Persistent gender inequality in Iraq calls for coordinated efforts in developing 2nd National Action Plan on implementing Resolution 1325

Baghdad, 3 October 2018 – Gender inequality continues to prevail in Iraq with worrisome signals that it is deepening, requiring intensified efforts and coordination in developing a new action plan on implementing UN Security Council resolution 1325, UN Representative to Iraq Ján Kubiš said today at the high-level consultation meeting on the development of the 2nd National Action Plan. Although he was encouraged to see progress in the protection pillar and dedicated efforts to strengthen the participation pillar in the National Action Plan, the legacy of the conflict with the terrorist Da’esh continues to hamper steps forward and there are other worrying signs of women being targeted.

Mr. Kubiš condemned the recent attacks against women, including the assassination of two women and the sudden death of two others in the past month, all of them active in political and social spheres. Other civil society activists including women are targeted by social media and political threat campaign, among others for their contacts with foreign embassies. This is unacceptable.

"Only once politically and socially active women are protected and safe, Iraq can claim to be making real progress towards women’s equality and empowerment," he said.

The development of a new NAP with all the diversity and complexity of issues will require continuous coordination and collaboration across sectors, in particular involving civil society, and drawing from the lessons learned from the previous plan, the Special Representative said.

"By making your deliberations open to the society, by publicly broadcasting them you could mobilise even broader support for your objectives," Mr. Kubiš said.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq noted with disappointment that political forces that negotiate the formation of the government do so, again without the participation of women. “We all need to ask: “when the political leaders intend to deliver on their pledges to empower women and advance their rights as a part of the democratic entitlement of all Iraqis thus strengthening equal representation and inclusiveness? The time is now. Otherwise, all the exclamations about commitment to equality of women and values of democracy continue to sound hollow."

Mr. Kubiš outlined UN efforts in support of women empowerment, noting that UNAMI supports women parliamentarians in their quest to establish a cross-political women’s parliamentary caucus. UNAMI will continue to impress on Political Parties who are key to advancing the participation of women in all processes to include women in their leadership structures, urging men advocates to assume a more prominent role, and parliamentarians to consider gender responsive budget in the next budget law to enhance the implementation of the NAP. The UN will also continue to advocate for the establishment of a dedicated institution in the next government structure with budget and authority to coordinate the implementation of the NAP and national frameworks and policies on WPS.

The UN in Iraq will also mobilise support of the broader international community, including through the International Gender Group from among embassies here in Baghdad, Mr. Kubiš concluded.
UNAMI Herald

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In this edition ...

UN Secretary-General appoints new Special Representative for Iraq

New York/Baghdad, 31 August 2018 - The Secretary-General of the United Nations has appointed Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert as his Special Representative for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). Current Special Representative Ján Kubiš continues to serve as the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and Head of UNAMI until later in the year.

Following is the announcement by the Secretary-General:

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today announced the appointment of Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert of the Netherlands as his Special Representative for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). She will succeed Ján Kubiš of Slovakia, to whom the Secretary-General is grateful for his service.

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert brings over 20 years of political and diplomatic experience, having served in several high-level government and parliamentary positions. She was Minister of Defence of the Netherlands (2012-2017), the first woman to be appointed in that role. As Minister, she oversaw the Central Staff, Support Command, the Defence Material Organisation and the four Royal Netherlands Armed Forces: Army, Navy, Air Force and the Military and Border Police. In this role, she had oversight of Dutch involvement in military operations in Mali, Afghanistan and Iraq, building close collaboration with the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and United Nations partners.

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert also served as a member of the House of Representatives of the Netherlands (2010-2012) and a member of the European Parliament (2004-2010). She worked for the European Commission in Brussels and in Riga, Latvia, and for the City of Amsterdam.

