

# FOR IRAQ

The United Nations in Iraq

# 2024



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**SCPIO Director:**  
Samir F. Ghattas

**Editor-in-Chief:** Ivan Djordjevic

**Editorial Board:** Jean El Alam, Laila Shamji, Celia Dadson

UN Country Team

**Design:** Salar Brifkani



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**Cover Artwork:** Mazin Al-Azzawi

For comments and suggestions, contact  
[unami-information@un.org](mailto:unami-information@un.org)

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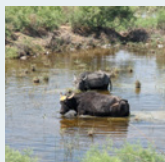
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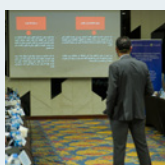
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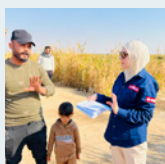
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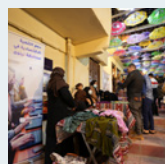
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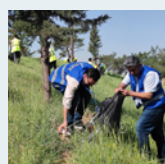
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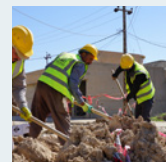
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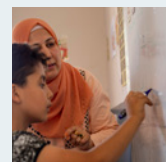
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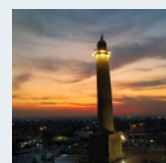
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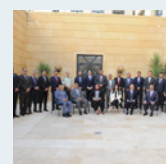
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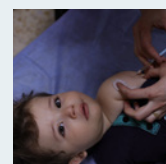
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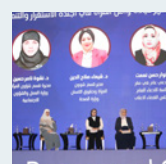
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## Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI

# DR. MOHAMED AL HASSAN

## FOREWORD

Iraq is rising again, and I am delighted to be part of this transformation. Since leading the United Nations in Iraq in October, I have been overwhelmed by the wealth of history and culture as well as the generosity and hospitality of the people of this country – the cradle of civilization. Baghdad today is tantamount to a giant construction site. A new spirit dominates this sprawling city hugging the banks of the tranquil Tigris River, a scene that belies the stereotypes that accompanied its name for decades as

one of violence and destruction. In addition, Baghdad prepares, deservedly, to welcome tourists this year as the Arab Capital of Tourism. In my engagements with Iraqis across the country, I sensed from them a deep sense of belonging and determination to make their nation one that they are proud of, complementing its historic significance with contemporary importance. Certainly, the country might be facing challenges but equally there are opportunities to seize. It is important that Iraq keeps moving forward.

National unity remains key to progress. Regional developments dictate on all of us to shield Iraq and seek opportunities to enhance its standing as an arena for regional cooperation. Iraq has a partner in the United Nations, as we work together to meet the people's expectations and fulfill their aspirations for a stable and prosperous future. After all, Iraq is a founding member of the United Nations, and we are here to serve the country and its people. Iraqis can always count on us.



## The United Nations in Iraq in 2024

# Fast Facts

### Which UN organizations operate in Iraq?

The United Nations in Iraq comprises two field missions (UNAMI and UNITAD), UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, working at the community, governorate and national levels across the Republic of Iraq.

## UNAMI

The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) is a special political mission established in 2003 by UN Security Council Resolution 1500, at the request of the Government of Iraq. Its role was greatly expanded in 2007 with the adoption of Resolution 1770.

UNAMI is headed by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq, who is supported by two deputies. One Deputy SRSG oversees Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, while a second Deputy SRSG oversees UN humanitarian and development efforts and also performs the functions of Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq.

Through its resolution 2732 (2024), adopted on 31 May 2024, the Security Council extended the mandate of UNAMI for a final 19-month period until 31 December 2025 after which UNAMI will cease all work and operations.

UNAMI has an authorized strength of 777 personnel (280 international, 495 national and 2 UNV).

The Mission's budget for 2024: USD 98.4 million.

The Mission is administered by the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and supported by the Department of Peace Operations as well as the Department of Operational Support.

## UNAMI's mandate

### Resolution 2732 (2024)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 9642nd meeting, on 31 May 2024

The Security Council,

Recalling all its previous relevant resolutions on Iraq, in particular 1500 (2003), 1546 (2004), 1557 (2004), 1619 (2005), 1700 (2006), 1770 (2007), 1830 (2008), 1883 (2009), 1936 (2010), 2001 (2011), 2061 (2012), 2110 (2013), 2169 (2014), 2233 (2015), 2299 (2016), 2379 (2017), 2421 (2018), 2470 (2019), 2522 (2020), 2576 (2021), 2631 (2022), 2682 (2023), and reiterating resolutions 2107 (2013) and 2621 (2022) on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, and the values set forth in 2367 (2017),

Reaffirming the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Iraq, and emphasizing the importance of the stability, prosperity, and security of Iraq for the people of Iraq, the region, and the international community, particularly in light of Iraq's territorial victory over ISIL (Da'esh), and encouraging Iraq and neighboring countries, in close consultation, to provide outreach, as well as good offices, to support regional dialogue and cooperation, where appropriate,

Supporting Iraq as it continues its stabilization efforts, including the ongoing fight against terrorism, including against ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida and their affiliates, consistent with its obligations under international law including international human rights law and international humanitarian law and continues the task of recovery, reconstruction, and stabilization, including the requirement to meet the needs of all Iraqis, including women, youth, children, displaced persons, and persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities,

Supporting the Government of Iraq as it continues to deliver on reforms, aimed at meeting the Iraqi people's legitimate aspirations, to address corruption, respect and protect the human rights of all individuals in Iraq, promote accountability for human rights violations and abuses, deliver essential services, diversify the economy, create jobs, improve

# UN Iraq

The United Nations in Iraq | FAST FACTS

governance, combat climate change and environmental and water-related challenges, and strengthen viable and responsive state institutions, including the security sector,

Recognizing the Government of Iraq's efforts to that effect, including working toward full implementation of the Yezidi Survivors Law and disbursing payments and other benefits as required under the law to survivors and victims, and noting the measures taken by State institutions to redouble efforts to pursue accountability for those responsible for human rights violations and abuses including the killing, serious injury, abduction or disappearance of demonstrators and journalists, including women, and to safeguard and respect the rule of law and the right to freedom of expression, further noting the Government of Iraq's efforts towards the implementation of its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and the 2016 UN-Iraq Joint Communiqué on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, and to hold perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict accountable and provide mental health and psychosocial support to all victims,

Welcoming the Government of Iraq's efforts to assist internally displaced persons and displaced Iraqis in Syria to return and reintegrate to their areas of origin or resettle elsewhere in Iraq, renewing the call for international support for those efforts, and stressing the importance of achieving dignified, safe and durable solutions undertaken on a voluntary and informed basis,

Welcoming the Government of Iraq's efforts to address the adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters,

Calling on the international community to support durable solutions and development efforts while the Government of Iraq assumes responsibility for the provision of humanitarian services,

Noting the recommendations contained in the Independent Strategic Review dated 28 March 2024 to streamline the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI),

1. Takes note of the Government of Iraq's letter dated 8 May 2024 and decides

to extend UNAMI's mandate for a final 19-month period until 31 December 2025 after which UNAMI will cease all work and operations except with respect to any remaining liquidation of the Mission pursuant to paragraph two;

2. Requests that the Secretary-General prepare, in consultation with the Government of Iraq, a transition and liquidation plan to be completed by 31 December 2024, for UNAMI to start the transfer of its tasks, as well as the orderly and safe drawdown and withdrawal of its personnel and assets, including identification of an end date for liquidation activities in Iraq;

3. Decides to authorize for a period to be determined based on administrative procedures subject to the UN Financial Rules and Regulations, the retention of guard units from within UNAMI's existing footprint to protect the Mission's personnel, facilities and assets, including during the liquidation period;

4. Calls on the Government of Iraq to cooperate fully with the UN during UNAMI's transition, drawdown and liquidation;

5. Commends the Government of Iraq's efforts to settle internal issues in Iraq and to make progress towards achieving the milestones set out in the Government of Iraq's programme and priorities, including the holding of Iraqi Council of Representatives and Iraqi Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections in due course; preservation and strengthening of functioning institutions to sustain a structured and regular dialogue; and the strengthening of national human rights bodies that are effective and independent;

6. Notes the request of the Government of Iraq to draw down UNAMI's activities in its letter dated 8 May 2024, and requests the Secretary-General to streamline the tasks of UNAMI as follows:

(a) Provide advice, support, and technical assistance to the Government of Iraq, the Independent High Electoral Commission and other Iraqi institutions with efforts to strengthen electoral preparation and processes to ensure free and fair elections, with the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women, including federal Iraq's parliamentary elections

and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region's parliamentary elections, through transparent and inclusive processes, including through regular technical reviews and detailed reporting on electoral preparations and processes, as part of the Secretary-General's regular reporting cycle;

(b) Facilitate, within the transition period, progress towards the final resolution of outstanding issues between Iraq and Kuwait, including the return of Kuwaiti property and the National Archives, and the repatriation or return of all Kuwaiti and third country nationals or their remains, consistent with resolution 2107 (2013), and requests the Secretary-General to make recommendations by 31 May 2025 and present them to the Council for an appropriate follow-on mechanism to support continued progress should these issues not be resolved upon termination of UNAMI's mandate;

(c) Promote, support, and facilitate the following development and humanitarian tasks, in coordination with the Government of Iraq, and in accordance with the Secretary-General's transition plan for UNAMI to be completed by 31 December 2024:

(i) the safe, informed, voluntary and dignified return or local integration, as appropriate, of internally displaced persons, and displaced Iraqis in Syria, including through the efforts of the UN Country Team, while welcoming the national measures taken in this regard, and timely access to legal assistance and civil documentation for internally displaced persons and displaced Iraqis in Syria, including persons at risk of statelessness, particularly children without birth registration or other documentation of legal identity; programmes dedicated to the reintegration of displaced persons and survivors of terrorist attacks and atrocities, and support for reconstruction of areas liberated from ISIL/Daesh;

(ii) the coordination and implementation of programmes to improve Iraq's capacity to provide effective essential civil and social services, including health care, inclusive of psychosocial support services, and education, for its people and continue to support Iraq's regional and international donor coordination to-

wards strengthening national ownership according to national needs;

(iii) Iraqi, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and other efforts, including through coordination with national institutions and regional organizations and, as appropriate, civil society, donors, and other international agencies, on economic reform, capacity-building and setting conditions for sustainable development, building resilience, and recovery and reconstruction including in areas affected by terrorism;

(iv) the contributions of UN agencies, funds, and programmes to the objectives outlined in this resolution under the unified leadership of the Secretary-General through the Special Representative for Iraq, supported by their designated Deputy;

(d) Promote accountability and the protection of human rights, and judicial and legal reform, with full respect for the sovereignty of Iraq and national ownership, in order to strengthen the rule of law, improve governance in Iraq, and support the Government of Iraq's economic development goals and projects;

(e) Note, while commending the Government of Iraq on signing and implementing the National Action Plan and efforts to fulfill its commitments in coordination with relevant UN agencies, the importance of treating children affected by armed conflict primarily as victims, and encourage the Government of Iraq and UN Country Team, including UNICEF, to strengthen child protection, including the reintegration of children in accordance with Iraq's national laws and Iraq's obligations under international law, and to continue institutionalizing the measures taken in the implementation of the action plan;

7. Recognizes that the security of UN personnel is essential for the UN to carry out its work for the benefit of the people of Iraq and calls upon the Government of Iraq to continue to provide security and logistical support, to the UN's presence in Iraq;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Council every six months, three times in total, with the first report occurring before 30 November 2024,

on the progress made in paragraph six towards the transition of all UNAMI's responsibilities and its residual tasks;

9. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

## UNITAD

United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) was an independent and impartial accountability mechanism mandated by the United Nations Security Council to support domestic efforts to hold ISIL accountable by collecting, preserving and storing evidence in Iraq of acts that might amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed in Iraq. UNITAD was established as a unanimous response from the international community to a request for assistance from the Government of Iraq. Effective cooperation with the Government of Iraq is central to the mandate and activities of UNITAD. Led by a Special Adviser, UNITAD works closely with domestic counterparts to conduct its work in a manner complementing investigations carried out by the national authorities, and in full respect for national sovereignty.

UNITAD concluded its mandate on 17 September 2024 pursuant to Security Council resolution 2697 (2023), and is no longer operational.

## THE UN COUNTRY TEAM

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Iraq comprises 24 UN Agencies, Funds and specialized Programmes including 19 resident and five non-resident agencies, and coordinates their work through joint work plans: FAO, ILO, OCHA, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNCTAD, UN WOMEN, UNDP, ESCWA, UNESCO, UNEP, UNHCR, UN-HABITAT, UNIDO, UNFPA, UNODC, UNOPS, WFP, WHO, UNMAS, ITC, IFC, IMF and IOM.

Led by the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq/ Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, the UNCT works to improve the lives and livelihoods of all Iraqis by supporting the country in achieving the Sus-

tainable Development Agenda and its related Sustainable Development Goals with the latest specialized expertise and evidence-based actions. The spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals is captured in a single phrase: 'to leave no one behind'. This is the principle that guides everything the United Nations does in Iraq. The overall framework under which the United Nations Country Team delivers is the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2024 (formerly UNDAF), which presents the key shared development objectives of the United Nations in the country. The United Nations in Iraq has been working together in a new, coherent way to support the government to achieve its national development priorities and international development commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

### Where does the UN operate in Iraq?

The United Nations family operates in all the 18 governorates of Iraq and operate at the community, governorate, regional and national levels. National and international staff are deployed throughout the country and work in partnership with their local, provincial, regional and national counterparts.

### What is the difference between UNAMI and the other UN entities operating in Iraq?

UNAMI is a political mission established in 2003 at the request of the Government of Iraq.

The presence of the UN organizations in Iraq is established on the basis of bilateral agreements with the Government of Iraq.

### How long has the UN been present in Iraq and why?

Iraq is a founding member of the United Nations. A number of UN organizations have been operating in Iraq since 1955. Others established their offices in the early 1990s and again after 2003.

The UN continues to be present in Iraq to respond to the needs of the Iraqi people and support their efforts to achieve a peaceful and prosperous future.

النائب الممثل  
والمساعدة في الإثبات  
أشغل منصب مدير  
بين العامين 2013 و  
وحكم القانون في ب  
ممثل المفوض الس  
برنامج ومستشار خا  
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واشنطن الولايات ا  
للدراسات La Sapienza



Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance

## MR. CLAUDIO CORDONE

### UNAMI in 2024 and the way forward

The year 2024 was an exceptional one. Exceptional in the fact that while we were finalizing support for the process of the governorates' elections that were held in December 2023 we started preparing, together with our Iraqi electoral partners, for the Kurdistan Regional parliamentary elections which were held in October 2024 after a delay of several years. And in between, we engaged with our Iraqi partners on a number of political and legislative issues, including on human rights such as the Personal Status Law and the Amnesty Law and continued to promote and support Internally Displaced Persons and minority issues, including those of the Yazidi community. And amid all of this, UNAMI

began the process of planning its exit from Iraq after the UN Security Council, at the request of the Government of Iraq, decided in resolution 2732 (2024) to terminate the political Mission and transition all residual work to the UN Country Team of Agencies, Funds and Programmes by end of 2025.

Not an easy task to juggle between transition planning and continuing to deliver on a mandate, reduced but albeit a robust one on electoral affairs, human rights, the Kuwait file and IDPs and returnees of Iraqi nationals from camps and detention centres in northeastern Syria.

As a member of the Senior Leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission for

Iraq (UNAMI), I work under the guidance and in close coordination with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq in implementing the mandate of the Mission that the Security Council entrusted to us in resolution 2732.

The portfolio of Political affairs is wide-ranging and includes cross-cutting themes, covering human rights issues such as freedom of expression, hate speech, women's and children rights, rights of IDPs and minorities, just to name a few. All of this is aligned with our mandate to support Iraq's political stability and democratic processes. Of course, all of this is at the request of the Government and various stakeholders. To underscore these issues, we have spoken

out on a number of occasions in 2024, publicly and privately urging Iraqis to ensure the protection of the rights of all as well as accountability. We provided legal and legislative advice on certain issues to strengthen the rule of law and governance.

A key focus of my work in 2024 was electoral support, led by the Office of Electoral Assistance, which provides advice, support, and technical assistance to the Independent High Electoral Commission to strengthen electoral preparations and processes for the purpose of ensuring free, fair and credible elections.

UNAMI played a significant role in the preparations for the Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections, and we repeatedly engaged with the parties to prod them to hold the elections without further delay. Those elections were successfully held in October 2024. Before that, in December 2023, we supported the conduct of the governorate councils' elections in the rest of Iraq, including in Kirkuk for the first time in about two decades. Those were a success, too. Our support was appreciated as a way to enhance electoral processes and ensure transparency and credibility. Also, we built on previous experiences and lessons learned and provided trainings for electoral staff to ensure effective and efficient election management.

UNAMI's role, led by the Special Representative, continued in promoting and providing the political support for Iraq's commendable policy of repatriating all of its citizens from the Al-Hol camp and other locations

in northeastern Syria, and supporting their rehabilitation and reintegration in Iraqi society as well as ending the file of the IDPs across the country, including that of the Yazidi community. While UNAMI is not directly involved in the reintegration process of Al-Hol, a task taken up by the Iraqi authorities supported by a number of UN agencies, the role of UNAMI remained critical in encouraging the government and donor countries' support to promote support for the process.

On women issues, UNAMI has consistently advocated for the representation of women at all decision-making levels and in promoting the protection of women's rights. In national elections in 2021, women have successfully crossed the 25 percent minimum quota threshold and have won close to 30 percent of seats in the Council of Representatives. Three women are currently in the Council of Ministers. Regrettably, no women were elected to head provincial councils or to the governorships. We continued to urge higher women representation in decision-making positions at all levels.

We continue to support initiatives to increase women's participation in political and public life and in the protection of their rights. In this regard, we engaged with the various stakeholders on amendments to the Personal Status Law, urging Iraq to live up to its international human rights obligations. The protection of the rights of women is an ongoing process that we continue to engage in and support in whatever way we can.

On regional issues, as part of UNAMI's mandate, I have closely followed the file of the Kuwaiti missing persons and property including the National Archives. More needs to be done to end this file.

We look forward to continuing to engage on issues relating to our mandate, especially on electoral support as Iraq prepares for national parliamentary elections which must be held by 25 November 2025. This can be challenging given that UNAMI will have to terminate its operations by end of December 2025, but it is a challenge we take on. The UN support for Iraqi electoral institutions will continue beyond UNAMI if required by the government.

“

**We continue to support initiatives to increase women's participation in political and public life and in the protection of their rights**

”





## Interview with

Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator

# Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai

### What are the biggest challenges facing Iraq today, and how can the UN contribute to building a more prosperous Iraq?

Iraq is at a critical juncture, facing challenges that include climate change, water scarcity, governance reforms, economic instability, and the lingering impacts of conflict and displacement.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) has been specifically designed to address the key challenges Iraq is currently facing. This five-year cooperation framework, developed in close consultation with the Government of Iraq,

This comprehensive framework is not only aligned with Iraq's National Development Plan but also with the broader SDG agenda, aiming to accelerate Iraq's progress toward achieving these goals. To support Iraq in overcoming its challenges, the UN

can provide a range of services, including technical assistance, which involves providing expert knowledge and solutions to address specific developmental and technical challenges. Additionally, capacity building will be essential to strengthen the abilities of Iraq's institutions and human resources, ensuring they are well-equipped to manage their own development sustainably. Furthermore, the UN can support policy development by advising the government on formulating and implementing policies that foster social, economic, and environmental resilience, aligning them with international best practices.

For instance, our initiatives last year helped rehabilitate critical infrastructure particularly in the areas affected by conflict, provide vocational training to youth, and improve service delivery in underserved areas.

### Climate change, water scarcity, and governance are significant concerns for Iraq. How is the UN addressing these issues?

Climate change is significantly intensifying water shortages and environmental degradation in Iraq, placing immense stress on the ecosystems of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. As temperatures rise and rainfall patterns become more erratic, these vital water sources are at risk, threatening livelihoods and the region's overall sustainability. In response, the UN is collaborating closely with Iraq to implement the National Adaptation Plan, which prioritizes sustainable water management strategies, the establishment of early warning systems for climate-related risks, and the promotion of nature-based solutions, such as the restoration of mangroves in Basra, to protect and restore coastal ecosystems.

Additionally, the UN is supporting Iraq in revising its renewable energy laws and developing a comprehensive climate investment plan to ensure the country is equipped to transition to a low-carbon economy. This includes fostering Iraq's active participation in the global climate discourse, particularly through support for the COP28-29 conferences, where Iraq's climate action commitments and progress will be showcased.

Good governance plays a pivotal role in addressing these complex environmental challenges. The UN is committed to supporting Iraq's efforts to combat corruption, strengthen institutional capacity, and promote inclusive decision-making processes. By enhancing transparency and accountability, the UN aims to ensure that climate action and environmental protection are integrated into national policies, with the active participation of all stakeholders, including marginalized communities, ensuring a fair and sustainable future for all Iraqis.

**Has the UN in Iraq completed its transition from humanitarian to development activities? What is the current situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Iraq, and how is the UN supporting Iraq in addressing displacement?**

The transition is currently underway. Through the Humanitarian Transition Overview, the UN is gradually scaling down direct humanitarian interventions, focusing on empowering Iraqi institutions to take the lead in service delivery. This shift emphasizes the integration of displaced populations into national systems, while continuing to address remaining humanitarian needs.

The UNSDCF 2025–2029 is pivotal to this transition, ensuring a development-oriented and sustainable approach. In collaboration with the Government, the UN developed the Durable Solutions (DS) Road Map, which aims to resolve displacement issues in Iraq.

