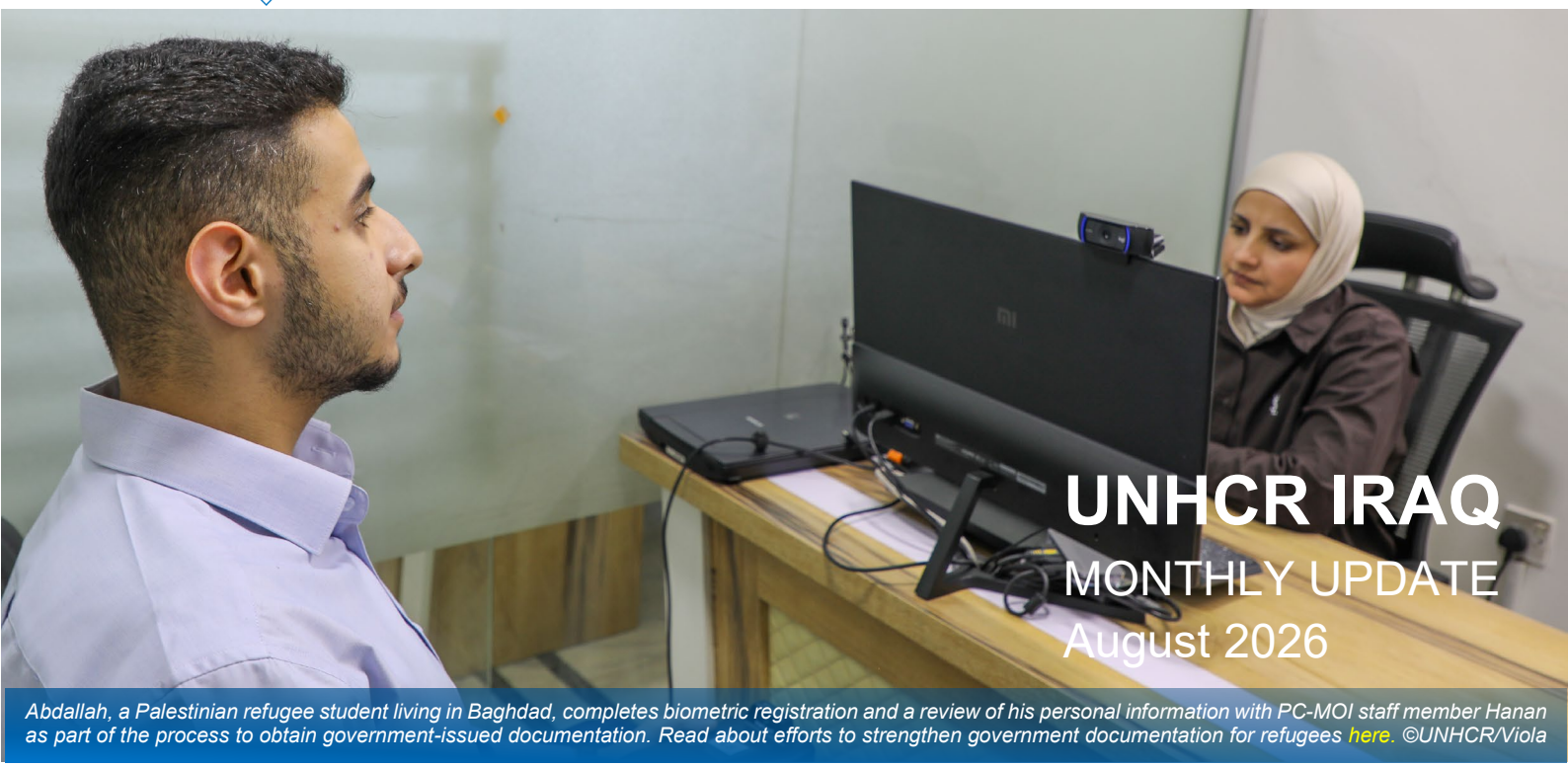



*Abdallah, a Palestinian refugee student living in Baghdad, completes biometric registration and a review of his personal information with PC-MOI staff member Hanan as part of the process to obtain government-issued documentation. Read about efforts to strengthen government documentation for refugees here. ©UNHCR/Viola*

## CONTEXT

**As of the end of August 2026, Iraq generously hosts over 343,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, the majority (88%) of whom are Syrians.** Close to 80% of this population resides in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. While most refugees and asylum-seekers live in urban and peri-urban settings, 30% remain in nine refugee camps across the country. Additionally, around 97,000 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) live in 18 IDP camps.[1]

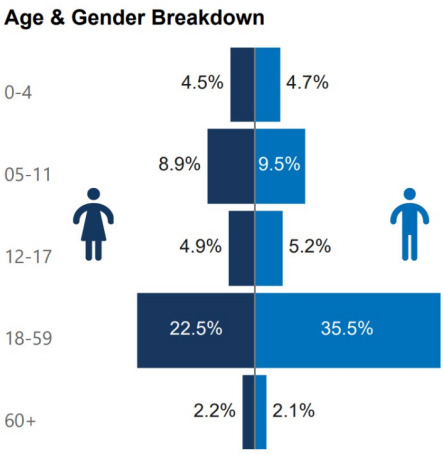
UNHCR works with the Government of Iraq and partners to support refugee and asylum-seeker access to protection and inclusion in public services, such as education and healthcare, as well as access to economic opportunities and in advancing solutions.

