



Field Report, 4 November 2022

1. Muthanna – My Voice, My Power.....1
2. Anbar – Mines and IEDs Still Taking Their Toll.....2
3. Kirkuk Celebrates International Day of Peace4
4. Basra – Disability Inclusion Still Far Behind Expectations.....5
5. Thi-Qar – Life Without Drugs Campaign Revives Hope ..6
6. Saladin – Celebrating Peace After Conflict7



These Field Reports are prepared by the field staff of UNAMI's Development Support Office (DSO), who are based in Iraq's governorates, where they coordinate with local government officials, NGOs, community groups, and other development actors. They also monitor socio-economic and development trends to improve the UN's understanding of events in Iraq.

1. Muthanna – My Voice, My Power



Rabab Al-Zayadi, a 48-year-old woman, is a civil activist who has participated in many campaigns to prevent domestic violence against women. She is also a domestic violence victim.

She explains, “I have been a civil activist since 2008, a defender of human rights, women's rights, and worked in the media to raise awareness of violence against women. In 2014, I got married traditionally, quit my job, and just became a stay-at-home wife because my media work was considered disgraceful and there was a stigma interacting with men, as

my husband claims.”

After months of marriage, her husband started beating her violently, and he did not take her to the hospital for treatment. He brought medicine from a pharmacy to treat her severe blows.

Al-Zayadi took this medicine for several months but became addicted to it and slept all day. A doctor later told her that the medication she was using was a narcotic.

It was a shock to her, and she tried to commit suicide several times, but then decided to seek a divorce through the court. After three years of a cruel marriage, Al-Zayadi got divorced.

In 2017, she returned to her life and resumed working in the local news media, becoming a strong advocate for women and their rights.

According to Khaled Saeed, the director of the Community Police,¹ one in every seven women have experienced violence. The total number of domestic violence cases was 357 in Muthanna during 2020-2021. There were already 165 registered cases by the end of July 2022.

Saeed adds that the causes of the high rate of domestic violence are poverty, drug addiction, and unemployment. This pushes husbands to abuse their wives or children. The deterioration of living conditions in the absence of job opportunities has a psychological impact on families.

The Muthanna Cultural Team was established in 2021 to combat violence against women and children and is self-financed. Ms. Amna Karim, the coordinator of the team explains, “Our team includes more than one hundred members representing university and institute students, in addition to activists to defend women’s freedom in Muthanna.”



Violence Against Women Campaign © social media



Campaign demanding legislations © social media

¹ Community policing, or community-oriented policing (COP), is a strategy of policing that focuses on developing relationships with community members.

She adds that their initiative aims to empower women by building their capacity within a society that is known for its tribal customs with all the restrictions of social norms and traditions.

The team conducted awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns to demand the Domestic Violence Law and other laws that protect women and children. The initiative organized a festival entitled Silence About Violence is Violence. The activities consisted of plays explaining the reality of women in Muthanna, which show the domination of men in society and how they restrict women and prevent them from expressing their opinion.

Finally, the team calls for more governmental efforts to reject violence against women and children and to protect the victims of violence by providing them and their children with a haven, ensuring decent life for them, allocating medical treatment units for survivors of domestic violence and rehabilitation centers for perpetrators of domestic violence.



Rabab received a "Woman Day Award" in UAE. Courtesy of Rabab

2. Anbar – Mines and IEDs Still Taking Their Toll



Rajab Sobhi, age 20, who lives in western Anbar, lost his legs when a mine exploded under his feet. His father says, "The amputation of my son's leg is a disability for the whole family. I am really afraid that the scattered mines will bring us another tragedy, and then regret is useless".

Despite the passage of more than six years since the liberation of Anbar, mines still threaten the lives of residents there, especially in Anah and Rawa districts, located in western Anbar. Many minefields have been removed around Anah and a small part of Rawa, and people living there still suffer from the remaining mines and explosive devices.



Rajab Sobhi a mine victim © aljazeera.net

The Director of the Mine Affairs Department at the Ministry of Health and Environment says that the mines and explosive devices left by ISIS have killed or injured 10,268 victims.