Since the ISIL conflict, nearly 5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned to their homes, yet over 1 million people remain displaced, many living in vulnerable and precarious conditions. The UN is actively supporting Iraq in implementing the DS Roadmap, which emphasizes ensuring safe, voluntary, and dignified returns for IDPs or exploring alternative solutions, such as integration into new communities.



Our efforts focus on addressing the immediate and long-term needs of IDPs by rehabilitating housing and critical infrastructure, facilitating the provision of civil documentation, and promoting social cohesion in areas of return. Special attention is given to the most vulnerable groups, including female-headed households, unaccompanied children, and individuals with specific protection needs, ensuring that their return and reintegration processes are both safe and inclusive.

In addition to the challenges of housing shortages and the need for compensation to rebuild homes, we are tackling the broader issues faced by returning IDPs. These include difficulties related to obtaining civil documentation, which is crucial for accessing services and securing legal rights, and addressing the political and security challenges in areas of return. The UN is working closely with local authorities and community leaders to resolve these issues and ensure that returnees can rebuild their lives in safe and stable environments.

**Can you elaborate on the progress of the One-UN Plan, “A New Beginning,” for returning Iraqi nationals from northeast Syria?**

Since 2021, more than 13,000 Iraqi nationals have successfully returned to Iraq from northeast Syria, with the Government of Iraq leading the effort, supported by the UN. In January 2025, we launched the second phase of the ONE Plan, “New Beginnings” (2025-2027), which aims to facilitate the return of the remaining approximately 18,000 Iraqis by the end of 2025, with reintegration efforts continuing through 2027.

While this target is ambitious, the urgency of the situation - particularly given the current instability in Syria - underscores the importance of expediting the return process.

Upon their return, these individuals are temporarily housed at the Al-Amal Center (formerly known as the Jeddah 1 Rehabilitation Centre), where they receive crucial reintegration support. This includes assistance with acquiring civil documentation, access to psychosocial services to address trauma, and vocational training to improve their livelihoods.

The UN's approach to reintegration is both comprehensive and rights-based, ensuring that returns are not only safe and dignified but also fully aligned with international human rights standards and legal frameworks. We prioritize community-based reintegration, collaborating closely with local authorities and host communities to ensure that returnees are welcomed and integrated into their new environments. Key challenges to sustainable reintegration, such as the rehabilitation of damaged housing, access to essential services like healthcare and education, and legal and social support for individuals, are being actively addressed.

**How is the UN supporting Iraq's economic reform, resilience-building, and reconstruction in areas affected by terrorism?**

Economic recovery and resilience are foundational to Iraq's long-term stability and development. In regions liberated from ISIL, the UN has played a key role in rebuilding critical infrastructure, such as



schools, hospitals, and housing, which were severely damaged during the conflict. These reconstruction efforts are not just about physical infrastructure but also about restoring essential services that communities rely on, ensuring a safer, more prosperous future for Iraqis.

One of the notable initiatives supporting Iraq's economic recovery is the Employment-Intensive Investment Programme, which has created thousands of jobs, particularly benefiting youth and women in vulnerable communities. These programs not only provide much-needed income but also contribute to strengthening local economies, fostering social stability, and reducing the risk of further displacement or radicalization.

Furthermore, the UN is working to strengthen public-private partnerships, which are critical to driving sustainable economic growth and job creation. By promoting climate-smart agricultural practices, the UN aims to enhance food security while supporting economic diversification. These initiatives help to reduce the country's dependency on oil by encouraging investment in other sectors, such as agriculture, renewable energy, and technology.

In line with Iraq's national priorities, the UN is also supporting the government's efforts to diversify its economy and reduce its reliance on the oil sector, which currently accounts for a significant portion of Iraq's GDP. The government has set a target to decrease this reliance by 25%, and the UN is working closely with the Iraqi government to develop and implement strate-

gies to promote other industries, ensure sustainable development, and increase resilience to external shocks.

### **How is Iraq progressing toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and how does the UNCT support this journey?**

Iraq has made significant progress in areas such as poverty reduction, with the poverty rate decreasing to 17.5%, education, and improving access to essential services. However, significant challenges remain, particularly in poverty alleviation, healthcare, and environmental sustainability. Addressing these gaps and accelerating progress in key sectors will be essential for achieving the SDGs and ensuring a sustainable future for all Iraqis. The 2024 Sustainable Development Report highlights that 38% of measurable SDG targets in Iraq are off track, underscoring the need for focused efforts in these critical areas. We hope that the data from the 2023 Census will help gather more comprehensive information to guide policy-making that is more equitable, inclusive, and better aligned with the needs of all communities. Considering that Iraq currently holds an SDG index score of 64.2, ranking 108th out of 162 countries, the UN Country Team is committed to adopting a "Leave No One Behind" approach. This approach prioritizes resilience, equity, and prosperity for all Iraqis, ensuring that every individual benefits from the country's development. Our focus is on paving the way for sustainable development by 2030, working to close the gaps and promote inclusive progress

across all sectors of society.

The UNCT, guided by the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2025–2029, is working in partnership with the Government of Iraq to address these challenges. The UNSDCF focuses on four strategic priorities:

1. **Inclusive Social Development:** Expanding access to quality education, healthcare, and social protection for vulnerable populations, including displaced persons.
2. **Sustainable Economic Development:** Promoting economic diversification, empowering youth and women through skills development, and fostering entrepreneurship.
3. **Climate Resilience and Environmental Protection:** Addressing critical issues such as water scarcity, pollution, and biodiversity loss, while promoting renewable energy and sustainable agricultural practices.
4. **Good Governance and Human Rights:** Enhancing institutional accountability, civic participation, and the rule of law.

### **At the end of 2025, UNAMI will conclude its presence in Iraq. How is the UN Country Team preparing for this transition, and what will be the focus of the UN agencies, funds, and programs?**

The transition from UNAMI to the UN Country Team (UNCT) marks a critical turning point in the UN's engagement in Iraq, as it shifts focus from peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts to long-term development priorities. Under the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2025–2029, the UNCT will take the lead in driving Iraq's development agenda, aligning closely with the country's national priorities.

Our efforts will prioritize key areas such as climate resilience, economic diversification, and governance reforms. These are crucial for addressing the pressing challenges of Iraq's future and ensuring sustainable growth. We will also strengthen partnerships with the Government of Iraq, working collaboratively to support Iraq's vision for development and stability. The UNCT will continue its commitment to leaving no one behind, ensuring that marginalized communities are included in the country's development trajectory, and that Iraq moves toward a future of stability, peace, and prosperity.



# Office of Political Affairs and Analysis

## OPAA achievements over the last two decades

**A**s we begin this new year, the Office of Political Affairs and Analysis reflects on over two decades of supporting Mission leadership in engaging with Iraqi stakeholders. This collaboration has played a pivotal role in building state institutions, fostering dialogue, and empowering youth, all of which have contributed to a more resilient and inclusive future for Iraq. Since UNAMI's establishment in 2003, Iraq has overcome numerous internal and external challenges, emerging as a steadfast advocate for peace and stability. Furthermore, Iraq has made significant strides in addressing economic challenges and is firmly committed to sustainable development that ensures the protection and inclusion of all its communities.

## Constitutional Reforms

Constitutional reforms have been, and continue to be, a key and central issue for a more effective and representative governance structure and political system in Iraq. Between 2006 and 2020, Parliamentary constitutional review committees and other executive committees were formed pursuant to Articles 126 and 142 of the Constitution. During this period, UNAMI provided technical support to these committees through constitutional experts, stakeholder engagement, technical and consultative workshops,

and the development of recommendations and options for the review process. In 2020, an expert report was prepared and submitted to the government, outlining constitutional reform options and recommendations focused on five key areas: (1) the nature of the political system; (2) the relationship between the capital and the regions; (3) reform of the judicial system; (4) consolidating liberties and rights guaranteed by the Constitution; and (5) the procedural formula for constitutional amendments.

## Dialogue Promotion – National Reconciliation

Since 2005, successive Iraqi governments have prioritized reconciliation and dialogue as essential components of building an inclusive political system and achieving coexistence in a stable Iraq. Over the past two decades, UNAMI has supported various initiatives and Iraqi-led reconciliation efforts aimed at fostering an inclusive process that brought together political and societal actors. By creating an environment of peaceful and inclusive dialogue, UNAMI facilitated forums and workshops that engaged Iraqi stakeholders from diverse ethnic backgrounds and differing, sometimes opposing, perspectives.

These efforts provided technical support and capacity building for Iraqi decision-makers in implementing national dialogue initiatives. The outcomes encompassed a wide range of recommendations, including constitutional and economic reforms, promoting intercommunal dialogue, peaceful coexistence, and the inclusion of minorities, women, youth, and other marginalized and vulnerable groups in decision-making processes. The efforts were aligned with the priorities set forth in various government programmes and initiatives such as the National Alliance's National Settlement Initiative in 2016 and the National Dialogue in 2021 and succeeded in mitigating conflict, strengthening social cohesion and advancing confidence-building measures.

## Dialogue Promotion - Disputed Boundaries

Article 140 of the 2005 Iraqi Constitution outlined a process to resolve the political and legal status of the Internally Disputed Boundaries (DIBs) between the Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). However, the implementation of Article 140 continues to strain relations between Baghdad and Erbil, as well as Arab-Kurdish relations, particularly concerning power-sharing, property and land disputes, and voter registry agreements.

As part of its efforts to promote peace and reconciliation in Iraq and facilitate dialogue between Baghdad and Erbil, UNAMI prepared an extensive report on the DIBs in 2009 and conducted two follow-up studies in 2017 and 2018. These studies focused on managing land disputes affecting minorities in Ninewa and on peaceful coexistence, demographic changes, and population movements in the disputed areas of Kirkuk, Diyala, and Salah Al-Din.

These reports, shared with both the federal government and the KRG, laid the groundwork for UNAMI's engagement on the DIBs providing a framework for dialogue addressing governance, security, service delivery, displacement, and social relations. The recommendations covered issues related to governance and administration, elections, demographics, socio-economic conditions, and social cohesion. These insights offered a comprehensive understanding of the situation and proposed actions for mediation and other engagement strategies. Over the years, UNAMI has facilitated intensive dialogue sessions, including in Kirkuk and Sinjar, to support coexistence and stability in the DIB areas through various initiatives.

## Youth Engagement and Empowerment

Youth represent 60% of Iraq's population, and since 2017, UNAMI has prioritized youth empowerment, engaging over 1,200 young Iraqis, including many women. This initiative aligned with UNAMI's broader efforts to advance national reconciliation and political dialogue, fostering positive responses from both youth and government representatives. Acting as an intermediary, UNAMI has facilitated direct dialogue between youth and decision-makers, particularly addressing the disillusionment following the 2019 protests.

UNAMI's engagement with the youth from 2017 to 2023 included several capacity-building workshops on peacebuilding, conflict resolution, climate change, leadership, and advocacy, using innovative methods like simulations, gamification, and hackathons. In 2023, UNAMI supported the development of two youth-led policy papers on political, economic, and climate challenges, which were presented to decision-makers in a roundtable discussion to enhance youth engagement in policymaking.

## Plans for 2025

Following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2732 (2024), the Office of Political Affairs and Analysis will focus on providing support to Mission leadership regarding the conduct of the 2025 federal parliamentary elections, including women's participation in elections, human rights activities and humanitarian and development tasks. Moreover, the Office will contribute to transition and drawdown planning and implementation of the Transition and Liquidation Plan as requested by the Security Council, with a view to ensuring an orderly and smooth closure of the Mission by 31 December 2025.





# Office of Electoral Assistance

## Achievements in 2024

Since the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in 2005, electoral assistance has been a central component of the Mission's mandate, playing a pivotal and multifaceted role in the country's electoral processes and reflecting the United Nations' commitment to promoting democracy in post-conflict societies. Through its Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA), UNAMI provides strategic and technical support to Iraqi institutions that helps build public confidence in Iraq's democratic and electoral systems.

In particular, OEA offers comprehensive advice and technical assistance to the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), enabling the successful conduct of free and fair elections in Iraq through transparent and inclusive processes.

Under UN Security Council resolution 2732 (2024), UNAMI's mandate was extended to 31 December 2025 and tasked UNAMI with providing technical electoral assistance to Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission, supporting the design and execution of free, fair and Iraqi-led elections.

UNAMI's electoral assistance aims to uphold international standards, ensuring that elections in Iraq are credible and widely accepted by the public.

The mission's ongoing support to IHEC, particularly in areas such as operations, ICT, legal, communications and public outreach underscores its unwavering commitment to fostering a democratic culture in Iraq. In 2024, a significant achievement was the successful conduct of the 20th October Kurdistan Region Parliamentary elections with UNAMI's full support.



## Kurdistan Region Parliamentary Elections

The long-awaited 2024 Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections marked a significant milestone in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's democratic journey, demonstrating enhanced electoral integrity through technology, structured public engagement, and collaboration among key stakeholders. The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), supported by the UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA), implemented several advancements to improve the transparency, security, and inclusivity of the electoral process, while also navigating a range of political, logistical, technical, legal and security challenges.

The elections were structured around key reforms, with the Kurdistan Region divided into four constituencies—Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk, and Halabja—each functioning as a single electoral constituency. The parliament consists of 100 seats, of which a minimum of 30 seats (30%) are reserved for female candidates, reflecting the gender quota aimed at promoting greater female

representation. Additionally, five seats were exclusively reserved for minority communities, ensuring the inclusion of Christians and Turkmen in the region's legislative body.

The 2024 Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections saw significant voter engagement, with 2,899,578 registered voters and an impressive voter turnout of 72%, the highest recorded for Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections. The voter list included 215,960 special voters from security forces, who voted in advance on October 18, and 2,683,618 regular voters who participated in the general election on October 20. Among the registered voters, 1,486,461 were male and 1,413,117 were female, highlighting a balanced gender distribution and strong overall engagement from both genders. The proportional representation list system, with the allocation of seats determined by the Hare-Niemeyer method (also known as the largest remainder method) was the system utilized for this election, specifically chosen to re-

flect the diverse demographics of the Kurdistan Region and ensure fair representation of all political entities.

To implement this mandate, UNAMI, through its Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA), provided advisory and technical assistance to IHEC's National Office in Baghdad and to the Central Committee, based in Erbil, responsible for managing and overseeing the elections. UNAMI established a dedicated office at IHEC's Central Committee in Erbil and maintained a regular presence through visits to the Kurdistan Regional Electoral Office (KREO) and the Governorate Electoral Offices (GEOs) in the region.

Senior UN leadership, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the two Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, (DSRSGs), along with the Principal Electoral Adviser and OEA advisors, visited polling centers on both voting days, showing the United Nations' commitment to supporting



democratic governance in the Kurdistan Region.

**SRSB and DSRSBs Visits:** The SRSB and DSRSBs visited several polling centers in Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah. During these visits, they interacted with polling staff, voters, and observers, emphasizing the importance of an inclusive and orderly process. The SRSB's statements to the media commended the peaceful conduct of the elections. SRSB and DSRSBs gave a statement to over 20 national, regional and local media on the regular voting day.

The OEA worked closely with IHEC and other stakeholders, facilitating dialogues and offering technical assistance on electoral processes, public outreach, security coordination and a host of other important issues. Principal Electoral Advisor (PEA) Dr. Aamir A. Arain was involved with IHEC's senior management on a daily basis. Additionally, Dr. Arain engaged with the Federal Supreme Court on electoral matters, with civil society organizations, and regularly updated the diplomatic community in Iraq on electoral developments.

On October 21, 2024, IHEC announced the preliminary results for the 2024 Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections at a press conference held at its headquarters in Baghdad. This announcement complied with the legal

requirement to release results within 24 hours after the close of polling. The preliminary results included data from 7,044 of the 7,070 polling stations, covering both regular and special voting centers. The remaining 26 polling stations, located across Dohuk, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah, were excluded from the preliminary release pending an audit to address issues such as electronic transmission failures, USB malfunctions, and discrepancies between electronic and manual counts. The audit process spanned over three days, with each day dedicated to a different governorate.

Domestic and international observers, along with political party agents, were present throughout the audit to monitor the process. OEA teams were also deployed to observe the audit. Accredited media outlets covered the event, and IHEC provided regular updates. Upon completion of the audit process in Erbil, IHEC held a press conference to update the public on the findings and procedures of the audit.

On 30 October 2024, IHEC announced the final uncertified results of the 2024 Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections at a press conference held at its headquarters in Erbil. This announcement came after the completion of the audit and reconciliation process that covered 100% of the polling stations across all four constituencies. The an-

nouncement provided comprehensive details on the total votes cast and votes received by the candidates for each constituency including the women and minority quota.

Following the announcement of the final uncertified results, IHEC set the appeals submission deadline for 3 November 2024. During this period, 41 appeals were submitted, comprising 17 individual candidates, 23 political parties, and one political alliance. Most challenges focused on alleged vote discrepancies between preliminary and uncertified results. On 12 November 2024, IHEC forwarded all appeals to the Electoral Judicial Panel (EJP), which dismissed all 41 appeals by 18 November after finding no substantial evidence to support the claims.

On November 24, 2024, after receiving confirmation from the EJP that all appeals had been dismissed, IHEC's Board of Commissioners certified the final results. Of the 100 parliamentary seats, 31 were secured by women, including a reserved seat for a Turkmen minority candidate in Erbil. The certification was formally communicated to the Kurdistan Region Presidency by the IHEC Chairperson.

The 2024 Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections, facilitated by the collaborative efforts of UNAMI OEA supporting IHEC, stand as a testament to the commitment to democratic processes in Iraq. The successful conduct of these elections, characterized by inclusivity, accessibility, and positive public perception, reflects the resilience and progress of Iraq's electoral system, setting a benchmark for future electoral events in Iraq.

Looking ahead to 2025, Iraq is preparing for the Council of Representatives (CoR) elections and UNAMI will continue supporting Iraqi institutions in its preparations. The OEA will persist in assisting IHEC with reviewing accomplishments, documenting lessons learned, and advising on measures to enhance its internal coordination and communications, as well as its coordination with external stakeholders.



# Human Rights Office

## Q & A with UNAMI Human Rights Office

### What is the human rights mandate of UNAMI?

UNAMI Human Rights Office (HRO) is responsible for the implementation of the Mission's human rights mandate in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2732 (2024) and its preceding resolutions to promote accountability and the protection of human rights, and judicial and legal reform to strengthen the rule of law and improve governance in Iraq.

### How did the human rights situation evolve in Iraq in 2024?

Throughout 2024 HRO engaged with the government of Iraq to promote legislative and policy measures to increase respect for human rights and enhance engagement with United Nations human rights mechanisms. The endorsement of national legislation in line with international human rights obligations, is key to ensuring the protection of human rights for all Iraqi. A number of key draft

bills protecting human rights, including those covering Anti-Domestic Violence, Freedom of Expression, Protection from Enforced Disappearances, and Protection of Minorities, remained pending in 2024.

Challenges remain in protecting the right to freedom of expression, with civil society organizations, human rights defenders and journalists continuing to face administrative and legal restrictions on their activities, as well as threats and harassment, including in the online space.

HRO continued to promote the independent functioning of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) in accordance with the Paris Principles. The IHCHR has not had a legally appointed Board of Commissioners since the term of office of the previous Board expired in 2021. At the end of 2024 the selection process for a new Board of Commissioners remained on hold.

In 2025 Iraq will be reviewed by the Human Rights Council under the 4th cycle

of the Universal Period Review. In 2024 UNAMI HRO engaged with both the government and civil society to facilitate the submission of national and stakeholder reports as part of the UPR process.

### What has UNAMI HRO done for the preservation and expansion of civic space?

The protection of civic and democratic space, freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly is a core priority for the Mission. HRO engaged in monitoring and reporting on the situation of activists, human rights defenders, journalists, and media workers. In 2024, civil society activists, journalists and bloggers continued to face charges under the broad provisions in the Penal Code prohibiting defamation or 'derogatory' content.

Throughout the year, HRO worked with civil society, the Government, and the IHCHR to support their efforts for human rights monitoring and reporting and en-



gagement with United Nations human rights mechanisms.

Moreover, HRO engaged in activities to support the preservation and expansion of civic space, the protection of journalists including women journalists, and prevention of online threats and harassment and promoted measures to enhance their capacity to engage effectively in the promotion and protection of human rights, highlighting issues of public concern and raising awareness about human rights. HRO also engaged in advocacy with various entities of the government, civil society, and the IHCHR to promote legislative and policy measures for the preservation and expansion of civic space in line with the Constitution of Iraq and its international obligations.

#### **What is UNAMI doing to protect hu-**

#### **man rights in the administration of justice?**

HRO engagement in promoting human rights in the administration of justice aims to enhance social cohesion and conflict prevention by ensuring non-discriminatory application of the rule of law. For this purpose, HRO continued to implement its trial monitoring programme particularly focused on observing the trials of ISIL suspects and promote compliance with procedural guarantees, detention safeguards, and fair trial standards. In 2024, HRO conducted 118 trial monitoring missions, monitoring 497 trials, including terrorism-related trials and 297 anti-corruption trials as part of the UNAMI-UNDP joint project on anti-corruption. The detention monitoring programme remained suspended in the

federal Iraq due to a lack of authorization to conduct confidential interviews with detainees. Technical cooperation activities also focused on the Iraqi and international human rights law framework governing legitimate arrests and investigations as well as the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment, enhancing the role of defence lawyers in the fight against corruption.

Additionally, HRO facilitated dialogue with law enforcement officials, investigative officers from different police departments, representatives of the IHCHR, civil society, and defence lawyers to enhance the understanding of due process principles and their implementation within the law enforcement context, including safeguarding the investigation, the right to remain silent, the right to a legal representation and the prevention of arbitrary detention or arrest and the prohibition against torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

Throughout 2024, HRO continued monitoring investigative hearings as well as trial proceedings of Iraqi nationals returning from northeast Syria.

