

Iraq

August 2021

> 47,200

Refugee and IDP women and girls have received sanitary kits in 2021

> 34,200

Refugees and IDPs have received legal assistance in 2021

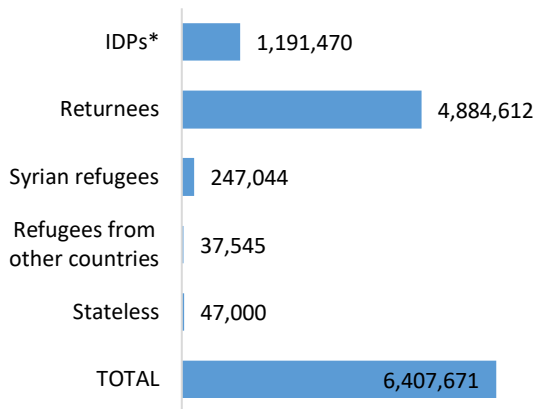
> 12,181

Refugee, IDP, and returnee families have benefitted from multi-purpose cash assistance in 2021

> 13,650

Refugees and IDPs received their first COVID-19 vaccination as of 25 August

POPULATION OF CONCERN

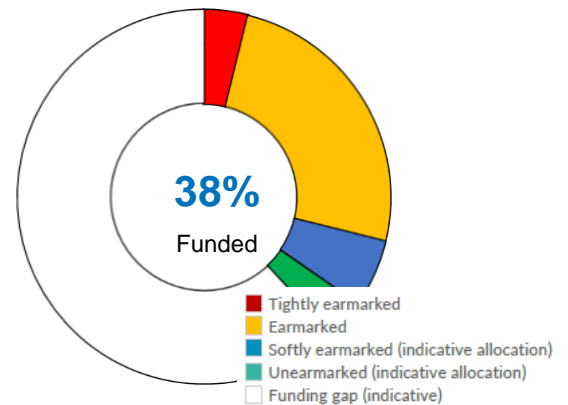


* Internally displaced persons (IDPs) since 2014, as of 31 July 2021, in accordance with IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

FUNDING (AS OF 24 AUGUST 2021)

USD 420.9 M

requested for the Iraq operation for 2021



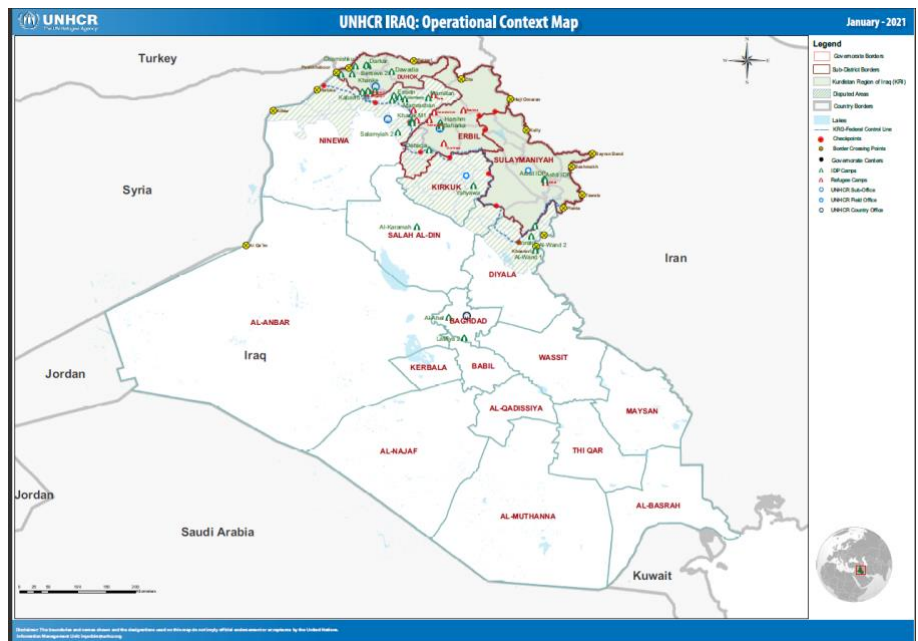
UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