UN Kubiš calls on political leaders to include women in the government formation negotiations and key ministries

Baghdad, 9 September 2018 – A meeting with women leaders, former MPs and former Ministers, civil society and youth activists facilitated by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) pressed for robust participation of women in negotiations for government formation ... More on page 4

Aspiring for sustainable development and peace: Naciri calls on Iraqi leaders to safeguard women leadership positions

Baghdad, 15 September 2018 - Mr. Mohammad Naciri, UN Women Regional Director for Arab States, called on Iraqi leaders to take practical and decisive steps to ensure that women assume leadership positions in the three presidencies and in the government to achieve sustainable development and peace... More on page 25

Annual conference on opposing violence against women held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 13 October 2018 – The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, attended today the 10th annual conference organized by the Al-Hakim Foundation to mark the Islamic day of opposing violence against women... More on page 30

Regional parliament elections held in the Kurdistan Region

Kurdistan Region, Iraq, 30 September 2018 - Polling stations were opened today in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for the election of 111 (including 11 reserved for ethnic minorities) representatives in the Regional

Statement from Nadia Murad on winning the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize

New York, 5 October 2018 - This morning the Nobel Committee informed me that I was selected as a co-recipient of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize. I am incredibly honored and humbled by their support and I share this award with Yazidis, Iraqis, Kurds, other persecuted minorities... More on page 34

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In the UNAMI Herald articles are sorted according to the topic and in a chronological order.
UN’s Kubiš urges calm and speedy formation of Government to tackle Iraq’s persistent problems

Baghdad, 5 September 2018 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, expresses grave concern over the casualties during violent protests over the lack of critical public services in Basra. He offers condolences to the families of the dead and wishes the injured a speedy recovery.

Mr. Kubiš calls for calm and urges the authorities to avoid using disproportionate, lethal force against the demonstrators, provide the necessary protection for the people of Basra, ensure human rights while protecting law and order, and investigate and hold accountable those responsible for the outbreak of the violence.

The Special Representative calls on the Government of Iraq to do its utmost to respond to the people’s rightful demands of clean water and electricity supplies as a matter of urgency. Mr. Kubiš urges political leaders and the newly elected Council of Representatives to assume their duties and act responsibly and without delay, including taking all the necessary steps to expeditiously agree on a new national, patriotic and pro-reform government that will quickly and effectively respond to the people’s longstanding needs and deliver on their basic demands of water and electricity and the longer-term goal of job creation and life in dignity. Long-term stability and improved economic performance go hand-in-hand, and tackling these challenges rests with the political leaders uniting and working together in the national interest.

UN Special Representative Kubiš condemns violence in Basra as harmful to people’s needs, urges the government to take resolute action while respecting the right of people for peaceful demonstrations for their legitimate demands

Baghdad, 8 September 2018 - Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq Ján Kubiš condemns violence and riots in the recent days in Basra, attacks on government, political parties’ and media offices, hospitals, oil installation and the airport, the ransacking of the Iranian consulate and public and private property. These acts of violence have nothing to do with the people’s rightful demands for services, jobs and against corruption and work against their very legitimate rights and expectations of dignified peaceful life.

While fully supporting the legitimate demands of the protesters, of the civil society in Basra pursued in peaceful ways, the Special Representative urges the authorities to ensure law and order and take firm action against instigators of violence, against provocateurs and infiltrators with destructive political agenda aimed at sowing chaos. Security forces while doing so must protect the genuine protestors, act in full respect for human rights. He also calls on the Iraqi government to take all necessary steps to protect diplomatic and consular premises, public and private property. The authorities are also expected to investigate the events, identify those behind the act of violence and hold those responsible fully accountable.

The Special Representative joins in H.E. Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani’s call to refrain from violence, to spare private and public property and for immediate action to be taken to answer the people’s rightful demands, so that people can gain trust and reassurances as steps to ease tensions. He urges the political leaders to listen to this and other recommendations of the Marjaiya.