#### **What role did UNAMI HRO play in promoting women and children's rights, particularly protection of women from domestic violence?**

HRO engaged in promoting women's rights, including protection from domestic violence and accountability of perpetrators of violence against women. UNAMI continued efforts to further develop and implement appropriate and effective strategies and plans for the advancement of women in the judicial system and institutions at the leadership, managerial and other levels.

In March, UNAMI and OHCHR jointly released a report entitled "Accountability for Domestic violence in Iraq: Promoting justice and non-discrimination." The report underscored how domestic violence remains a form of discrimination that significantly hinders women's enjoyment of their rights and freedoms, and emphasized the impact of social stigma and other barriers preventing survivors from reporting incidents. It also notes the absence of a legal protection framework, particularly a law on domestic violence in conformity with international standards,



exacerbating the lack of awareness among the public and law enforcement agencies and posing substantial challenges in addressing criminal violence within homes. The report recommended measures within the judicial processes to enhance the reporting of domestic violence cases, ensure protection for survivors and hold perpetrators accountable in line with international human rights standards.

HRO engaged in monitoring and reporting the situation of children affected by armed conflict, including the documentation of six grave violations against children. In January 2024, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict visited Iraq. During her visit she welcomed the signing by the Government, in March 2023, of an action plan to prevent the recruitment and use of children by the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). In 2024, HRO conducted a series of training projects aimed at enhancing the capacity of staff at the Human Rights Directorate of the PMF in promoting the protection of children.

## **What steps UNAMI HRO took to address human rights of Iraqi societal components?**

HRO worked closely with civil society, government officials and Iraqi societal components to enhance efforts to promote and protect the rights of ethnic and religious components in Iraq. Structured engagement with minority youth and marginalized groups enabled increased awareness and concerted action by civil society to engage with the Government of Iraq to advocate for the adoption of measures to increase protection for minorities. HRO engaged in advocacy aimed at encouraging the Government of Iraq to implement the existing laws, strengthen relevant institutional frameworks and mechanisms to enhance protection for minorities, increase opportunities for economic and social rights, and to promote minorities' full and meaningful participation in decision-making processes at all levels. Additionally, HRO implemented capacity building projects to address the root causes of racial discrimination, enhanced the capacity of civil society organizations to promote the rights of Iraq's ethnic and religious societal



components and facilitated dialogue on promoting equality and inclusion.

## **How did HRO engage in countering hate speech?**

HRO continued to work to counter hate speech through multi-stakeholder dialogue and engagement, by monitoring and analyzing hate speech in media and social media. HRO continued to coordinate the implementation of UNAMI Plan of Action on Hate Speech, adopted in January 2020. UNAMI also provided technical support to the Secretariat of the Supreme Committee to Counter Hate Speech, established by the Prime Minister and chaired by the Minister for Communications, to assist its efforts in developing a national strategy to counter hate speech in line with international standards.

## **How many capacity building/training activities did HRO organize during 2024? Who were the participants?**

In 2024, HRO conducted 112 capacity building workshops/training events, attended by 3,045 participants (1,954 men

and 1,091 women) in Baghdad, Basra, Erbil, Kirkuk and Mosul. These events were attended by lawyers, civil society activists and networks, human rights defenders, women rights activists and women's rights NGOs, government officials, judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials and staff of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights.

## **Does your office engage with youth, women and organizations working on disability rights?**

In 2023, HRO engaged with 63 youth-led organizations across Iraq promoting engagement of young people in the promotion and protection of human rights, social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, and economic and social development. Moreover, HRO established new partnerships with youth and youth-led organizations advocating for human rights and effective ways to address climate change, thus enhancing ability of civil society activists on climate change and human rights issues for concrete action on the right to health, water, and sustainable



agricultural practices.

HRO engaged and collaborated with 95 women-led organizations in Baghdad, Basra, Erbil, Kirkuk, and Mosul, reaching out to and working closely with women's rights organizations and groups for the protection of women's rights and supporting their engagement with the UN human rights mechanisms. During the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence campaign, HRO engaged with civil society and government counterparts to promote and strengthen measures to criminalize domestic violence, formalize effective support systems for survivors and hold perpetrators of domestic violence. Moreover, HRO engaged in dialogue with stakeholders and organized focus group discussions to promote accountability for conflict-related sexual violence and supported efforts for the implementation of the Yazidi Survivors Law.

To promote the human rights of persons with disabilities, HRO collaborated with 23 organizations of persons with dis-

abilities. Additionally, HRO continued to support the implementation of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy.

### **Does UNAMI Human Rights Office work to promote human rights in the context of climate change?**

Iraq is one of the countries most affected by the impact of climate change. HRO promotes rights-based interventions in climate change and advocates for the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, including the right to clean air; a safe and stable climate; access to safe water and adequate sanitation; healthy and sustainably produced food; non-toxic environments in which to live, work, study and play; and healthy biodiversity and ecosystems. HRO organized events with youth actively engaged in promoting human rights in the context of climate change.

### **What are UNAMI's human rights priorities in 2025?**

In 2025, UNAMI HRO will continue to support the Government of Iraq, civil society,

and the IHCHR to promote and protect human rights. UNAMI HRO priorities in 2025 include:

- Monitoring and reporting on human rights developments to identify patterns and trends and to advocate for measures to address key areas of concern;
- Engagement with the Government of Iraq to enhance institutional capacity for the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Advocacy for the adoption of legislation and policies to strengthen human rights protection;
- Protection of civic and democratic space and promotion of an enabling environment for civil society, including activists, human rights defenders, journalists, and media workers.
- Strengthening the rule of law and fair trial standards through a comprehensive legislative, policy, and institutional reform process to ensure respect for international due process and fair trial standards;
- Promoting accountability for human rights violations and abuses, included targeted killings, abductions, threats and harassment of activists, human rights defenders, journalists, and protesters;
- Protection and promotion of the rights of religious and ethnic minorities, diversity, and inclusive and non-discriminatory policies to achieve social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, and countering hate speech;
- Promoting compliance with international law and the Constitution of Iraq, concerning accountability for perpetrators of domestic violence and conflict-related sexual violence and protection of women's rights and inclusion of women in decision-making processes.
- Protection of children affected by conflict violence and insecurity and safeguarding the rights of children deprived of their liberty.



## UNAMI Development Support Office in 2024

The UNAMI Development Support Office (DSO) operates under the leadership of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) and plays a key role in supporting Iraq's transition from humanitarian aid to sustainable development. The Office facilitates coordination between UNAMI, the UN Country Team (UNCT), and the Government of Iraq, ensuring alignment with national priorities and strengthening Iraq's institutional capacity.

Through strategic planning, policy support, and inter-agency coordination, the DSO enhances development efforts across Iraq, particularly in governance, economic recovery, climate resilience, and durable solutions for displaced populations. The DSO also works closely with national and international partners to promote sustainable initiatives that contribute to stability, recovery, and long-term development.

The Office operates in Baghdad, Anbar, Kirkuk, Diyala, Salah ad Din, Ninawa, Erbil, Najaf, Wassit, Qadissiyah, Muthana and Basrah.

Moreover, DSO coordinates and supports the implementation of programs that enhance Iraq's capacity to provide essential civil and social services including support to Iraq's regional and international donor coordination, strengthening national ownership of its development priorities.

### Key Functions of the DSO:

- Supporting the Government of Iraq in its coordination efforts and implementation of national development strategies.
- Facilitating cooperation between



the UN and the Government, ensuring that UN programs align with national policies.

- Strengthening inter-agency coordination, linking UNAMI's political and development work with UNCT's programming.
- Enhancing regional and international partnerships, including engagement with donors and development stakeholders.
- Providing technical support for stabilization, recovery, and reintegration of displaced populations.
- Advancing durable solutions for displaced populations and returnees, ensuring sustainable reintegration and community resilience.

### Key Contributions of the DSO in 2024:

#### 1- Area Coordination and Support

The DSO led 38 Joint Coordination Forums (JCF) meetings in Kirkuk, Ninewa, Anbar, Salah al-Din, Diyala, and Basra governorates, strengthening local governance structures and service delivery. The JCF forums provided a platform for collaboration among UN agencies, national authorities, and development partners to address local challenges, enhance returnee reintegration, and promote social cohesion.

In the Kurdistan Region, the DSO pro-

vided secretariat support to the Erbil Joint Crisis Coordination Forum (EJCC), facilitating collaboration on humanitarian and development efforts. In Sinjar and Ba'aj (Ninewa), the DSO supported Area-Based Coordination (ABC) forums, leading monthly coordination meetings to ensure inclusive, needs-based planning.

#### 2- Development Initiatives and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2025-2029

The DSO played a key role in formulating the 2025-2029 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). Through seven national consultations, the office engaged UN agencies, government entities, IDP and refugee representatives, and civil society organizations to ensure that the framework reflects Iraq's development priorities.

#### 3- Climate Change Engagements

Recognizing Iraq's vulnerability to climate change, the DSO supported various initiatives aimed at enhancing environmental resilience and addressing climate-related challenges:

- Facilitated a high-level Ministry visit on climate displacement in southern Iraq.
- Organized a climate conference in Kirkuk, attended by 140 participants, in partnership with local authorities.
- DSO facilitated the handover of a mobile debris recycling system

donated by UN environment agency to Kirkuk authorities in March 2024.

- Conducted outreach programs in six governorates on water scarcity, climate-induced migration, and pollution.
- Supported World Environment Day activities in Kurdistan, including a cleanup initiative with local officials.
- Partnered with the Kurdistan Directorate of Climate Change to address issues related to human rights, peace, security, and environmental sustainability.

#### 4- Humanitarian and Development Coordination

The DSO played a key role in facilitating humanitarian assistance and development responses across Iraq. Notable efforts included:

- Led inter-agency missions to assess returnee conditions in Salah al-Din, Anbar, and Diyala.
- Provided logistical support for SRSRG and DSRSG/RC/HC missions in field locations.
- Organized mine-action risk awareness sessions for aid workers in Ninewa.
- Convened inter-agency meetings to improve coordination between UN agencies and the Kurdistan Regional Government.

#### 5- Outreach and Transition Planning

DSO compiled and published comprehensive project profiles for the southern governorates in both English and Arabic. These reports were widely disseminated among government stakeholders, NGOs, donors, and local communities.

As UNAMI prepares to conclude its mission by December 31, 2025, the DSO is preparing to transfer its activities and coordination mechanisms to national authorities and UN partners. This strategic handover will ensure continuity in critical development support functions while empowering local institutions to take ownership over long-term development priorities.



## Statement from the Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD on the conclusion of the UNITAD mandate

### Ms. Ana Peyró Llopis

#### Baghdad, 16 September 2024

The mandate of the Investigative Team (UNITAD) will conclude on 17 September, at which point it will have ceased operations and no longer be present in Iraq.

Since I joined UNITAD as Acting Special Adviser, about six months ago, the Team has worked diligently to conclude the mandate in an orderly manner and on a positive note, in cooperation with the Iraqi authorities.

I think it is important to pause before we close to reflect on the past six years. There are several tangible results and achievements to highlight, which will hopefully continue to benefit Iraq and all

stakeholders beyond the mandate in the wake of the work that has been done.

First, investigative results:

- The Team has produced 19 case assessments and analytical reports - hundreds of pages - covering specific acts that may amount to crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide, committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq, against the Christian, Kaka'i, Shabak, Shi'a, Turkmen, Sunni and Yazidi communities.
- These outputs have been shared with the competent Iraqi authorities along with underlying evidence that UNITAD produced. A summary of their factual and legal findings was provided to the

United Nations Security Council this past June in our 12th and final report. Many will be made available publicly soon on our new legacy website.

- Guidelines in areas relating to the use of technology and trauma-informed investigations were developed and published online as well, as were the results of certain investigative lines of inquiry, including a report on the destruction of cultural heritage and a report on sexual violence.
- The result of this investigative work draws from millions of pieces of information that the Team collected and produced over the years, in particular information provided by

the Iraqi authorities, and notably by the Iraqi judiciary

Second result, the collection and preservation of materials:

- Those millions of pieces of information are another significant achievement of the Team, which has consolidated an archive of ISIL (Da'esh)-related material. An archive managed and analyzed by the Team, using cutting-edge systems and tools, which contains information that could be used as evidence in future criminal proceedings.
- This archive includes, most importantly, interviews taken directly by the Team from survivors and witnesses, who stepped forward to give their account, from across Iraq. It also includes other information collected from a diverse range of sources and also produced by the Team, such as forensic reports.
- UNITAD has delivered an important part of this archive to the Iraqi authorities, in accordance with its Terms of Reference. The most comprehensive archive, which contains all the records of the Team is now safely stored within the United Nations Headquarters with the hope that it will be made accessible in the future for accountability purposes.
- I wish to stress this point: the archive of the Team contains relevant information for accountability purposes, information that links the acts committed by ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq to the commission of international crimes and the individuals responsible for these crimes.

Third result, building capacity:

- Much of the information has been collected by the Team in cooperation with the Iraqi authorities, and often for the purpose of building their capacity, in areas such as mass grave excavations, digitization and archiving, and digital forensics.
- Results from this cooperation include the excavation of 68 ISIL-related mass graves and the return of identified victim remains from these excavations to their families, the digitization and archiving of twenty (20) million ISIL-related paper records; and the acquisition of data from a significant number of digital devices (e.g. hard drives, mobile phones) seized from ISIL (Da'esh) by the Iraqi authorities.

Fourth result, support to national investigations and prosecutions in third States:

- During its mandate, the Team supported some three hundred (300) requests for assistance received from twenty-one (21) third States, aiding their ISIL-related national investigations and



prosecutions. At least eighteen (18) cases under investigation supported by the Team led to indictments; and at least fifteen (15) cases ultimately resulted in convictions.

Fifth result, supporting victims:

- All of our work was victim-centric, driven by an expert witness protection and psychosocial support capacity. This capacity has served our investigative and evidence collection efforts. It has also helped to build capacity in this area among the competent Iraqi authorities and other counterparts in Iraq, through the delivery of workshops and trainings.

Let me add that none of the results and achievements mentioned would have been possible without the tireless support from the security, finance, human resource, language service, mission support, and programme management components within the Team, including those working to secure our premises, drive the vehicles; serve the food; and keep us healthy and our offices safe and clean.

This would not have been possible without our Iraqi colleagues either, who brought to the Team fundamental expertise and the domestic perspective. Ultimately, one half of all staff members were national personnel prior to the drawdown and liquidation of the Team.

Finally, there is also the excellent cooperation from the Iraqi

authorities, in particular their security forces who facilitated our movements, as well as the support from other United Nations entities in Iraq and abroad.

On a more personal note, I wish to reiterate my appreciation for the commitment of UNITAD colleagues in ensuring an orderly conclusion of our mandated activities, and the drawdown and liquidation of the Team. These are challenging times for many, both professionally and personally. It is during challenging times that we often show our best selves, where our professionalism shines through. And it is during challenging times when our human values become fundamental. Those at UNITAD have shown that they were up to the challenge.

I want to thank you all for what we have achieved, and for how we have achieved it, that is in a professional, humble, and honest manner, leaving hopefully behind us a positive legacy.

The results and accomplishments I have described ultimately serve the interests of those who have been most deeply impacted by the crimes of ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq. To the victims, survivors and affected communities, it is truth and justice that matter. We should be proud that our efforts have made a significant contribution to both, while remembering that the work will only be completed when the last victim, the last survivor and all impacted families and communities, receive the truth and justice they deserve.



# FAO Iraq in 2024

## Achieving positive impact and fostering resilience in Iraq

### Dr Salah El Hajj Hassan FAO Iraq Representative

**R**esponsible partnerships by FAO Iraq highlight its unwavering commitment to achieving positive impact and fostering resilience. In 2024, FAO focused on building new relationships while strengthening existing ones signifying a collective dedication to sustainable development, food security, and the well-being of communities across Iraq. We value every partnership—from farmers and producers in the field to the Iraqi Government, development partners, donors, civil society, the private sector, and both national and international experts. We look forward to continued success and impactful contributions in the coming year.





For FAO, the Year 2024 marked yet another steady progress towards building more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems in Iraq. Guided by its corporate strategic pillars aimed at better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind, FAO continued building on its past successes while integrating new initiatives and approaches to support the people of Iraq. This included working directly with farmers, extension workers, and local authorities at the grassroots level, as well as closely collaborating with national legislative and executive bodies. Furthermore, FAO promoted and showcased sustainable agricultural practices in Iraq and the role of the government in supporting food system transformation from policy, technological and financial perspectives, in various regional and global platforms, such as a dialogue led by FAO during COP29 in Azerbaijan and Hand-in-Hand Initiative Investment Forum 2024 in Italy.

Evidence gathered through various assessments, surveys, and feedback from

farmers indicates tangible results of the FAO actions in Iraq, including increased yields, higher incomes, improved livelihoods, better access to agricultural inputs, and enhanced tools and skills to adapt to climate change. These outcomes are contributing to more resilient farmers and communities, and at a larger scale to a more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems.

**Policy.** FAO provided technical support to the National Food Security Committee in developing the National Food Security Strategy and its Action Plan. The Strategy serves as a roadmap to achieving food security in Iraq and meeting internationally agreed goals. To address both current and emerging challenges, the Strategy and Action Plan ensure the food security needs of all Iraqis are met by creating a food system that is productive, equitable, adaptive, and resilient to various man-made, natural, and market shocks. Additionally, a national Sustainable Land Management Strategy of Iraq (2025 - 2035) and a national Agriculture and Marshland Conservation Action Plan (2030 - 2035)

were developed and presented for ratification to the national Steering Committee under the Ministry of Environment. These strategic documents provide framework and action-plans, outlining pathways for Iraq to achieve its long-term objectives to reverse land degradation processes, conserve and sustainably manage land and water resources in degraded marshland ecosystems across the country for greater access to services from climate resilient ecosystems and improved livelihoods.

**Animal health.** Efforts spared previous years started yielding in 2024. As such, the electronic animal health reporting system using the Event Mobile App (EMA-i) - a tool that allows real time reporting of animal diseases from the field, has been institutionalized in the country. The introduction of the EMA-i has significantly improved data collection and real-time disease reporting, strengthening the capacity of veterinary services in disease surveillance. At the policy level, activities have been initiated on strengthening Iraq's veterinary legislation, including amendments to the Animal Health Law



No. 32. In addition, efforts have been made to strengthen Iraq's preparedness for animal diseases by introducing and applying "Good Emergency Management Practices". Furthermore, under the umbrella of the One Health approach, a comprehensive training plan has been implemented to improve the delivery of animal health services and disease surveillance in Iraq aiming at reducing the risks posed by diseases that threaten livestock production, food security, food safety, and public health.

**Geographical coverage.** FAO's support has extended to all governorates across the country with activities primarily focused on southern and central Iraq, which are significantly impacted by drought, water shortages, and climate change. Additionally, FAO provides various support packages to other governorates as well. Notably, FAO also leads several national-level initiatives—ranging from capacity building to policy support—that will benefit all people across Iraq.

**Transformative and climate-smart initiatives.** Throughout 2024, FAO implemented several initiatives that are designed to bolstering resilience and sustainability within communities and safeguarding the environment in Iraq. Supported financially by the EU, SIDA, Global Affairs Canada, GEF, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented in close collaboration with the Ministries of Agriculture, Water Resources, Environment, and Planning, the projects aim at improving agricultural practices and empowering farmers and women to drive

positive change. These projects offer a comprehensive, inclusive, and innovative approach to enhancing the climate resilience of rural households by introducing climate adaptive technologies and farming practices that should improve water-use efficiency and stabilize water availability for improved crop yields.

**Developing value chains.** FAO continued to enhance production standards and improve the livelihoods of rural communities by developing various value chains, including dairy, fodder, vegetables, rice, date palms, and wheat. For instance, the dairy production initiative has empowered rural women's groups in the marshes, boosting their productivity and market access for local dairy products. Additionally, modern machinery has been introduced to further strengthen production capacities in these communities.

**Conservation agriculture, agroecology, and agrobiodiversity promotion.** The Iraqi government, in collaboration with key ministries and humanitarian actors, is promoting the adoption of Conservation Agriculture and Agroecology practices for Sustainable Land Management in agricultural landscapes. Ministry of Agriculture Extension Officers were trained in these practices to deliver agricultural extension services to farmers. Forty-one Farmer Field School plots for Conservation Agriculture and 25 for Agroecology were established in southern Iraq. Over 2,500 farmers are adopting these practices, integrating fruit/fodder trees with crops and animals to enhance socio-

economic and environmental benefits. This shift towards sustainable agriculture promotes land restoration, climate change adaptation, and resilience, contributing to food security and improved livelihoods. Additionally, two gene-banks were established in central and northern Iraq to enhance Agrobiodiversity and plant genetic resource conservation.

**Precision farming.** In line with scaling up climate-smart agricultural practices in the rice value chain, FAO, in collaboration with the Najaf Agriculture Directorate and with support from the Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources, as well as the Najaf local government, utilized drones to apply fertilizers in transplanted rice fields using mechanical transplanting in Al-Mashkhab district. The use of drones offers several advantages, including precise application of fertilizers, reduced labor costs, and minimized environmental impact. By improving efficiency and accuracy, drones help farmers optimize resource use and increase crop yields while supporting sustainable agricultural practices.

**Data and knowledge management for decision making.** Several initiatives have been implemented in collaboration with the Iraqi statistics authority, specifically on monitoring several relevant SDGs indicators, nationwide agriculture household survey focused on small-



holder farmers to inform policy decisions, socio-economic surveys, as well as on improving land and water monitoring capabilities. FAO also continued collecting, analyzing and disseminating data on shocks and livelihoods in Iraq using DIEM-Monitoring tool. There were two monitoring rounds conducted in 2024 by collecting data from 2,500 households across all 18 governorates. In addition, FAO initiated agricultural inputs traders survey in Iraq aimed at systematically collecting actionable data on agricultural inputs supply, sales and demand primarily to inform evidence-based interventions. Significant progress has also been made in establishing a knowledge management platform to enhance government's capacity for land use monitoring to support evidence-based decision-making, as well as in integrating WaPOR – publicly accessible near real time database using satellite data that will allow monitoring of agricultural water productivity.