- 335 National Staff
- 94 International Staff

Offices:

- 6 Offices located in Baghdad, Duhok, Erbil, Kirkuk, Mosul and Sulaymaniyah
- Field presence in Hilla (Babylon), Ba'quba (Diyala), Ramadi, Fallujah, Qaim (Anbar), Tikrit (Salah al-Din), and Khanaqin (Diyala) based in Kalar (Sulaymaniyah)



UNHCR produces regular updates on its response in Iraq, which can be found at [UNHCR Global Focus](#)

Working with Partners

- Through the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), UNHCR leads the humanitarian response for Syrian refugees in Iraq, in close coordination with humanitarian actors and government authorities, to protect and assist refugees and asylum-seekers. Under the 3RP, UNHCR leads the Protection, Shelter, and Basic Needs sectors and co-leads the Health sector with the WHO and the WASH sector with UNICEF.
- UNHCR is engaged in the inter-agency response to internal displacement and returns. UNHCR leads the Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), and Shelter/Non-Food Items clusters as part of the cluster coordination mechanism for the IDP response. UNHCR also co-leads, with UNFPA and the WFP, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2020-2024) Priority Working Group “Achieving Social Cohesion, Protection, and Inclusion.” UNHCR is also part of the inter-agency Durable Solutions Task Force and its technical subgroups.

Main Activities

Protection

- **Refugees** – UNHCR coordinates the response for all refugees in Iraq with the government, UN agencies, and local and international partners, including activities related to: registration; protection monitoring and advocacy; legal aid; psychosocial support; child protection; prevention, risk mitigation, and response to gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA); and resettlement to third countries which is pursued for a small number of refugees with acute vulnerabilities/protection needs.
- **IDPs** – Direct interventions are undertaken with local, regional, and national authorities to ensure that the displaced can access safety in camps and non-camp locations. Protection monitoring teams have been deployed to identify protection and assistance needs, including in areas of return, which directly inform protection responses, including: provision of legal assistance on a range of issues such as missing civil documentation; prevention, risk mitigation, and response to GBV and SEA; child protection; the reunification of separated families; and the coordination of IDP protection responses with the government, NGOs and other UN agencies.
- **Durable Solutions** – Through an area-based approach, UNHCR works to develop pilot projects and strengthen local government coordination mechanisms to ensure the viability and sustainability of local integration, both in areas of return, for those who are willing and able to return, and in areas outside of places of origin.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- As the CCCM Cluster and 3RP lead, UNHCR works with local authorities and humanitarian actors to provide coordinated services to IDP and refugee camps. This translates to ensuring adequate shelter, delivery of food and water, presence of education and health facilities, as well as capacity building for camp management actors and service providers.
- As of 31 July 2021, over 182,400 IDPs were hosted in 27 camps, mainly in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), with only two camps operating in federal Iraq.
- Of the 247,044 registered Syrian refugees, over 95,000 reside in ten camps across the KR-I. Currently, over 98 per cent of Syrian refugees live in KR-I, with 39 per cent residing in camps and the remainder in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas.

Shelter and NFIs

- UNHCR provides shelter assistance, core relief items and coordinates with humanitarian actors to complement the work of local authorities to improve the living conditions of IDPs and refugees in camp and non-camp settings throughout Iraq. This includes the distribution of tents, blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, and sanitary kits.

Basic Needs

- UNHCR assists vulnerable displaced and refugee families to cover their most basic needs through the distribution of cash assistance. In areas where markets are functioning and accessible to beneficiaries, unconditional cash provides an efficient way to meet the needs of those affected by displacement, allowing families to prioritize their own needs while upholding their dignity and making them less likely to resort to harmful coping strategies.

