

Iraq

September 2022

> 12,800

Internally displaced and returnee families received monthly cash assistance since the start of 2022

> 3,600

Mental health consultations delivered to refugees since the start of 2022

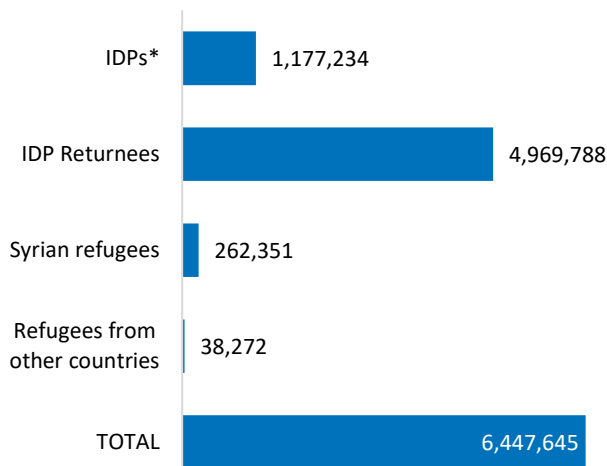
> 67,600

Internally displaced people and returnees received legal assistance in 2022

> 47,600

Civil documents issued benefiting IDPs and IDP returnees since the start of 2022

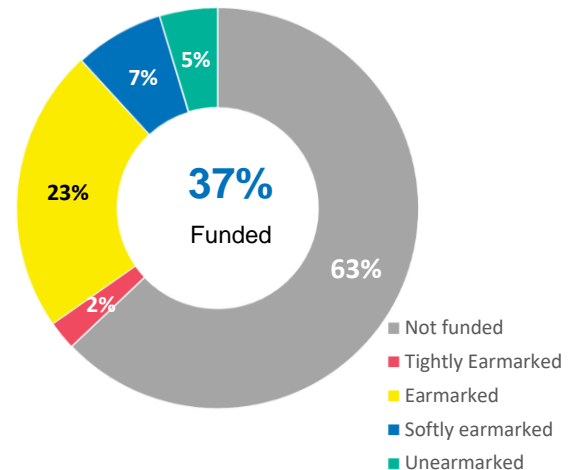
POPULATION OF CONCERN



* Internally displaced people (IDPs) since 2014 as of 30 June 2022 (IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM))

FUNDING (AS OF 6 OCTOBER 2022)

USD 128.7 million received by the Iraq operation of the **USD 347.4 million required** for 2022



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

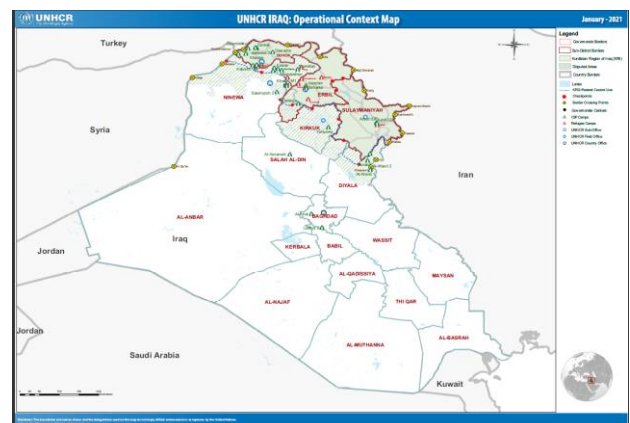
347 National Staff

86 International Staff

Offices:

Six Offices located in Baghdad, Duhok, Erbil, Kirkuk, Mosul and Sulaymaniyah

Field presence in Samarra, Tikrit (Salah al-Din), Ba'quba (Diyala), Ramadi, and Al-Qaim (Anbar).



Special thanks to donors

UNHCR thanks its major donors of un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds, as well as those who contributed directly to the Iraq Operation in 2022.