**Anticipatory Action.** FAO conducted Stocktaking of Anticipatory Action (AA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Iraq's agriculture sector to pinpoint specific areas where FAO can assist anticipatory action in the sector. The findings emphasize on strengthening early warning systems and boosting the national counterpart's capacity. The report also highlights the importance of enhancing livestock early

warning systems and bolstering disaster preparedness and identifies gaps in Iraq's current early warning systems and provides recommendations for improvement, which could be used by other organizations working in the agricultural sector.

**FAO flagship initiatives in Iraq.** FAO supported the Iraqi government in developing three investment cases for attracting funding in support of the country's agri-food sector, which has been presented at the Hand-in-Hand Initiative Investment Forum 2024 in Italy. Another FAO flagship initiative implemented in Iraq is "One Country, One Priority Product". As part of this initiative, FAO provided support to the date palm industry in Iraq, including training farmers and agricultural engineers, distributing inputs and equipment to farmers, expanding the use of technological tools, and spreading good agricultural practices.

**Youth agenda.** Acknowledging youth engagement as a core principle of FAO, with a particular focus on mainstreaming youth in FAO's programmatic work areas, projects and activities, FAO Iraq is committed to incorporating and emphasizing youth in its efforts to increased food security and promote environmental sustainability. In 2024, FAO established partnerships with academia and supported youth in beekeeping and digital market-

ing, creating employment opportunities.

**Resource mobilization.** The Green Climate Fund approved a \$39 million project aimed at improving water and food security in Iraq's rural areas with climate-resilient agriculture. The six-year project, known as "Strengthening Climate Resilience of Vulnerable Agriculture Livelihoods in Iraq's Rural Communities" (SR-VALI), seeks to address climate-induced water scarcity and improve food security in three targeted governorates – Karbala, Muthanna and Najaf – where climate change threatens agricultural production.

**Campaigns.** In line with World Water Week and the 'Water is Life' campaign, FAO, in collaboration with the Iraqi government, local authorities, and fishermen, launched a cleanup initiative for the Al-Hawizeh Marsh. The campaign focused on three key passages—Umm Al-Tous, Al-Zubair, and Al-Husseji—removing 100 cubic meters of plastic waste. This initiative is crucial for protecting water resources, wetlands, and the riverine ecosystem, especially in light of severe water shortages, heatwaves, and drought in southern Iraq, all exacerbated by climate change.

**Numbers.** Approximately 8,209 households, including 1,905 women, have received various forms of assistance, reaching a total of 41,100 individuals across Iraq. Of the households supported, 2,046 benefited from crop production initiatives, while 6,163 received support for livestock production. In total, 1,812 families gained from capacity-building activities, 994 received inputs such as seeds, seedlings, fertilizers, and sugar molasses, and 5,721 households benefited from tools, equipment, and infrastructure projects provided by FAO. The capacity-building activities varied in format, including Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and in-house trainings and workshops. The tools and infrastructure support included agricultural machinery, canal cleaning, irrigation systems, dairy equipment, and the rehabilitation of dairy centers. The highest number of households supported was in ThiQar governorate (2,576, including 367 women), followed by Basra (2,052, including 552 women) and Maysan (1,896, including 513 women).





## UNDP in Iraq in 2024

### Social Cohesion Programme in 2024

UNDP provided in-depth training for 26 representatives from CSOs and Women Empowerment/Affairs Directorates in Salahaddin, Nineveh, and Misan, supporting the implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security. Additionally, 10 Women Peace Groups and 10 Youth Peace Groups from Anbar, Diyala, Salahaddin, Nineveh, and Kirkuk led 40 local peacebuilding initiatives.

UNDP inaugurated a workshop for 25 women faith-based peacebuilders to discuss their role in fostering social cohesion and develop joint action plans.

UNDP supported seven governorate-level PVE sub-committees to develop localized PVE Plans of Action. In 2024, 21 PVE initiatives were funded, contributing to Iraq's National PVE Strategy.

UNDP built the capacity of 47 civil society

members from seven governorates to counter violent extremism through a human-rights-based approach and supported 79 civil society personnel in conflict-sensitive peacebuilding programming.

### Reintegration and Durable Solutions

UNDP facilitated the reintegration of returnees from Al Hol and other areas by providing economic reintegration programs, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and housing rehabilitation for over 5,000 beneficiaries. Additionally, the Reintegration Task Force and Durable Solutions Technical Working Group, co-chaired by UNDP, continued to align efforts with national stakeholders.

Economic Reform and Financial Inclusion With funding from USAID, UNDP supported Iraq's Central Bank in advancing financial inclusion and digital finance. In 2024, the approval of Digital Payment

Services Regulations (No. 2) marked a pivotal step in Iraq's digital economy. The launch of Iraq's SDG Investor Map, developed in collaboration with UNDP and the Ministry of Planning, highlighted investment opportunities aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### Inclusive Development and Disability Empowerment

UNDP concluded Iraq's First National Forum for Empowering People with Disabilities, engaging stakeholders from government, civil society, and academia to address challenges and promote vocational empowerment.

### National Development Strategy

In August 2024, UNDP and the Ministry of Planning launched Iraq's National Development Plan (2024-2028), focusing on economic growth, infrastructure improvements, social services, and environmental sustainability.



## Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS)

In 2024, the Funding Facility for Stabilization continued its essential work across the five liberated governorates—Anbar, Nineveh, Salahuddin, Kirkuk, and Diyala—rebuilding critical infrastructure, restoring homes, and conducting capacity-building programs. The restoration of basic services, combined with early signs of local economic recovery, positioned these regions to attract further investments.

## Anti-Corruption and Arbitration Initiatives (ACAI)

UNDP maintained its strong support for Iraq's anti-corruption efforts in collaboration with the European Union. In 2024, UNDP published its Trial Monitoring Reports for Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), which assessed judicial practices and offered actionable anti-corruption recommendations. Key milestones include:

- Monitoring 184 cases and 173 verdicts in Federal Iraq and 100 cases and 50 judicial decisions in KRI related to grand corruption.
- Hosting the Regional Arab Integrity Forum with 300 participants from 30 countries.
- Achieving over 65 million views for the #PasstheBaton campaign, which won the MENA Public Relations Association's Best Non-Profit Campaign Award. UNDP also advanced Iraq's foreign in-

vestment goals by providing technical guidance on commercial dispute resolution, organizing a conference on the Singapore Convention, and training law students in alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Iraqi students gained international recognition for their achievements in global mediation competitions.

## Energy, Environment, and Climate Change



UNDP's Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) achieved notable milestones in 2024:

- Generated 2.5 megawatts of clean energy, contributing to Iraq's renewable energy capacity.
- Reduced water wastage by 146 million liters annually through improved irrigation in nine southern governorates.
- Reached over 500,000 individuals in rural communities through targeted climate awareness campaigns.
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 1,233 tonnes of CO2 annually.

## Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Institutional Strengthening

UNDP Iraq's SSR program provided critical advisory support to key security sector documents, including the National Security Strategy (2024-2028), Security Sector Reform Strategy (2024-2032), and Ministry of Interior Strategy (2024-2026). This included:

- Strengthening women's inclusion and leadership in SSR processes.
- Supporting the integration of environmental considerations into security planning.
- Guiding the security sector through transitions to people-centered approaches.
- Promoting frameworks for community engagement and inclusive security practices.

## Digital Transformation and Governance

In 2024, UNDP Iraq achieved groundbreaking progress in digital transformation, cementing its role as a trusted partner in modernizing governance and fostering sustainable development. Through strategic collaboration with Iraq's Supreme Committee for Digital Transformation under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), UNDP spearheaded initiatives that positioned Iraq to align with international digital benchmarks and catalyze a more inclusive digital economy.

A hallmark achievement of the year was securing the Prime Minister's endorsement of UNDP as the technical partner for enhancing Iraq's digital indicators. This decision underscored the Government's trust in UNDP's capacity to navigate Iraq's digital transformation journey, ensuring alignment with global standards such as the Oxford Insights, GSMA Mobile Connectivity Index, World Bank GovTech Maturity Index, and the UNDP Digital Development Compass as the indicator showcase platform.

UNDP has also achieved the following milestones:

- Formation of the Supreme Committee for Digital Transformation
- Identification of National Digital Priorities.



# UNEP supports Iraq to comply with its international obligations

## Completion of the Initial Assessment of the Minamata Convention on Mercury

With support from UNEP, Iraq has assessed its national requirements and needs for implementing the Minamata Convention on Mercury, a global treaty designed to safeguard human health and the environment from mercury's harmful effects. Iraq ratified the Convention in September 2021, and as part of its Minamata Initial Assessment, has formulated action plans for its implementation. In 2024, following cabinet approval, the assessment was shared with the Minamata Convention Secretariat.

## Addressing climate change

UNEP continues to support Iraq in enhancing its climate action. As part of the country's commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Iraq with

support from UNEP Regional Office for West Asia has prepared its Second National Communication (SNC) and First Biennial Update Report (BUR).

As party to the Paris Agreement, and with support from UNEP, Iraq has also prepared its First Biennial Transparency Report (BTR). The BTR, which is submitted every two years, includes information on national inventory reports, progress towards nationally determined contributions, policies and measures, climate change impacts and adaptation, levels of financial, technology development and transfer and capacity-building support, and capacity-building needs. The final report was submitted to the government on December 18 and is pending revision for submission to the UNFCCC platform. These reports are essential to showcase climate change's impacts in the country as well as to track commitments of the country to address it through miti-

gation and adaptation actions.

## An Environmental Information System for environmental data in Iraq

In line with its international obligations, including the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the government of Iraq, with support from the UN Environment Programme developed and implemented The Environmental Information System (EIS) in 2024.

This web-based system serves as a centralized platform for real-time environmental data collection, monitoring, and analyzing, and will enhance environmental governance and decision-making. It will thus support Iraq in complying with the reporting obligations against Multilateral Environment Agreements.

Public dashboards for data visualization were also incorporated in the sys-



tem to improve transparency, engage citizens, and promote accountability.

Extensive capacity building was carried out with the participation of government officials and project's stakeholders, including a final workshop on maintaining and sustaining the system and enhancing GIS capabilities that will allow Ministry of Environment team and technicians to host and manage the platform.

The EIS platform was officially handed over to Iraq's Ministry of Environment on 30 June 2024.

### **Supporting Iraq's Commitment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer**

In 2024, UNEP's OzonAction Compliance Assistance Programme for West Asia continued to play a key role in supporting Iraq's efforts to meet its obligations under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer through the implementation of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) Phase-Out and Institutional Strengthening Projects.

Building on the success of the first phase of the HCFC Phase-out Manage-

ment Plan (HPMP), which achieved a 35% reduction in HCFC consumption by 2020, the second phase (2021–2025) aims to further reduce consumption by 69% from the baseline. This phase focuses on policy enforcement, training, licensing, and monitoring.

In December 2024, at its 95th meeting, the Executive Committee for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol approved the second tranche of stage II of the HPMP for Iraq, along with the 2024–2026 tranche implementation plan.

Additionally, through the fifth phase of the Institutional Strengthening Project, OzonAction continued to support Iraq's National Ozone Unit in strengthening regulatory frameworks, licensing systems, and awareness-raising initiatives to ensure sustainable compliance with the Protocol's commitments.

Further fostering regional collaboration and knowledge exchange, Iraq's representatives actively participated in the joint network meeting for South Asia and West Asia National Ozone Officers, as well as the joint thematic customs dialogue, both held in Chennai, India, in September 2024.

## **Capacity building and networking for a better planet**

In 2024, UNEP organized a series of technical workshops in Iraq with participants from various ministries and departments to support Iraq address its environmental challenges.

### **Adaptation, loss and damage: priorities, and barriers**

A workshop on adaptation and loss and damage targeting sectors of health, water, biodiversity, and agriculture was held in Erbil between 25–26 July 2024. During the workshop, and upon request from the Iraqi government, a climate change vulnerability assessment for health sector was discussed and initiated. Moreover, priorities and barriers for adaptation and loss and damage were identified.

### **GHG emission calculation and tracking NDC**

A workshop on calculations and projections of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and tracking progress towards National Determined Contributions (NDC) was held in Erbil between 30



## UNEP and Iraq at COPs

### COP29 in Baku

Acknowledging the importance of localizing climate action, UNEP, Iraq Ministry of Environment, and NDC partnership launched the project “Building Capacities Towards a Comprehensive Approach for Governorate-Level Climate Actions” during COP 29 in Baku.

The project is focused on empowering decision-makers at the subnational level to strengthen climate action taking the specificity of each region in Iraq. Over the next year, the project will develop and deliver comprehensive training materials tailored to the needs of the various stakeholders.

### On the way to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP16 and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Cop 16

Representatives from Iraq participated in preparatory meetings for CBD-COP16 and UNCCD-COP16 in October 2024 demonstrating country's commitment to addressing biodiversity loss and land degradation. These meetings were a crucial step in the lead-up to the two COPs, focusing on the pressing environmental challenges, and consolidating the region's position on various key issues as part of COP agendas. The collaborative efforts and shared knowledge from these meetings are expected to enhance the effectiveness of Iraq's contributions both nationally and regionally.

September – 2 October 2024 with the participation of experts from relevant ministries. UNEP presented the approaches for the collection and generation of activity data as well as methods for GHG emission calculations, and highlighted modalities to report, using the required specific table format for GHG and NDC.

### Integrated Biodiversity Conservation and Land Degradation Neutrality in Highly Degraded Landscapes of Iraq

As part of Iraq's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) commitments, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Ministry of Environment, launched in June 2024, the “Promotion of Integrated Biodiversity Conservation and Land Degradation Neutrality in Highly Degraded Landscapes of Iraq” project.

Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the project aims to strengthen governmental and non-governmental organizations' capacities to achieve biodiversity conservation and land degradation neutrality in the Middle Euphrates Landscape through integrated landscape management. It is implemented in close collaboration with Ministry of Water Resources, and Ministry of Agriculture in Iraq.

### Extended Producer Responsibility for accelerating the circular economy

Enhanced the capacity of officials on waste management through a regional capacity-building workshop on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). The workshop aimed to strengthen the knowledge and skills of regulatory agencies in developing and implementing EPR schemes as a key tool for accelerating the circular economy and improving waste management at the national level. Held in September 2024, the programme also served as a vital platform for Iraq to foster coordination and knowledge sharing on waste management among West Asian nations.

### Enhanced coordination to address air pollution challenges

Air pollution is a transboundary issue that requires coordination among neighboring countries to effectively address this environmental challenge. With Iraq's participation, regional cooperation on air quality in West Asia was strengthened through an agreement on a regional framework and work plan for the 2025–2026 period at a network meeting in December 2024. This network serves as a crucial mechanism for Iraq to collaborate with neighboring countries in tackling air pollution challenges.



# UN-Habitat Iraq in 2024: Advancing Sustainable Urban Futures

As the focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements within the UN system, UN-Habitat supported Iraq in transitioning from urban recovery to long-term development. While addressing critical challenges like infrastructure rehabilitation and housing shortages, the focus has increasingly shifted towards strengthening urban and housing policies and legal frameworks. These efforts aim to promote sustainable urban development, ensure inclusive growth, and leave behind the legacies of protracted displacement and conflict.

## Urban Recovery and Infrastructure Upgrades

Urban recovery continued to be a vital focus in conflict-affected areas. In Ninewa, UN-Habitat led housing rehabilitation projects, developed social and affordable housing units, revitalised public spaces, and provided vocational training for youth in Mosul and Sinjar. In Basra, initiatives targeted informal settlements, improving access to clean water, sewage systems, stormwater drainage, and introducing more sustain-

able solid waste management practices. Unemployed youth were equipped with skills to re-enter the labour market, contributing to local socio-economic revitalisation.

## Housing, Land, and Property Rights

In 2024, the Government of Iraq reached a historic milestone by issuing over 500 title deeds to Yazidi households, ending decades of discriminatory practices and enabling sustainable returns for

displaced families. This achievement, supported by UN-Habitat's decade-long work in legal reform, advocacy, and technical assistance, paves the way for processing an additional 14,000 claims.

In collaboration with UN-Habitat, the Government also made significant progress in registering housing, land, and property (HLP) claims across 11 Sinjar mujamaats. These efforts aim to convert temporary occupancy certificates into formal title deeds, ensuring greater security for affected families.



UN-Habitat is further assisting the Government in modernising land administration by supporting the consolidation of data management and shift to a digital platform. This includes helping to establish a legal framework, strengthening institutional capacity, and encouraging civil society participation in policy discussions. These reforms aim to improve property records, ensure secure land rights, and promote efficient and transparent land management. By transitioning to a modern e-land management system, Iraq can enhance public services and build greater trust among citizens and investors.

## Policy Reform and Urban Development

UN-Habitat is supporting Iraq in advancing critical urban policy reforms to address housing and land challenges.

### • Drafting a New National Housing Policy

The process to develop a New National Housing Policy has begun, aiming to address Iraq's housing deficit and ensure access to adequate and affordable housing for all. The policy will also explore the housing sector's potential as a significant driver of socio-economic growth and job creation.

### • Rehabilitation and Regularisation of Informal Settlements

Policy dialogues are underway to update, endorse and implement the new Roadmap of the National Programme for the Rehabilitation and Regularisation

of Informal Settlements. The new Road-Map endorsed by the government seeks to transform informal settlements by improving living conditions, inclusion, and promoting sustainable urban development across Iraq.

### • Modernising Land Management

Efforts are being made to establish an enabling legal framework to support the transition to an e-land administration system. This shift aims to improve land management, secure property rights, and streamline public service delivery.

Across all these initiatives, participatory approaches are being prioritised. National and local authorities, civil society, and community stakeholders are actively engaged to ensure the policies reflect diverse perspectives and guarantee inclusive development.



## Connecting Iraq to Global Best Practices

UN-Habitat supported Iraq's delegation participation in international forums, such as the 12th World Urban Forum and COP16, showcasing its progress in urban recovery, sustainable development policies, and climate resilience initiatives. Iraq's transboundary collaboration to combat sand and dust storms was a key highlight, reflecting the alignment of national priorities with global best practices.

## A Long-Term Vision for Urban Development

In 2024, Iraq demonstrated a growing commitment to sustainable urban development. UN-Habitat supported the government in planning a future centered on durable solutions, sustainable growth, and improved management capacities. The development of policy frameworks for housing, land, and urban planning reinforced the foundation for a stable and prosperous urban future.





# ITC is dedicated to empowering Iraqi Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises to realize their full potential

“ ITC is dedicated to empowering Iraqi Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to realize their full potential, fostering sustainable economic growth, job creation, and resilience in Iraq’s evolving economy. Together with our partners, we envision a diverse and thriving Iraqi economy, where more competitive MSMEs lead the charge in climate-smart innovations, fostering youth and women’s empowerment and paving the way for prosperity and peacebuilding efforts.

**Eric Buchot**  
Head of Programme

”

# International Trade Centre in Iraq



The International Trade Centre (ITC) in Iraq continues to support Iraqi micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to leverage trade and market opportunities. In Iraq, MSMEs represent a large share of the private sector. Collaborating with partners, ITC works on creating sustainable and competitive conditions at every step for small businesses in Iraq.

Currently, ITC is implementing two European Union-funded projects in Iraq, namely the "Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy in Iraq" (SAAVI) project and the "Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation" (BEIT) project, jointly executed with UN-Habitat, and ILO.

## In 2024, key highlights of out interventions include:

### Empowering farmers, businesses and youth through the EU-Funded SAAVI project

ITC-SAAVI has established 15 productive and commercial agribusiness alliances in Iraq, including one female-led potato alliance. Following a market-driven approach, these alliances are connecting close to 2,000 farmers with a large network of reliable buyers nationwide. Since the beginning of the project, ITC-SAAVI has facilitated 71 transactions between these alliances with reputable buyers, resulting in the sale of over 252 tons of fresh produce resulting in 372,000 USD in total

price transacted. ITC's support is empowering these alliances through tailored capacity-building and technical, facilitation of linkages with buyers and advisory support to ensure long-term sustainability.

To further enhance impact, ITC introduced aggregation hubs to improve post-harvest processes and foster business growth in 2024. These hubs provide dedicated spaces for sorting, packaging, and enhancing the quality of their products. Developed in partnership with NRC, WFP, UNHCR, and Iraq's Department of Agriculture, the hubs aim to boost local farmers' competitiveness, reduce inefficiencies, and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

To increase market visibility, ITC's SAAVI project supported the creation of the "By Iraqi Hands" label, which enhances traceability and promotes Iraqi producers and farmers, as well as domestic agricultural products.

ITC has also prioritized improving quality management and operational practices among alliance members. Through assessments and tailored training sessions, the Quality Champions program has strengthened the capacities of key support organizations. This programme now includes a Young Quality Champions chapter with the aims to strengthen Iraq's agribusiness sector by training youth in quality management.

## Engaging and empowering youth

SAAVI project reached over 43,000 young people through awareness campaigns focused on disseminating opportunities in the agriculture sector, inspiring a new generation to explore agribusiness. Of these, 4,635 completed agripreneurship training and 166 youth receiving business grants to support their ventures. Innovative initiatives, such as the Agriculture Innovation Hackathon and the YE! Chapter served completed these efforts, fostering youth innovation and entrepreneurship. The upcoming Investment Readiness Program will further support AgriTech businesses.

SAAVI contributed to strengthening Iraq's agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system in the agriculture sector by supporting the development of the Iraq National Education Strategy Implementation Plan in the agriculture sector under the leadership of PMAC and advancing the Ninewa Agriculture Skills Council Roadmap.

