

UNFPA IRAQ

QUARTERLY UPDATE



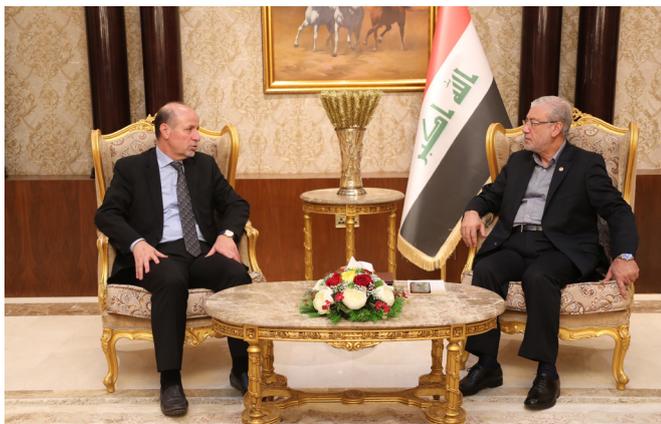
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UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND - IRAQ
صندوق الأمم المتحدة للسكان - العراق

UNFPA REGIONAL DIRECTOR VISITS IRAQ



UNFPA Director for the Arab region, Dr Luay Shabaneh, conducted a four-day visit to Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, from 27 to 31 July to mark the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, World Population Day and UNFPA 50th anniversary.

During his visit, as part of UNFPA's advocacy efforts for the implementation of the 2020 Population Census, he met, in the Central South area, with Iraqi Prime Minister, Adil Abdel Mahdi; the President's Advisor, the Second Deputy Speaker, and ministers and the President of the Kurdistan Region, Nechirvan Barzani, the President's Chief of Staff, the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff, and ministers in the Kurdistan Region.

"I am pleased to sense an enabling environment for the census, and while there might be some obstacles that can hinder its implementation, both Governments expressed their readiness to discuss their concerns to reach an agreement that will serve first and foremost the interest of the people of Iraq," he said.



UNFPA CELEBRATES ICPD25 & UNFPA50

On 28 July 2019, under the patronage and attendance of His Excellency, Dr Qusay Al-Suhail, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Iraqi Statistical Association, in collaboration with UNFPA, hosted a seminar on the 25 years of ICPD, in presence of UNFPA Regional Director for the Arab States, Dr Luay Shabaneh.

Throughout the seminar, academics, experts, and demographers discussed the progress made in Iraq and the ways forward to guarantee women, youth and adolescents have access quality education and reproductive health services, including family planning, and ensure all forms of discrimination against women and girls are eliminated.

On 29 July, UNFPA and the Ministry of Planning, under the guidance and attendance of His Excellency, Minister of Planning, Dr Noori Sabah al-Dulaimi, held a conference and dinner at the PM's Guest House to celebrate not only 25 years of the ICPD, but also World Population Day and 50 years since the establishment of UNFPA.



UNFPA RELEASES THE ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF & SERVICES PROVIDED TO GBV SURVIVORS IN IRAQ

The devastating impact of the three-year battle on women and girls in Iraq remains profound as Gender-Based Violence (GBV), including sexual violence and forced marriages, was used as a weapon of war. However, GBV is not only the result of the conflict in Iraq but exists within the different communities in the country; approximately 63 per cent of incidents are perpetrated by partners, brothers, fathers and mothers.

For that reason, UNFPA, in partnership with the GBV sub-cluster and working groups members, conducted a Survivors' Assessment in order to identify the evolving needs of the survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) across Iraq. As an outcome of this assessment, a list of recommended actions has been developed; including policy action and capacity building of government and local partners, to ensure that GBV survivors receive the care and support that they need and to strengthen the GBV multi-sectoral prevention and response in Iraq.

