

Iraq

June 2020

52,790

IDP and refugee families (**305,005 individuals**) have received COVID-19 cash assistance since April

35,126

Refugee and IDP women and girls have received sanitary kits since April

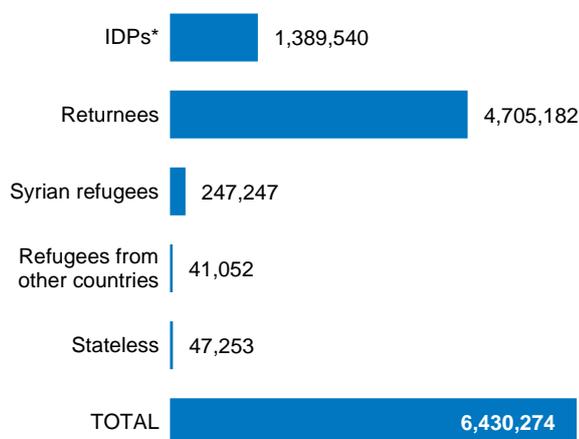
5,387

Refugees and IDPs received remote legal assistance in April

+375,000

Persons of concern have benefitted from COVID-19 awareness raising since April

POPULATION OF CONCERN

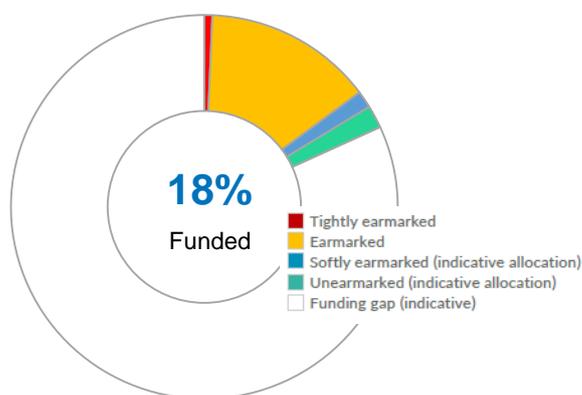


* Internally displaced persons (IDPs) since 2014, as of 29 April 2020, in accordance with IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

FUNDING (AS OF 4 JUNE 2020)

USD 538.6 M

requested for the Iraq operation for 2020



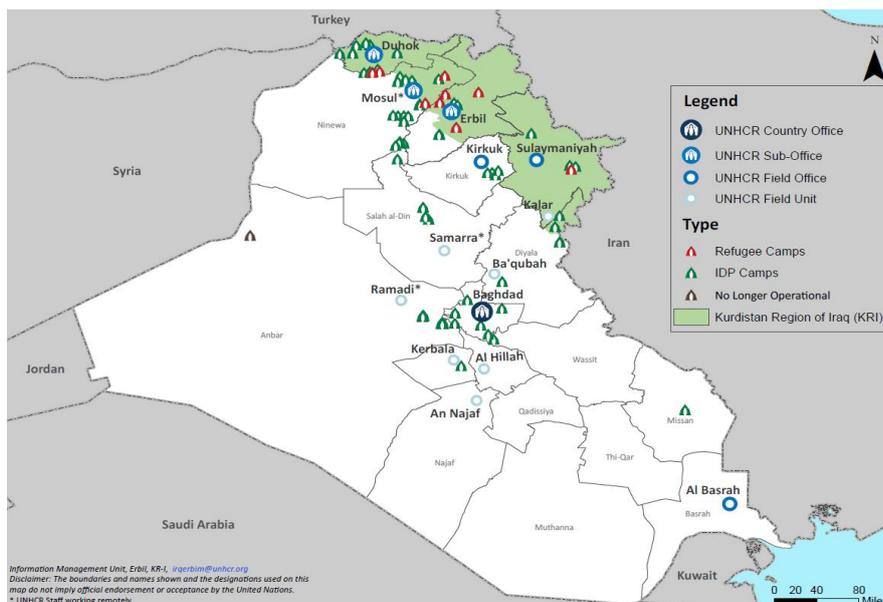
UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

- 357 National Staff
- 119 International Staff

Offices:

