

Iraq

April 2021

>37,000

Refugee and IDP women and girls have received sanitary kits in 2021 as of 30 April

>20,000

Refugees and IDPs have received legal assistance in 2021 as of 30 April

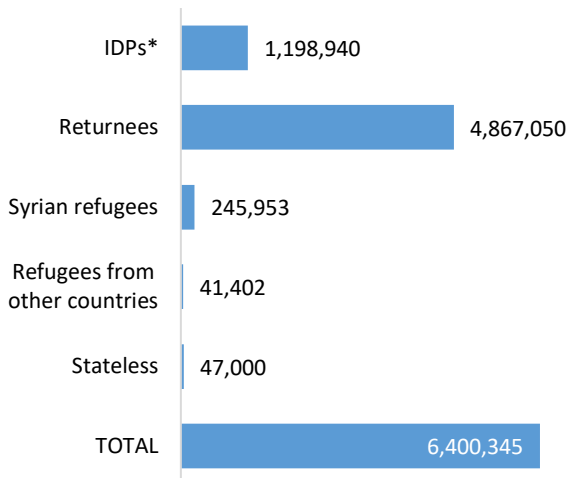
>24,000

Refugees have benefitted from COVID-19 awareness raising in 2021 as of 30 April

~1,000

Refugees and IDPs received their first COVID-19 vaccination as of 30 April

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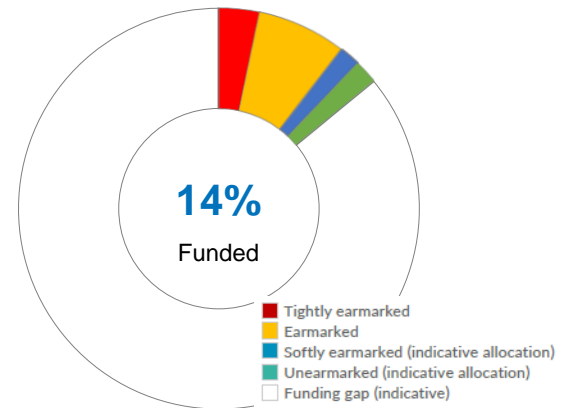


* Internally displaced persons (IDPs) since 2014, as of 30 April 2021, in accordance with IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

FUNDING (AS OF 4 MAY 2021)

USD 430.8 M

requested for the Iraq operation for 2021



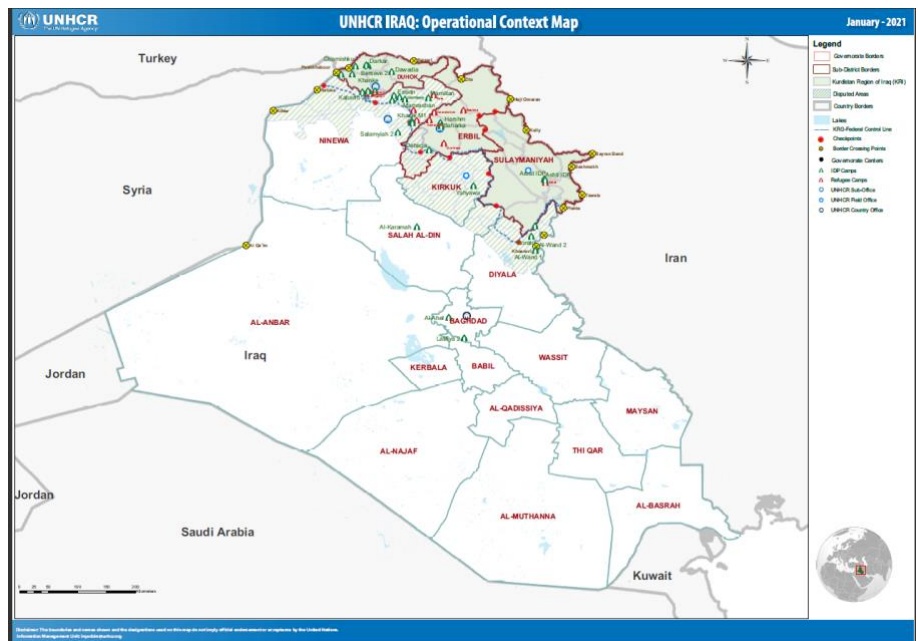
UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

- 334 National Staff
- 91 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.
- In mid-October 2020, the Government of Iraq embarked on a sudden IDP camp closure exercise which resulted in the closure or reclassification of 16 IDP camps and informal sites, affecting over 42,400 individuals who departed from these sites. As of 30 April 2021, 184,552 IDPs were hosted in 29 camps, mainly in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), with only two camps operating in federal Iraq following the aforementioned closures.
- Of the 245,953 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

As of 30 April 2021, Iraq had recorded over one million confirmed cases of COVID-19 with more than 15,000 fatalities. The country has conducted over nine million PCR tests since the start of the pandemic—with over 40,000 tests conducted per day throughout April. The data indicates a gradual downward trend from the peak of a second wave, with infections falling from a maximum weekly incidence rate of 134.9 cases per 100,000 on 25 April to 108.6 on 2 May. At the same time, the number of positive tests fluctuates significantly on a daily basis.

By the end of April 2021, 851 COVID-19 cases had been confirmed among persons of concern to UNHCR (443 refugees and 408 IDPs), including 111 hospitalizations and 65 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. Close to 1,000 refugees and IDPs had been immunized by the close of the month—the actual number of refugees and IDPs vaccinated in Iraq is likely to be higher due to the fact that refugees and IDPs can independently register themselves on the system.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Government of Iraq has implemented a range of measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, including partial and total lockdowns, the closure of public sites, the prohibition of gatherings, and the shifting of school and university learning online.

According to UNHCR's feedback and complaint mechanisms and 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 due to current and previous movement restrictions. Most individuals affected by displacement were living on daily wages, and movement restrictions have significantly affected their ability to make a living. This has translated into an increase in the number of individuals needing to resort to negative coping mechanisms. 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 37,243 sanitary kits have been distributed to women and girls throughout Iraq since January 2021.
- **COVID-19 cash assistance:** 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, Primary Health Care Centres, and community outreach volunteers.
- **Provision of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) sets and medical Protective Personnel Equipment (PPE):** UNHCR Iraq procured 23 sets of ICU equipment, consisting of ventilators, electric beds, monitors, nebulizers, syringe pumps, infusion and suction pumps, and oxygen regulators. The ICU equipment was delivered to COVID-19 hospitals in seven governorates (Erbil, Duhok, Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, Anbar, Diyala, and Salah al-Din). UNHCR has 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 Iraq operation in 2020 and 2021.

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

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