[Full assessment](#)

[Executive summary](#)

INTRODUCING MENTAL HEALTH & PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT CARE TO UNFPA IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

With the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AEICD) & the UN Action Fund, UNFPA organised a [five-week long training from 7 July to 8 August 2019](#). The trainings, which are part of a ten-week long project for building the capacity of a total of 200 specialised and non-specialised mental health and psychosocial support workers, offered participants the tools and guidance on the care and support that should be provided to survivors and how to cater to their needs.

The training combines theory with practice and group activities and the topics focused on case management, first care to survivors, psychological first aid, trauma-informed care, among others.



ORIENTATION SESSIONS FOR THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARDS

On 21 and 22 July, UNFPA organised orientation sessions to 26 young men and women from Basra, Diyala and Najaf on the Youth Advisory Boards (YAB), in presence of officials from the respective governorates.

The sessions aimed at elaborating the concept of youth participation and engagement in a community and the effective role played by YAB. The participants were briefed on the values and principles of the Boards, as well as their functions and the mechanisms of operation.

The main focus was on the partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the expectations from the Boards.



EXCHANGING EXPERTISE ON CMR

As part of the preparations for piloting the Clinical Management of Rape services in Kirkuk and Baghdad, a team from the Ministry of Health, accompanied by UNFPA, visited on 10 July, the Women & Girls Treatment Centre in Duhok, supported by Canada and Sweden.

During the visit, the Centre's management shared with the MOH the best practices and lessons learnt from their experience in rolling-out the CMR in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.



WOMEN SHELTER IN BASRA

UNFPA and the office of the Basra Governor as well as member of the civil society held a meeting on 21 July to discuss the opening of the first shelter for women survivors of gender-based violence in Basra.

The shelter, funded by Canada & Sweden in Baghdad will provide a place of temporary protection and support for women survivor of gender-based violence escaping abuse.

TRAINING ON PSEA GUIDELINES IN DUHOK

Providers of aid can themselves become the perpetrators of exploitation and abuse against those they are entrusted to serve.

To ensure partners will promptly act upon any abuse if & when it occurs, and assist those affected by it, UNFPA trained 25 humanitarian workers in Duhok on the core concepts of the protection of sexual exploitation and abuse.

CELEBRATING WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY IN DUHOK

Under the theme "Women Humanitarians", UNFPA and partners commemorated World Humanitarian Day by delivering seminars to a total of 120 women and girls in three camps in the Duhok governorates on the role humanitarian women play in the humanitarian response in Iraq and across the world.

Women humanitarian workers also discussed the challenges they face on a daily basis when defying the norms and talking about gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health as well as psychosocial support to survivors.

The women and girls attending the celebration discussed the feeling of safety working with women service providers generates: "We feel proud to be able to seek support from another woman who is well informed on sensitive topics in our communities. Women humanitarians, especially those from our communities, give us hope that we too can succeed in life," said Summaya - one of the attendees.

UNFPA DISTRIBUTES 456 DIGNITY KITS IN SALAHUDDIN

On 22 August, UNFPA and partners distributed dignity kits to 348 women and 108 girls in Basateen Al-Shoukh camp in Shirqat district, in Salahuddin.

The distribution took place after the assessment of the needs and living conditions in the camps, where women complained from the lack of hygiene and menstruation items and requested support from UNFPA.

With the support of Sweden and through UNFPA partners on the ground, a total 456 women and girls received garments and other items in addition to sanitary supplies and basic hygiene items.



UNFPA REPRESENTATIVE, FIRST LADY, CONVENE OVER ICPD & POPULATION MATTERS



Population challenges, status of women, violence against women, population growth, family planning, and the Nairobi Summit for Population & Development (ICPD25) were at the heart of the discussions between UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Oluremi Sogunro and the First Lady of Iraq, Ms Sarbagh Salih on 12 September.

Dr Sogunro emphasized the importance of the 2020 Population and Housing Census to enable the government to draft policies that will improve the services and strengthen the development process.