- 7 Offices located in Baghdad, Basrah, Duhok, Erbil, Kirkuk, Mosul and Sulaymaniyah
- Field presence in Hilla (Babylon), Ba'quba (Diyala), Kerbala (Kerbala), Ramadi, Fallujah, Qaim (Anbar), Najaf (Najaf), Tikrit (Salah al-Din), and Khanaqin (Diyala) based in Kalar (Sulaymaniyah)



UNHCR produces regular updates on its response in Iraq, which can be found at [UNHCR Global Focus](#)

Working with Partners

- Through the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), UNHCR leads the humanitarian response for Syrian refugees in Iraq in close coordination with humanitarian actors and government authorities to protect and assist refugees and asylum-seekers, and to prevent statelessness. Under the 3RP, UNHCR leads the Protection, Shelter, and Basic Needs sectors, and co-leads Health with WHO and WASH with UNICEF.
- UNHCR is engaged in the inter-agency response to internal displacement and returns. UNHCR is leading the Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), and Shelter/Non-Food Items (also known as core relief items or CRIs) clusters, as part of the cluster coordination mechanism for the IDP response. UNHCR also co-leads with UNFPA and WFP the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2020-2024) Priority Working Group “Achieving Social Cohesion, Protection, and Inclusion”, and supports the National Social Protection Forum chaired by the Ministry of Planning and co-chaired by the World Bank.

Main Activities

Protection

- **Refugees** – UNHCR coordinates with the government, UN agencies, and local and international partners the response for all refugees in Iraq, including activities related to: registration; protection monitoring and advocacy; legal aid; psychosocial support; child protection; prevention, risk mitigation and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA); and resettlement to third countries which is pursued for a small number of refugees with acute vulnerabilities.
- **IDPs** – Direct interventions are undertaken with local, regional, and national authorities to ensure that the displaced can access safety in camps and non-camp locations. Protection monitoring teams have been deployed to identify protection and assistance needs, which directly inform protection responses, including: provision of legal assistance on a range of issues such as missing civil documentation; prevention, risk mitigation, and response to SGBV and SEA; child protection; the reunification of separated families; and the coordination of IDP protection responses with the government, NGOs and other UN agencies.
- **Returnees** – Durable solutions, including voluntary, safe, and dignified return are a strategic priority for UNHCR and the humanitarian community in Iraq. UNHCR monitors the return of displaced persons to their areas of origin and advocates with authorities when there are incidents of barred returns, risks of forced or coerced returns to areas that are unsafe due to contamination of explosive remnants of war (ERW) and improvised explosive devices (IED), presence of militias, widespread destruction of property, and absence of critical infrastructure and basic services.

Shelter and NFIs

- UNHCR provides shelter assistance, core relief items, and coordinates with humanitarian actors to complement the work of local authorities to improve living conditions of IDPs and refugees in camp and non-camp settings throughout Iraq. Over 275,000 IDPs are hosted in 62 camps across Iraq, and around 100,000 Syrian refugees reside in ten camps throughout the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). Currently, 99 per cent of Syrian refugees live in KR-I, out of whom 41 per cent reside in camps and the remainder in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- As the CCCM Cluster lead, UNHCR works with local authorities and humanitarian actors to provide coordinated services to IDPs. In camps, this translates to ensuring adequate shelter, delivery of food and water, presence of education and health facilities, as well as capacity building for camp management actors and service providers. Partners' mobile teams provide CCCM services to camps and out-of-camp settlements throughout Iraq. UNHCR, alongside other humanitarian partners, are advising on a government-led process for the consolidation of camps in line with the Principled Returns Framework.

Basic Needs

- UNHCR assists vulnerable displaced and refugee families to cover their most basic needs through the distribution of cash assistance. In areas where markets are functioning and accessible to beneficiaries, unconditional cash provides an efficient way to meet the needs of those affected by displacement, allowing families to prioritize their own needs while upholding their dignity and making them less likely to resort to harmful coping strategies.

COVID-19 in Iraq

As of 6 June, the Iraqi Ministry of Health has confirmed 11,098 COVID-19 cases throughout the country, with 318 fatalities, most of which in Baghdad, Basrah and Kerbala. 90 per cent of the cases have been recorded in the centre and south of Iraq, with the remaining 10 per cent of cases detected in KR-I. To date, the Government of Iraq (GoI) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) have conducted over 290,000 tests.

