

Contents:

- UN Agencies Support Yazidis
- 2020 HRP Gap Analysis
- UNFPA Receives CERF Grant
- IHF Field Monitoring Visit
- IDP Participation in Elections



Photo of Burial Ceremony of Victims of Sinjar Massacre, February 2021 [Photo Credit: IOM]

UN Agencies Announce Projects to Support Yazidis



Two Yazidi Men living in Bersive IDP Camp (2019)
[Photo Credit: OCHA]

In April 2021, two UN agencies in Iraq announced new projects to assist survivors of the Yazidi genocide.¹ The Yazidis are a religious minority whose beliefs and practices span thousands of years, the majority of whom have historically lived in the Sinjar region of northern Iraq, near the Syrian border. On 3 August 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)—who considered the Yazidis to be heretics—launched a sustained attack on the Sinjar region as part of their larger campaign to capture territory in Iraq and impose their extremist ideology. Reports soon emerged of atrocities being committed against the Yazidis: men were tortured, killed or forced to convert to Islam; women and girls were sold at slave markets and held in sexual captivity by ISIL fighters; and young boys were forcibly taken from their families and pushed into

service as child soldiers.² Thousands died, thousands more remain missing, and hundreds of thousands of Yazidis were displaced, many living in camps in Duhok governorate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Although Iraqi and Coalition forces re-established control over Sinjar in 2017, and military operations against ISIL ended in December of that year, Yazidis have faced innumerable obstacles in trying to rebuild their lives, including widespread destruction of infrastructure.

United Nations agencies and NGOs have been meeting the humanitarian needs of displaced Yazidis living both in and out of camps for several years, but as Iraq continues to transition out of its immediate post-conflict context, more durable solutions to help Yazidis return home are needed.

On 1 April, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq announced a joint project to rebuild homes and promote community memorialization efforts in the village of Kocho, which experienced some of the worst ISIL atrocities. In parallel, on 12 April, UN-Habitat signed an MOU with Iraq's Ministry of Justice to help Yazidis reclaim their housing, land and property (HLP) rights in Sinjar. Yazidis often face major challenges in proving their ownership or occupancy land rights, due to a

¹ The United Nations first used the term “genocide” to refer to the campaign of brutal violence carried out against the Yazidi people in a 2016 report, “They Came to Destroy: ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis,” presented to the Human Rights Council, June 2016. Summary, “ISIS is committing genocide against the Yazidis,” available [here](#).

²² All information taken from reports cited in FN1

legacy of discriminatory policies or the fact that official documents are missing, damaged, destroyed after the conflict with ISIL. These initiatives follow the enactment of the [Yazidi Female Survivors Law by Iraq's federal Parliament in March 2021](#), which seeks to establish a framework for redress and reparations to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence which can be used to address the legacy of ISIL crimes against Yazidis and other minority groups.

These efforts will be implemented in tandem with the ongoing work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), which is mandated 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.

Gap Analysis of the 2020 Humanitarian Response in Iraq

In late March 2021, the Iraq Inter-Cluster Coordination Group [published an analysis](#) of the 2020 humanitarian response, which summarized gaps in the response and identified associated challenges in implementing humanitarian activities in line with the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). The summary is based on inputs by eight clusters and two sub-clusters.

In the 2020 HRP, partners set out to cover the critical needs of 1.8 million people living in 63 out of Iraq's 101 districts. Despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian partners reached 1.4 million people (81 per cent of the target), with 95 per cent of funding requirements having been met. However, the response gaps were found to be more pronounced for certain population groups and locations. While partners managed to reach all internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in camps, the response gap was particularly high among out-of-camp IDPs in acute need (291,000 people out of 429,000 people targeted were reached, or 68 per cent) and returnees in acute need (878,000 people out of the 1.2 million people targeted were reached, or 74 per cent).

