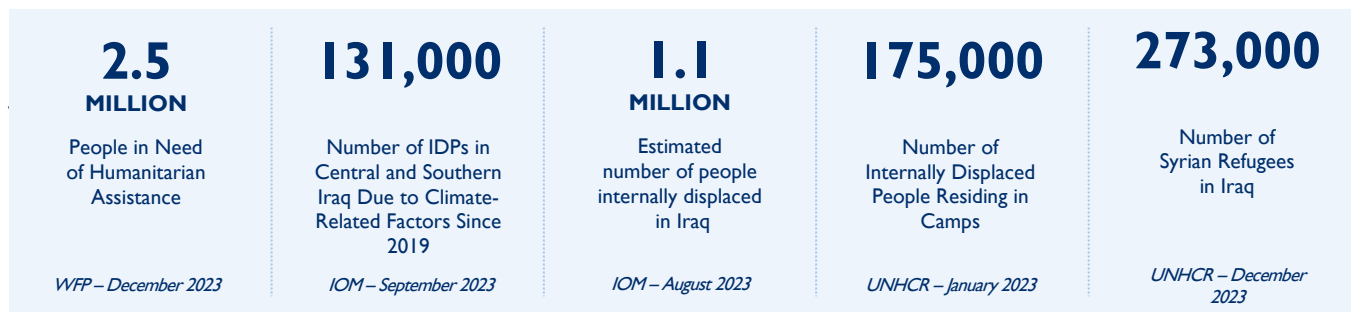


Iraq – Complex Emergency

JANUARY 22, 2024

SITUATION AT A GLANCE



- IDPs sheltering in informal settlements across Iraq face increased risk of eviction. GoI authorities had announced impending evictions for more than 10,000 households countrywide as of November, according to UNHCR and IOM.
- Approximately 4.84 million IDPs returned to their area of origin between 2014 and December 2023, but many returnees require ongoing humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs, according to UNHCR.
- Climatic shocks have displaced nearly 131,000 people across 12 governorates in Iraq’s central and southern regions as of mid-September 2023, according to IOM.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

For the Iraq Response in FY 2024

USAID/BHA¹ \$3,500,000

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

Total \$3,500,000

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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

IDPs Face Increased Risk of Evictions from Informal Settlements and Camp Closures

The Government of Iraq (GoI) has increased eviction notices for internally displaced persons (IDPs) sheltering in informal sites in recent months as it perceives the sites as prolonging internal displacement in the country, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In August 2023, the GoI issued notices to IDPs to vacate the Al Furasn site in Salah al-Din Governorate's Tikrit District, where approximately 4,000 households had been sheltering, noting that the land was designated for agriculture. At least 10,200 households in informal sites had received eviction notices countrywide as of November 2023, IOM reports. Approximately 55 percent of affected households were in Ninewa Governorate and 42 percent in Salah al-Din; as of December 2023, an estimated two percent of affected households—approximately 220 families—had been evicted. IDPs across Iraq continue to face urgent humanitarian needs, lack of access to basic services, and poor conditions in camps, with more than 60 percent of IDP households reporting livelihood opportunities as their highest-priority need in a recent USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)-supported survey of nearly 10,000 IDP households.

Despite ongoing needs among displaced populations in Iraq, IDP camps throughout the country face an uncertain future due to the GoI's stated desire to end prolonged displacement. The GoI and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) have been working with humanitarian agencies to facilitate the return of displaced households and consolidate certain IDP camps. In November 2023, the GoI closed Qorato IDP camp, which resulted in households returning to their areas of origin and some remaining households moving to nearby Tazade IDP, according to IOM. Similarly, the GoI Ministry of Migration and Displacement, in coordination with the KRG's Department of Migration and Crisis Response, consolidated Arbat IDP camp—the second-largest IDP camp in Sulaimaniya Governorate—with neighboring Ashti IDP camp, on December 14, 2023. Although the Iraqi government closed the last IDP camp in federal Iraq in April 2023, approximately 175,000 IDPs are still living in 23 camps in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR), according to a situational update published by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at the beginning of January 2024. On January 2, the federal ministry announced intentions to close all IDP camps in Iraq—all of which are in the IKR—in the next six months, according to international media, although the KRG had not yet publicly confirmed its plans as of mid-January.