COVID-19 in Iraq

Since the start of the pandemic, Iraq has conducted over 14.2 million PCR tests and confirmed over 1.86 million cases of COVID-19. There have been more than 20,550 fatalities. Iraq entered into a third-wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in July. While the positivity rate and daily case figures have decreased from their peak, cases remained high throughout August. As of 22 August, the weekly incidence rate of reported cases per 100,000 had fallen to 122.9 from a high of 207.6 on 1 August.

By 25 August 2021, 1,743 COVID-19 cases had been confirmed among persons of concern to UNHCR (801 refugees and 942 IDPs), including 91 fatalities. Together, UNHCR and the WHO have advocated with the Ministry of Health at the federal and Kurdistan Regional Government levels for the inclusion of refugees in the country's *National Deployment and Vaccination Plan for COVID-19*. Both refugees and IDPs are eligible to register themselves on the online system and can receive a COVID-19 vaccine through Iraq's healthcare system. So far, over 13,675 refugees and IDPs have been vaccinated in Iraq.

With the lifting of lockdowns and the easing of COVID-19 restrictions by the Iraqi authorities, UNHCR has recorded a slight decrease in the overall COVID-19-associated protection risks and challenges reported by refugees, IDPs, IDP returnees, and persons at risk of statelessness across Iraq. Nevertheless, the impact of the virus on displaced populations remains significant, and the number of individuals resorting to harmful coping mechanisms remains high. Protection monitoring activities suggest that the main concerns are related to access to livelihood opportunities and healthcare services. Challenges to reach persons of concern in certain locations, psychological trauma, stress and anxiety, the halt of education activities, and the rise of domestic violence, among others, have also been raised widely.

UNHCR Response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Iraq

Most basic services continue to function (at limited capacity) in camps and areas with a high density of displaced populations. UNHCR has adopted new distribution modalities to ensure assistance continues to be delivered. The new modalities include door-to-door assistance to avoid mass gatherings and respect physical distancing, and remote protection monitoring, legal counseling, and psychosocial support, among others. In addition, UNHCR is implementing the following series of measures across the country to respond to the virus outbreak:

- **Access to basic hygiene items:** A total of 47,211 sanitary kits have been distributed to women and girls throughout Iraq since January 2021.
- **Vaccination unit:** UNHCR and the Directorate General of Health, working with the Department of Health and the Department of Migration and Crisis Response in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, opened the first COVID-19 vaccination unit in Domz-1 refugee camp in Duhok governorate on 14 July. The unit is part of the public health care centre at the camp, which provides health care services to camp residents and those in nearby urban areas.
- **COVID-19 cash assistance:** Starting in the last week of June and continuing through July, UNHCR rolled out another round of COVID-19 cash assistance (IQD 240,000) targeting over 82,000 refugees, IDP, and returnee households over the course of 2021. To date, over 13,650 households have already cashed out the assistance.
- **Health awareness:** UNHCR conducts regular health awareness-raising sessions on transmission and prevention of COVID-19, including vaccination, in refugee and IDP camps, registration centres, and some urban areas. Posters and leaflets are distributed through camp management, Primary Health Care Centres, and community outreach volunteers. Key messages are also shared through social media and messaging apps.
- **Provision of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) sets and medical Protective Personnel Equipment (PPE):** UNHCR Iraq procured and delivered 23 sets of ICU equipment to COVID-19 hospitals in seven governorates (Erbil, Duhok, Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, Anbar, Diyala, and Salah al-Din). UNHCR has also provided medical PPE, masks with filters, surgical masks, disposable shoes, gloves, and disposable medical gowns to medical staff in camps and at borders.

At this critical time, humanitarian action to save lives and alleviate the suffering of vulnerable populations remains imperative. UNHCR further appeals to donors not to deprioritize funding for regular programmes and thanks to major donors of un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as donors who have contributed directly to the Iraq operation in 2021.

Belgium | Canada | Czech Republic | Denmark | European Union | Finland | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Kuwait | Luxembourg | Netherlands | Norway | Private Donors | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

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