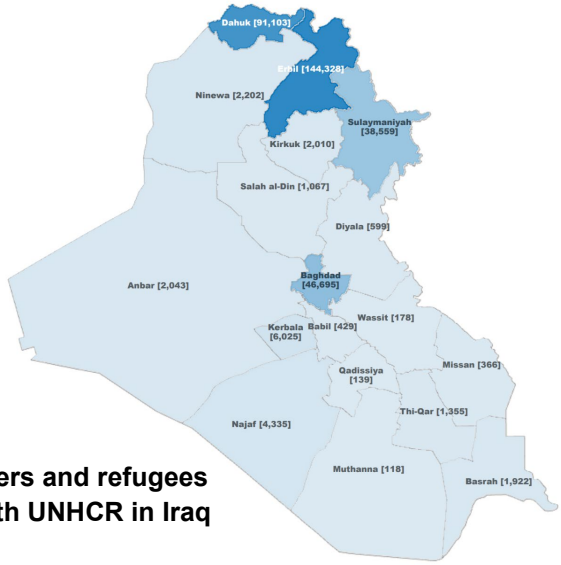
**42%**

**Funded**

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

## POPULATION AT A GLANCE




**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.

## AUGUST MONTHLY ACHIEVEMENTS

**13,779**
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, **151** refugees and asylum-seekers were released from detention on immigration related charges.

**358**
Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned voluntarily to Syria.

**2,653** Communications received through UNHCR's HelpLine from refugees and asylum seekers.

## WHAT'S NEW IN IRAQ…

- The draft version of the updated Refugee Law, which has been under discussion and development with State Council for several months, was **approved by the General Committee of the State Council in Baghdad.** This means that the current draft of the law is ready for submission to the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and, following their endorsement, would move to Parliament for voting.

- Since the launch of joint registration procedures in April 2026 with the Permanent Committee for Refugee Affairs under the Ministry of Interior (PC-MOI), **1,504 new asylum-seekers have been issued with government-documentation (PC-MOI card).** This marks progress in expanding the Government's ability to register and issue documentation to refugees and asylum-seekers, linked to efforts to strengthen the national asylum system. Despite this, asylum-seekers in Baghdad continue to face challenges in obtaining Proof of Residence which is needed as a prerequisite document before a PC-MOI card is issued. UNHCR continues to follow-up with authorities to discuss this issue.

- **UNHCR teams travelled to Wasit, Babil, and Diyala governorates in August to register refugees and asylum seekers.** This builds on registration missions to Qadisiya, Thi-Qar, Muthanna, Salah al-Din earlier in July. UNHCR is prioritizing registration of new asylum-seekers and renewal of documentation of refugees and asylum-seekers in Iraq in locations where PC-MoI plans to go on mission to support access to the national asylum system through joint procedures established.

- UNHCR observed an **increased number of Afghans spontaneously approaching Baghdad registration centre,** alongside a notable increase in requests for new registration from Afghan asylum-seekers with asylum applications from Afghan nationals reaching some 370 in August, compared to a monthly average of 90 during the preceding six months. This increase is consistent with the recurrent annual trend observed after the pilgrimage season.

- In August, UNHCR started **construction work at the Kabarto Wastewater Treatment Plant** in Dohuk governorate. The project is restoring a critical piece of public infrastructure that serves refugee-hosting areas and surrounding communities. Once completed, the plant will treat more than 1,000 cubic metres of wastewater per day to national standards, improving public health, protecting the environment and enabling the reuse of treated water for agricultural irrigation.

- **So far in 2026, 2,377 Syrian refugees and asylum seekers have voluntarily returned from Iraq to Syria, including 358 individuals in August**. Of those who returned in August, 325 did so with UNHCR support. As part of the facilitated return process, UNHCR provides Syrian refugees with cash assistance of IQD 130,000 (USD 100) per person to help with logistical costs, with additional financial support available for the most vulnerable.

- In August, the Legal Task Force in Al-Amal – made up of UNHCR, Intersos, UNICEF, Terre des Hommes, IOM and government authorities - **conducted four reverse missions bringing families from Al-Amal Centre to Mosul Civil Affairs Directorate for the purposes of processing National Unified ID (NUIDs) applications.** This enabled 161 Iraqi returnees to apply for NUIDs. Since the beginning of 2026, 55 such reverse missions have facilitated 2,801 applications and led to 2,069 NUIDs being issued.

## 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 | Canada | Denmark | España con ACNUR | European Union | Finland | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Japan for UNHCR | Luxembourg | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) | Norway | Private Donors | Spain | Sweden | Sweden for UNHCR | Switzerland | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe

**For more info:** Lilly Carlisle, Senior External Relations Officer, carlisle@unhcr.org