



UNHCR IRAQ

MONTHLY UPDATE

May 2026

Located just 10 kilometres from the Peshkhabour border crossing, at the Derabon Return Centre UNHCR staff provide counselling, carry out de-registration and record the return. This process is important as it will also enable UNHCR in Syria to have information about their return. ©UNHCR/Rasheed Rasheed

CONTEXT

As of the end of May 2026, Iraq generously hosts around 350,500 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

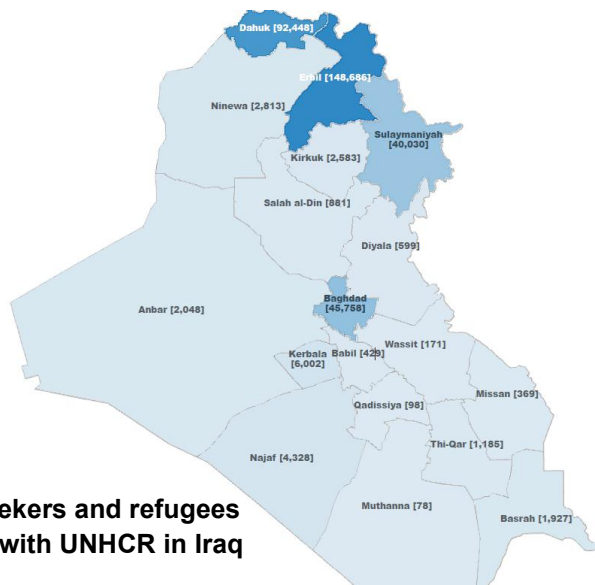
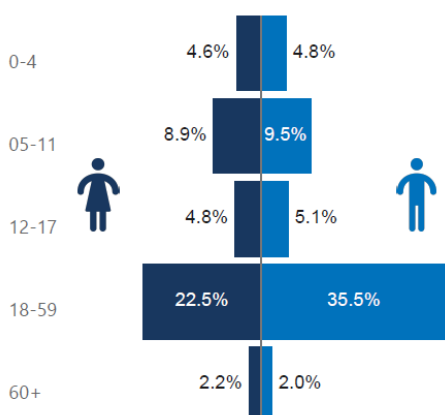
UNHCR works with the Government of Iraq and partners to support refugee and asylum-seeker access to protection and inclusion in public services, such as education and healthcare, as well as access to economic opportunities and in advancing solutions.

 **41%**
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.

MAY MONTHLY ACHIEVEMENTS



11,892

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, **129** refugees and asylum-seekers were released from detention on immigration related charges and **100** deportations prevented thanks to legal support and interventions.



323

Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned voluntarily to Syria.



2,291 Communications received through UNHCR's HelpLine from refugees and asylum seekers.



WHAT'S NEW IN IRAQ...

- In May, UNHCR conducted a **training session on UNHCR's Mandate and International Protection of refugees and asylum seekers for the Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MoMD) in Baghdad**. The session was attended by 28 participants from various units within the Ministry, as well as representatives from the MoMD branch in Al-Rusafa, one of the nine administrative districts in Baghdad.
- During May, UNHCR continued close engagement with Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO) and the World Bank, advancing **the Social Safety Net (SSN) pilot project in Dohuk** and **the Iraqi Household Socio-Economic Survey (IHSES) refugee annex**. UNHCR directed its efforts toward validating and cleaning refugee registration data to ensure accurate eligibility determination. For the IHSES refugee annex, UNHCR, WB and KRSO finalized agreement on sampling and clustering methodology, supporting an efficient approach for data collection. In May, UNHCR supported trainings for KRSO staff who will conduct the IHSES survey across Erbil, Dohuk, and Sulaymaniyah on the refugee context. Preparations are complete, with data collection expected to start in June.
- In 2026, a total of **1,320 Syrian refugees and asylum seekers voluntarily returned from Iraq to Syria**, of which 323 individuals in May. At the end of May, UNHCR launched **the facilitated voluntary return process in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)**, enabling refugees to book appointments indicating their intention to return via the UNHCR Iraq HELP Page and then go through processing for return at UNHCR registration centres. As part of the facilitated return process, UNHCR supports eligible Syrian refugees who wish to return with cash assistance of IQD 130,000 (USD 100) per individual to help with logistical costs, with additional financial support available for the most vulnerable.
- In May, UNHCR finalized the handover of **a newly constructed 18-classroom school in Bedare, Dohuk Governorate** to local authorities. 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)**. In Arbat refugee camp, UNHCR also rehabilitated an elevated water tank (225 cubic meters), enabling adequate and equitable water distribution across the camp.
- In the course of May, UNHCR maintained regular communication with refugees and asylum seekers through its Communication with Communities channels, receiving over **2,200 communications through the HelpLine** mainly on registration, cash assistance, voluntary returns. In addition, the [My Service portal](#), reached over 56,000 users, enabling refugees to access services and manage their data with UNHCR digitally.
- Seven reverse missions were conducted by legal actors in Al-Amal Centre** (four UNHCR/INTERSOS, two UNICEF/TDH and one IOM), 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 312 applications for National Unified IDs (NUIDs) for Al-Amal Centre residents. In 2026, 35 reverse missions have taken place, resulting in 1,757 applications submitted, out of which 1,234 NUIDs have been issued and 523 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](#) | [Japan for UNHCR](#) | [Netherlands \(Kingdom of the\)](#) | [Norway](#) | [Private Donors](#) | [Sweden](#) | [Switzerland](#) | [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#) | [UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe](#)

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