The Special Representative reiterates his call on political leaders and newly elected members of the CoR to live up to the expectations of the people, to assume their responsibilities, to work together in addressing the people’s needs and in preventing uncertainty and polarisation. He urges them to expedite taking decisions on the country’s three Presidencies and the formation of a pro-reform national government that must immediately embark on taking effective steps to alleviate the people’s hardship. Otherwise, the chasm between the political elites and the people will deepen and the political system and its leaders will risk losing the confidence and the support of the people. A protracted process of government formation creates uncertainty and a fertile environment for political manipulations and acts of intimidation and violence that sabotage the democratic processes.
UN Kubiš calls on political leaders to include women in the government formation negotiations and key ministries

Baghdad, 9 September 2018 – A meeting with women leaders, former MPs and former Ministers, civil society and youth activists facilitated by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) pressed for robust participation of women in negotiations for government formation and for holding key ministerial posts in the next Cabinet.

The group of activists, which included two male champions of women’s rights, heard assurances from UNAMI officials to push the political leaders for prioritising women’s political involvement, a longstanding position of UNAMI’s leadership.

Following the meeting, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq Ján Kubiš reiterated UNAMI’s position and pressed the importance of that point. “The meaningful participation of women in the political process means the success of democracy in Iraq and the realisation of a truly inclusive and representative Government that serves the needs and interests of its people,” he said.

The Special Representative calls on political leaders to consider nominating women for senior policy and decision-making posts, including for the Speakership and Deputies’ roles in the new Council of Representatives, and on political leaders to ensure their nominee lists for Cabinet posts include women.

Mr. Kubiš also urges the incoming Council of Representatives to consider adopting a legal framework, notably a Gender Parity Bill, that would ensure a minimum 25 percent quota for women’s inclusion in the new government. He underscores the need to include women on parliamentary committees as Chairs and members.

UN’s Kubiš welcomes election by the CoR of Speaker and Deputies and urges expeditious steps to elect President and Prime Minister

Baghdad, 16 September 2018 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, welcomes the election by the Council of Representatives (CoR) of its Speaker and two deputies. He congratulates the elected officials, Speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi and deputies Hassan al-Kaabi and Basheer al-Haddad. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) looks forward to working with the new parliamentary leadership and the CoR and is ready to offer any required assistance.

The Special representative appreciates the perseverance of the interim Speaker who chaired the session and applauds the sense of responsibility that motivated the candidates to compete for the leadership positions in the CoR. While taking note of the results of the votes and congratulating the elected officials, Mr. Kubiš expresses his deep disappointment that none of the eminently qualified women made it to the CoR Speakership, and urges the MPs and political leaders to be true to their pledges and elect women to other leadership positions in the CoR and to ministerial and other senior positions in the future government.

The Special Representative urges the political forces and blocs to expeditiously proceed, in adherence to the constitutional timelines, with the process of electing the President of the Republic then the Prime Minister, to be followed by the formation of a pro-reform, non-sectarian patriotic national government that will be based on partnership cooperation of diverse components and groups of Iraq, away from the sectarian quotas and corruption. Only such a government can regain the confidence of the people, swiftly act to fulfill their demands for improved public services, jobs, economic development and reform, protect the interests of Iraq, and ensure full respect for its sovereignty and independence.
UN’s Kubiš congratulates Mr. Barham Salih on his election as President of Iraq, urges to expeditiously proceed with the formation of the new Government

Baghdad, 2 October 2018 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, congratulates Mr. Barham Salih on his election by the Council of Representatives as President of the Republic of Iraq. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the whole UN family look forward to working with the new President in serving as a guarantor of the Constitution of Iraq and its implementation, in strengthening Iraq as a united, federal and democratic state, in supporting Iraq’s post-conflict reform, rehabilitation and recovery for the benefit of all the Iraqi people.