The existence of mines in the governorates of Iraq is not limited to the era of ISIS occupation between 2014 - 2017, but the problem goes back to repeated wars that Iraq has experienced since the 1980s.

The Military Engineering unit of the Al-Jazeera Operations Command and the Norwegian People's Aid Organization (NPA) work cooperatively to remove the mines and explosive devices, which are distributed in residential and agricultural areas of Anah and Rawa districts.

In June 2021, NPA started a comprehensive non-technical survey (NTS) project funded by UNMAS in Anbar Governorate.

NTS refers to the collection and analysis of data in order to determine the existence, type, distribution, and surrounding environment of explosive ordnance contamination without use of technical interventions.

NTS contains four mobile teams, deployed across Anbar to get the necessary information through talking to local community leaders, villagers, and other people with knowledge of the areas for example shepherds passing through the land.

All NTS results were reported to the Iraqi Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) for entry into the national mine action database.

According to the Administrative Deputy of Anbar Governorate, Jasim Al-Halbousi, the areas of operations during the war against ISIS are still suffering from these remnants. "The desert areas in Anbar are vast, and the possibility of completely demining is very difficult".

He added that after the liberation of the province from ISIS, the focus was on city centers and densely populated areas, which were cleared, leaving only a few scattered areas, which are waiting for their turn to be cleared from contamination.

The citizens living in the non-cleared areas such as Rawa and Anah hope that their areas will be free of improvised explosive devices as soon as possible so that their lives can return to normal.



NPA staff marked a contamination spot © NPA Facebook page



NPA staff - NTS Project © NPA Facebook page



Contaminated house in Rawa waiting to be cleared © NPA Facebook page



3. Kirkuk Celebrates International Day of Peace



Kirkuk is a home for many ethnic groups. Kurds, Turks, Arabs, Christians, and Kakai. Each culture has left its marks on the province. This multicultural feeling makes the Kirkuk Governorate a unique place to live.

Many Kirkuk citizens are quietly proud of their unusually mixed parentage, lineage, and heritage. It is common for elderly Kirkukis to have an Arab mother, a Kurdish father, and a Christian aunt – a practical demonstration of peaceful coexistence and harmonious relationships at

the family level.

On the International Day of Peace, UNAMI-DSO organized a celebration with a peace-pole ceremony, tree-planting campaign, speeches, and sport. Established by the UN General Assembly in 1981, International Peace Day provides an opportunity for all of humanity to commit to peace above all differences and contribute to a culture of peace. This year is particularly significant for Kirkuk: it is the 20th Anniversary of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

Kirkuk Governor Rakan Al-Juboori unveiled an authentic peace pole. The Governor said that Kirkuk has for centuries been a model of peaceful co-existence between all its ethnic components, sometimes under threat when outside forces try to alter the local balance. On behalf of the UN in Kirkuk, Laura Romanazzi, the Head of Office, launched a campaign to plant 100 different trees. A tree planting is a symbol for different tribes to bury differences and live together in peace.

As part of the UNAMI ‘art-for-peace’ project, Fatima Fazel and her National Youth Network (NYN) - collective of street artists unveiled two paintings on the T-walls, transforming a symbol of violence into a message for peace. And the military detachment changed out of their uniforms and put down their guns to play a friendly soccer game with a local team of Iraqis from different ethnicities, unified through sport.



Fatima Fazel and the NYN collective of young street artists transformed the UNAMI Compound’s T-wall barriers, which are associated with war, into a message for peace. The Kirkuk citadel is a symbol of multi-culturalism, home to a mosque, church, and synagogue. A dove of peace flies above Kirkuk. © UNAMI-DSO



Peace-Poles are created by a not-for-profit organization in association with UNDP. © UN-DPI

4. Basra – Disability Inclusion Still Far Behind Expectations



No accurate figures are available on people with disabilities (PWDs) in Basra and Iraq in general. However, the number of PWDs has been constantly increasing in Basra since 2003, mainly due to ongoing violence, landmines, and explosive remnants of war and acts of terrorism.²

According to recent surveys conducted by local NGOs, PWDs in Basra, are still facing all forms of discrimination that impair their full enjoyment of their rights and their equal participation in all aspects of society. For example, due to the stigma associated, they have fewer employment and educational opportunities, poorer health, and increased poverty rates.³

Women, girls, and children with disabilities are more subject to exploitation, sexual harassment, and abuse as they are less able to defend themselves. Women with disabilities are also further burdened by movement restrictions due to gender customs and therefore face more difficulties accessing basic services. Children with disabilities living in rural areas also have very limited access to specialized facilities and educational opportunities.

