical structure and governance of the census.

South-South cooperation refers to the technical cooperation among developing countries in the Global South. It is a tool used by the states, international organizations, academics, civil society and the private sector to collaborate and share knowledge, skills and successful initiatives in specific areas such as agricultural development, human rights, urbanization, health, climate change etc.



UNFPA Advocacy Efforts on Census

UNFPA Director for the Arab region, Dr Luay Shabaneh, concluded, at the end of July, a four-day visit to Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The Regional Director held meetings with high level officials in the Central South area and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq as part of UNFPA's advocacy efforts for the implementation of the 2020 Population Census.

He met with the Iraqi Prime Minister, Mr Adil Abdel Mahdi; the Advisor to the Iraqi President, Dr Ali Shukri; the Second Deputy Speaker, Mr Bashir Al-Haddad; the Ministers of Health and Planning and other government officials.

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Dr Shabaneh convened with President Nechirvan Barzani, as well as the Ministers of Planning, Health, and Labour and Social Affairs and other government officials.

During his meetings, he received a positive response on the implementation of the census and both Governments agreed that the census should not be used for political gains but for development purposes. Conveners admitted that there might be some obstacles that can hinder the implementation of the census, however, expressed their readiness to discuss the concerns to reach an agreement that will serve first and foremost the interest of the people of Iraq.

On the issue of the census, UNFPA Regional Director asserted: "We cannot fail the people of Iraq. After years of living in challenging social conditions and suffering from the repercussions of war, we will support the Iraqi people by helping them deliver accurate data and design people-centred strategies to help them achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and enhance the quality of their lives."



Pilot of the Census for Development

CSO and KRSO have conducted a pilot of the census in four governorates in Anbar, Baghdad, Basra, and Erbil in November and December 2019. The pilot followed all the steps of the census, including the sampling, grouping and counting of households, and helped identify gaps to be addressed before the implementation of the Census.





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