



PHOTO: HAI FOR USAID/IRAQ

SAFE RETURN

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- **Implementing Partners:** Heartland Alliance International with sub-awardees Alliance of Iraqi Minorities (Gusn Al-Zaytoon for Youth and Hammurabi Human Rights Organization), and Vivan Organization
- **Duration:** August 2018 - January 2023
- **Total Estimated Assistance:** \$8.6 million
- **Locations:** Bashiqa, Qaraqosh, and Sinjar and Mosul City

OVERVIEW

The so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) occupation in northern Iraq resulted in mass executions, torture, and forced displacement of religious and ethnic minority groups, including Yazidis, Shabaks, Turkmen, Roma, Chaldeans, Assyrians, and other Christians. Nearly 5,000 Yazidi men were killed in Sinjar alone, and thousands of Yazidi women and children were taken prisoner. Turkmen and Shabaks faced threats, abductions, and even death, and the Christian population in Iraq has been reduced by more than half since 2013. With the liberation of ISIS-controlled territory, approximately five million Iraqis have already returned home, while another 1.2 million remain internally displaced. Many of those

still displaced are minorities from diverse religious and ethnic groups and are survivors of human rights abuses. Helping reintegrate IDPs in northern Iraq remains a unique challenge.

GOALS

USAID's Safe Return project aims to reintegrate IDPs from minority communities in the Ninewa Plain and Sinjar. Through local partners this initiative has established three safe return centers in Bashiqa, Qaraqosh, and Sinjar to provide comprehensive medical, mental health, and psychosocial services as well as assistance with livelihood recovery and legal support. USAID also supports the Smile of Hope torture treatment center in Mosul. To assist IDPs in pursuing justice against their ISIS perpetrators, USAID has trained volunteers to set up reporting systems in their communities and to assist with the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators named in their lawsuits.

KEY RESULTS

- The safe return and Smile of Hope centers have provided comprehensive medical services to nearly 16,000 beneficiaries since the start of the project in 2017.
- Legal support was provided to more than 2,400 survivors of severe human rights abuses.
- Training was provided to 12 civil society organizations to implement community-based advocacy campaigns in coordination with Community Based Monitoring (CBM) teams. With USAID assistance, the CBM teams are mobilizing community demands for better public services, serving as whistleblowers for human right abuses, and coordinating security concerns with the local governments in Bashiqa, Qaraqosh, and Sinjar. The project provides ongoing support for 31 Yazidi survivors in legal cases against ISIS.