Nearly 5 Million IDPs Return to Areas of Origin; Many Face Urgent Humanitarian Needs

Approximately 5,600 previously displaced individuals arrived in Sinjar and Al Ba'aj districts in Ninewa Governorate between April 1 and October 25, 2023, according to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix, supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM). Returnees to Sinjar and Al Ba'aj—of whom approximately 90 percent were from the Yezidi ethnic group—noted the primary reasons for their return were challenges associated with protracted displacement, a desire to reunite with their community, and the impacts of local animosity against their community in displacement areas. Since 2017, approximately 4.8 million IDPs had returned to their areas of origin across Iraq as of December 2023, but many returnees live in substandard living conditions and require humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs, according to UNHCR.

Climatic Shocks Continue to Drive Displacement, Loss of Livelihood, and Water Scarcity

While the effect of conflict in northern Iraq was the leading cause of displacement in 2023, climatic

shocks such as drought and environmental degradation in central and southern Iraq also resulted in significant displacement. Overall, climate-related factors displaced nearly 131,000 people across more than ten governorates in Iraq's central and southern regions between 2019 and September 2023, according to IOM. Approximately 46 percent of climate-displaced individuals were displaced within their district of origin, while 47 percent of climate-displaced migrants relocated from rural to urban locations. Notably, nearly one-half of these climate-displaced individuals were displaced from Dhi Qar Governorate, followed by an estimated 22 percent from Maysan Governorate and 8 percent from Muthanna and Qadisiya governorates due to adverse environmental conditions. Water-related issues—including damaged or insufficient water infrastructure, low water allocation, persistent drought, and reduced rainfall—also resulted in loss of water security and loss of livelihoods, driving displacement in these regions, according to IOM.

Drought, increased salinity in rivers and tributaries, and land degradation continued to strain livelihoods in rural areas of Iraq during 2023, including adverse effects on agriculture, fishing, and the raising of livestock, IOM reports. A combination of worsening environmental and economic factors—including damming and water diversions, high costs of water trucking, inadequate infrastructure, and shrinking supply of irrigation water—has prompted many individuals to abandon agriculture-based livelihoods and find alternative strategies to cope. Approximately 80 percent of respondents surveyed in farming communities in Kirkuk and Ninewa governorates reported reducing their food expenditures during the past 12 months due to a decrease in available resources within their households, according to a late-November report by nongovernmental organization (NGO) Norwegian Refugee Council. Moreover, environmental degradation has led to tensions among community members over natural resources, especially water and grazing land, IOM reports.

KEY FIGURES



13,022

Number of civil documentation items issued with support from State/PRM partner UNHCR between January and June 2023.

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), and two NGO partners to provide protection services, including activities to prevent and respond to protection risks among children, gender-based violence prevention and response, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and mine risk education. Additionally, State/PRM partner UNHCR continues to provide legal assistance for civil documentation, securing more than 13,000 civil documents between January and June 2023. With funding to IOM, UNHCR, and NGO partners, 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. State/PRM partners also provide a range of protection services to IDPs, returnees, and refugees, including legal assistance, gender-based violence prevention and response, child protection, and MHPSS.



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USG implementing partners providing WASH assistance

WASH

With USG support, five 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.



16,855

Consultations provided to Iraqi returnees in Jeddah-I camp by State/PRM partner WHO between January and May 2023

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, 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. State/PRM also supports the UN World Health Organization (WHO) to provide a range of health services to Syrian refugees and support the sole health clinic in Ninewa’s Jeddah-I transit camp providing care to Iraqi returnees from Al Hol camp in Syria. At Jeddah-I, WHO provides primary health services, secondary health care referrals, and response to communicable disease outbreaks.

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 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 FY 2024, USAID/BHA partner the UN World Food Program (WFP) continues to deliver 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 2023.
- Approximately 2.5 million people required humanitarian assistance in Iraq in 2023, 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 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	HCIMA, WASH	Countrywide	\$500,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$3,500,000
TOTAL USG FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ RESPONSE IN FY 2024			\$3,500,000

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of January 19, 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](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).