Since the beginning of the outbreak, the GoI and the KRG have established a series of measures to prevent the spread of the virus; these include: strict curfew measures throughout the country, closure of border crossing points, suspension of international flights, and disinfection campaigns, among others. These actions were slightly eased at the beginning of May but have been rigidly re-imposed at the end of May due to an increase in numbers of cases. While UNHCR, NGOs, and other entities delivering humanitarian assistance are, in principle, excluded from these measures, the capacity to deliver support has been slightly affected, and the overall impact on the protection environment of refugees, IDPs, returnees, and stateless persons has been significant.

The main protection risks encountered by UNHCR's people of concern include the closure of borders preventing movement of refugees, challenges to access camps and reach PoCs in certain locations, lack of livelihood opportunities and its socio-economic consequences, rise in the prices of basic food items, increased risk of eviction, the rise in domestic violence, and halt of education activities, among others. Most refugees and IDPs across Iraq live on daily wages, and their inability to access job opportunities due to the current health crisis is having a profound impact on their capacity to meet their most basic needs. The majority of requests and complaints by PoCs received through feedback mechanisms related to cash assistance and food support.

UNHCR Response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Iraq

Through regular contact with authorities at the federal, regional and governorate level, UNHCR has ensured that all PoCs are included in national COVID-19 response plans. This guarantees that any vulnerable displaced individual will receive assistance in case of contracting the virus. At the moment, public facilities throughout the country continue offering services to all affected cases. UNHCR has adopted new distribution modalities to ensure assistance continues to be delivered, including door-to-door distributions and telephone modalities for legal counselling, protection monitoring, and other activities.

In addition to regular activities, UNHCR is implementing the following series of measures across the country to respond to the COVID-19 crisis:

- **Access to basic hygiene items:** UNHCR is currently providing IDP and refugee families in camps and in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas with cash assistance of IQD 240,000 (USD 200) so they can afford basic hygiene items. As of the end of May, UNHCR had provided cash support to over 55,000 refugee and IDP families throughout Iraq, along with over 35,000 sanitary kits for women and girls.
- **Health awareness:** UNHCR is conducting ongoing health awareness-raising sessions on transmission and prevention of COVID-19 in refugee and IDP camps, as well as in registration centres and some urban areas. Posters and leaflets are distributed through camp management, PHCCs, and community outreach volunteers;
- **Provision of medical Protective Personnel Equipment (PPE):** UNHCR is procuring medical PPE, masks with filters, and disposable shoes to use at borders and in refugee camps. Should funds permit it, UNHCR will procure other protective equipment such as surgical masks, gloves, and disposable medical gowns for daily use by medical staff at Primary Health Care Centres in refugee camps and other sanitary items to public health institutions.
- **Provision of additional specialized medical equipment:** Based on consultations with health authorities, as well as other agencies and partners in the country, UNHCR will provide support as needed to ensure public health facilities have the capacity to provide appropriate care and case management of suspected COVID-19 cases for PoCs.

UNHCR in Iraq is urgently appealing for US\$35.7 million to scale-up its activities in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, as reflected in the UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan. Since the launch of the UNHCR Global COVID-19 Emergency Appeal, UNHCR Iraq has received generous contributions of US\$ 6.5 million from the **United States of America**, US\$1.5 million from **Japan**, and US\$ 135,000 from **Badr Jafar**. UNHCR is immensely grateful for this swift support to cover the most immediate health, protection, and basic needs of vulnerable displaced families in Iraq.

At this critical time, humanitarian action to save lives and alleviate the suffering of vulnerable populations remains imperative. UNHCR further appeals to donors not to deprioritize funding for regular programmes and thanks major donors of un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as donors who have contributed directly to Iraq operation in 2020 (as of 28 May)

Canada | Czech Republic | Denmark | Eid Charity | European Union | Finland | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Kuwait | Luxembourg | Netherlands | Norway | Other Private Donors | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

Baghdad: Marwa Hashem, Reporting Officer, hashemma@unhcr.org Alejandro Staller, Associate Reporting Officer, staller@unhcr.org
Erbil: Yanet Bahena, External Relations Officer, bahena@unhcr.org