## Revitalizing key sectors

Under the leadership of Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture and with technical support from ITC, Iraq's Potato Sector Strategy was developed, charting a blueprint for transforming this key agricultural value chain. This effort brought together the International Potato Center for expert technical input. In addition, ITC-SAAVI carried out market-led assessments of the dates sector, identifying key opportunities, buyer requirements, and the support needed to strengthen this industry. These efforts aim to revitalize one of Iraq's most iconic agricultural products and enhance its competitiveness to capitalize on untapped potential in regional and global markets.

## Advancing trade and WTO accession

2024 marked a significant milestone in Iraq's World Trade Organization (WTO)



accession process with the successful convening of Iraq's Third Working Party Meeting, reinforcing Iraq's commitment to the multilateral trade system. This progress comes after a hiatus of 16 years.

ITC-SAAVI has provided technical assistance and advisory support to the Government of Iraq in this process. This included preparation for the meeting, technical assistance for the unification of Iraq's tariff structure between the Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), support for Iraq's WTO initial offer, and conducting legislative reviews. ITC-SAAVI's capacity-building initiatives engaged key stakeholders, including youth and Parliamentarians, and contributed to substantial revisions to domestic reforms, alongside widespread awareness-raising and capacity building on WTO and trade policy.

### **Building green futures in Mosul: ITC's BEIT Green Home Hackathon**

In 2024, ITC, in collaboration with its BEIT partners—the International Labour Organization and UN-Habitat—launched the project's inception phase. During this phase, all three agencies began progressively organizing activities, laying the groundwork for impactful and coordinated implementation.

A highlight of this phase was the Green Home Hackathon hosted under the EU-funded BEIT project in Mosul, which exemplified the power of collaboration and innovation to address Iraq's housing and

energy challenges.

In November 2024, the International Trade Centre (ITC), in partnership with Mosul Space, brought together a dynamic mix of 35 architects, engineers, entrepreneurs, and students to tackle Iraq's pressing housing and energy challenges.

Over two days, participants brainstormed, designed, and prototyped affordable, climate-resilient housing solutions. The event kicked off with a series of expert-led sessions on traditional architecture, clean energy, and innovative prototyping. Guided by local and international mentors, teams worked tirelessly, blending modern technology with traditional techniques to craft solutions tailored to Iraq's needs.

The hackathon culminated in a pitch competition, where two standout projects emerged victorious. HeriTech introduced hybrid Lego-style bricks made from mud, recycled plastic, and cement—reducing building costs by up to 51%. Their design, inspired by traditional shanasheel architecture, incorporated solar-powered smart shading systems for energy efficiency. Meanwhile, Green Insulation and Ventilation (GVI) showcased vertical gardens and green facades, transforming plants into natural thermal insulators to lower cooling costs and reduce emissions.

Through initiatives like this, ITC seeks to contribute to the enhanced competitiveness and sustainability of local MSMEs in the construction sector through a more conducive environment, along with increased inclusive and green trade investment.

### **ITC's plans for 2025**

In 2025, ITC will continue driving impactful initiatives in key sector of Iraq, such as agriculture, and housing, focusing on market-led growth, youth empowerment, and trade policy development.

A key highlight for 2025 will be the third edition of the Iraq National Trade Forum, which is being organized in close coordination with the Government of Iraq, private sector and under the sponsorship of the European Union. As in previous years, the INTF will be a platform for Iraqi firms to identify and expand business opportunities.

Next year, ITC will continue its efforts to ensure long-term sustainability of the results achieved through SAAVI. The focus will be on consolidating outcomes and providing the necessary support to stakeholders, equipping them with the skills and frameworks required to scale and sustain activities.

The BEIT project, now fully in its implementation phase, will continue to make strides in improving housing sector performance and enhancing Iraq's capacity to support affordable housing objectives. ITC will work alongside its partners, UN-Habitat and ILO, to advance initiatives in housing, energy efficiency, and youth empowerment.

ITC thanks its partners for their ongoing support and look forward to another year of impactful collaboration.



# UNHCR: An Inclusive Iraq for Refugees and Displaced Communities

Iraq currently hosts over 338,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, the majority of whom have fled Syria. It is also home to more than a million internally displaced persons (IDPs), among whom some 110,000 persons continue to live in IDP camps.

UNHCR continues to work closely with government counterparts at federal, regional and local levels, with partners and with refugees and displaced communities themselves to support protection and solutions for people who have been forced to flee their homes.

Hear from some of the refugees and forcibly displaced in Iraq about the impact this support has had on their lives:

## **Dalia**

"As I left Syria, I felt my whole life full of uncertainty. But I discovered that there is still a chance when I arrived in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. I was happy that I could still teach again. Becoming an official teacher is more than a job. It is also a recognition of my qualifications and remarkable contribution as a refugee in the region. I have learned the local language, and I am now work-

ing with the local government. This has deepened my sense of belonging. I am excited about the future opportunities for myself and my students. By teaching children, I hope to contribute to its growth."

Dalia is one of 700 Syrian refugee teachers formally hired by the Ministry of Education of the Kurdistan Regional Government under the Refugee Education Integration Policy. For the 2024-25 aca-

demic year, over 55,000 Syrian refugee students attend classes alongside their Iraqi peers in public schools.

## **Dr. Amir**

"The people of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq helped me stand on my feet and use the experience I have to care and treat others. Nothing compares to the feeling of being part of a community and supporting others equally"

Dr. Amir is a Syrian refugee and doctor



working at the Domiz primary health-care centre near Domiz 1 refugee camp in Dohuk Governorate. Constructed by UNHCR and equipped by the World Health Organization (WHO), the health centre receives around 300 patients every day. In total, 76 staff, including 44 refugees currently work and volunteer in the health centre.

UNHCR has supported the construction of four primary healthcare centres in Basirma, Kawergosk, Domiz and Qush-tapa. Instead of maintaining parallel services in camps, UNHCR supports public health clinics in local communities, accessible to refugees and Iraqis, including IDPs. In 2024, these clinics provided over 177,000 medical consultations.

## Kawe

“We lost our home and all our belongings on the way to seek safety, including our identity documents. But soon, we will have everything we need to enjoy our rights.”

Kawe is an Ezidi Internally Displaced Iraqi who fled Sinjar in 2014. Last year UNHCR provided Kawe with legal counselling and helped her gather the required documentation to prove her and her children’s identities – a process that required months of follow-up with administration and judicial actors in Sinjar and Dohuk to obtain supporting document.

Kawe is one of 37,500 displaced Iraqis who received legal assistance from UNHCR and partners in 2024, helping them overcome administrative and

legal barriers to obtain civil documents. In total, UNHCR helped displaced Iraqis obtain around 41,000 civil documents last year.

## Nidal and Mahabad

“As a family we try to make a spending plan, but the money is never enough. Products for our children are very expensive”.

Nidal and Mahabad, Syrian refugee parents to four children, two of whom have disabilities and face financial struggles. Nidal works informally in the construction sector but often struggles to find daily work, while Mahabad stays home to care for their children. In 2024, they were among 56,000 vulnerable refugees who received UNHCR multipurpose cash assistance, helping them cover basic needs, including rent, food, and medical expenses for their children.

## Yahya

“Registration is important to ensure that we as a family are protected and are able to access other services such as school.”

Yahya Mustafa and his family renewed their registration with UNHCR at the community centre in Baghdad in mid-2024. During the year, UNHCR newly registered 37,100 refugees and renewed the registration for 140,000 refugees and asylum seekers. Having a valid UNHCR certificate remains the basis for registration and documentation by the authorities in Iraq and essential to access protection and services across Iraq.





## UNICEF 2024 Highlights

### Overview

In 2024, Iraq experienced significant regional conflict, exacerbating pre-existing threats and profoundly affecting its child population, which constitutes more than half of the country's population. Almost half of Iraqi children live in multidimensional poverty, lacking access to fundamental services, including food, clean water, shelter, education, and healthcare. The country faces a neonatal mortality rate of 13 deaths per 1,000 live births, and there are over two million children and young people out of school, according to 2018 data. Furthermore, an estimated 2,400 children are reported to be in detention, with numerous grave violations against minors documented. Iraq is also dealing with severe water scarcity and is among the most vulnerable nations to climate change-related water and food shortages. Gender disparities intensify these issues, as girls endure additional challenges such as early marriage and increased domestic responsibilities.



# Major Achievements and UNICEF's Contribution

In 2024, UNICEF has been instrumental in supporting the Iraqi government's endeavours to enhance the quality of life of every child in Iraq. These tangible achievements contribute to Iraq's national priorities and the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

## Every Child Survives and Thrives

- UNICEF implemented an integrated Early Childhood Development (ECD) package at 706 health facilities, reaching over 1 million children, approximately 50% of whom are girls, along with their caregivers.
- UNICEF facilitated the procurement and administration of two vaccines (Bacillus Calmette-Guérin and oral polio vaccine) and vitamin A to four million children.
- UNICEF's efforts during the mass measles vaccination campaign ensured that 6.7 million children received essential vaccinations.
- UNICEF trained more than 5,864 frontline healthcare workers, including 1,600 women, on childcare and vaccination micro-planning.

## Every Child Learns



- The Iraqi Government, with the support of UNICEF, identified over 290,000 out-of-school children, including more than 85,000 girls, resulting in 136,363 children (34,322 girls) returning to education or registering for external exams.
- UNICEF's ongoing support has enabled the institutionalisation of the Education Management Information System in over 5,000 schools across three governorates by 2024.
- UNICEF-supported youth-led initiatives have empowered over 127,271 young Iraqis to drive community change on social cohesion, gender equality, and environmental sustainability.

- UNICEF established 10 innovation labs nationwide, providing over 10,092 youth (including 4,795 girls) with crucial life skills, digital competencies, green skills, and employability training.
- U-Report and Learning Passport platforms, spearheaded by UNICEF, have enhanced digital engagement for 22,260 youth.

## Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation

- UNICEF established the first-ever Childhood Care Directorate, child-friendly courts, and the Justice for Children curriculum in Iraq.
- UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to operationalise 27 child protection centres in KRI and established 44 childhood care units across Federal Iraq, benefiting over 100,000 vulnerable children.
- UNICEF trained more than 650 social workers and case managers to enhance local expertise and ensure high-quality child protection services in Iraq.
- UNICEF scaled up the Laaha Virtual Safe Space platform to support over 7,000 girls with vital information and resources.
- UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Planning, developed a mental health and psychosocial support curriculum for children affected by armed conflict.

## Every Child Lives in a Safe and Clean Environment

- Provided basic water services to over 531,000 individuals (283,416 women and 244,400 children), including those in humanitarian settings.
- Improved water services for 26,112 individuals with disabilities and ensured safely managed water access for 500,377 individuals, including 255,000 women and 230,170 children.
- Delivered climate change education to 60,000 children.

- Engaged youth in governance and climate action through Iraq's first Local Conference of Youth, trained 80 young people in solar-powered systems, enhanced prospects in the renewable energy sector, and supported six youth delegates to represent Iraq at COP29 to lead critical discussions on climate solutions.
- Enabled the Government of Iraq to generate US\$32.7 million in revenue by installing 624,675 digital water meters.

## Every Child Has an Equitable Chance in Life

- Supported the Government of Iraq in implementing the National Social Protection Strategy for Federal Iraq and the Social Protection Strategic Framework for KRI.



- Launched the cash-plus integrated child benefit pilot in Duhok in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, linking cash assistance to essential services for children.
- Enhanced coordination and collaboration across governorates to improve system modules for cash assistance and service referrals within the Management Information System (MIS).
- Evidence generation efforts addressed data gaps and informed national reform initiatives, including geospatial analyses of child poverty and assessments of social protection expenditures for 2024.

## Humanitarian Response

- Established quality child protection, education, and WASH services for 703

returning families (1,529 children) from Al-Hol camp in Syria at Al-Amal camp.

- Expanded learning access for 87,769 displaced individuals and vulnerable children (44,202 girls), ensuring continued learning.
- Under the Refugee Education Integration Policy, UNICEF has facilitated the integration of over 158,000 children from refugee camps into community schools in the Kurdistan Region.
- Safe water access was provided to 48,928 refugees and 216,667 IDPs, including 24,953 women and 22,507 children.
- Child protection and GBV services reached 285,448 individuals, including 102,904 girls.
- 219,927 accessed child protection services, with 109,100 children benefiting from MHPSS.
- 10,838 children received specialized child protection services, while 65,294 accessed GBV prevention and response services.

## Collaboration with UN in Iraq

Collaboration with other UN agencies has been crucial for developing key strategies, joint programming, and embodying the principle of speaking as One UN.

- Partnered with WHO, UNFPA, UN Women, and the World Bank to enhance care for newborns, children, and mothers in Iraq, whilst strengthening the health system.
- Collaborated with FAO, WHO, and WFP to finalize the Nutrition Strategy 2025-2030 and develop policies for maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health.
- Worked alongside WHO, UNDP, and UN-Habitat on joint programming to tackle WASH challenges in Iraq, encouraging a coordinated response.
- Engaged high-level stakeholders as One UN to promote policy change for child protection, involving global and local officials.
- Advocated with UNHCR for the integration of refugees into national systems and addressed the issue of childhood statelessness.

- Supported children in detention in collaboration with UNODC, whilst promoting the socioeconomic reintegration of returnee families with UNDP.
- Participated in the PROSPECT joint programme with IOM, UNHCR, and the World Bank to uphold the rights of vulnerable children and ensure access to opportunities.
- Collaborated with IOM on the protection rights of migrant children through the UN Migration Network and co-chaired a working group for the One UN Plan of Response.
- Strengthened ties with UNHCR through a joint programme launched in 2024, focusing on building institutional capacity in education.
- Introduced Early Essential Newborn Care in Baghdad with WHO and the Ministry of Health, integrating it as a national standard for essential care.
- Advanced digital health transformation by improving data generation, achieving birth registration access in 250 facilities, and supporting over 5,000 children.
- Supported the development of the Nutrition Strategy 2025-2030 with WHO, highlighting the importance of domestic investment in preventive nutrition initiatives.
- Co-chaired the Technical Working Group to aid the government's humanitarian response for children returning from northeast Syria, securing endorsement from the Prime Minister's office for civil documentation access.
- Collaborated with UNAMI to establish a prevention committee to monitor children affected by conflict in Iraq.
- Co-chaired the UN Water Taskforce to enhance water security and climate adaptation efforts.
- Convened high-level government support for social protection reform through joint initiatives with the European Union and United Nations.
- Modernised the Disability Management Information System with WFP to enhance data management and service delivery.



## 2025 and beyond

In 2025, UNICEF plans to launch a new country programme document, creating opportunities to strengthen its brand, trust, and relevance as a preferred partner in support of Iraq's ambitious development goals. As part of the next country programme, UNICEF will continue to advocate for children's access to essential services in IDP, refugee and other vulnerable communities, including areas of return. Crucially, UNICEF intends to take a more integrated approach that will lead to more resilient, equitable and sustainable outcomes for children, families and communities. To achieve our goals for integrated response to support the children of Iraq through meeting their diverse needs, UNICEF in Iraq is prioritising the following priority areas for the 2025-2029 Country Programme:

1. Building a climate-resilient future
2. Ending child marriage
3. Promoting early childhood development
4. Ending child poverty
5. Increasing access to quality, inclusive and equitable education



## UNESCO's achievements

# The spirit of Mosul is back

On 5th February 2025, alongside the Iraqi authorities, the Director-General of UNESCO will inaugurate the emblematic monuments of the historic centre of Mosul, whose reconstruction by UNESCO has just been completed as part of the 'Revive the Spirit of Mosul' initiative.

Initiated in April 2018 by Audrey Azoulay, the 'Revive the Spirit of Mosul' initiative is UNESCO's most ambitious reconstruction campaign ever, with a budget of more than \$115M allocated by the United Arab Emirates, the European Union and a dozen other international partners.

UNESCO has led the rehabilitation and reconstruction of four emblematic monuments - the Al-Nouri mosque, the Al-Hadba minaret, the Al-Tahera Syriac Catholic church and the Dominican

Convent of Our Lady of the Hour – Couvent Notre-Dame de l'Heure and its prayer house - as well as 124 historic houses that are now once again home to families.

These projects, carried out to the highest international standards, have generated almost 7,700 jobs. More than 2,800 people have also been trained and qualified in construction, including traditional techniques such as alabaster carving, and in heritage conservation and restoration.

But stones alone cannot revive the spirit of Mosul. That is why, through its initiative, UNESCO has also invested in education and cultural life. More than 400 classrooms have been renovated in Mosul and its surroundings, the University was supported to equip its library and

in the creation of a "cinema" department.

5,000 teachers, educators and parents were trained in peace education to prevent the return of violent extremism. They learned how to re-establish dialogue with young people who have dropped out of school, identify those who are suffering from psychological distress and answer sensitive questions in class about the events that took place.

UNESCO also supported the revival of cultural festivals, opened a space for young creators – "The Station" – and provided training in the practice of traditional musical instruments. It opened a community information centre on the banks of the Tigris, hosting events and supporting civil society initiatives.



## Interview with MR. ZEESHAN AMIN Chief of UNOCT's Strategic Coordination Section and Head of UNOCT Programme Office in Baghdad

**Can you share your thoughts on the overall impact of the UNOCT Baghdad Office?**

The UNOCT Baghdad Office was newly established in 2023 but has since grown to include 6 staff members. We have been running several significant projects, one of which is the UNOCT/UNCCT's Global Programme on Prosecution, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (PRR), and the second project we are engaged in is "Human Rights and Counter-Terrorism: Capacity-building Support to Law Enforcement and Intelligence Services in Iraq." Both projects have been thoroughly rewarding for us at UNOCT. Through these initiatives, we have provided valuable training opportunities, shared expertise, and facilitated discussions on how counter-terrorism efforts can be more effective when integrated with a strong understanding of human rights considerations. The engagement and collaboration we have witnessed throughout the projects have been remarkable. Recent achievements by UNOCT's Global Human Rights Program in Iraq was around 280 law enforcement and intelligence officials trained on human rights compliance in counter-terrorism work – explaining why this matters and how to do so in their context. And as the situation in Syria evolves, we are working hard with our Iraqi counterparts and with agencies on the compound to provide assistance to Iraq in bringing back its citizens from northeastern Syria. We continue to work for solutions to the challenges faced by Iraqi security forces working on terrorist cases, by tapping

into international and Iraqi expertise.

**How has the collaboration with partners contributed to the project's success?**

For the success of the human rights project, we would like to express our deep gratitude to the Government of Canada for its generous support, which has been vital in making this initiative possible. We also greatly appreciate the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, whose funding has been crucial to the implementation of UNOCT/UNCCT's Global Programme on Prosecution, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (PRR). In addition, we also thank the Governments of the Netherlands and Denmark for their support on the repatriation of Iraqis from northeast Syria. Furthermore, we are thankful to the Office of the National Security Advisor of the Government of Iraq for its invaluable guidance and assistance in facilitating our workshops and bringing together key participants. The collective collaboration of these partners has been essential in ensuring the success of these projects, enabling meaningful dialogue and driving forward critical efforts to strengthen Iraq's counter-terrorism strategies while integrating human rights considerations.

**What has been the role of Iraq's experiences in shaping the project's outcomes?**

One of the key strengths of the UNOCT Baghdad Office has been its ability to integrate a diverse range of experiences from across the Iraq and also the whole region. By doing so, we've been able to offer valuable insights to beneficiaries in Iraq, drawing from multiple agencies, including the Ministry of Interior, the Office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA), and beyond. The exchange of best practices and lessons learned has significantly enriched our discussions and further



strengthened the overall impact of our efforts. This sharing of Iraq expertise has been instrumental in refining our approach and enhancing the project's outcomes.

**How do you see the future of counter-terrorism efforts in Iraq?**

The successes that Iraq has achieved in combating terrorism are significant not only for the country but also for the international community. It is essential that we continue to build on these achievements and further strengthen the progress made. In light of the evolving regional climate, it is imperative that we all redouble our efforts to safeguard the progress that Iraq has made over the years. The role of human rights must never be overlooked in this ongoing effort. By maintaining a rights-based approach, Iraq can continue to reinforce its counter-terrorism strategies while upholding fundamental freedoms.

**What are the next steps for UNOCT in supporting Iraq's counter-terrorism efforts?**

The UNOCT Baghdad Office remains committed to supporting Iraq in this critical area. We look forward to continuing our close collaboration with the Iraqi Government, the Office of the National Security Advisor, and our international partners. Together, we will explore the next steps to further enhance counter-terrorism efforts while ensuring a strong emphasis on human rights and the rule of law.



# UNIDO Improved Livelihoods and Food Security through Reviving the Food Processing Industry

In 2024, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) continued critical interventions to address food insecurity and unemployment through its project, “Emergency livelihood support to mitigate the food insecurity crisis among vulnerable peoples in Iraq,” with funding from the Government of Japan. The project empowered 117 refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and host community people in Duhok and Nineveh Governorates in 2024 alone through the three targeted support programmes below to expand livelihood opportunities or business in food processing.

By supporting food processing households and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), over 500 family members and employees are estimated to benefit indirectly from the project.

Anchored in the project was gender equality and women’s empowerment. The project’s effort to promote gender-inclusive growth and resilience in displacement-affected communities culminated in 95 women of the 117 beneficiaries (81%). By fostering self-help groups and cooperative models, UNIDO promoted women’s leadership in business while strengthening social cohesion in the post-conflict areas.

## Building Sustainable Livelihoods for Refugee Women through Modernising Dairy Processing

As part of the project, UNIDO implemented a six-day training programme for 37 Syrian refugee women in Domiz 2 Refugee Camp to enhance their skills in dairy production and entrepreneurship. The curriculum combined theoretical and practical sessions, focusing on modern dairy processing techniques, including proper sterilization of equipment, temperature control during fermentation, and safe storage practices to minimize spoil-



age. Business management modules covered essential entrepreneurial skills such as cost-effective budgeting, market analysis, and strategies for branding and sales in local markets.