Iraq acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in March 2013, and in the same year enacted the Care of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs Act no 38 (2013).

According to Adel Hamdi, a lawyer and civil activist, there is a gap between the legislative framework and reality. Although there is a system of registration that allows persons with disabilities to be officially recognized, the government does not have a clear and unified definition for persons with disabilities.



infrastructural impediment is one of the main challenges faced by PWDs

According to the Alsoror Association for women and Children, a local NGO, the lack of reliable statistics concerning the number of persons with disabilities in Iraq prevents any comprehensive assessment of the gaps and needs and thus the development of appropriate policy plans.

Ahmed Hadi, the manager of the Services Division for People with Disabilities in Basra, highlighted that the legal framework for the promotion and protection of PWDs' rights should be strengthened to dismantle the institutional and physical barriers that prevent them access their rights and hinder their active participation in society.

The role of the community-based and disabled persons' organizations since 2003 was mostly related to care and support provision more than advocacy on the rights of PWDs. Today, there is a need for country-wide awareness-raising campaigns to raise awareness of the rights of persons

² Estimated figures by the Ministry of Planning in 2021 reveals that the number of people with disability in Iraq exceeds 1.5 million. Baghdad is the highest with (29%) followed by Basra (13%).

³ In regard to the right to work and social protection, even though the government is obliged to assign 5% of public sector positions to PWDs, stakeholders report that this percentage has not been met.

with disabilities and to eliminate discrimination against them. Moreover, there is a need to enhance citizen complaint mechanisms and community engagement.

5. Thi-Qar – Life Without Drugs Campaign Revives Hope



Life was a lot to grapple with for Saad, a 19-year-old unemployed high school dropout from Thi-Qar. The pressure from his family and society was unbearable – living up to their expectations and keeping up with their standards were impossible. He was desperate for a solution, something that could tune everything out and make him feel like a new person.

He began to look around for a way out and then, out of the blue, a resourceful smooth-talking friend appeared in his life. He understood him in a way that his own family and other friends never did. One day, after one of their heart-to-heart conversations, he offered him something new to try out together, a magical drug that could make all of those negative feelings and emotions go away.

Saad and his friend smoked crystal methamphetamine together. He felt great afterwards, so he asked his friend to repeat the experience over and over again. Crystal meth is cheap and available where he lives, and even though he had no job, his family gave him money whenever he requested it, which he spent on sustaining his new habit.



Life Without Drugs campaign logo © local media

As time went by, Saad's condition deteriorated significantly. He was not eating, he was not sleeping, and he became increasingly aggressive. Up to that point, his family had no idea that he was addicted to crystal meth, but when his behavior began to cause major problems for himself and them, they began to notice that something was seriously wrong. After questioning and pressuring him, Saad confessed everything.

Thi-Qar Governorate has recently witnessed an alarming rise in the rates of drug abuse, trafficking, suicide, and theft crimes. Statistics prepared by the Thi-Qar Police Command at the beginning of 2022 revealed that the rate of these crimes increased to more than 17% in 2021.

Many community and governmental campaigns have been launched to face the growing phenomenon, including a campaign called "Life Without Drugs." Launched by a team of Thi-Qar youth, in coordination with health institutions and community police, the campaign has contributed to the recovery of 70 drug addicts, among whom was Saad. Meanwhile, the local government launched another campaign to reassure drug addicts and urge them to visit the addiction treatment center that opened a few months ago.

According to volunteers with the program, the campaign educates young people about the harms of drug abuse and the health, psychological, and social risks to the individual in particular. The distribution of awareness leaflets about the dangers of drugs is accompanied by interviews with

those on Al Haboubi Street⁴, as well as giving lectures and conducting meaningful dialogues with young people in forums and their gathering places.

