

Iraq – Complex Emergency

JUNE 3, 2024

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<p>2.5 MILLION</p> <p>People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance</p> <p><i>WFP – March 2024</i></p>	<p>140,184</p> <p>Number of IDPs in Central and Southern Iraq Due to Climate-Related Factors Since 2019</p> <p><i>IOM – May 2024</i></p>	<p>1.1 MILLION</p> <p>Estimated Number of IDPs in Iraq</p> <p><i>IOM – April 2024</i></p>	<p>157,000</p> <p>Number of IDPs Sheltering in Camps</p> <p><i>UNHCR – April 2024</i></p>	<p>280,000</p> <p>Number of Syrian Refugees in Iraq</p> <p><i>UNHCR – April 2024</i></p>
---	---	--	--	---

- The Government of Iraq’s resolution directing the closure of Iraq’s remaining 22 IDP camps, all in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, by July 30 risks exacerbating humanitarian needs among the more than 150,000 individuals currently sheltering in the camps.
- IDPs returning to their areas of origin continue to experience a lack of livelihood opportunities, protection risks, and poor WASH infrastructure, likely exacerbating humanitarian needs, as of May.
- MHPSS needs remain high among IDPs and returnees in Ninewa Governorate, according to an IOM survey.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

For the Iraq Response in FY 2024

USAID/BHA¹

\$3,569,780

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

Total

\$3,569,780

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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

IDP Camp Closure Plan Risks Exacerbating Humanitarian Needs

The resolution passed by Government of Iraq's (GoI) Council of Ministers (CoM) in January, which includes a plan to close and halt services in Iraq's remaining 22 internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) by July 30, could adversely affect an estimated 150,000 Iraqi IDPs who are currently living in the camps, according to humanitarian actors. Approximately 90 percent of IDPs in camps are from Ninewa Governorate, according to the nongovernmental organization (NGO) Rehabilitation, Education, and Community Health (REACH). From September to December 2023, over half of all returnees from IDP camps went to Sinjar District, which remains largely decimated after conflict between the Islamic State and international coalitions between 2014 and 2017 destroyed 80 percent of the civilian infrastructure and 70 percent of houses, according to USG partner the International Organization for Migration (IOM). As a result of the lack of public services, housing, and job opportunities, over half of all failed returns—where displaced peoples returned to their areas of origin, but then departed again—at the end of 2023 occurred in Sinjar. Following the CoM resolution in January, the GoI's Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) outlined details of the proposed IDP camp closure plan, including an aid package of 4 million Iraqi dinars, approximately \$3,000, for IDP households in the camps to return to their areas of origin, integrate, or relocate outside the camps. However, IDP families, including many who have already returned from camps in Sulaymaniya Governorate to Salah al-Din Governorate, have indicated that the amount provided is insufficient to restart their lives, according to the UN. Despite GoI attempts to incentivize voluntary returns, the majority of Iraqis displaced from Sinjar have not returned to their areas of origin since hostilities ceased: 65 percent of towns and villages across the district hosted one-half or less of their populations prior to the conflict as of April.

As part of the implementation of the Government of Iraq's plan to cease all services in IDP camps in the IKR, MoMD relocated IDPs from Tazade and Ashti camps in Sulaymaniya Governorate in recent months, primarily to their areas of origin in Salah al-Din Governorate. In April, the Tazade IDP camp officially closed. Humanitarian actors noted that the Ashti IDP camp will likely empty in coming months, following the end of student exams. According to humanitarian actors, IDPs across all camps continue to report uncertainties and stress about how the IDP camp closure plan and CoM decision will affect them.

Iraqi Returnees Continue to Experience Unmet Humanitarian Needs Upon Arrival to Areas of Origin

Iraqi IDPs who have recently returned to their areas of origin amid the GoI's push to close IDP camps experienced inadequate housing, limited livelihood opportunities, and poor infrastructure, resulting in increased humanitarian needs, according to humanitarian partners. Some governorates have made improvements to basic service provision, including advancements to electricity services and water supply in Diyala Governorate's Khanaqin and Al Muqadadiyah districts; improvements to electricity and water supply in Baghdad Governorate's Tarmia District; and some reconstruction of destroyed houses in Kirkuk Governorate's Al-Hawiga District. In other governorates, however, returnees have experienced a deterioration of living conditions, including insufficient electricity supply, damaged or destroyed housing, and insufficient water supply in Ninewa; and lack of employment opportunities, limited basic service provision, and poor health infrastructure in Salah al-Din Governorate. If humanitarian actors are unable to address immediate needs of returning populations, returnees will continue to experience poor conditions despite returning from IDP camps, likely generating additional humanitarian needs among an already vulnerable population and creating potential risk of secondary displacement.