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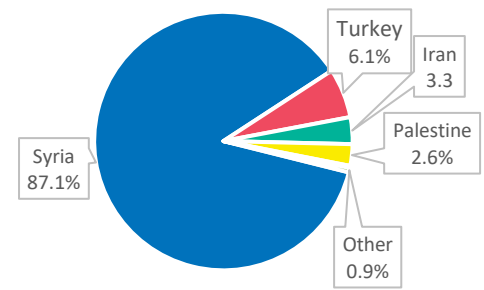
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Operational context

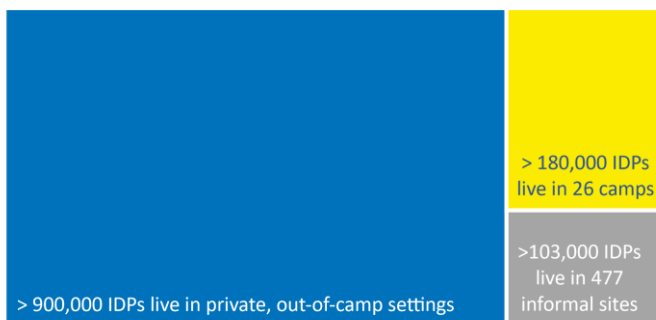
Despite three years of relative stability and an ongoing transition from a humanitarian emergency response toward one rooted in recovery and development plans, displaced populations in Iraq continue to have some humanitarian needs. The socio-economic situation remains fragile despite an expansion in the Government's fiscal space. Furthermore, the political and security environment remains unpredictable.

Iraq generously hosts over 300,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly Syrians (over 260,000) residing in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), with limited immediate return prospects. Over 60% of Syrian refugees reside in urban areas, while the rest reside in nine refugee camps and one transit centre.

REFUGEES IN IRAQ: COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



IDP POPULATION BY SETTING




Some 1.2 million Iraqis remain internally displaced by Da'esh's insurgency (defeated in 2017), while 5 million IDPs have returned. There are currently 26 IDP camps (hosting some 180,000 IDPs), of which 25 camps are in the KR-I, and one camp (Jeddah 5) is in Federal Iraq. Many families continue to face security and protection risks, lack local integration opportunities, have limited livelihood opportunities and financial resources in areas of displacement and return, and lack civil documents. Many families face significant barriers to return, especially those with perceived affiliation to extremist groups.

In line with the humanitarian community's transition efforts,

UNHCR's interventions are aimed at enhancing displaced populations' self-reliance and socio-economic inclusion in public systems and development programmes. Support is also provided to public institutions to deliver basic services to all populations affected by forced displacement and vulnerable host communities.

Main activities

Protection


 UNHCR is the mandated agency for the protection of refugees and stateless people and the lead of the protection cluster for IDPs in Iraq. The Office plays a critical role through direct interventions and working with local, regional and national authorities, other UN agencies, NGOs, and civil society partners to ensure that displaced people and host communities are safe and live in dignity.

UNHCR and partners provide legal assistance to individuals to secure their civil documentation; support safe spaces; provide counselling and assistance for survivors of gender-based violence, such as mental health and psychosocial support; assist children in need of specialised services, such as alternative care arrangements; and build the capacities of partners and authorities to respond to protection issues.

Protection assessments, focus groups and interviews with those affected by displacement allow UNHCR and partners to better understand vulnerabilities, identify protection and assistance needs, and inform activities to target the most vulnerable individuals and communities with appropriate programmes and support public service providers accordingly.

UNHCR also supports a range of ways for refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs to directly raise their concerns, including through community representation structures, two-way communication through community-based volunteers, and complaint mechanisms.

Registration and documentation

 Registration (refugees) and access to civil documentation (IDPs) are key protection interventions, mitigating against the risk of detention/deprivation of movements, refoulement (refugees), and enabling access to public and humanitarian services.

In Iraq, UNHCR issues certificates to people seeking international protection. Further, UNHCR supports the Permanent Committee of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) to register refugees and asylum seekers; and facilitates their access to humanitarian residency permits issued by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) for refugees in the KR-I.

UNHCR is moving towards the implementation of a two-year UNHCR asylum-seeker certificate validity instead of the current one-year certificate. This is expected to reduce the registration backlog in Iraq, creating space to collect a more comprehensive dataset. The new certificate will also contain enhanced security measures, including QR code

verification to ensure the certificate's authenticity. The extended validity will apply to asylum-seekers who have been in the KR-I for longer than three years, encompassing most of the asylum-seeker population. In parallel, [UNHCR is advocating with KR-I authorities for the KRG Humanitarian Residency Permit to be extended to two years](#). This would alleviate a lot of burden and costs on asylum seekers who must renew their residency permits annually with relevant authorities and reduce the overall costs of the process.


