

# Iraq – Complex Emergency

MAY 5, 2023

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<p><b>2.5</b> MILLION</p> <p>People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance</p> <p><i>UN – March 2022</i></p>	<p><b>991,000</b></p> <p>Number of People Intended to Receive Assistance in 2023</p> <p><i>UN – February 2023</i></p>	<p><b>1.2</b> MILLION</p> <p>Estimated Number of People Internally Displaced in Iraq</p> <p><i>UNHCR – December 2022</i></p>	<p><b>180,000</b></p> <p>Number of Internally Displaced People Residing in Camps</p> <p><i>UN – February 2023</i></p>	<p><b>261,929</b></p> <p>Number of Syrian Refugees in Iraq</p> <p><i>UNHCR – March 2023</i></p>
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- On April 19, Gol officials closed Ninewa Governorate’s Jed’dah 5 camp, one of the last remaining sites in federally controlled Iraq.
- Despite improved access to public services and standard of living from 2012 to 2022, wide gaps in the quality of public services continue to undermine the sustainability of returnee integration, according to IOM.
- WFP coordinates with the Gol to modernize the PDS—the country’s largest food subsidy and social safety net program—to ensure all Iraqis maintain access to social protection.



## TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

For the Iraq Response in FY 2023

USAID/BHA<sup>1</sup>

\$6,154,200

*For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 5*

**Total**

**\$6,154,200**

<sup>1</sup> USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### **Gol Closes Federal Iraq's Last Remaining Displacement Camp**

On April 19, Government of Iraq (Gol) officials closed Jed'dah 5 camp in Ninewa Governorate's Qayyarah town, where 342 internally displaced households—more than 1,500 individuals—had been sheltering on the day of the camp's closure, according to the UN. The sudden closure of the camp conflicted with information Iraq's Ministry of Migration and Displacement shared previously with humanitarian partners that it would close Jed'dah 5 within 60 days. The UN Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq issued a statement on April 19 calling for Gol authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of the recently departed camp residents, the majority of whom are children.

Following years of Gol efforts to close displacement sites across the country to promote returns, Jed'dah 5 served as the last remaining internally displaced person (IDP) camp in federal Iraq. However, 25 IDP camps in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) and Ninewa's Jed'dah 1 camp in federal Iraq, which hosts Iraqis repatriated from northeast Syria's Al Hol camp, remained open as of early May. Humanitarian actors have raised concerns that the camp closures leave vulnerable families, including many women and children, unable to integrate in their areas of origin and at risk of marginalization due to perceived affiliations with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), according to international media.

### **WFP Coordinates With Gol to Reform Iraqi Social Safety Net Program**

The UN World Food Program (WFP) signed a letter of cooperation with the Gol's Ministry of Trade (MoT) on March 26, formalizing their collaboration to reform Iraq's Public Distribution System (PDS)—the Gol's largest food subsidy and social safety net program—and ensure that vulnerable groups maintain access to social protection. Between January and March, WFP and the MoT digitalized the PDS for the entirety of Najaf Governorate, where nearly 300,000 people had transitioned from the older paper-based system to the new digital system as of March 31. WFP had provided registration support to more than 108,000 individuals in Najaf, or 30 percent of the governorate's population, during January alone. The improved system allows beneficiaries to update critical information, such as their current location, without having to physically visit a PDS office, allowing IDPs greater access to support. WFP's support for the PDS is part of broader effort of UN organizations to work with the Gol and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to hand over humanitarian operations and enable the Gol and KRG to assume responsibility for the provision of life-saving services, such as emergency food assistance, to conflict-affected populations in Iraq.

### **Returnees Face Persistent Challenges Despite Improved Access to Services**

While returnees across Iraq continue to face challenges in reintegration, including social tension and insecurity, their access to basic services has largely increased since 2012, according to an International Organization for Migration (IOM) assessment compiling data on returnee populations across 14 districts with the largest number of returnees between 2012 and 2022. Overall, the standard of living and access to public services improved from 2012 to 2022, with only 1 percent of returnees living in houses with poor physical conditions, such as informal shelters, tents, or unfinished buildings, as of April, according to IOM. In addition, electricity and water supply for returnees had returned to or exceeded 2012 levels. However, returnees continued to report significant gaps in the quality of public services, with nearly 80 percent of returnee households reporting insufficient electricity supply, and more than 60 percent reporting challenges in accessing adequate education and health care services, citing the lack of educators and limited medicines and treatments offered in health facilities. Furthermore, while levels of employment have largely returned to pre-conflict levels, economic insecurity persists, with one in three

returnee households reporting having insufficient money to purchase food or other essential items at the time of the assessment.