New Assessment Highlights Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Needs Among IDPs in Ninewa Governorate

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) needs remained high among IDP communities, host communities, and returnees in western areas of Ninewa Governorate as of December 2023, according to a May IOM assessment which interviewed a total of 280 individuals who were primarily IDPs or returnees, including caregivers, health care workers, host community members, local authorities, members of civil society organizations, and persons with disabilities. Approximately 96 percent of respondents indicated a prevalence of stress and unease within their communities, due in part to years of prolonged displacement and struggles with the enduring psychosocial consequences of conflict, including anxiety, disrupted social support networks, fear, and trauma. The assessment found more than 30 percent of returnees had experienced risks and protection violations—including abductions—following a return to their places of origin, which indicates the high level of persistent risk and uncertainties that individuals and families encounter during or after displacement. Furthermore, participants experienced challenges in accessing basic services, particularly health care in remote areas. Priority needs include access to drinking water and electricity, employment and livelihood opportunities, health care, and shelter support for IDP communities.

Gol Facilitates Additional Returns from Al Hol Displacement Camp

Gol authorities continue to repatriate Iraqi nationals from the Al Hol displacement camp in northeastern Syria to the Jeddah One transit camp (JI) in Iraq. As of February, Al Hol, housed more than 43,000 individuals—more than 60 percent of whom are children, according to the UN. Iraqis remain the largest nationality at Al Hol, and Gol authorities continue to repatriate groups of Iraqis from the camp. More than 1,300 Iraqi nationals have been repatriated in 2024, including a group of more than 600 individuals repatriated in March. Humanitarian needs in JI remain high; U.S. Government (USG) humanitarian partners continue to provide protection services, including gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), child protection, education, health services, electronic vouchers for food assistance, and other response programs for individuals residing in JI.

KEY FIGURES



45,567

Number of civil documentation items secured with support from State/PRM partner UNHCR in 2023

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

PROTECTION

Addressing protection concerns remains a top priority for the humanitarian response in Iraq, with USG partners supporting a range of critical protection initiatives for host communities, IDPs, returnees, and Syrian refugees ranging from community-level prevention and referral to individualized case management. The USG supports IOM, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UNHCR, UNICEF, and nine NGO partners to provide protection services, including activities to obtain civil documentation items, prevent and respond to protection risks among children, GBV prevention and response, MHPSS, legal assistance, and mine risk education. To promote durable solutions for displaced populations in Iraq, State/PRM partners, including IOM and UNHCR, facilitate voluntary movement and sustainable reintegration programs and help provide information, referrals, and a range of services in host communities and areas of origin.



35,543

Consultations provided to Iraqi returnees in Jeddah One camp by State/PRM partner WHO between July 2023 and April 2024

HEALTH

With USG support, IOM continues 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, USAID/BHA supports World Health Organization (WHO) and IOM to respond 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. State/PRM also supports WHO to provide a range of health services to Syrian refugees and support a health clinic in Ninewa’s Jeddah One transit camp providing care to Iraqi returnees from Al Hol camp in Syria. At Jeddah One camp, WHO provides primary health services, secondary health care referrals, and response to communicable disease outbreaks.



3

Partners supported with USG-funded WASH activities

WASH

With USG support, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and two 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.



8

Governorates where USG partner IOM is providing shelter and settlement support

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

The USG supports IOM 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. Partners continue to support 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.

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 2023.
- Approximately 2.5 million people require humanitarian assistance in Iraq in 2024, according to WFP. Climatic shocks, 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 Gol and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to respond to humanitarian needs remains challenged by budgetary constraints.
- On November 6, 2023, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Alina L. Romanowski issued a redeclaration of humanitarian need in Iraq for FY 2024 due to the ongoing complex emergency and humanitarian crisis.

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ RESPONSE IN FY 2024¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA			
WFP	Food Assistance—Cash Transfers for Food	Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaimaniya	\$2,180,800
	Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice	Countrywide	\$819,200
Implementing Partner	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments; WASH	Countrywide	\$500,000
	Program Support		\$69,780
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$3,569,780
TOTAL USG FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ RESPONSE IN FY 2024			\$3,569,780

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of June 3, 2024.

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.
- 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
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at 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)