UNHCR supports IDPs and IDP returnees to obtain and renew their civil documentation, including through legal advice and representation. UNHCR also supports mobile missions of Civil Affairs Directorates (CAD) to IDP camps and urban areas with large IDP/returnee population groups to process civil document applications. Missing civil documentation impedes people's ability to access basic services such as education, healthcare and social security benefits and can lead to restricted freedom of movement, increased risk of arrest and detention, exclusion from restitution/reparation and/or reconstruction programmes, and the inability to participate in the public affairs of the country.

UNHCR leads civil documentation efforts in Jeddah 1 (J1) centre in Ninewa governorate, which hosts Iraqi returnees from Al-Hol camp in north-east Syria. In September, UNHCR, in coordination with the local CAD, completed the distribution of 36 civil IDs and 30 Iraqi Nationality Certificates for J1 residents, bringing the total number of civil documents issued so far in J1 to 190 civil IDs and 30 Nationality Certificates. Since the start of the mobile missions to J1 in March 2022, 275 unified ID card applications and 83 other civil and legal documents (excluding civil ID applications) have been processed and are pending issuance.


Legal assessments indicate that over 400 J1 residents are still in need of civil documentation, with the majority missing unified IDs and nationality certificates. To address the civil documentation needs, UNHCR is supporting three additional Unified ID, CAD and court mobile missions before the end of 2022.

In Duhok governorate, the fifth and final Mol mobile mission with UNHCR and its partner processed over 10,200 nationality certificates and civil status IDs for IDPs in camps. The five mobile missions processed over 35,100 civil documents (23,652 nationality certificates and 11,453 civil ID cards). Of these, 18,350 nationality certificates and 6,848 civil status IDs were issued, thus addressing the civil documentation needs in 14 IDP camps and five urban areas.

Cash-based interventions

 For individuals and families assessed as socio-economically vulnerable, UNHCR provides cash assistance to enable them to pay rent, buy food and other essentials, thus decreasing the use of harmful coping mechanisms such as reducing food intake, accumulating debt, child labour or forced marriage. Cash assistance allows families to determine what they most need and contributes directly to the local economy. [UNHCR Iraq provides several types of cash assistance, including multi-purpose and winterization cash assistance for refugees, IDPs and IDP returnees.](#)

Advocacy

 UNHCR advocates with the government to develop legislative and policy frameworks that are in line with international law/protection standards and best practices, as well as with humanitarian and development actors to include displaced populations in their programmes - IDPs and refugees alike. Iraq is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and currently lacks a comprehensive refugee legal framework that aligns with international standards. [UNHCR has been supporting the process of the adoption of a new refugee law for Iraq that would provide a sound legal framework for refugee protection.](#)



[Syrian refugee children playing with snowballs in Akre refugee camp, Duhok governorate, KR-I.](#) © UNHCR

UNHCR issued its [regional winter appeal planning](#) for winter cash assistance for the Syria and Iraq situations, with the rollout in Iraq expected in October 2022, once funding is made available. Depending on the level of funding received, UNHCR aims to assist some 51,000 Iraqi IDP and returnee households (256,000 individuals), 70,000 Syrian refugees (232,000 individuals) as well as 10,000 refugee households of other nationalities (26,000 individuals). The assistance will consist of a one-time cash grant to help the most vulnerable families meet winter needs.

Selected refugees will receive the equivalent of \$330 per family, delivered through mobile money using the biometric (EyePay) authentication system. IDPs will receive some \$165 per family through the e-wallet, as government-led programmes complement humanitarian assistance. The identification of both IDP and refugee families will be based on socioeconomic vulnerability criteria harmonized among humanitarian actors.