All clusters experienced some gaps in their response; at a district level, the highest response gaps were most frequently reported by the Health, Food Security, Protection (including HLP, Mine Action, GBV and Child Protection), Shelter/NFI and WASH Clusters. Gaps were attributed to five broad categories: lack of funding, lack of access, lack of partner presence, reprioritization of beneficiaries, or challenges related to COVID-19. Some gaps may also be attributable to challenges in reporting and adjusting the modality of response. The highest response gaps for out-of-camp IDPs were observed in Erbil district, followed by Sumail district in Duhok and Al- Sulaymaniyah district. As there are no persistent access or administrative problems present in the governorates in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, further review was recommended by the gap analysis report into the reasons behind this lack of humanitarian services. For returnees, the highest response gaps were observed in Telafar, followed by Al Hawiga in Kirkuk and Tilkaef in Ninewa. In some districts, the response gaps were primarily within one or two clusters, while in others nearly all clusters observed significant gaps.

With some exceptions, most of the gaps in the response to out-of-camp IDPs were attributed to lack of partners, while the primary reason for the gap in the returnee response was reported to be COVID-19 restrictions. Overall, access issues were the least reported set of challenges.

UNFPA Iraq Receives CERF Grant to Support GBV Interventions

In mid-April 2021, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) granted [US\\$ 1.6 million to UNFPA Iraq](#) for a two-year programme to provide integrated sexual reproductive health (SRH) and gender-based violence (GBV) interventions in the country. The funding will strengthen the capacity of national actors, in particular women's empowerment organizations, and

Gaps by cluster

	■ Out-Of-Camps IDPs ■ Returnees	# of times a cluster reported the highest gap in a district	Total response gap	
			IDPs	Returnees
Health		22	180K	228K
WASH		7	36K	148K
Education		5	69K	74K
Food Security		7	94K	80K
General Protection		4	-	257K
Shelter & NFI		6	75K	25K
Child Protection		5	86K	119K
Gender Based Violence		2	40K	180K
Emergency livelihood			-	27K

The \$1.6 million grant to UNFPA Iraq is part of CERF's first-ever allocation to specifically support global GBV programming.

Worldwide, \$25 million will be disbursed to prevent violence against women and girls, and help victims and survivors with access to medical care, family planning, legal advice, safe spaces, mental health services and counselling.

will ensure that women and girls have access to quality mental health and psychosocial support services, as well as increased access to livelihood opportunities. The grant will allow a scale-up of mobile teams to deliver integrated GBV and SRH services for IDPs, returnees and vulnerable host community members.

CERF was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 as the UN's global emergency response fund, and is managed by the [Emergency Relief Coordinator](#) (who also serves as the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs). Over the past 15 years, CERF has granted over \$5.5 billion in life-saving assistance in over 100 countries and territories.

Gender-based violence is very prevalent in Iraq, broadly attributed to deeply rooted pre-existing negative social norms and gender inequalities, but also to the endemic challenges associated with protracted displacement.³ According to data collected by the [National Protection Cluster](#), the main threats affecting women and girls relate to various forms of

coercion or deprivation: lack of safe space and privacy, lack of independent access to livelihoods and restrictive social norms. Issues of violence, harassment and abuse either within the household, by community members or by security actors are also reported. [Analysis by the GBV sub-cluster of reporting trends in 2020](#) found that the majority of the incidents are reported by married, female, adult survivors, and are mostly perpetrated by the spouse at home. The sub-cluster also found that vulnerable groups such as female- and child-headed households, women with perceived affiliation to extremists, widows, and people living with disabilities are at heightened risks for sexual violence, early marriage, survival sex and sex trafficking.

The \$1.6 million grant to UNFPA Iraq is part of [CERF's first-ever allocation to specifically support global GBV programming](#). The allocation will disburse \$25 million to UNFPA and UN Women in various countries to prevent violence against women and girls, and further support victims and survivors with access to medical care, family planning, legal advice, safe spaces, mental health services and counselling.

IHF Field Monitoring Visit to Muhallabiya

In April 2021, a monitoring team from the Iraq Humanitarian Fund (IHF) undertook a field monitoring visit to Muhallabiya, Ninewa, to review projects that had received funding as part of the second reserve allocation of 2020.

