

UNHCR IRAQ

MONTHLY UPDATE

April 2026



Zozan, a Syrian refugee and mother of three daughters, was arrested after her visa expired and her lack of valid residency due to a fraud she had experienced. When she reached out to INTERSOS, a lawyer intervened immediately, submitting a request for her release on bail so she could return to her daughters. "They supported me and clarified my situation. After they supported, six hours later I was released," Zozan recalls with relief. Read her story [here](#). ©UNHCR/Rasheed Rasheed



CONTEXT

As of the end of April 2026, Iraq generously hosts approximately 350,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, the majority (88%) of whom are Syrians. Close to 81% of this population resides in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. While most refugees and asylum-seekers live in urban and peri-urban settings, 26% remain in nine refugee camps across the country. Additionally, around 100,000 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) live in 18 IDP camps.¹

UNHCR works with the Government of Iraq and partners to support refugee and asylum-seeker access to protection and inclusion in public services, such as education and healthcare, as well as access to economic opportunities and in advancing solutions.



40%

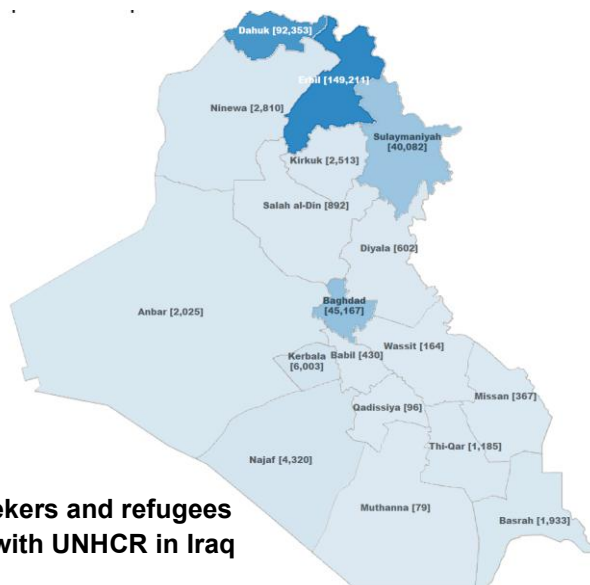
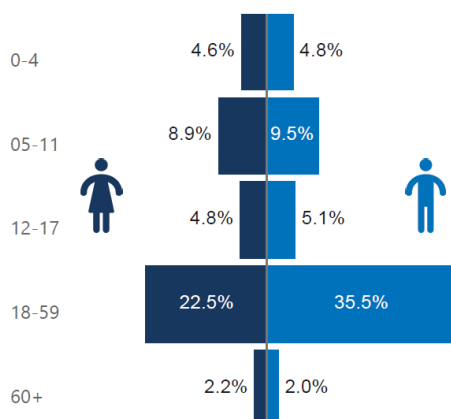
Funded

of the \$60.6 million required by UNHCR in 2026 to protect people forced to flee in Iraq



POPULATION AT A GLANCE

Age & Gender Breakdown



Asylum-seekers and refugees registered with UNHCR in Iraq

¹ As of February 2026, UNHCR, together with the Government, have decided to administratively consolidate four IDP camps into two IDP camps in Dohuk Governorate. This means there are now 18 IDP camps in Iraq, although the population figures remain the same.

APRIL MONTHLY ACHIEVEMENTS



10,079

Refugees and asylum-seekers newly registered or with registration verified with UNHCR. This process assists access to government-issued documentation and protects against refoulement.



As result of close engagement and coordination with relevant Iraqi authorities, **252** refugees and asylum-seekers were released from detention on immigration related charges and **115** deportations prevented thanks to legal support and interventions.



431

Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned voluntarily to Syria.



2,553 Communications received through UNHCR's HelpLine from refugees and other forcibly displaced populations.



WHAT'S NEW IN IRAQ...

- UNHCR continued to **monitor border crossings with Iran in coordination with local authorities**. In April, numbers of Iranian and Afghan asylum-seekers approaching UNHCR to ask for asylum in Iraq has remained stable and in line with previous trends, with only minimal numbers of new arrivals mentioning that they have fled Iran to Iraq due to the hostilities. In parallel, in coordination with IOM, WFP, WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women, UNHCR finalized the draft six-month interagency contingency plan to respond to potential refugee movements from Iran and submitted it to Government counterparts at both federal and regional levels.
- Amid the continuous volatile security situation, UNHCR maintained regular communication with refugees and other forcibly displaced populations through its Communication with Communities channels, receiving over **2,500 communications through the HelpLine** (+88% from March), mainly on registration, cash assistance, voluntary returns, and the [My Service portal](#), which has reached 45,000 users since its launch in late 2025. Calls—especially on cash assistance—highlighted worsening socio-economic conditions, including financial hardship, rising rents, unmet medical needs, and limited income opportunities.
- UNHCR launched the joint registration procedure for asylum with the Permanent Committee of the Ministry of Interior (PC-MOI)**, whereby UNHCR conducts registration, and directly refers refugees and asylum-seekers for government registration and documentation to PC-MOI. This shift aims to increase refugees' access to government registration and documentation—critical for their inclusion in Iraq—while gradually reducing reliance on UNHCR-issued certificates.
- In 2026, a total of **956 Syrian refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR Iraq voluntarily returned**, including 917 from the Kurdistan Region and 39 from central and southern governorates. In April alone, 431 individuals returned. UNHCR continues to provide return cash assistance (USD 100 per person) to refugees and asylum seekers returning from central and southern Governorates through Baghdad. In 2026, 31 refugees who have confirmed to have departed Iraq received cash assistance for return. Facilitation of voluntary return through enhanced cooperation with authorities and provision of cash assistance for return is expected to begin in June in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- The Kurdistan Regional Government, through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, **launched** in Dohuk the pilot phase of its **Social Safety Net (SSN) programme**, which will provide financial assistance to 3,200 households, including 20% refugees, with support from UNHCR, the World Bank and UNICEF. During April, the registration phase for the project was open, with over 1,700 refugees and asylum-seekers – who will now be assessed for eligibility - expressing interest in taking part. The initiative marks a key step toward inclusive social protection, with the first financial social assistance distributions expected mid-year.
- In April, UNHCR completed the construction of an **18-classroom school in Masike, Dohok governorate**, with technical handover carried out. The construction of schools and classrooms seeks to further support the inclusion of refugee children into public schools in support of the **Refugee Education Integration Policy (REIP)**.
- Eight reverse missions were conducted by legal actors in Al-Amal Centre (five UNHCR/INTERSOS, two IOM, one UNICEF/TDH), **bringing families from Al-Amal Centre to Mosul Civil Affairs Directorate (CAD) for the purposes of processing National Unified ID (NUIDs) applications**. This resulted in submission of 382 applications for National Unified IDs (NUIDs) for Al-Amal Centre residents. In total in 2026, 28 reverse missions have taken place, resulting in 1,484 applications submitted, out of which 970 NUIDs have been issued and 514 are pending.



SPECIAL THANKS TO PARTNERS

UNHCR in Iraq thanks its major partners of unearmarked funds, as well as those who contribute to directly to the Iraq operation and to the regional response for Syrian refugees: [Australia](#) | [Australia for UNHCR](#) | [Belgium](#) | [Denmark](#) | [España con ACNUR](#) | [European Union](#) | [Germany](#) | [Ireland](#) | [Italy](#) | [Netherlands \(Kingdom of the\)](#) | [Norway](#) | [Private Donors](#) | [Sweden](#) | [Switzerland](#)