CENSUS: SOUTH TO SOUTH COOPERATION



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

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



WORKSHOPS IN THE KURDISTAN REGION ON FAMILY PLANNING & SUPPORT TO LOCAL PARTNERS

On 4 September, with funding from the European Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP), UNFPA held a workshop for UN Agencies and partners in Iraq to put together a plan that aims to support and strengthen the technical & institutional capacities of local partners, including governmental and civil society organisations dealing with gender and gender-based violence issues within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

UNFPA organised on 18 September a week-long workshop on the decision-making tools for family planning service providers in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. During the Canada-supported workshop, participants were briefed on the best ways to approach family planning and which method is most appropriate for each family.



WORKING WITH IRAQI OFFICIALS ON THE ICPD COMMITMENT

Twenty government officials, parliamentarians, and civil society organisations members attended the meeting organised by UNFPA and presided by the First Deputy Speaker, Mr Hassan Karim Al-Kaabi, on 11 September at the Prime Minister's guest house on the ICPD programme of action (PAO) and commitments made by Iraq in 1994.

UNFPA provided a summary on the ICPD POA and the importance of achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health, addressing gender-based violence and harmful practices, drawing demographic diversity to drive economic growth and achieve sustainable development and upholding rights to sexual and reproductive care in humanitarian and fragile contexts. The Head of the Iraqi Statistical Associate presented the progress made on the country level towards advancing the promise of the right to universal access to sexual and reproductive health for all, and that of women's and girls' empowerment and gender equality, emphasising on the role of family planning as a catalyst for any development.



YOUTH OF IRAQ & PEACE-BUILDING: CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

Investing in young people can help put countries on a path to accelerated economic growth and equitable development. To that end, the Swedish government and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), in collaboration with UNFPA, have launched an initiative to train young men and women of Iraq on the principles of inclusive dialogue in peacebuilding.

On 22 September, the Embassy of Sweden, FBA, UNFPA, Iraqi Center for Negotiation Skills and Conflict Management (IQCM) and Peace and Freedom Organisation (PFO) launched a five-day training for 25 young men and women on inclusive dialogue processes in peacebuilding. The interactive sessions will focus on collaboration and dialogue in sustaining peace.

Participants were selected during a previous collaboration between UNFPA and FBA in April 2019 where a consultative meeting took place to assess the needs of young people through discussions on the challenges and visions they have for the future through peacebuilding engagements.

The Inclusive Dialogue Processes in Peacebuilding training is a part of a three week-programme laid out over seven months (September -2019March 2020). The sessions will enhance the knowledge and practical ability of young people in the areas of peacebuilding, mindful communication, gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding, conflict analysis; inclusive dialogue, as well as the design and facilitation of dialogue sessions within their communities.



FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS THE FINALISATION OF THE ANTI-DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BILL

UNFPA, the UNAMI Human Rights Office, and OHCHR facilitated a two-day workshop with the Iraqi State Council (Shura Council) for final revision and finalisation of the Anti Domestic Violence Bill that should be submitted to the Parliament for endorsement.

Once enacted, the Law will protect all members of the family, not only women.

LUXEMBOURG ANNOUNCES OVER EUR 6.7M IN NEW FUNDING FOR UNFPA; EUR 735,000 FOR IRAQ

UNFPA received a significant financial boost with EUR 6,735,000 in additional core and non-core funding from the Government of Luxembourg, a staunch advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights within the European Union as well as an active member of the She Decides initiative.

Luxembourg also committed EUR 735,000 for UNFPA in Iraq. The funding will enable continued support for centres for Yazidi women fleeing abuse and human trafficking by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in northern Iraq. The centres are one-stop shops that offer integrated medical, psychological and legal assistance, as well as referrals for other required services to Yazidi women who survived the ISIL atrocities, classified as genocide by a United Nations human rights panel. ([Read more](#))

WHD 2019 | WOMEN HUMANITARIANS PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS, DIGNITY AND GIVE HOPE TO OTHERS

When crisis strikes, women and girls are disproportionately affected and face increased risk of gender-based violence. Health facilities are often damaged or destroyed, leaving women, including pregnant women, without life-saving care. The fundamental needs of women and girls that allow them to uphold their dignity are often an afterthought. The leadership of women and young people is often excluded from peace processes.

