UNHCR IRAQ
MONTHLY UPDATE
August 2025

"The small income I make helps me support my family and cover my children's needs." Hawas fled his hometown in northeast Syria in 2019 because of ongoing fighting. He brought with him a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a wide range of skills gained from running a food shop back home. In 2024, UNHCR built 45 new shops in Gawilan and gave them to those who needed additional support to find livelihood opportunities. Hawas was one of the beneficiaries of this project, Read his story here.

CONTEXT

Iraq generously hosts around 343,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, the majority (88%) of whom are Syrians. Approximately 82% of this population resides in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. While most refugees and asylum-seekers live in urban and peri-urban settings, around 30% remain in nine refugee camps across the country. Additionally, some 102,000 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) live in 20 IDP camps located within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

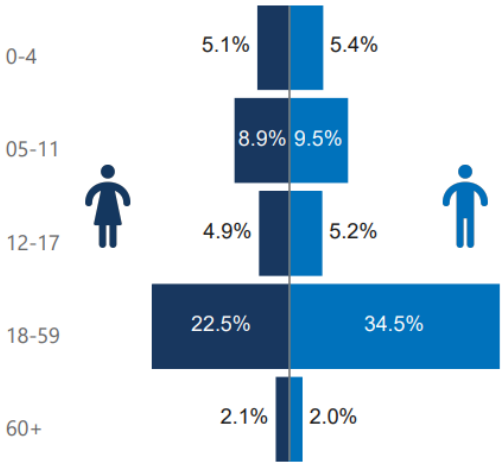
UNHCR works with the Government of Iraq and partners to support the access of refugees and asylum-seekers to protection and their inclusion in public services, such as education and healthcare, as well as their access to economic opportunities and in advancing solutions.

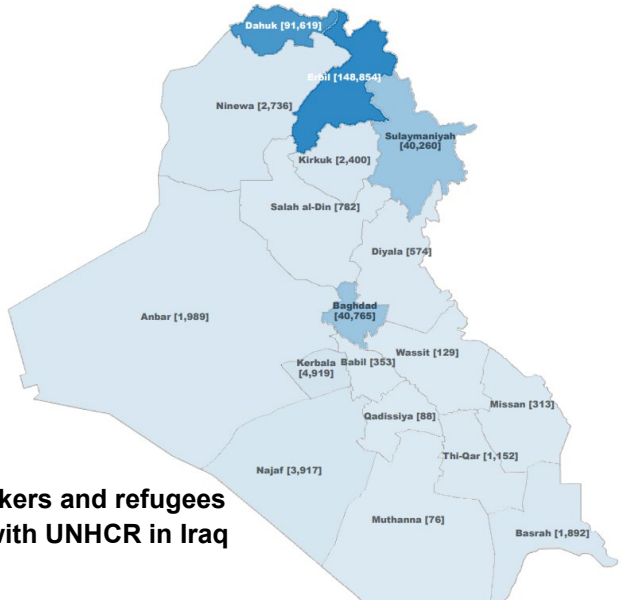
27% Funded

of the $158.5 million required by UNHCR in 2025 to protect people forced to flee in Iraq

POPULATION AT A GLANCE

Age & Gender Breakdown





Asylum-seekers and refugees registered with UNHCR in Iraq

AUGUST MONTHLY ACHIEVEMENTS

Over 15,600
Refugees and asylum-seekers newly registered or with registration verified with UNHCR. This process allows refugees to access government-issued documentation and protects against refoulement.

287
Refugees and asylum-seekers released from detention thanks to legal support and interventions

200
Refugees and asylum-seekers prevented from deportation thanks to legal support and advocacy.

1,357
Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned voluntarily to Syria.

146
Refugees departed to different third countries through resettlement.

WHAT'S NEW IN IRAQ…

- In August, UNHCR continued its technical support to the Government of Iraq on the implementation of law and policy around asylum through **organizing a workshop for Residency Department Officers** from various governorates across Iraq. This was done in partnership with the Ministry of Interior's Permanent Committee for Refugee Affairs, as part of an agreement signed in April. The workshop focused on the use of UNHCR's Verify Plus App, which helps officials quickly check if someone's UNHCR certificate is real. This is important as refugees and asylum-seekers who hold a UNHCR certificate should not be arrested or detained on immigration-related charges. However, UNHCR continues to observe a concerning trend of such arrests across Iraq. By using the app, authorities can prevent detention and support the release of refugees and asylum seekers who may have been inadvertently detained on such charges.

- **In August, UNHCR and its legal partner INTERSOS continued to help Iraqi returnees from North-East Syria at Al-Amal Centre get their national ID documents.** This included transporting 300 people to Mosul's Civil Affairs Directorate to submit applications for their documents. So far this year, 1,449 Iraqi returnees have received their IDs thanks to this support. Applications for an additional 2,342 returnees in Al-Amal have also been prepared by UNHCR and INTERSOS and are ready to be submitted to the government authorities so that they can get their IDs. In addition, **839 Iraqi returnees (230 households) arrived in Al-Amal Centre from Al-Hol camp North-East Syria on 28 August** as part of the 29th round of return movements led by the Government of Iraq since May 2021 and 11th return movement so far in 2025. UNHCR's partner, INTERSOS began a legal needs assessment of this group shortly after their arrival once the families had settled in the centre.

- **1,357 registered Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers returned home in August through the Peshkhabour border crossing and Erbil international airport.** The figure reflects a 33% decrease in the number of returns compared to July. However, it still represents a notable increase relative to the earlier part of the year. This is primarily attributed to the decision of the Kurdistan Regional Government to waive overstay fines for Syrians and the summer school holidays. UNHCR Iraq continues to provide counselling and information to Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers considering voluntary return.

- In August, **UNHCR submitted its comments on the fourth draft of the updated Refugee Law to the Iraqi State Council.** This is part of UNHCR's ongoing support to the Government of Iraq in developing a new, comprehensive refugee law that will replace the 1971 Political Refugee Act and better reflect international standards. Once the State Council completes its review, the draft law will be submitted to Parliament.

- **UNHCR completed renovations at across five schools in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in August to help improve learning environments for refugee and host community children** as part of its support for the Refugee Education Integration Policy. In Erbil, 6 classrooms were renovated at Pirash Primary School and Baherka School. In Sulaymaniyah, 8 classrooms were renovated at Sarsyan and Hajiawa schools. UNHCR also completed the construction of four new classrooms at Mamzawa Primary School in Erbil.

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