



IRAQ COUNTRY PROFILE

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BACKGROUND

In January 2014, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) began seizing control of parts of northern and central Iraq, displacing a significant portion of the population as civilians fled their homes to seek safety. Following years of conflict and displacement, nearly 4.7 million people have returned home while an estimated 1.3 million people remain displaced. Destruction of housing, critical infrastructure and livelihoods, lack of basic services, on-going security risks, and social tensions continue to prevent many Iraqis from returning to their areas of origin.

Furthermore, governance challenges, lack of economic opportunities across the country, and poor essential services have led Iraqi youth to take to the streets in protest since late 2019. Iraq’s economic and fiscal crisis is being exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the decline in oil revenues. The United States and Iraq are committed to cooperation to enhance security and assistance for the people of Iraq.

OUR WORK

Since 2003, the United States, through USAID, has been a steadfast partner of the Government of Iraq (GOI) in helping enhance the country’s overall stability and promote greater prosperity for all citizens. USAID’s programming in Iraq focuses on stabilizing communities, improving the transparency and accountability of government, expanding economic opportunities, supporting the

development of civil society, providing life-saving humanitarian assistance, and promoting religious and ethnic pluralism.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

USAID supports the GOI and Iraqi civil society to foster a system of governance that is democratic, accountable, and responsible in ways that benefit all Iraqis. USAID works with its Iraqi partners to enhance the transparency of political processes, natural resource management, and service delivery to all citizens. Through our work, USAID seeks to better integrate all civil society actors into these processes.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

USAID is helping to pull households and communities out of poverty and promote long-term economic growth by diversifying and strengthening the Iraqi private sector, and improving the overall business investment climate. USAID programming also expands economic opportunity by providing technical assistance to small and medium enterprises looking to grow or rebuild, and identifying and linking Iraqi businesses with sources of financing and business development.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in Iraq, providing \$3 billion in a diverse array of targeted assistance since 2014. USAID has increased access to safe drinking water, improved sanitation, and provided hygiene supplies, which can help to protect communities and limit the spread of communicable diseases, such as COVID-19. USAID funding also assists primary health care centers improve the quality and accessibility of healthcare services for vulnerable groups, including families displaced by conflict. Finally, USAID support helps to supply safe and dignified shelter; address food insecurity in camps and as internally-displaced persons are departing camps; and provide increased access to protection services, such as psychosocial support, prevention and response to gender-based violence; assistance in obtaining legal assistance for civil documentation; and mine risk education.

SUPPORT TO RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Through a combination of short, medium, and long-term efforts, USAID is working with over 100 local, faith-based, and international organizations to meet the immediate, life-saving recovery needs of persecuted ethnic and religious minorities in northern Iraq to safely return and rebuild their communities after the genocide committed by ISIS. Engaging these communities is a cornerstone to all of USAID's development work in Iraq, including several stand-alone programs focused exclusively on providing support to these communities. Through the New Partnerships Initiative (NPI), USAID is managing small grants to six local groups based in northern Iraq to support religious and ethnic minorities targeted by ISIS. NPI is an opportunity to directly tap into the ingenuity and knowledge of Iraqi organizations to enact impactful, innovative projects that address local needs and priorities. As part of NPI, USAID also provides training to build local capacity to develop the skills to lead their own sustainable development and become long standing partners.

STABILIZATION

Working closely with the GOI, provincial and local governments, and local communities, USAID works to stabilize areas formerly occupied by ISIS by restoring essential infrastructure and services,

such as electricity and water. USAID also works with local partners, including civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, and municipalities, to identify local priorities for recovery, improve social cohesion, and help marginalized and displaced populations return and rebuild their places of origin. USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) complements these efforts through swift, strategic interventions in areas impacted by ISIS's violent occupation by partnering with civil society organizations, faith-based groups, and local government entities to foster the durable return of communities displaced by conflict.