Mr. Kubiš appreciates the sense of responsibility shown by the candidates who competed for the post and lauds the efforts of the Council of Representatives led by Speaker Mohammed Al-Halbousi for holding the election within the constitutional timeframe. The Special Representative urges the Constitutional leaders and the political forces in the Council of Representatives to expeditiously proceed, with the same vigour and in adherence to the constitutional timelines, with the process of designating the Prime Minister, to be followed by the formation of a pro-reform, non-sectarian national government that will be based on partnership cooperation of diverse components and groups of Iraq and on the principles of citizenship with equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Such government will be able to unite the country and embark on deep political, economic and social reforms that will ensure a successful fight against corruption and boost economic development, that will deliver on services and enable a dignified future for the people of Iraq, safeguard the country’s independence and interests in cooperation with all its neighbors and international supporters, and protect its sovereignty.

UN Secretary-General congratulates Mr. Barham Salih on his election and swearing in as the President of the Republic of Iraq

New York, 3 October 2018 - The Secretary-General congratulates Mr. Barham Salih on his election and swearing in on Tuesday, 2 October as President of the Republic of Iraq. The Secretary-General looks forward to working closely with President Salih on all issues of mutual concern, in accordance with the mandate of the United Nations in Iraq.

The Secretary-General hopes the election of the President will pave the way to the swift formation of an inclusive Government in line with constitutional timelines.

In Iraq, UN welcomes new President, and Prime Minister-designate, calls for ‘truly representative’ cabinet

New York, 3 October 2018 - The United Nations Special Representative for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, on Wednesday, welcomed the designation of a new Prime Minister, Adel Abdel-Mahdi, and urged political leaders to promote women’s meaningful representation in politics.

“As the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the United Nations family in Iraq congratulate Mr. Abdel-Mahdi on his appointment, we recognise the enormous challenges he faces,” said Mr. Kubiš, adding that “we stand side by side with him, as he leads the country in its steady march towards a future of stability, economic growth and prosperity.”

In a statement issued later, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, also congratulated Iraq’s new President, Barham Salih, after his swearing-in on Tuesday, saying that he was looking forward to “working closely” with him, “on all issues of mutual concern, in accordance with the mandate of the United Nations in Iraq.”

Since the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein was toppled following the 2003 invasion, the country’s three largest ethnic-sectarian groups have shared the country’s highest positions, with the Prime Minister position held by a Shia politician, the Speaker of Parliament post by a Sunni, and the Presidency by a Kurd.

Ending months of deadlock following inconclusive national elections in May, the new Prime Minister – a former Vice- President, Oil Minister and Finance Minister – has one month to form a cabinet that will be presented to parliament for approval.

In this regard, Mr. Kubiš urged political leaders to live up to their pledges on women’s meaningful representation in politics.

“Iraq needs a stable, national government that brings Iraqis together and restores hope in their country as they move forward in the post-Da'esh period,” said Mr. Kubiš. “This government should be formed well within the constitutional timeline, should be professional, competent, truly representative and inclusive of women in cabinet posts”.

UN News
UN's Kubiš welcomes designation of Mr. Adel Abdel-Mahdi Iraq's Prime Minister and the pledges to timely Government formation, encourages meaningful women's representation in the Government

Baghdad, 3 October 2018 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, welcomes the designation of Mr. Adel Abdel-Mahdi to form Iraq's next government. Just as the United Nations supported Iraq during the difficult fight against the terrorist Da'esh, the UN reiterates its support for the Iraqi people as they build a new future of peace, stability and prosperity. Iraq needs a stable, national government that brings Iraqis together and restores hope in their country as they move forward in the post-Da'esh period. This government should be formed well within the constitutional timeline, should be professional, competent, truly representative and inclusive of women in Cabinet posts. In this regard, Mr. Kubiš urges political leaders to live up to their pledges on women's meaningful representation in politics, and the Prime Minister-Designate to appoint qualified women to key Cabinet posts.