Uniquely positioned to reach and assist women and girls, women humanitarians constitute a large percentage of frontline responders who risk their own lives to save the lives of others. We pay tribute to women humanitarians who, under difficult conditions, protect human rights, dignity and give hope to others.

We honour midwives who assist women in childbirth day and night in dangerous conditions. We honour women from communities and civil society who step up to stop gender-based violence, counsel survivors and ensure they get the services they need. ([Read more](#))

IYD 2019 | MY BODY, MY LIFE, MY WORLD!

To reaffirm our commitment to helping young people realise their full potential in life, we unveil [a new youth strategy, My Body, My Life, My World!](#) It places their needs, aspirations and ideals at the core of our work to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the ICPD agenda by 2030.

The My Body, My Life, My World! strategy is grounded in what we have learned about young people from young people in decades of programming with and for them. Co-created with thousands of youth activists and advocates around the globe, it is aligned with Youth 2030, the broader United Nations efforts to protect the health and rights of young people and empower them to shape their own futures and participate in the development of their countries.

Equipped with the right information and preparation, the world's young people have the potential to lead positive change in the world ([Read more](#))

STORY FROM THE FIELD

CHILD BRIDE, MOTHER OF SEVEN, REFUGEE AND, TODAY, AN INDEPENDENT WOMAN

"I was only 12 years old when I got married to my 25-year-old cousin," Najma*, from a Syria, told UNFPA recently.

"My mother entered my room at around 5 pm while I was sitting on the floor, colouring in my princess colouring book. She sat on the bed and called me up. 'Najma, tomorrow you will get married.'"

Najma's mother explained what marriage meant. "You have some duties, and the most important one is to please your husband, prepare his meals, clean and iron his clothes and be an obedient woman," she recalled her mother saying.

Najma, now 31, says the marriage was motivated by tradition, and also the family's financial circumstances. "They told me that he would provide financial support to my siblings and my parents, and that this was the tradition there in Qamishli, Syria," she explained.

As a child bride, she began to experience the agony of unwanted intimacy, as well as verbal abuse and physical violence.

"I was never free. I was scared all the time because he would not let me do anything and would always decide what should be done in our life," she said.

A few months later, she became pregnant. "He did not let me go to school and imprisoned me in the house. The most painful, though, were the insults and accusations of being a bad mother. I was doing my best, but I was a child raising another child," she said. By the time she was 25, Najma had seven children.

"I love all my children," she said. "However, in 13 years of marriage, I had seven deliveries, three of which were in the first five years. It was exhausting."

Things got even worse when the conflict in Syria intensified in 2015, forcing her to flee, along with her children, husband and parents. They sought refuge in Domiz 2 camp, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The camp is home to over 10,000 Syrian refugees.

Najma's husband did not work, so Najma decided to look for a job. "My children's needs were increasing," she explained. "It was also a way for me to escape the abuse that did not stop even in displacement."

With help from a humanitarian organization, she was able to grow vegetables to sell at the nearby market. But being the family's breadwinner was not enough to earn the respect of her husband.

Najma learned he was having affairs with other women. "When I confronted him, he started beating me and repeating to me that I was an old witch now and he wanted young women."

Finally, she gathered the courage to leave, taking her children with her to her parents' home. It was then Najma learned about a women's centre in the camp.

[For more on the story.](#)

DONORS

UNFPA is extremely thankful to its donors for their contribution towards humanitarian and development programmes and response in Iraq this quarter.



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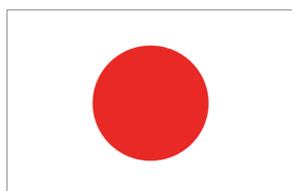
United Nations
MPTF Office



STOP RAPE NOW
UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT



Spanish
Cooperation



من الشعب الياباني
From the People of Japan



Norwegian Ministry
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