

Iraq

March 2021

+25,000

Refugee and IDP women
and girls have received
sanitary kits as of
March 2021

+12,000

Refugee and IDPs received legal assistance as of March 2021

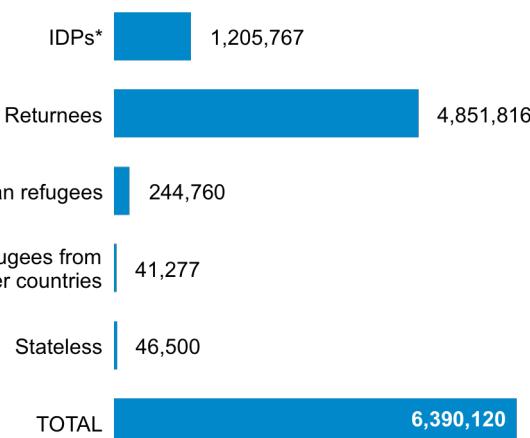
+17,000

Refugess have benefitted
from COVID-19
awareness raising as of
March 2021

+118.000

Refugees and IDP families received winterizaiton assistance as of March 2021

POPULATION OF CONCERN



* Internally displaced persons (IDPs) since 2014, as of 28 February 2021, in accordance with IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

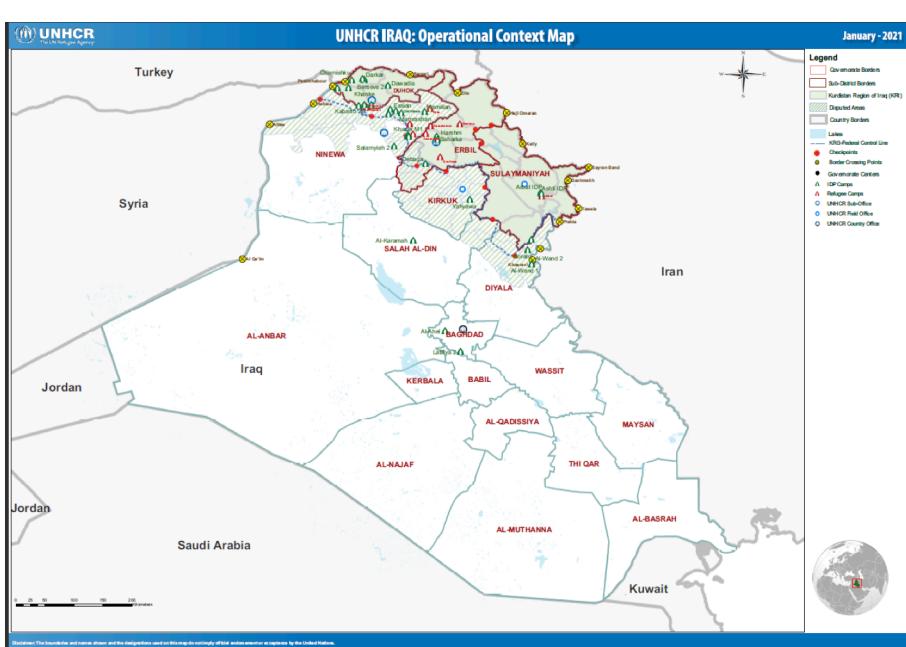
UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

- 366 National Staff
 - 95 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 Health with WHO and WASH with UNICEF.
- UNHCR is engaged in the inter-agency response to internal displacement and returns. UNHCR is leading the Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), and Shelter/Non-Food Items (also known as core relief items or CRIs) clusters, as part of the cluster coordination mechanism for the IDP response. UNHCR also co-leads with UNFPA and 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 like: 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 area-based approach to develop pilot projects and strengthen local government coordination mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of local integration and settlement outside of areas of origin in addition to returns for those who are willing to return to their areas 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. In mid-October 2020, the GoI embarked on sudden IDP camp closure exercise, which resulted in the closure or reclassification of 16 IDP camps and informal sites, and affected over 42,400 individuals who left these sites. As of March 2021, over 185,800 IDPs are hosted in 29 camps mainly in KRI, with only two camps remaining in federal Iraq.
- 100,000 Syrian refugees reside in ten camps throughout the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). Currently, 99 per cent of Syrian refugees live in KR-I, with 41 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 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

As of 31 March, COVID-19 cases across Iraq continue to rise, with an average of 5,000 daily cases and the number of individuals who have contracted the virus stands at 850,924 cases. Close to 30 per cent of these cases have been detected in Baghdad, followed by Basrah, Erbil, Wassit and Duhok Governorates. Similarly, the number of deaths has increased to 14,323. The Government of Iraq (GoI) continued to conduct over 40,000 tests per day and reached close to eight million tests.

A total of 674 cases (322 refugees and 352 IDPs) among UNHCR PoCs have been identified since March 2020, including 521 recoveries and 58 fatalities.

Through the UNHCR advocacy with the Ministry of Health at the Federal and Kurdistan Regional Government levels to include refugees in their national plan, refugees can register in the online vaccine registration systems (Federal and KRI) with their UNHCR registration number or residency card. Also, they can refer to the designated hospitals and clinics and receive the vaccine according to the COVID-19 national vaccination plan.

Amid the resurgence of COVID-19 cases in Iraq in March 2021, the Government of Iraq imposed partial and total lockdown, closed public sites, prohibited gatherings, and shifted to online learning in schools and universities instead of on-premises attendance. The Kurdistan region's Supreme Committee for Coronavirus Response has suspended in-person lessons for students in the first to eleventh grades until 25 March due to an increase in the number of Coronavirus infections.

According to UNHCR's feedback and complaint mechanisms and ongoing remote protection monitoring, the main concern raised by refugees, IDPs, returnees, and persons at risk of statelessness across Iraq is the inability to access livelihood opportunities as a result of current and previous movement restrictions. Most individuals affected by displacement were living on daily wages, and the movement restrictions have significantly affected their ability to make ends meet. This has translated into an increase in the number of individuals resorting to negative coping mechanisms. Challenges to reach persons of concern in certain locations, psychological trauma, stress and anxiety, halt of education activities, and the rise of domestic violence, among others, have also been raised widely as a direct concern.

UNHCR Response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Iraq

Most basic services continue to function (albeit 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 25,679 sanitary kits were distributed for women and girls since January 2021 throughout Iraq. UNHCR is planning to provide another round of COVID-19 cash assistance (IQD 240,000) during the course of 2021.
- **Health awareness:** UNHCR is conducting ongoing health awareness-raising sessions on transmission and prevention of COVID-19 in refugee and IDP camps, as well as in registration centres and some urban areas. Posters and leaflets are distributed through camp management, PHCCs, and community outreach volunteers;
- **Provision of ICU sets and medical Protective Personnel Equipment (PPE):** UNHCR Iraq has procured 23 sets of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) equipment, consisting of ventilators, electric beds, monitors, nebulizers, syringe pumps, infusion and suction pumps, and oxygen regulators. The ICU equipment were delivered to the COVID-19 hospitals in seven governorates (Erbil, Duhok, Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, Anbar, Diyala, and Salah al-Din). In addition, 40 beds, pillows, and mattresses and 40 intravenous stands for medical equipment were delivered to the Mosul Burns Hospital. UNHCR has provided medical PPE, masks with filters, disposable shoes, surgical masks, 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 Iraq operation in 2020 and 2021.

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