

PROVIDING CASH ASSISTANCE TO VULNERABLE REFUGEES IN IRAQ

The Iraqi economy remains fragile, with the price of basic items like rice and flour having increased by 14.5% in February 2024 compared to the mid-way point in 2023. As a result, according to a UNHCR survey in Iraq, **98% of refugee families are in debt just to afford food, send their children to school and pay rent.**

Even if most refugees are well accepted by the host community, can access public services such as healthcare and education and can pursue livelihood opportunities, particularly in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), others – especially women heading a family, persons with disability or elderly persons – **struggle to make ends meet and live in dire poverty.**

Most refugees rely on irregular daily labour opportunities in the informal sector. On average, refugee households in Iraq make IQD 455,000 (USD 350) per month, less than the national poverty line of approximately IQD 554,405 (USD 423) for a typical household that does not benefit from other social support. This means that refugees do not have enough to afford basic necessities, let alone to improve their current situation or save for the future.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

In 2024, **UNHCR needs USD 73,000,000 to provide cash assistance to 26,500 refugee households** identified as most at risk in Iraq. Refugee households will receive IQD 300,000 per month (USD 230) over 12 months, to meet their most basic needs.

Your support is urgently needed. Otherwise, refugees may be forced to resort to desperate coping measures such as reducing their food intake, early and forced marriages and entering into a spiralling cycle of debt. A smaller number even reported sending children under 12 to work in factories, sell items in the streets or as cleaners in restaurants.

WHY DO REFUGEES NEED CASH ASSISTANCE?



The price of a typical **food** basket increased by 18% in 2023 compared to 2022. The majority of refugees – 93% – reported having to buy food on credit.



Some 16% of refugee households reported living in constant fear of being evicted, as they cannot pay **rent**.



30% of refugees cannot send their children to **school** because they cannot afford schooling costs like transportation and textbooks.



63% of refugee households said they could not get specialised **healthcare** not available in the public health system, due to high costs.

WITH YOU, WE CAN CONTINUE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In 2023, UNHCR in Iraq provided cash assistance of IQD 300,000 (USD 230) for a period of 12 months to **58,400 refugees** assessed as being among the most vulnerable, of which around 34% were single women heading a family.

- ✓ About **79%** of refugee households met half of their basic needs, which helped reduce their feeling of stress and improve their living conditions.
- ✓ Over **71%** of refugee households reported a reduction in their overall debt, while 8% reported having been able to pay back all their debts.
- ✓ **43%** of refugee households reported an improvement in their food security, including improved access to nutritious food, increased quantity and variety of food and enhanced ability to afford essential groceries.
- ✓ **15%** of refugee households reported being able to enroll their children in school after receiving support, and three out of the four households reported that their children stopped working.



UNHCR IN IRAQ: Iraq hosts over 300,000 refugees, of whom 90.2% are Kurdish Syrians. The majority reside in the KR-I. About 67.3% of Syrian refugees reside in urban areas and 32.7% are in nine refugee camps across the KR-I. There are over 20,670 female-headed refugee households and 311 child headed households, who are extremely vulnerable. Ninety-four per cent of Syrian refugees indicate they do not intend to return to Syria in the next 12 months due to lack security, limited public services and livelihoods opportunities at home.

For more information, please contact:

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