In parallel, [UNHCR has been supporting the Mol with the drafting of the Federal Administrative Instructions related to the 1971 Political Refugee Act](#), which seeks to provide further clarity on the procedural safeguards related to asylum applications in line with international standards, in the absence of an updated refugee law. Additionally, since 2021, UNHCR has been supporting the KRG Mol in developing Administrative Instructions which aim to harmonize across the KR-I governorates and codify – for the first time – the procedures for issuing humanitarian cards to asylum seekers

and refugees of all nationalities, thus strengthening the protection environment. Both Instructions are expected to be issued by the end of 2022.

UNHCR also advocates on behalf of individuals seeking asylum in Iraq, including advocacy for access to territory for persons in need of international protection through the reopening of borders with Syria, and interventions in cases of risks of refoulement.

Solutions and inclusion

 Given the protracted nature of displacement in Iraq, UNHCR is working to promote longer-term solutions and enhance social and economic inclusion. Efforts include enhancing displaced families' access to quality public services such as healthcare and education, as well as promoting access to livelihoods through support to public service providers. UNHCR is currently advocating for the inclusion of refugees in employability and social protection initiatives in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as well as in livelihood programmes run by development actors.


Through its [Area-Based Programming for Protection and Solutions \(A2PS\)](#), UNHCR promotes the sustainable (re)integration of those affected by forced displacement. The Office identifies locations where refugees, IDPs and IDP returnees live side by side with vulnerable host communities and develops projects that seek to support the provision of basic services through relevant public institutions, especially in urban areas. The primary objective is to transform refugee and IDP camps into formal settlements connected to public services.

Examples of A2PS projects include [the construction and rehabilitation of National Identification Documents Centres](#) to strengthen access to civil documentation, the construction of [public health facilities](#) to strengthen access to quality health services, and the [rehabilitation of water treatment plants and construction of irrigation pumps](#) for agricultural purposes to strengthen the management of water and provide livelihood opportunities.

On 13 September, the [Refugee Education Integration Policy \(REIP\)](#) was rolled out with the start of the 2022-23 academic year for refugee students grades 1-4 to enrol in public schools. UNHCR and partners offer Kurdish language classes for refugee children and teachers and rehabilitate schools to accommodate more children. The KRG's Ministry of Education committed to financially support qualified refugee teachers, which is a major breakthrough.

For especially vulnerable refugees, UNHCR pursues [resettlement to third countries](#). Since the start of 2022, UNHCR has submitted 2,102 of the most vulnerable refugees for resettlement, with 417 having departed to resettlement countries as of the end of September. UNHCR also works to [expand complementary pathways such as scholarships and labour mobility opportunities abroad](#). So far in 2022, some 345 refugees have been assisted to access complementary pathways, and 69 individuals have departed to six different countries.

Coordination and working with partners

 UNHCR coordinates the response for all refugees in Iraq with the **relevant authorities, UN agencies, and international and local partners**. For Syrian refugees, under the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), UNHCR leads the Protection, Basic Needs and Shelter sectors, co-leads the Health sector with WHO, and works closely with the Ministry of Planning. For IDPs and IDP returnees, UNHCR leads the [Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management \(CCCM\)](#), and [Shelter/Non-Food Items Clusters \(NFI\)](#), to be deactivated in 2023 as part of the shift toward development interventions. UNHCR is engaged with the durable solutions architecture in Iraq, including the Durable Solutions Technical Working Group (DSTWG) and Area-Based Coordination bodies (ABCs).

Cluster transition update – the Protection Platform

To ensure a responsible transition of the UNHCR-led Protection Cluster in Iraq, [the Protection Platform \(the Platform\)](#) was identified as a new coordination mechanism at the strategic level, co-led by UNHCR and OHCHR, with the participation of UN entities, NNGO and INGO representatives.

The objective of the Platform will be to inform and provide strategic guidance, advice and technical support to actors supporting UN humanitarian and development efforts on key protection issues for all vulnerable population groups in line with the five strategic priorities agreed upon in the [UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(UNSDCF\)](#) in Iraq. The Platform aims to strengthen protection systems, ensure the Centrality of Protection and adoption of human rights approach. It will serve to ensure that high-level advocacy and engagement will continue on core and emerging protection issues in Iraq. A Protection Monitoring Core Group has been established to work on the new protection monitoring tool that will be launched under the Platform. [While the Platform will supersede the Protection Cluster in January 2023, it will be launched in October 2022 to ensure a smooth transition.](#)