Captain Salem Muhammed, a member of the community police, referred to the cooperation and participation of the community police with the volunteer teams in their campaign to raise awareness about the phenomenon of drug abuse.

“We go out on a continuous basis with awareness tours in markets and public places such as parks, parks, and youth gathering centers, where we aim to educate and raise awareness of young people’s need to stay away from drug abuse or trafficking because it causes family disintegration and loss of their future as well as its health repercussions.”



Al-Hayat Center for treatment and rehabilitation of narcotics addicts in Thi-Qar @ local media

After Saad confessed to his family, they brought him to Al-Hayat (Life) Center for treatment and rehabilitation of narcotics addicts in Thi-Qar, where he got the help that he needed. A week later he was discharged home by his treating psychiatrist. Before he left the center, he made a promise to the staff that he would never let crystal back into his life.

6. Saladin – Celebrating Peace After Conflict



After the third Gulf War in 2003, many local armed groups in Iraq rejected the new government, which ultimately led to the rise of ISIL and its occupation of large parts of the country in 2014, including 80% of Saladin governorate.

Seven years after liberating the governorate from ISIL’s occupation, there are still visible effects such as 463 destroyed infrastructure sites and 54,360 forced IDPs. On 16 January 2022 ISIL members executed four fishermen in an agricultural area north of Samarra district.

The government of Saladin tries to keep the peace and maintain security while sustaining reconstruction and development efforts despite competition by the political parties to gain authority.

In response, the first Peace Forum of Saladin Youth in Tikrit city center was an exceptional event held on 21 September. Participants in the forum included local government officials, humanitarian activists, poets, writers, and leaders of special volunteer teams.

The forum included many activities that lasted from morning to evening, such as a book fair and folk dances representing the culture of Saladin’s people, handmade products, and agricultural products in Saladin.

⁴ Al-Haboubi Street is one of the most prominent streets and landmarks in Nasiriya city (the capital of Thi-Qar Governorate), and the most crowded with pedestrians. It is the center of the educated youth gathering.



The Basmat Khair volunteering team campaign was formed in 2012 by five students at the College of Media at the Iraqi University, and relief work was at the top of their diversified activities.

The volunteer teams engage in charitable activities and participate in activities like planting trees in public parks.

Adnan Iyad, a team member of the campaign, said they work off of donations by their members and others. They collect and purchase food and in-kind items that include necessities for the Iraqi table, as blankets and toys for children, and distribute them to the displaced. They also collect medicines to aid about 100 families from Saladin governorate.

Most of the volunteers do not engage in political work. Instead, they are an opportunity for young people to broaden their horizons through empowering their abilities, accountability, and confidence. The volunteers form a network of social relationships and acquire new skills that reinforce positive values and help them solve problems in a creative way.

Ismail al-Haloub, the Governor of Saladin said, “The embrace of Saladin governorate for the Peace Forum carries a clear message with clear meanings that affirms deep-rooted Iraqi brotherhood that is not discouraged by enemies through exercising a new era of reconstruction, and the role played by the volunteer teams.”

Salim Al-Hathout, a volunteer team leader said, “Peace is not only the absence of war and violence, but to live with dignity and equal rights, justice, freedom of expression, and the free practice of customs, traditions, and religious occasions. Peace is for a human to live in peace.”

The Rev. Kent Winters-Hazelton said, “While war destroys and disrupts, peace builds and strengthens as well as restores. Moreover, peace is personal, which helps us achieve security and tranquility and avoid anxiety and chaos to make our lives better.”⁵



Turkmen participants from Saladin in the Peace Forum of the Youth © Saladin Governorate Media Office



Folk Dances for Arabic Youth in the Peace Forum of the Youth © Saladin Governorate Media Office

⁵ The Rev. Kent Winters-Hazelton, senior pastor, First Presbyterian Church, 2415 Clinton Parkway, Peace builds, strengthens and restores, Faith Forum: Why is peace important, Lawrence Journal-World Newspaper. LJWORD.COM.