In response to the sudden closure of several IDP camps that began in mid-October 2020—triggering rushed returns and secondary displacement of some 34,000 people—the IHF launched a \$5.7 million reserve allocation in December 2020 to support the rapid response of shelter/NFI, protection and WASH partners targeting the areas which witnessed an influx of new arrivals from now-closed camps.

As part of the second reserve allocation, IHF partner Oxfam undertook assessments which indicated that among their most critical needs, returnees needed basic household essentials on their return. With IHF funds, Oxfam designed a three-month project to give NFI kits to newly returned families in Salah Al-Din, Diyala and Ninewa. As per Shelter/NFI cluster guidelines, the kits included a kerosene stove and heater, blankets, pots and other kitchen items, a portable cooler, COVID-19 hygiene items, mattresses, a solar lamp, a jerry can, rope, water storage containers, a tarpaulin and a bucket.

On completion of the three-month emergency project, an IHF monitoring visit to Muhallabiya to review implementation, provided an opportunity for beneficiaries to share their perspectives regarding the type of assistance received. Discussions shed light on the returnees' ongoing and acute needs as they re-establish their lives after several years living in an IDP camp. In a meeting, the Mayor of Muhallabiya added



IHF Field Monitoring Visit to Muhallabiya
[Photo Credit: OCHA]

³ UNFPA Iraq | GBVIMS narrative report of 2020

that longer-term support was needed for the town which had been devastated during the conflict against ISIL, specifically mentioning livelihoods and reconstruction of war-damaged homes.

Visits to the homes of those assisted with the emergency NFI distribution highlighted that shelter reconstruction, the establishment of basic services and provision of income-generating opportunities are urgently needed. In one location, homes which had been destroyed by Katyusha rockets remained in disrepair, while residents who were forced to return from the camps lived in tents which they had been permitted to take with them on their departure.

The agility provided by IHF Standard and Reserve Allocations enables humanitarian partners to quickly adapt and respond to emerging needs in underserved locations, based on inter-cluster priorities. As a major source of humanitarian funding in Iraq—since 2015, the fund has disbursed more than \$330 million—the IHF has in place robust risk management and accountability tools, including field project monitoring, financial spot checks and audits, the frequency of which are determined by individual partner risk ratings, grant size and duration.

IDP Participation in 2021 Parliamentary Elections



UNAMI File Photo of IHEC setting up voter registration centres in IDP camps (2019)
[Photo Credit: UNAMI]

Elections to decide the members of the Council of Representatives in Iraq (the federal Parliament) are scheduled to be held in October 2021. Elections Law No. 9 on voter eligibility, adopted at the end of 2020, makes special provisions enabling the participation of IDPs in their place of displacement for the constituency from which he or she was displaced, provided they are registered biometrically.

According to Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), in order to register to vote, IDPs must present several forms of identification, including the Civil Status ID and an Iraqi Nationality Certificate. IDPs who cannot meet these requirements are unable to register as displaced voters and will be unable to vote unless they return to their area of origin.

Issuance of missing civil documentation for participation in civic life has been a priority focus of protection partners throughout the humanitarian response. In 2020, there were 2.1 million people living in households that were missing one or more of the core documents.

In order to encourage voter registration for eligible IDPs, IHEC sent mobile registration centres to the remaining formal IDP camps in federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. Out-of-camp IDPs were requested to attend the nearest IHEC voter registration centre to register to vote, particularly affected IDPs at risk of eviction from their current location.

According to the UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance, as of 9 April, there had been 23,738 new IDP voter registrations since registration began on 2 January. Another 96,635 IDPs were already registered with IHEC. This is approximately 10 per cent of the IDP population. Observers note that the rate of registration of IDP voters is lower than expected, raising concerns about poor levels of participation of displaced people in the forthcoming elections. UN teams of electoral advisers deployed at UN regional hubs continue to engage with their IHEC counterparts to enquire on the status of complaints relating to the low registration turnout for IDPs.