"As the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the United Nations family in Iraq congratulate Mr. Adel-Mahdi on his appointment, we recognise the enormous challenges he faces and we stand side by side with him as he leads the country in its steady march towards a future of stability, economic growth and prosperity," the Special Representative said.

UN Special Representative for Iraq Kubiš welcomes that a female MPs are assuming some of the top positions in the CoR

Baghdad, 9 October 2018 - UN Special Representative Mr. Ján Kubiš congratulated MPs Khadija Ali and Burhan Ad-Deen Ishaq on becoming rapporteurs of the Iraqi Council of Representatives (CoR). "I particularly welcome that a female assuming one of the top positions in the CoR. A good first step towards more women representation in senior political positions" stated SRSG Kubiš.

UN's Special Representative Kubiš urges political parties to support PM-Designate in Government formation within constitutional timelines, calls for inclusion of women and minorities

Baghdad, 21 October 2018 – Following extensive discussions with Iraqi government and political party leaders, the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, notes their intention to facilitate the formation of the next government within the constitutional timeline so it can promptly embark on responding to the needs and requirements of the people for services and their dignified life. Mr. Kubiš urges all the political parties to support Prime Minister-Designate Mr. Adel Abdel-Mahdi's efforts and cooperate with him in the government formation process, prioritizing the well-being of the country and its people over partisan interests. The people of Iraq expect the Prime Minister-Designate to be able and free to choose his own Cabinet team with a composition that will send a strong positive response to Iraqi citizens who demand radical change and a break with the practices of the past.

Throughout my meetings with Iraqi leaders, including H.E. President Barham Salih, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, Council of Representatives Speaker Mohammed Halbousi, Prime Minister-Designate Adel Abdel-Mahdi and various political and civil society leaders and representatives, I sensed the urgency and determination to expedite the process, to be guided by the best interest of the country and its people," said the Special Representative.

"I was encouraged to hear that there is a strong desire to create the next government as a patriotic administration with a reform-minded programme away from sectarian and partisan quotas and corruption, with partnership participation of all components and segments of Iraq. I also call for the meaningful representation of women with key ministerial portfolios as well as for respecting the rights of minorities.

"Only a government based on these principles will be strong, effective and capable of meeting progressively the aspirations and expectations of the Iraqi people, in consolidating security and law and order, in delivering on public services, rejuvenating the country's economy to create job opportunities for the increasingly young population and providing for return of IDPs and reconstruction. Such a government working in full respect of the Constitution that guarantees the rights and equality of all Iraqi citizens, can provide for a stable and prosperous future in a united, federal, democratic and sovereign Iraq," he said.
SRSG Kubiš welcomes confirmation of Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi, urges early confirmation of the full Council of Ministers, and expresses concern at the lack of female representation among ministers

Baghdad, 25 October 2018 – Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, has welcomed the formal confirmation of Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi, and expressed appreciation of the efforts of outgoing Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi throughout the last parliamentary term. He also welcomed the Council of Representatives’ endorsement of the government programme and the partial formation of the new Council of Ministers, although he has voiced deep concern at the lack of any female representation among ministers announced thus far.

“I welcome the partial formation of the new cabinet of Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi, and congratulate the people of Iraq on achieving this important step in their democratic transformation. I do hope that this process will be completed as soon as possible,” SRSG Kubiš said.

“I also take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the outgoing Prime Minister, Haider Al-Abadi, and his government under whose leadership Da’esh was defeated and the unity of Iraq was re-established, and Iraq started to assume its traditional place in the region and in the Arab world through expanded cooperation with all its neighbors and the international community”.

“I reiterate that the new Government should work hard to meet the aspirations and expectations of the Iraqi people, in consolidating security and law and order; in delivering on public services; in rejuvenating the country’s economy to create job opportunities for the increasingly young population; and in providing for the return of IDPs and reconstruction. Such a government, working in full respect of a Constitution that guarantees the rights and equality of all Iraqi citizens, can provide for a stable and prosperous future in a united, federal, democratic and sovereign Iraq. In this context, I am pleased at the Council of Representatives’ endorsement of the government programme,” SRSG Kubiš said.