The participants were also provided with toolkits comprising stainless-steel processing containers, thermometers, and packaging materials, enabling immediate application of their newly acquired skills and reinforcing their technical capabilities. The UNIDO support facilitated small-scale dairy production, increasing production quality and quantity and enhancing household income and community-level food security.

“Now I make more yogurt with the big pots that were given to me, and my sales are better. I want my life to be better, and for my family too, to be able to provide for themselves.” Amina Nuri Khalaf, Domiz 2 Refugee Camp

## Strengthening Livelihoods and Community Bonds among Refugee Women through Agribusiness

In Gawilan Refugee Camp, 53 Syrian refugee women, predominantly single mothers, created a pathway to food security and income generation through the project’s agribusiness initiative. Each of them received 2 adult female goats,

most of which were pregnant, along with 2 kid goats. This strategic allocation ensured immediate milk production from the adult goats and future herd expansion through the kids’ growth and the pregnant goats’ offspring, amplifying long-term benefits. The beneficiaries also gained skills in animal husbandry, milk processing, and entrepreneurship to monetize dairy products such as cheese and yogurt, and essential tools and supplies, including animal feed, veterinary kits for basic healthcare, milking equipment, and cooling containers to preserve dairy products.

UNIDO also constructed a communal goat house with durable shelters, feeding troughs, and storage facilities. This facility facilitated collective care of the livestock and peer-to-peer learning among the beneficiaries, fostering a sense of community. The project not only developed individual livelihoods but also strengthened community bonds within the camp.

## Strengthening SMEs’ Food Safety and Hygiene Management

Following training for SME owners in 2023, a four-day intensive training programme was conducted in 2024 for 27 SME workers in Bardarash Town to strengthen their expertise in food safety and hygiene, quality assurance,

and compliance with international standards. The training focused on practical applications of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), sanitation protocols, and risk management strategies tailored to key food processing sectors such as dairy, tahini, pickles, and bakery. Hands-on training in raw material handling, contamination prevention, and the use of digital tools for regulatory compliance equipped SMEs to meet both local and export market requirements.

UNIDO also provided advanced equipment aligned with sector-specific needs, such as milk analysers for precise quality control and handheld laser printers to ensure accurate labelling and traceability of production dates, enhancing compliance with food safety standards.

This strategic approach integrating skills development with sector-specific technology helped SMEs standardize production output, reduce waste, and access formal markets. The project’s impact extended beyond modernizing production processes, creating a positive ripple effect that stimulated the local economy and enhanced community well-being.

## Looking ahead

In addition to the successful conclusion of the above project, 2024 also marked the launch of a new project, “Digital technology skills to enhance employability in Iraq,” funded by the Government of Austria. It aims to equip unemployed youth in displacement and host areas with digital and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills for wage- or self-employment, leveraging the growing digital economy. The year was dedicated to groundwork and an assessment of skills needs of potential beneficiaries and the labour market. Informed by its findings, digital and entrepreneurship training is to be delivered in 2025.

Through this project and other initiatives, UNIDO continues to foster SMEs and entrepreneurship, creating employment and livelihood opportunities especially for vulnerable people and promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development.



# UNMAS activities in Iraq

Remarks by

UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme

**MR. PEHR LODHAMMAR**



As we close the year, I am glad to reflect on the achievements that we have made and the lessons we have learned throughout 2024. This year has been a continuation of our support for the development of a sustainable, well-coordinated national mine action sector and reducing the threat of explosive ordnance (EO) to civilians.

As the country has transitioned from a humanitarian emergency response to a more development-oriented approach, UNMAS assistance



in Iraq continued to enable safety, stabilization, reconstruction, and development initiatives. In the face of the shift in donor appetite to other global and regional priorities and the consequent decline in mine action funding for Iraq since 2019, the need for mine action responses in Iraq remains significant. UNMAS Iraq works alongside other UN agencies to clear EO, support the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and address remaining humanitarian needs.

Despite a year filled with uncertainty and unpredictability, I am proud to observe the progress that UNMAS Iraq team has made to ensure an effective and sustainable mine action response and strengthen national ownership of mine action by providing technical and advisory support to the National Mine Action Authorities (NMAAs), namely the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) and Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA). Additionally, in 2024, we expanded our relationship with the MoI by providing a number of training sessions at the MoI Explosive Ordnance Disposal Training Center in Salman Pak, Baghdad. We were impressed by the level of professionalism and commitment of the Iraqi officials at the center, and we look forward to further collaboration in 2025.

Regarding the national capacity of mine action responses, after completing the Partnership grant model between the International NGOs and National NGOs to build the capacity of national opera-

tors, in early 2024, UNMAS Iraq awarded direct grants to the National NGOs to independently operate and deliver Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) sessions. The two grants where the work was entirely achieved by Iraqi men and women in Mosul and Sinjar districts in Ninewa governorate are expected to continue through 2025.

These two pillars, the commitment of Iraqi authorities and the qualified national operators, are the two wheels of the sustainable mine action responses in Iraq. Iraq is one of several countries in the Middle East who committed to the international treaties, such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). For the country to meet the obligations, I would like to emphasize the allocation of the Iraqi federal budget to mine action is indispensable. Meanwhile, the continued support from the international donors are still required, for which, I have engaged in a number of meetings with donors based in Iraq and Jordan to seek assistance to mine action in Iraq. We also organized the third Local Mine Action Support Group (LMASG) in Baghdad that brought together representatives of the donor community and the two NMAAs. The fourth LMASG meeting is planned in early 2025.

Women empowerment and changing the stereotype of the mine action as a male-dominated sector continued to be one of my main priorities in 2024. An outstanding achievement worth

mentioning this year is the women's participation in the mine action activities. Today, women represent more than 40 percent of the UNMAS Iraq's national teams. This does not only mean an increase in women's number but also the representation at the senior level and decision-making roles. Most significantly the deserved promotion of one of the women deminers to a supervisor role in operations team.

Furthermore, I am thrilled to mention that, through the Post-Activity Impact Assessment (PAIA) where my teams have conducted recently through revisiting areas cleared previously in Ninewa and Basra, we have observed the revival of livelihood opportunities through farming the lands, the development work that was enabled after EO clearance, the reduction of EO-related accidents, and the perception of safety and confidence from the communities. This motivates us to continue our endeavors, take on new responsibilities, and embrace opportunities to achieve sustainable success in the coming year.

We cannot forget that demining is a risky activity that requires a lot of precautionary measures to reduce the risk to a tolerable level; however, there are always risks. We had a tragic fatal accident in early 2024 that occurred during clearance operations in Batnaya, Tal Kaif, north of Mosul, resulting in the death of an Iraqi operator. Mine action accidents happen everywhere. I personally worked in different locations of the world and have unfortunately witnessed several accidents. This did not hinder our and Iraqi people's tireless efforts to protect the lives of vulnerable groups including women and children. I cannot emphasize enough that UNMAS Iraq is here to support the Iraqi authorities and operators to make Iraq an EO-free country.

Finally, I would like to recognize the hard work, determination, and dedication of the UNMAS Iraq team for the accomplishments that have laid a strong foundation for the year to come. I cannot thank our donors for their instrumental support for our mission in Iraq. I look forward to continuing with great commitment to make a difference in the lives of EO-affected communities.

## Impact story



The ISIL occupation and the ensuing battles to liberate the occupied areas, caused extensive damage on private and infrastructure property. Residences, local shops, factories and agricultural areas throughout the liberated areas were significantly damaged, with devastating impact on the lives of the local population.

In January 2024, UNMAS Iraq awarded a grant to the Iraqi national mine action NGO, Shareteah Humanitarian Organization (SHO), to conduct survey, manual and mechanical clearance operations in the Sinjar district. One of the clearance tasks was a poultry farm in the Ain Talawi area, between Mosul and Sinjar town. The farm had been largely destroyed and was contaminated with explosive ordnance (EO).

SHO expected to clear the area with heavy machines; however, the owner of the poultry farm refused to commence clearance operations until he had received financial compensation from the local authorities. The government of Iraq provides compensation to the owners of houses, shops and factories that were destroyed during the conflict, but such governmental compensation might not be provided without acceptable proof of the damage. The area was extremely dangerous with significant EO contamination, but the owner remained concerned about compensation and did not agree with survey and clearance being undertaken at the site, despite the risk of potential explosions that could result in human casualties.

Despite guidance from the Iraqi National High Committee permitting survey and clearance operations without the owners' consent, SHO opted to support the owner of the property in a local court to ensure full acceptance of the work to follow. SHO requested the compensation court to send an investigation team to the site to document the damage. This ensured the claim would be processed even if the buildings and contamination were cleared. Consequently, the court officially documented the owners' right to receive government compensation even without the collapsed facilities being present.

After receiving the inspection documentation and official confirmation regarding the compensation, the owner had been reassured and agreed to sign off for an approved clearance operations at the site, enabling the commencement of mechanical clearance operations conducted by SHO. The teams immediately began clearance operations.

This type of innovative and considerate approach can only be conceived by national organizations. Through their networks and close coordination with local authorities, along with in-depth knowledge of Iraqi law and regulations, SHO successfully devised a solution that met all requirements

## Key figures

- Provided 19 training courses to 254 officials at Government of Iraq the Ministry of Interior of which 56 were women. Training courses covered various mine action related areas including training on Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and map reading, drone essentials, Explosive Ordnance Disposal/Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (EOD/IEDD) (T3), Detectors and Awareness training.
- Provided Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) lifesaving messages for 16,112 people (4,319 women, 5,198 girls, 4,846 boys, and 1,749 men in Ninawa governorate).
- Cleared 863,972 million square meters of land and removed 3,592 EO items.
- By the end of 2024, women represented 40 percent of the technical and support staff amongst the UNMAS Iraq's implementing partner organisations, in a sector previously, and traditionally, dominated by men in Iraq.
- The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the DMA endorsed the inclusion of awareness-raising messages on the risks of explosive ordnance in primary, intermediate, and secondary school curricula for the academic year of 2023-2024. This EORE achievement follows UNMAS Iraq's continued efforts after two years of intensive coordination and discussions with national mine action authorities.

while satisfying the local beneficiaries.

After the completion of the SHO clearance operation this coming autumn the owner plans to rebuild parts of the poultry farm, utilizing the compensation provided by the government. Within 12 months, the poultry farm is expected to resume operations, providing livelihood opportunities to the locals, revitalizing the local economy, and encouraging safe return of IDPs.

UNMAS Iraq is pleased with this outcome, as it highlights SHO's qualified management skills. SHO has been trained under UNMAS Iraq's partnership grant over the last three years and is now conducting operations fully autonomously. UNMAS Iraq will continue to support national NGOs and sustainable mine action response in Iraq.



## UNODC in Iraq in 2024

In 2024, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) focused on supporting Iraq in areas such as trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, drug trafficking, countering terrorism, countering corruption, and financial crimes, and more.

### Reshaping Iraq's Efforts Against Drug Trafficking: Strengthening Law Enforcement and Criminal Investigation Capacities

In 2024, UNODC finalized its first report, 'Drug Trafficking Dynamics across the Middle East with focus on Iraq (2019–2023)'. The report and its findings were presented at the 67th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in March and later at the 2nd Baghdad International Conference on Countering Narcotics in July 2024. The report highlights the alarming rise in trafficking of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), including the widely misused substance Captagon, and underscores the urgent need for strengthened national, regional, and international collaboration to counter this growing threat. It details the routes, substances, and socio-political factors driving the drug trade, offering actionable insights for policymakers and law enforcement.

UNODC, in collaboration with the World Health Organization and the Iraqi Ministry of Health, also completed a situa-

tion analysis on drug use patterns and their underlying causes. The report offered comprehensive insights into drug demand reduction strategies, including prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and social reintegration, alongside multiple recommendations to strengthen the response.

As part of the "Supporting Iraqi Authorities in Combating Drug Production and Trafficking" project, funded by the Peace and Stability Operations Programme/Canada, UNODC co-sponsored the Annual Conference of the Supreme National Commission for Drug Control and Psychotropic Substances in Iraq in November 2024. In December 2024, two roundtable meetings were held in Erbil and Baghdad to present detailed project information, expected outcomes, and activities, following extensive discussions with stakeholders. These meetings led to consensus on the project work plan and the nomi-

nation of working groups. Completion of Preliminary Activities for the project is set to begin in early 2025 for a two-year implementation period.

In early 2024, UNODC, in collaboration with the Government of Iraq, launched a series of advanced training courses under the "Enhancing the Capacities of Iraqi Law Enforcement and Criminal Investigations" project, funded by the U.S. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, which concluded in 2024. This six-month programme aimed to strengthen the capabilities of Iraqi security agencies in countering drug-related crimes and was delivered to the General Directorate for Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances. With the successful training of 168 participants, the training focused on forensic skills, intelligence gathering, source handling, operational planning, legal procedures, investigative techniques, and successful prosecutions.



## Global Action Project to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (GLO.ACT)

Under the EU-funded GLO.ACT (PROTECT) project, UNODC implemented various initiatives to strengthen efforts against human trafficking and migrant smuggling in collaboration with criminal justice professionals. With UNODC's support, Iraq has achieved a significant milestone by adopting Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to enhance the investigation of these crimes. The SOPs, are designed to enhance investigations, ensure the protection of victims' rights, and hold perpetrators accountable. What distinguishes these procedures is their comprehensiveness and clarity, covering all stages of the investigation, from receiving reports to referring cases to the judiciary in line with international standards.

In the meantime, UNODC's legislative support in Iraq has yielded notable advancements. Efforts have focused on drafting Smuggling of Migrants (SoM) legislation and recommending key amendments to the Anti-Human Trafficking Law. In November 2024, the Council of Ministers approved draft amendments to the Anti-Human Trafficking Law, which have been submitted to Parliament for a final vote. Additionally, final amendments to the SoM law have been submitted to the Council of Ministers for review, marking a significant step in enhancing Iraq's legal framework to counter hu-

man trafficking and migrant smuggling.

Under the UK-funded Smuggling of Migrants and Related Crimes project in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), UNODC supported a range of initiatives aimed at enhancing efforts to counter migrant smuggling. As Iraq anticipates adopting the Smuggling of Migrants (SoM) law, UNODC is engaging with key stakeholders to prepare for its implementation and enforcement. In September 2024, UNODC facilitated a workshop with judges in the KRI to discuss the draft law, raise awareness of migrant smuggling, and emphasize the importance of criminalizing this act. The workshop also provided a platform to gather judicial feedback, marking a starting point towards strengthening judicial capacities in the region, in conjunction with efforts to ensure the effective implementation of new legislation upon its issuance.

Additionally, UNODC supports the Kurdistan Security Agency (Asayish) in strengthening intelligence analysis and open-source intelligence for migrant smuggling investigations. Three trainings have been conducted to equip investigators with tools and techniques to leverage criminal intelligence, enhancing operational capacity to counter migrant smuggling in the region effectively.

## Enhancing Counter-Terrorism Cooperation in Iraq

To strengthen international cooperation on terrorism-related cases, UNODC organized a regional workshop in Amman, Jordan, bringing together senior officials from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Yemen, including fifteen delegates from the ministries of justice, interior, and foreign affairs, as well as military courts and public security. The workshop focused on enhancing mutual legal assistance in terrorism-related cases, fostering intelligence sharing, and coordinating joint security efforts. Additionally, it aimed to assess legal and operational frameworks, identifying the technical needs to improve security and judicial capacities, while facilitating the exchange of best practices in counterterrorism.

## In a Qualitative Step Towards Securing Iraqi Airports

UNODC, through the Passenger and Cargo Border Team – Airport Communication Programme (PCBT-AIRCOP) and in collaboration with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), initiated a consultative dialogue with Iraqi officials to enhance passenger information systems in Iraq. This dialogue involved teams responsible for Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Records (PNR), with participation from the Ministry of Interior, Civil Aviation, the Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Advisory. The discussions focused on developing the necessary legislative framework for the collection, transmission, use, retention, and sharing of passenger data, as well as establishing and operating the Passenger Information Unit (PIU) to identify known and suspected terrorists and serious criminals. Additionally, the dialogue aimed at designing clear operational procedures to ensure the effective management of passenger data, system integration, and long-term sustainability.



## Strengthening Border Security: The Air Cargo Control Unit

With UNODC's continued support, the Air Cargo Control Unit (ACCU) at Baghdad International Airport significantly enhanced its capacity to identify, target, and seize suspicious shipments, including counterfeit medicines, misdeclared materials, and machines used for producing official documents. Several shipments were either re-exported or abandoned, preventing harm and saving lives across Iraq. Building on this success, UNODC is set to establish a Port Control Unit (PCU) at Umm Qasr Port in 2025, Iraq's largest port, which is expected to deliver unprecedented results in intercepting illicit shipments and further enhancing border security.

## Promoting Integrity and Combating Corruption and Financial Crimes in Iraq

In 2024, significant progress was made in addressing corruption in Iraq, with UNODC providing technical assistance to 457 representatives from anti-money laundering (AML), counter-terrorism financing (CTF), and anti-corruption authorities. UNODC's technical assistance included guidelines, train-

ing curricula, and initiatives that enhanced analytical skills for operational and strategic analysis, enabling authorities to better identify and assess ML/TF risks. This improved analytical capacity has increased the ability to detect suspicious activities, resulting in more actionable intelligence. Training on the misuse of new technologies and virtual assets further empowered participants to understand emerging financial crime threats. Through Training of Trainers (ToT) programmes, a sustainable knowledge transfer model was established within Iraqi investigative teams to ensure ongoing professional development. These efforts also enhanced Iraq's ability to implement financial sanctions related to terrorism financing and weapons of mass destruction proliferation, while deepening understanding of international standards for identifying and classifying individuals associated with terrorism, supporting Iraq's compliance efforts.

Furthermore, UNODC has supported the Iraqi Commission of Integrity in tackling challenges related to parallel financial investigations and strengthening international cooperation. Additionally, it contributed to the review of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. These efforts have resulted in notable improvements in investigation efficiency, financial crime prevention, and inter-agency collaboration.

## Strengthening Private Sector Engagement in Countering Corruption

On May 6, 2024, UNODC, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, co-organized a regional forum for Arab private sector companies, titled "Enhancing the Role of the Private Sector in Combating Corruption: Reality and Challenges." This event was part of the regional project "Strengthening the Private Sector Capacity to Prevent Corruption and Enhance Integrity in Arab Countries" funded by the Siemens Integrity Initiative. The forum brought together over 80 representatives from the private sector and anti-corruption authorities across the MENA region, fostering a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation. It aligned with the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention and Resolution 10/12 of the 10th session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which emphasized the importance of incentivizing the private sector to adopt integrity-related measures. The event facilitated the exchange of experiences among participating countries, exploring regional and international approaches to anti-corruption and effective incentives for private sector companies to implement transparency and accountability measures.



## Prison Reform Project in Iraq: Enhancing Security and Stability

In light of Iraq's ongoing security and social challenges, prison system reform has emerged as a key strategic priority. UNODC has been working in close collaboration with the Iraqi government to strengthen the capacity of institutions responsible for prison management, ensuring more effective and humane operations. In 2024, UNODC developed an inception report on prison classification in Iraq, focusing on creating a systematic approach for improving classification procedures, especially regarding high-risk prisoners, individuals linked to terrorism, and foreign terrorist fighters.

UNODC also supported the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for prisoner classification, aligning these protocols with international human rights standards, including the Nelson Mandela Rules. These SOPs, introduced to national counterparts, enhance intake processes, improve security classifications, and ensure more efficient resource management and rehabilitation programmes.

Additionally, UNODC facilitated a series of intensive training workshops for prison staff, addressing key areas such as incident management, de-escalation strategies, and the handling of inmates with special needs, including those with disabilities and chronic illnesses, while emphasizing the promotion of human rights and adherence to international prisoner treatment standards.

UNODC also provided technical support to upgrade prison infrastructure, improving detention conditions, sanitary facilities, and designated spaces for recreational and sports activities. To further enhance Iraq's prison system, UNODC facilitated knowledge exchanges with countries that have successfully implemented prison reform, contributing to the growth of Iraq's institutional capacity.

## STRIVE Juvenile: Preventing Violent Extremism Affecting Children in Iraq

The STRIVE Juvenile project, funded by the EU and implemented by UNODC since 2021, aims to prevent and counter violent extremism affecting children, with full respect for human rights, gender equality, and international law. In 2024, significant progress was made, with efforts directed toward strengthening infrastructure and support programmes for rehabilitation and reintegration. The Nineveh Juvenile Reform Facility in Mosul was officially handed over to the Iraqi Ministry of Justice following extensive renovations led by UNODC in partnership with UN-Habitat. The facility, which accommodates approximately 300 children and youth, now includes new classrooms, recreational areas, and a 60% increase in family visitation capacity. Spaces for psychological and social support were introduced, alongside sustainable upgrades such as solar panels and advanced water systems. Additionally, Al-Rashad School in Baghdad was handed over to the Ministry of Justice after comprehensive upgrades, which included outdoor recreational spaces, a solar-powered football field, and the renovation of eight bathrooms. Infrastructure improvements were also made to prevent flooding, enhancing living conditions for approximately 270 children and youth.

To further support the well-being of children and young people deprived of their liberty, UNODC established four dental clinics in juvenile correction facilities across Iraq (three in Baghdad and one in Mosul), providing essential healthcare services and contributing to a supportive rehabilitation environment.

In parallel, UNODC worked to prevent violent extremism by launching the Strong Families Programme in coordination with the National Committee under the National Security Advisory (NSA). This evidence-based initiative empowers families in vulnerable communities through parenting education, trauma-informed support, and skill-building. The programme's family-centered approach is particularly relevant in Iraq, where strong family bonds play a vital role in community stability and long-term peace. The initiative began with the training of 45 national facilitators, who will lead further sessions and implement the programme directly within vulnerable communities. Additionally, UNODC continued strengthening the capacity of professionals by training social workers, prison guards, and legal counselors to improve the rehabilitation and reintegration support.