## KEY FIGURES



**47,600**

Civil documentation issued with support from State/PRM partner UNHCR in 2022



**6**

Number of USG implementing partners providing WASH assistance

## U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

### PROTECTION

Addressing protection concerns remains a top priority for the humanitarian response in Iraq, with U.S. Government (USG) partners supporting a range of critical protection initiatives for host communities, IDPs, returnees, and Syrian refugees that range from community-level prevention and referral to individualized case management. USAID/BHA supports IOM, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), and three non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to provide protection services, including activities to prevent and respond to protection risks among children, gender-based violence prevention and response, legal assistance for civil documentation, mental health and psychosocial support, and mine risk education. With funding to IOM, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and NGO partners, the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) promotes durable solutions for displaced populations in Iraq by facilitating sustainable integration programs and helping to provide accurate information on security conditions and livelihood opportunities in host communities and areas of origin.

### WASH

With USG support, IOM, UNHCR, WHO, and NGO partners are providing essential water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services for vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas of Iraq. USG partners are providing safe drinking water through water trucking services; supporting operations and maintenance for WASH infrastructure in IDP camps; rehabilitating WASH infrastructure outside of camps; and promoting sanitary living conditions that enhance dignity, limit the spread of communicable diseases, and protect communities. USG partners are also responding to ongoing outbreaks of communicable diseases by enhancing community-level surveillance, conducting hygiene awareness campaigns, and distributing hygiene kits to vulnerable populations. In addition, USG partners have installed handwashing stations in camps, informal settlements, and public areas in out-of-camp locations and rehabilitated WASH facilities in primary health care centers across eight Iraqi governorates.



**512,238**

Number of health consultations provided from July through December 2022

## HEALTH

With USG support, NGOs and UN partners IOM, UNHCR, and WHO continue to reach conflict-affected populations with primary health care services in Iraq. USG partners are improving the quality and accessibility of primary health care services—including mental health care services—through staff capacity-building, supporting staff salaries, and ensuring the availability of essential equipment and medicines. In addition, USG partners are responding to communicable disease outbreaks by implementing risk communication and community engagement activities; strengthening disease surveillance systems; and training medical professionals on screening, identification, triage, and treatment of suspected cases.



**3**

Number of USG implementing partners providing shelter and settlements services

## SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

The USG supports IOM, UNHCR, and one NGO partner to provide critical shelter services for displaced Iraqis and refugees residing in Iraq. USG partners are distributing shelter kits and other relief commodities, as well as supporting coordination and management services at camps and informal settlements. Partner organizations are also supporting the rehabilitation of conflict-damaged houses, upgrading unfinished or abandoned buildings, and improving camp and informal settlement infrastructure to provide safe and dignified living conditions that align with humanitarian standards.

## FOOD SECURITY

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, with USAID/BHA support, WFP has delivered emergency food assistance in the form of cash transfers for food to populations in need in Iraq, reaching the most vulnerable IDPs and Syrian refugees living in camp settings, while also bolstering local markets.

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- The USG has been responding to the current humanitarian crisis in Iraq since January 2014, when a surge by ISIS caused mass displacement as civilians fled to areas of relative safety, including the IKR, to escape violence. Nearly 5 million former IDPs, the majority of people displaced since 2014, had returned to their areas of origin or resettled in other locations as of December 31, 2022.
- Approximately 3 million people required humanitarian assistance in Iraq in 2022, according to UNICEF. Climatic shocks, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, economic challenges, ongoing insecurity, and protracted displacement continue to adversely affect Iraq's IDP, host community, and returnee populations at a time when the capacity of both the GoI and KRG to respond to humanitarian needs remains challenged by budgetary constraints.
- On November 6, 2022, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Alina L. Romanowski redeclared a disaster in Iraq for FY 2023 due to the ongoing complex emergency and humanitarian crisis.

## USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ RESPONSE IN FY 2023<sup>1</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>USAID/BHA</b>			
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments	Countrywide	\$200,000
WFP	Food Assistance—Cash Transfers for Food	Countrywide	\$5,900,000
	Program Support		\$54,200
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ RESPONSE IN FY 2023</b>			<b>\$6,154,200</b>

<sup>1</sup> Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of May 5, 2023.

### PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed, often in the affected region; reduce the burden on scarce resources, such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space; can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)