# From Data to Action: UNFPA's Journey in Iraq in 2024

## Historic Milestone: Iraq's First Census in Over 30 Years

In 2024, Iraq launched its first national population and household census in over three decades, a transformative initiative supported by UNFPA. This landmark effort is set to provide comprehensive and accurate data to inform development policies and address the diverse needs of Iraq's population. Through its technical and operational expertise, UNFPA ensured the census adhered to

the highest international standards, leveraging advanced digital technologies to include marginalized and hard-to-reach communities, including internally displaced persons (IDPs). UNFPA will continue supporting the Government of Iraq in utilizing census data to inform national policies and development strategies, setting the stage for transformative planning and governance.

“

*The census is more than just numbers; it is a roadmap for Iraq's future. UNFPA is committed to helping Iraq leverage this opportunity to develop policies that serve all citizens,”*

”

**Garik Hayrapetyan**  
UNFPA Representative a.i. in Iraq



## UNFPA's "Basics of Journalism" Project Wins Stevie® Award for Best Social Program in MENA Region

The "Basics of Journalism" project, a partnership between UNFPA Iraq and Rudaw Media Network, earned the Stevie® Award for Best Social Program of the Year in the MENA region. This groundbreaking initiative empowers women aspiring to enter journalism, focusing on ethical reporting and amplifying women's voices in media.

Since its inception, the program has trained 159 women and girls across Iraq, with a goal of reaching 300 participants by year-end. Supported by the British Embassy in Iraq and partners like SEED Foundation and Google News Initiative, the project equips participants with essential journalism skills and knowledge of the UN's work in areas like climate change and sustainable development.

**Highlight:** The initiative was lauded as "a huge step forward and the first of its kind for a joint venture between the United Nations and a Middle Eastern media outlet."

## New Women's Protection Centre in Anbar: A Milestone for Violence Survivors

In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Anbar Governorate, and the French Government, UNFPA inaugurated a Women's Protection Centre in Ramadi. This facility offers survivors of violence access to medical, psychosocial, and legal aid, as well as reintegration support and job opportunities.

**Impact:** Led by UN-Habitat, the construction phase generated 1,915 daily job opportunities, benefiting 92 local workers. The cen-

ter joins other UNFPA-supported women's protection centers in Iraq, serving as a beacon of hope for survivors.

This milestone reflects UNFPA's dedication to creating safe spaces that empower women and girls, providing them with the tools to rebuild their lives.

## Youth Empowerment: Leading the Way to a Sustainable Future

In 2024, UNFPA intensified efforts to empower young people, focusing on sexual and reproductive health, leadership, and peacebuilding. Key initiatives included:

- **Training of Trainers (ToT):** 455 healthcare professionals from 268 Primary Health Care Centers (PHCCs) were trained on adolescent health, family planning, and mental health. As a result, 73,804 adolescents and youth received counseling and health services.
- **Youth Engagement:** UNFPA facilitated Iraq's participation in the Regional High-Level Meeting on Young People's Learning and Skilling in Tunisia. Iraqi youth representatives presented national commitments for the 2024 Summit, emphasizing climate change and sustainable development.
- **Education and Awareness:** Over 2,700 adolescent girls received reproductive health education through partnerships with Ministries of Education in federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

**Highlight:** The establishment of the United Nations Youth Advisory Council (UNYAC) in Iraq aligns with the UN Youth Strategy 2030, amplifying youth voices and fostering their engagement in peace, security, and development.

## Fighting Violence against Women and Girls: Comprehensive Support and Coordination

### 16 Days of Activism Campaign

UNFPA supported events during the global campaign to enhance response to end violence against women and girls at federal and regional levels. UNFPA played a key role in organizing impactful activities during the 16 Days of Activism Campaign in both Baghdad and Erbil. The events aimed to raise awareness, advocate for survivors' rights, and foster authorities' engagement toward ending violence against women and girls.

### One-Stop Assistance Centres (OSACs)

Established in 2021, OSACs in Kirkuk and Ninewa provided integrated services for survivors of violence. These centers offer medical, psychosocial, and legal assistance, alongside community awareness programs. In 2024,



management was officially handed over to the Government of Iraq, ensuring sustainability and integration into national systems.

GBVIMS Implementation and Progress In 2024, significant training and capacity-building initiatives were conducted for implementing partners (IPs) and data gathering organizations (DGOs). Key trainings included GBV case management and data analysis workshops, equipping over 100 participants with essential skills. A two-day workshop in December 2024 reviewed reports and developed a work plan for 2025.

## UNFPA's Support to Maternity Hospitals in Iraq

### A Cry of Life: Hussein and the First Breath

In the southern Iraqi city of Diwaniyah, where the population exceeds one and a half million, Hussein stood quietly behind the door of the neonatal intensive care unit at Diwaniyah

General Hospital. His eyes remained fixed on the small window that offered a glimpse of hope and uncertainty. Inside, doctors and nurses moved like a synchronized team, their calm professionalism contrasting with the relentless beeping of machines that monitored fragile new lives.

He could barely contain the tension gripping his chest. His first grandchild was fighting for his first breath. Each second passed slowly, marked by the rhythm of his pulse and the faint hum of incubators — modern machines that were once only a dream for struggling families in this region.

Clutching his hands together, he whispered a private prayer beneath his breath, his voice a mix of resolve and reverence: "Every child is a blessing and a message. Protect him and his mother for me."

The memories of his own childhood,

when medical resources were scarce and survival often left to fate, pressed heavily on his heart. He had seen families mourn newborns lost because the right care had been out of reach. But today, standing in the modern halls of Diwaniyah General Hospital, supported by UNFPA, Hussein felt something unfamiliar bloom within him: hope.

Through the window, he watched the nurse gently lift his grandson. His breath caught as he saw the tiny, vulnerable body in her arms. And then — a cry. A strong, clear cry that broke the silence. A triumphant sound of life.

Tears welled in his eyes. His lips trembled as he whispered: "That cry? By God, it's like a song of joy from heaven!"

The nurse, her face kind and reassuring, emerged from the unit to share the good news. Hussein approached



her with gratitude etched into every line of his face. His eyes, moist with emotion, carried the weight of generations past. He spoke softly: "We ask for nothing but life and safety for them. This boy... I call him a promise for the future. May he be blessed with a good, long life."

As he returned to his seat, the polished floors reflecting his steady steps, his mind drifted back to the countless stories of hardship that had shaped his life. His breath grew steadier as he settled into a corner of the hallway, staring into a horizon that only he could see. He sighed deeply and said: "I've lived through hard days. Back then, if a child got sick, we would say it was fate. But now... science is a gift, and mercy is the work of doctors. You're not just bringing life — you're planting hope in the hearts of families. Bless you all."

The machines inside continued their

gentle hum, keeping time with the fragile heartbeats of the newborns they protected. His grandson, later named Yusuf, lay peacefully in the incubator. He was smaller than Hussein had imagined, but stronger than he

had dared to believe.

And as the sun set over a city of one and a half million souls, a grandfather smiled, knowing that his story would forever be written in the heartbeat of hope.





## UNOPS in Iraq in 2024

Since 2020, with funding from the German Government through the KfW Development Bank, UNOPS has been implementing the “Local Infrastructure Rehabilitation in Anbar Project (LIRA)” to rehabilitate housing units and restore decentralized services, improving basic living conditions for returnees in the liberated areas of Anbar and Ninewa governorates.

As of December 2024, LIRA rehabilitated 1,799 war damaged shelters and 19 water stations, and installed 1300 solar-powered street lights along more than 25 km of roads that serve over 186,000 people in the Fallujah, Karma, Ramadi, and Sinjar districts. In addition,

the project rehabilitated 3 Km road in Al-Sakra village in Ana district. 13 water stations and 416 shelters are undergoing repairs. So far, the project has reached more than 481,250 people.

While LIRA is addressing immediate and pressing needs of returnees communities in Anbar and Ninewa Governorates, it also implements a capacity-building component dedicated to government staff and residents. Providing essential basic services alongside capacity-building initiatives and sustainable infrastructure development aligns with the humanitarian-development nexus, addressing both

immediate needs and long-term goals through a comprehensive approach. 100 people received capacity building training on maintenance skills in Anbar governorate, including 28 women, which will grant long-term sustainability of the works implemented.

The project approach is directly aligned with the Government’s commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, and will contribute to SDG5: Gender Equality (with LIRA III only), SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, and SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities.

**Story:****UNOPS and KfW bring back hope to returnees communities**

Mohammed Adnan, a 35 year old father of two children, was forced to flee his home in Aljazeera Albufaraj, Ramadi. Seeking safety, he and his family took refuge in the Alhabaniya camp, where they endured a life without access to essential services such as education, healthcare, or employment.

When it became safe to return, Mohammed and his family found their home severely damaged, leaving it unfit for habitation. "I knew my life was going to be difficult. Seeing our house, where we all lived before, severely damaged, affected me psychologically," he shared. "There were no doors, no fence and no electricity. We couldn't live in it."

Through the Local Infrastructure Rehabilitation in Anbar Project (LIRA I) funded by KfW and implemented by UNOPS, Mohammed's house was selected for rehabilitation. With the financial support provided by the project, Mohammed took part in restoring his home, transforming it into a safe place for his family.

"I have previous construction and maintenance experience. The engineers supervised my work and gave me guidance on the maintenance works that I had to do myself, and taught me how to read the Bill of Materials and technical specifications. The repair activities included building a fence, installing wooden and metal gates, setting up metal rails, painting, and completing various types of finish-

ing work", said Mohammed. He worked with skilled workers and gained hands-on experience in utility restoration, electrical work, carpentry, plumbing, and general construction. "I'm grateful for the opportunity to get our house repaired and gain knowledge and skills on house repair and maintenance," he said.

Feeling more confident with the new skills, Mohammed started taking on maintenance jobs in his community. He has also created a Facebook page to advertise the jobs that he can do, which has over 64,000 followers now. "I support anyone who wants to promote their work on my facebook page for free. When I get a maintenance job that I can't take on, I post it on the page so others can have the opportunity to work on them."

Reflecting on his journey with UNOPS, Mohammed expressed gratitude: "I would like to thank you for your efforts and assistance. It helped me and my family a lot during difficult times and bad weather. We are happy to return home. Now, I know what humanitarian work is doing to support us."

Mohammed's family is one of many families whose houses were rehabilitated under the LIRA project. It is a testament to how supporting people affected by conflict can encourage personal growth, transform lives and communities in many ways as well as contribute to sustainable development efforts.

**Strengthening the capacity of the public health system**

Funded as a loan by the World Bank, the COVID-19 Response Equipment Project – Phase II aims to support the Ministry of Health's efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen its operational capacity through the provision of critical medical equipment.

In 2023, UNOPS signed an agreement with the Iraqi Government to support the procurement and installation of CT scanners across 15 governorates. By December 2024, UNOPS had successfully procured and installed 11 CT scanners in 11 hospitals throughout Iraq. Site preparation and procurement efforts for CT scanners are still ongoing at the remaining sites.

**2024 KRG Elections - Operational Support to UNOPS and UNAMI for the KRG Elections**

UNOPS implemented the project, acting as the Implementing Partner (IP) under UNAMI's guidance. UNAMI provided strategic and technical input, engaged stakeholders, and received operational support from UNOPS to fulfill its mandate of advising and assisting Iraqi electoral processes, including the Kurdistan regional parliamentary elections. As a result, the KRG elections were successfully conducted in May 2024.

In 2025, UNOPS will continue its collaboration with the German Government and the KfW Development Bank, by launching the new "Enhancing Local Infrastructure and Services in Sinjar Project (ELISS)". This four-year initiative builds on and complements the achievements of previous phases of LIRA. The project aims to enhance the living standards of conflict-affected populations in Sinjar district (Ninewa Governorate) by increasing equitable access to essential services. It will include the rehabilitation of critical public infrastructure, such as schools, as well as war-damaged shelters and water stations, also maintaining a capacity building component.



# World Food Programme in Iraq

The Year 2024 proved to be another step in WFP Iraq's ongoing progress towards transitioning from its position of a leader in humanitarian response, towards achieving more sustainable development and long-lasting partnership with the Government of Iraq.

WFP was able to leverage its longstanding presence in Iraq, with a slew of innovative and effective initiatives that aim to counter the country's climate challenges. WFP's efforts help families to adapt and overcome those challenges and improve their food security, while enhancing agricultural productivity and improving their livelihoods.

## Partnerships and Strategic Alignment

Working hand-in-hand with the Government of Iraq has only increased as 2024 drew to a close. WFP has signed no less than 3 strategic agreements with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Environment. This is in addition to our previous cooperations with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, The Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Trade. WFP enjoys a strong position as one of the leading UN agencies in cooperation with Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Key to WFP's work in 2024 is its hands-on approach in placing the needs of Iraqis first. While tackling strategic issues like climate change and Social Protection Reform play a critical role in our mandate, however WFP has also introduced a number of innovative initiatives aimed at the grassroots level to better support smallholder farmers and agricultural workers with creating and sustaining a livelihood.

## Sustainable Development and Climate-Smart Initiatives

WFP's commitment to a sustainable future is demonstrated through targeted climate change mitigation initiatives that integrate innovative tools and nature-based solutions. In 2024, projects were launched to enhance agricultural productivity and diversify livelihoods—ranging from the installation of solar-powered sprinklers, drip irrigation systems, and modern water conservation techniques to the establishment of mango grove nurseries and afforestation efforts. These initiatives not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with national commitments under the Paris Agreement but also empower communities with adaptive capacities to combat the adverse effects of climate change.



## Food Security and Vulnerable Populations

While increased domestic production has contributed to Iraq's food supply, persistent challenges—such as reduced rainfall, prolonged droughts, and land degradation—continue to threaten food security. WFP focused its interventions on the country's most vulnerable groups, reaching nearly 80,000 individuals with essential food and nutrition support. In response to fluctuating food basket prices and evolving needs, cash-based transfer values were adjusted, and targeting mechanisms refined in close collaboration with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement and UNHCR. This adaptive response ensures that assistance reaches those most at risk, including internally displaced persons, returnees, refugees, and asylum seekers.

## Enhancing Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment

Recognizing the vital role of economic inclusion in fostering resilience, WFP introduced initiatives such as SheCan—a financial inclusion programme aimed at providing accessible financing to communities, particularly women, transitioning toward micro-businesses. Complementary vocational, business, and digital skills training under programmes like Jousour, along with support for women-led food processing cooperatives, have helped connect local producers to larger markets and diversify income streams. These efforts strengthen local economies and pave the way for a more inclusive and dynamic agrifood sector.

## Policy and Institutional Strengthening

WFP has bolstered the Government's policy frameworks by partnering on key initiatives such as the national school feeding system and the digital transformation of social protection. Collaborative efforts with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Trade, and other national institutions led to capacity assessments, the development of strategic policies, and the transition of the electronic Public Distribution System to national management. These actions support enhanced governance, institutional resilience, and improved service delivery, all of which are essential for sustainable food security and social protection.

## Climate Resilience and Natural Resource Management

Addressing the severe impacts of climate change, especially in southern Iraq, WFP advanced a food–energy–water nexus approach that integrates innovative water management and climate-informed planning. In partnership with the Ministry of Water Resources and other stakeholders, initiatives such as drought risk management, improved water infrastructure, and community-based water hubs have been implemented. Furthermore, studies on nature-based solutions—like mangrove plantations in Basra and afforestation in the Kurdistan Region—underscore WFP's efforts to harness sustainable practices for carbon reduction, ecosystem restoration, and enhanced rural livelihoods.



## Impact and Way Forward

WFP's integrated approach in 2024 has laid a robust foundation for Iraq's transition from humanitarian response to sustainable development. By strengthening strategic partnerships, refining policy frameworks, and implementing climate-smart and livelihood-enhancing initiatives, WFP has contributed significantly to improving food security and resilience across the country. As Iraq moves forward, WFP remains committed to supporting the Government's national priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring that its interventions continue to drive positive change and secure a prosperous future for all Iraqis.





## WHO in Iraq in 2024

**W**HO's achievements in 2024 reflect an unwavering commitment to strengthening Iraq's healthcare systems and addressing the diverse needs of its population. These efforts, spanning health promotion, emergency response, Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) mitigation, immunization, and capacity building, have laid a robust foundation for sustainable health advancements in 2025 and beyond.

### Health Promotion and Community Engagement

- Developed the Health Promotion and Community Engagement Health Strategy (2024-2030), establishing long-term goals for improving community health initiatives.
- Formulated the Health Promotion National Action Plan (2024-2027) to advance public health interventions.
- Represented Iraq in the Global Hand Hygiene Strategy, a collaborative initiative involving three nations.
- Published a scholarly commentary on hand hygiene practices to guide policy improvements and health outcomes.





- Executed collaborative health campaigns addressing Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (with FAO), climate change and health (with UNDP), and youth health awareness (with UN for International Youth Day).
- Supported MoH during the Arbreen pilgrimage by training 4,250 volunteers and producing RCCE materials in collaboration with UNV.
- Launched an RCCE campaign in Basra focusing on climate change and migrant health.
- Launch RCCE campaign on World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) to address AMR challenges.

## Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

- Conducted National Antimicrobial Stewardship Training workshops to strengthen prescribing practices.
- Updated AMR curricula for medical training institutions, ensuring relevance and rigor.
- Trained healthcare staff from 10 provinces on AMR surveillance techniques.
- Engaged 200+ medical students in AMR awareness and prevention initiatives.
- Adapted the AWARE Book for Iraqi



universities, addressing local health-care needs.

- Convened a high-level meeting with Iraq's Minister of Health and the AMR section at the UN General Assembly, emphasizing policy action.

## Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI)

- Partnered with UNICEF for a National Awareness Campaign on Routine Immunization, improving public engagement.
- Enhanced the National Annual EPI Communication Plan for better outreach.
- Delivered training sessions on disease surveillance for measles, rubella, rotavirus, and influenza.
- Procured critical laboratory reagents and kits for NIC, NPL, and NMRL to support national surveillance.

## Health System and Pharmaceutical Advancements

- Supported MoH in remodeling Primary Health Supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) in remodeling Primary Health Care (PHC) services, promoting equity and advancing Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- Facilitated workshops to improve National Health Accounts enhancing collaboration and planning for better financial management.
- Conducted capacity-building sessions on health services package costing, empowering decision-makers to allocate resources more effectively.
- Implemented DHIS2 in 1,877 health facilities, streamlining data management for immunization and event-based surveillance in Karbala.
- Conducted a situational analysis of pharmaceutical manufacturing, aligning local capacities with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).
- Collaborated with Iraq's MoH to strengthen traditional medicine systems, ensuring alignment with WHO's global strategies.

## Environment (Climate Change and WASH)

- Facilitated Iraq's membership in the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH), fostering global collaboration on climate adaptation within the health sector.
- Organized Iraq's inaugural Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment Workshop, addressing climate-related health risks and setting priorities for action.
- Initiated the development of Iraq's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to embed climate resilience into national health policies, with ongoing progress.
- Collaborated on the creation of the Local Adaptation Plan for Health and Migration in Basra, addressing region-specific climate challenges (ongoing).
- Supported Iraq's active participation in the First Health Ministerial Forum

to highlight the interplay between climate and health.

- Provided technical and strategic support for Iraq's delegation to COP28 and COP29, ensuring impactful representation and advocacy.
- Designed and implemented the WASH and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Dashboard, enhancing monitoring and reporting for primary healthcare centers (PHCs) across Iraq.
- Finalized Iraq's contribution to the Global Assessment on Water and Sanitation, aligning with international benchmarks and standards.

## Women, Child, and Adolescent Health (WCAH):

- Established the H6 Partnership to align UN agency strategies with Iraq's health priorities.
- Supported the development of the Women, Children, and Adolescents Health Strategy, National Nutrition Strategy, and National School Health

Strategy.

- Digitized maternal and newborn health monitoring systems using DHIS2 and enhanced the maternal and perinatal surveillance response (MPDSR).
- Integrated WHO's Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) into primary healthcare services, training 20 providers through a ToT program.

## Emergency and Refugee Health

- Managed four PHCCs in IDP camps, providing comprehensive healthcare services to an estimated 42,000 individuals.
- Renovated Duhok's Oncology Care Hospital benefiting over 1 million individuals from host communities, refugees, and displaced populations.
- Supported the integration of nine refugee camps in the KRG into Iraq's national health system, ensuring sustainable and equitable health-



care services.

- Provided critical medical equipment and staff training to enhance service delivery in refugee health centers, including the establishment of a fully operational PHCC in Qushtapa Camp.
- Trained 78 health staff in surveillance, prevention, IPC measures.
- Enhanced emergency care skills for 108 healthcare providers in Duhok and Erbil.
- Supported mental health initiatives for women during prenatal, natal, and postnatal periods.
- Conducted water quality monitoring in IDP camps to mitigate cholera risks.
- Delivered essential medical furniture and equipment to refugee health centers to ensure continuity and quality of care.

### Maternity Hospital Rehabilitation

- Upgraded the Erbil Maternity Hospital, expanding its capacity and aligning facilities with WHO clinical standards to enhance services for women and newborns.
- Integrated delivery units, operation theaters, and neonatal care units for seamless connectivity, improving infection control and emergency response capabilities.
- Improved staff areas, sanitation, and infrastructure to promote patient safety, comfort, and efficient resource utilization.

### Surveillance and Communicable Diseases

- Capacity-Building Workshops: Conducted multiple workshops to enhance the capacity of healthcare workers in outbreak investigation, signal notification and verification, as well as in the Early Warning, Alert, and Response Network (EWARN). These workshops included participants serving refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camp settings, along with healthcare professionals in host communities' facilities.



- Daily Epidemiological Monitoring: Undertook continuous, daily surveillance of communicable diseases that pose outbreak risks, in close collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Central Public Health Laboratory (CPHL).
- Provision of Medicines for Neglected Tropical Diseases: Ensured the supply of medications for the treatment of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), including leprosy, in partnership with relevant health authorities.
- Tuberculosis Collaboration: Worked in conjunction with the National Tuberculosis Program (NTP), the Inter-

national Organization for Migration (IOM), the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO), and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) to address and manage tuberculosis in Iraq, particularly within the prison system.

- Comprehensive Surveillance of Communicable Diseases Program (CSCP): Continued implementing the CSCP, in Basra Province. This initiative involves conducting clinical examinations and testing for patients who have recovered from Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF), thereby ensuring ongoing health surveillance.





## United Nations Volunteers in Iraq in 2024



The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in Iraq has continued to make impactful contributions to development, inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, and youth empowerment throughout 2024. Key activities and initiatives have supported progress in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and addressing existing challenges in Iraq.

In 2024, UN Volunteers in Iraq demonstrated the power of volunteerism in driving progress across diverse sectors. By addressing critical challenges such as gender inequality, environmental sustainability, social cohesion, and youth engagement, UNV advanced SDG implementation while empowering individuals and communities across Iraq.



### **Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment**

#### **International Women's Day Conference (March 7)**

In celebration of International Women's Day, a conference titled "Women and Building Economic Development in Iraq" was convened in Baghdad, organized in collaboration with the National Department for Iraqi Women and the United Nations in Iraq. The event underscored women's essential role in driving economic growth, tackled key challenges impeding their economic engagement, and proposed actionable solutions to improve access to the labor market. It was a pivotal step in championing gender equality and empowering Iraqi women.

### **Advocating for Environmental Stewardship**

#### **Earth Day Cleanup Campaign (April 22)**

To mark Earth Day, UNV joined forces with the Kurdistan Regional Government and other partners to host a cleanup campaign at Dlopa Resort, a popular destination in Erbil. UN Volunteers actively participated in collecting trash and cleaning up the area, demonstrating their commitment to environmental stewardship. The activity raised awareness about plastic pollution and its impact on Iraq's ecosystems while inspiring collective action to address the climate emergency.

### **Fostering Career Development for Youth**

#### **University Outreach (May)**

In May, UNV, in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and UNDP Iraq, conducted interactive sessions at the University of Basra, American University of Kurdistan, and

Erbil Polytechnic University. These sessions introduced students and graduates to the transformative potential of volunteerism. Personal accounts from UN Volunteers illustrated how volunteering builds skills, fosters youth engagement, and advances the SDGs. The outreach initiatives inspired many students to explore volunteering as a pathway to professional growth and societal impact.

### **Baghdad Job Fair (October 27-29)**

UNV participated in the 2024 Baghdad Job Fair, engaging youth in discussions on how volunteering can be a catalyst for skill-building and career advancement. The event, attended by numerous young Iraqis, provided practical guidance on registration and application processes for UN Volunteer roles, positioning volunteerism as a means to shape their future. Organized by Iraq's Ministry of Youth and Sports and



GIZ, the fair highlighted avenues for professional growth.

## **Knowledge University Job Fair (November 26)**

In Erbil, UNV showcased volunteer opportunities at a job fair hosted by Knowledge University, in collaboration with UNDP and USAID. Over 180 organizations participated, offering extensive networking and career-building opportunities. By demonstrating the benefits of volunteering, UNV inspired attendees to join efforts that contribute to sustainable workforce development in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

## **Field Missions with UNDP (June – July)**

In a series of joint missions, UNV joined UNDP's Social Cohesion project across multiple governorates. Discussions highlighted the contributions of

UN Volunteers to community resilience and emphasized inclusion and diversity in volunteer assignments.

## **Online Volunteers Widened Health and Climate Awareness**

### **International Youth Day Campaign (August 12-25)**

On the occasion of International Youth Day, UNV supported a health awareness campaign in collaboration with WHO, UNDP, and the Ministry of Health. Through the recruitment of 240 online volunteers, the campaign successfully disseminated health messages to over 536,000 followers on platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. This initiative exemplified the impact of youth-driven volunteerism in addressing

public health priorities. [Full story can be found in a separate attachment].

## **Celebrating Volunteerism and Inclusion**

### **International Volunteer Day & Inclusion Event (December 4)**

UNV partnered with UN agencies to celebrate International Volunteer Day (IVD) and International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) in Baghdad. The event featured inspiring activities, including artistic performances by young persons with disabilities and an exhibition of their work. The UN Resident Coordinator's speech reaffirmed the UN's dedication to fostering inclusivity and empowering marginalized communities, emphasizing volunteerism's transformative potential. Notably, UNV in July announced with IOM Iraq an international volunteering opportunity reserved for persons with



disabilities, in the field of protection mainstreaming.

### **Online health and climate awareness in Iraq**

In August 2024, about 200 online volunteers deployed through United Nations Volunteers (UNV) supported a crucial awareness campaign during the Arbaeen visits in Iraq, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world. In partnership with the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH) and several UN agencies, including WHO, UNDP, UNFPA, and WFP, these online volunteers played a vital role in spreading health and climate-related messages across Iraq through social media, disseminating materials developed jointly by the MoH and WHO.

While more than 4,000 volunteers on the ground distributed physical materials, the online volunteers extended the campaign's reach through

a series of social media posts. These posts, shared on their personal and public accounts across social platforms, reached over 530,000 people. The messages focused on preventing heat-related illnesses, managing chronic diseases, and promoting food and water safety during mass gatherings.

The online engagement ensured that essential health and safety advice was available not only to those present at the visit sites, but also to people across Iraq. This initiative demonstrated the powerful contribution of UNV's online volunteers in amplifying critical health messages, particularly in the face of climate-related risks.

Achieving an ambitious national reach online came with its own set of challenges, including communicating with the 200 online volunteers, harmonizing the timing of messages across platforms, managing performance, and collecting results. Solutions were

developed at each step of the campaign, leading to a successful collaboration between UNV and its partners. By the end of the campaign, hundreds of thousands of people had received vital health information through the efforts of the online volunteers. Their contributions reinforced the importance of online volunteerism in driving meaningful change, especially in environments impacted by both health and climate challenges.

### **UNV partnered with UN agencies to celebrate International Volunteer Day and International Day of Persons with Disabilities**



## OCHA's Humanitarian Advisory Team Contribution to Iraq in 2024

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) tailored its operations and presence in Iraq to a Humanitarian Advisory Team (HAT), in alignment with the ongoing humanitarian-to-development transition process. OCHA maintained its support to the Iraq Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), assisting in the humanitarian transition process, coordinating, and advocating with the Government of Iraq and the humanitarian community.

In line with the humanitarian transition, the HCT developed the Humanitarian Transition Overview (HTO) for the second consecutive year. While the 2023 HTO described the critical residual humanitarian needs and HCT's priorities, the 2024 HTO provides an overview of the humanitarian efforts conducted in 2023 and the support to IDPs provid-

ed by the Government. It also identifies the major humanitarian gaps and challenges which require continued attention both by the Government and the humanitarian community. Furthermore, it outlines progress in the Humanitarian Transition process and achievements made under the Durable Solutions framework. The HTO was produced by OCHA and published on relief web in English, Arabic and Kurdish, ensuring wide accessibility and impact.

In 2024, Iraq witnessed an increase in the return movement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from the IDP camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Overall, 34 per cent of the camp population have departed the camps, a total of 10,900 families (around 53,000 individuals,) and the majority returned to Ninewa Governorate (Sinjar and Ba'aj). With two IDP camps closed completely

in Sulaymaniyah Governorate, 21 IDP camps remain in Duhok and Erbil Governorates, including areas in East Mosul, hosting 22,458 IDP families (109,019 individuals).

As of 31 August 2024, a total of 4,897,128 individuals returned to their areas of origin while 1,053,038 individuals remain in protracted displacement, according to the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM).

In response to the regional security developments, the HCT developed a Contingency Plan on the Regional Conflict's Impact on Iraq, addressing potential population movement from Lebanon and Syria as well as internal displacement in Iraq. With support from OCHA, the plan was prepared along with a comprehensive stocktaking exercise which was subsequently endorsed by the HCT.



# Transformative Steps Towards Decent Work and Social Justice in Iraq: ILO's Key Achievements in 2024

In 2024, the International Labour Organization (ILO) continued to drive transformative change in Iraq, empowering communities, enhancing economic resilience, and championing inclusive growth. With support from key donors like the European Union, the Government of Italy, and the Government of the Netherlands, ILO's initiatives created tangible opportunities for thousands of Iraqis. From enterprise development and employment and employability support, including through upskilling, job-matching, and career counselling, to promoting green jobs and a just transition, supporting formalization, and driving rights-based social protection reforms, ILO's work in 2024 laid the foundation for a more equitable and sustainable future.

## Supporting Decent Employment in the Private Sector through the Launch of a Job-Matching Platform and Job Fairs

The ILO's commitment to decent work and social justice by bridging employment gaps was demonstrated through impactful policy and programmatic initiatives. In November 2024, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), with funding from the EU, the ILO supported the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in establishing a Job-Matching Platform. This platform aims

to connect workers with employers and streamline the private sector's job search and hiring processes. The launch of the Job-Matching Platform in the KRI was marked by a Job Fair, co-organized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Chamber of Commerce, and the ILO, which attracted 16 enterprises from the real estate, services, and construction sectors. More than 250 jobseekers

attended the job fair, with around 1,210 registering on the job-matching platform on the launch day. Although the Job-Matching Platform in the KRI is still gaining momentum, it has established an institutional foundation for MoLSA to take leadership in brokering cooperative frameworks, offering incentives to employers, educational institutions, and unions, and facilitating sectoral agreements and supportive measures to contribute to decent employment in the region.

"These initiatives are more than solutions to unemployment; they are steps toward restoring hope and dignity," said Dr. Maha Kattaa, ILO Iraq Country Coordinator. Additional job fairs in Basra and other cities strengthened these efforts, fostering a direct dialogue between Iraq's workforce and private-sector employers.

## Empowering Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

The ILO has supported Iraq's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by leveraging its certified trainers from national institutions and utilizing key tools such as Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB), Financial Education, and the Green Business Tool. Through targeted programs, the ILO has enhanced financial literacy, facilitated access to finance, promoted inclusive business practices, and advanced the green business concept. These initiatives have empowered entrepreneurs to build sustainable and environmentally responsible businesses while fostering equitable hiring and contributing to Iraq's economic growth.

As part of ILO's commitment to youth empowerment and sustainable business development, the organization launched a strategic partnership with the Higher Council for Youth to equip young Iraqis with the tools to enter the job market successfully. This initiative trains national trainers to guide young entrepreneurs in career planning, financial literacy, and green economy opportunities. Through workshops and mentorship, Iraqi youth are learning how to launch and grow environmentally friendly businesses that contribute to economic stability and foster sustainability. By integrating entrepreneurship training with labour law and decent work awareness, ILO ensures that the next generation of business owners is well-prepared for a resilient future.



## Access to Finance & MSMEs Growth

ILO Iraq is empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as a key driver of economic growth and decent job creation through three impactful projects. The "Promotion of the Development of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) Project," funded by KFW, is strengthening access to finance by establishing a credit guarantee fund and training financial institutions and SMEs, with a special focus on women and youth. In 2024, the project conducted four in-depth institutional assessments and secured partnerships with four financial institutions, paving the way to disburse €45 million in loans and create over 2,200 jobs by 2028. A second project, funded by AICS, is boosting private sector development and decent work, with a focus on green businesses in Southern Iraq. Working at the macro, meso, and micro levels, this project is improving the business ecosystem, building capacities through ILO's SIYB and financial literacy programs, and enhancing financial inclusion. During 2024, the project trained 392 (48% in Basra and 52% in Muthanna) entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs on SIYB, with 43% female participation, and provided financial education to 239 individuals (45% in Basra and 55% in Muthanna), including 55% females

and 6% persons with disabilities. The now-completed "Increasing Access to Employment Opportunities for Vulnerable Urban Populations in Basra in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis" project delivered SIYB training to 303 entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs (57% male, 43% female) in Basra during its final year. Finally, the "PROSPECTS" project, in partnership with the Central Bank of Iraq and funded by the Government of the Netherlands, has already disbursed 247 loans totalling \$2.49 million, supporting MSMEs in Dohuk and Ninewa, with a focus on IDPs, returnees, and women. This initiative has sustained 710 jobs and created an additional 684. Adding to these achievements, the ILO, in coordination with Iraq's Ministry of Youth and Sports and through the PROSPECTS project, proudly opened the Zaha Hadid Center for Women in Mosul. This inclusive, accessible space empowers women and individuals with disabilities through resources, training, and skill-building opportunities, fostering resilience, innovation, and independence and contributing to Iraq's sustainable development. This initiative underscores the ILO's unwavering commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all women and marginalized groups.



## National Conference Paves Pathways to Formalizing Iraq's Informal Economy

Recognizing the urgent need to address informality in Iraq's labour market, the International Labour Organization (ILO), in collaboration with the Government of Iraq and with funding from the European Union, organized the National Conference on Informal Work and Pathways to Decent Work in Iraq on 16 October 2024. The conference brought together national and international stakeholders, including representatives from government ministries, social partners, academia, and civil society, to develop a strategic approach to formalization.

Discussions highlighted Iraq's recent legislative advancements, particularly the ratification of ILO Convention No. 102 on Social Security and the passing of Law No. 18 on Pensions and Social Security in 2023. These milestones are expected to extend protections to informal workers, facilitating their gradual transition into formal employment.

Key recommendations from the conference focused on expanding social protection coverage, simplifying business registration processes, and incentivizing employers to formalize their workforce. Drawing insights from international experiences, the event underscored the importance of an integrated policy framework to ensure a structured transition towards decent work and economic stability.

As part of its ongoing efforts, the ILO will continue providing technical support to the Government of Iraq and its national partners to translate these recommendations into concrete actions, fostering a more inclusive and resilient labour market.

## A Year of Collaboration and Impact

ILO's achievements would not have been possible without its trusted partnerships with donors like the European Union, the Government of Italy, the Government of the Netherlands, and the newly formed partnership with KfW. These collaborations powered transformative initiatives, including the EU-funded BEIT project launched to stimulate decent work opportunities for young men and women while addressing the urgent need for affordable green housing for vulnerable people in Iraq through a national public works programme and labour governance reforms. Partnerships with national stakeholders, UN agencies, and local organizations amplified the reach and impact of ILO's work.

In 2024, ILO's initiatives touched lives, transformed communities, and laid the groundwork for a more equitable future in Iraq. Whether through empowering entrepreneurs, connecting job seekers to opportunities, extending social protection, or fostering green jobs, ILO's work embodies the spirit of collaboration and resilience. As Iraq moves forward, ILO remains steadfast in its mission to deliver hope, opportunity, and dignity to every worker.

# UN Women

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women



## UN Women in Iraq in 2024

In 2024, UN Women Iraq achieved significant milestones in advancing women's rights, leadership, and inclusion through targeted interventions, strategic partnerships, and evidence-based advocacy. Aligned with Iraq's national priorities and global commitments, UN Women worked closely with government institutions, civil society organizations, and women's rights organizations to promote women's participation in peacebuilding, politics, and economic empowerment. From supporting the implementation of the Iraqi National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 to fostering inter-agency coordination and building inclusive platforms

for marginalized women, UN Women demonstrated a comprehensive approach to driving gender equality and sustainable development.

This contribution to the 2024 Yearbook outlines UN Women's key achievements across thematic areas, including Women, Peace, and Security, women's political participation, outreach and advocacy, data development and normative support. Additionally, it highlights the organization's impactful collaborations with women's rights organizations and CSOs to promote collective action and advance women's empowerment at national, regional, and local levels.

### Women, Peace, and Security

UN Women has made significant strides in advancing Iraq's Women, Peace, and Security agenda by supporting the implementation of the Iraqi National Action Plan II and contributing to the development of INAP III. Through targeted interventions, UN Women has engaged with government bodies, civil society organizations, and regional stakeholders to promote inclusive policymaking and strengthen women's roles in peace-

building and conflict prevention. These efforts have included commemorative events, capacity-building initiatives, consultations, and evaluations aimed at driving progress on UNSCR 1325 and aligning national and regional priorities.

UN Women bolstered INAP II implementation through sectoral plans at ministerial and governorate levels and supported advocacy efforts through

high-level commemorations of UNSCR 1325 in Baghdad and Erbil. These events fostered strategic dialogue on WPS progress and challenges, while aligning regional and national priorities. Additionally, UN Women strengthened women's capacity for social cohesion and conflict prevention by establishing the Women's Peace Mediators Network through tailored training sessions in Baghdad, Basra, and Erbil.



To enhance monitoring and evaluation capabilities, UN Women provided comprehensive training to the NDIW, HCWD, and key stakeholders, equipping them with tools to track progress and identify gaps in INAP II implementation. These sessions also prepared participants to contribute effectively to the development of INAP III. Further, UN Women conducted consultations with 21 civil society organizations across 12 governorates, ensuring grassroots perspectives and community-specific challenges were integrated into INAP III's design. Additionally, UN Women supported the evaluation of the Regional Action Plan on INAP II in Kurdistan, convening strategic sessions with key ministries to inform INAP III's development.

## Women's Political Participation

UN Women has played a pivotal role in advancing women's political participation in Iraq through strategic support to both the National Directorate for Iraqi Women (NDIW) and the High Council for Women and Development (HCWD). These efforts have been

instrumental in addressing systemic barriers and creating opportunities for women's leadership at both the regional and federal levels. By working closely with government bodies, electoral committees, and civil society, UN Women fa-



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cilitated institutional and capacity-building initiatives to enhance the transparency, safety, and inclusivity of electoral processes.

At the regional level, UN Women provided targeted support to the electoral process in the Kurdistan Region, focusing on tackling Violence Against Women in Politics. During the Kurdistan Regional Parliamentary elections held on 20 October 2024, UN Women worked to foster a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment for female candidates. Through strategic engagements with electoral authorities and civil society, UN Women helped ensure that women candidates could participate without fear of harassment or violence, promoting a more secure and equitable electoral process. At the federal level, UN Women collaborated with the NDIW to revise and develop a comprehensive plan to support women's political participation in the lead-up to the 2025 national parliamentary elections. This initiative included the creation of a three-year plan designed to support women at multiple levels—as candidates, aspirants, voters, and advocates—while addressing societal and legislative barriers and combating Violence Against Women in Politics.

## Outreach and Advocacy

By collaborating closely with key national entities such as the National Directorate for Iraqi Women (NDIW) and the High Council for Women and Development (HCWD), UN Women has facilitated platforms for dialogue and collaboration among donors, government stakeholders, and civil society. Through high-level engagements and advocacy-focused events, UN Women has showcased innovative solutions, highlighted women's contributions to Iraq's development, and addressed challenges to women's participation and inclusion.

A key intervention was the High-Level Roundtable with the international community, co-hosted with NDIW and HCWD. The roundtable provided a platform to showcase ongoing and future projects focused on violence prevention and support for vulnerable groups. The event demonstrated the impact of current programs and identified areas requiring additional support, fostering dialogue on innovative funding approaches and long-term collaboration to sustain initiatives for vulnerable groups. This engagement strengthened partnerships with donors and mobilized resources for justice and equality initiatives.

During International Women's Day (8 March), UN Women highlighted wom-

en's contributions to economic development and explored innovative solutions to challenges in participation, particularly in leadership and decision-making roles. The event brought together key stakeholders, including government representatives, civil society, and private sector leaders, amplifying the message of equality and inclusion. The International Women's Day and 16 Days of Activism events elevated awareness of women's contributions to development and the importance of combating violence, fostering dialogue on innovative approaches to inclusion and participation, and influencing national and regional policies.

As part of the 16 Days of Activism against Violence towards Women and Girls, UN Women organized two events in Erbil and Baghdad to raise awareness about violence prevention and the importance of creating safe spaces for women and girls. These events showcased ongoing efforts to combat violence and mobilized support for initiatives promoting safety, justice, and inclusion. The events created opportunities for multi-stakeholder collaboration, bringing together government, civil society, private sector, and donors to work toward shared goals of justice and equality. Through these outreach and advocacy efforts, UN





Women continues to advance its mission of promoting women's rights and fostering a more inclusive and equitable society in Iraq.

## Coordination, Data Development, and Normative Support

Over the past year, UN Women has played a key role in enhancing coordination between the National Directorate for Iraqi Women and the High Council for Women and Development on Iraq's key development and governance priorities. Through strategic coordination meetings, UN Women facilitated dialogue to address shared challenges and opportunities, including laying the groundwork for establishing an Institute for Security and Peace in the Kurdistan Region. These discussions also integrated aspects of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, ensuring alignment with both national and regional policies. Additionally, UN Women supported NDIW in creating a National Data Platform to strengthen evidence-based policymaking and improve coordination and accountability at both federal and regional levels. These efforts reflect UN Women's commitment to fostering inclusive dialogue, bridging governance gaps, and enabling impactful, data-driven policymaking across Iraq.

Promoting Inclusion and Empowerment of Marginalized Women in Iraq

UN Women Iraq achieved significant results in promoting the inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable women across key populations. Through targeted initiatives, UN Women addressed the specific needs of adolescents and young women, women migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and women living in rural areas. These ef-

forts aimed not only to meet immediate needs but also to promote long-term resilience and inclusion, ensuring that marginalized women become active agents of change in their communities.

## Partnerships with Women's Rights Organizations and Civil Society

UN Women Iraq has built strong and impactful partnerships with women's rights organizations and civil society organizations, leveraging inclusive, multi-stakeholder platforms to advance women's leadership, peacebuilding, and socio-economic empowerment. These partnerships have fostered women-led initiatives, enhanced organizational capacities, and promoted community engagement to address critical issues such as gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, violent extremism, and economic inclusion.





الأمم المتحدة – العراق  
United Nations Iraq