“I am disappointed, however, about the lack of representation thus far of women in the new Cabinet. There are excellent, well qualified and experienced females active in the political life, professional positions and civil society of Iraq who would be strong candidates for many of the ministerial roles; ignoring their potential is to miss important opportunities for Iraq”, SRSG Kubiš noted.

The Secretary-General congratulates Mr. Adel Abdul Mahdi on his confirmation as Iraq’s Prime Minister and welcomes the announcement of the formation of a new Government

New York, 26 October 2018 - The Secretary-General congratulates Mr. Adel Abdul Mahdi on his confirmation as Iraq’s Prime Minister and welcomes the announcement of the formation of a new Government and the adoption of a new ministerial programme within the constitutional timeframe. He encourages the Council of Representatives to consider suitable women for the ministerial positions yet to be filled.

The Secretary-General expresses his hope that the new Government will be able to accelerate inclusive efforts to rebuild the country after years of conflict, promote national reconciliation and foster lasting peace and security in Iraq.

The Secretary-General reiterates that the United Nations will continue to support the Government and people of Iraq during this crucial period.

UNAMI welcomes IHEC’s 01 September decision concerning procedures of forming political alliances

Baghdad, 2 September 2018 – The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) welcomes the IHEC decision on 1 September 2018 to rescind its previous ruling issued on 27 August 2018 concerning procedures of forming political (parliamentary) alliances. The 01 September decision brings back the situation in conformity with the valid legislation, notably with Article 4 of the third amendment of the Election Law No. 45 of 2013 and the verdict of the Federal Supreme Court (No. 25/FSC/2010) on the law of 25 March 2010.

Elections
Pertinent issues bordering on electoral and security procedures set to conduct the September 30 Kurdistan parliamentary election discussed at a round table hosted by UNAMI

Erbil, 23 September 2018 - In a round table discussion hosted by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), and facilitated by the Head of Office, Mr. Ricardo Rodriguez, at the Erbil UNAMI office, participants from Kurdistan political parties, including an independent candidate, discussed with officials from the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission (KIHEC), and the Ministry of Interior, pertinent issues bordering on electoral and security procedures set to conduct the September 30 Kurdistan parliamentary election. Discourse centered mainly on issues of security for transferring ballot boxes to collation centers, the accuracy of the voters’ register, and concerns over early announcement of results of special votes.

Regional parliament elections held in the Kurdistan Region

Kurdistan Region, Iraq, 30 September 2018 - Polling stations were opened today in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for the election of 111 representatives in the Kurdistan Regional Parliament. Visiting some of the polling stations in Erbil, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Jan Kubis, called the people of the Kurdistan Region to use the opportunity to vote and select their parliament representatives. The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, this morning visited some polling stations in Halabja.
The leadership of the United Nations in Iraq continues intensive political consultations within Iraq and the region.

**SRSG Kubiš visited KIHEC**

**Erbil, 10 October 2018** – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, visited today the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission where he discussed the recent Regional Elections developments.

**Political consultations**

The leadership of the United Nations in Iraq continues intensive political consultations within Iraq and the region.

**Basra, 27 August 2018** – Deputy UN Special Representative for Iraq Ms. Alice Walpole met today with the Governor of Basra, Mr. Asaad al-Eidani. The objective of Ms. Walpole’s visit to the city of Basra was to understand more clearly the challenges currently facing Basra Governorate, such as water scarcity and youth unemployment, and the response at local government level in light of the recent street protests by residents demanding improved services.

Ms Walpole also met with members of the Basra Provincial Council, including Head of the Planning Committee Mr. Nashaat al-Mansouri and Ms. Basma Salami. The council members set out some of the logistical, budgetary and security challenges faced by local government. Ms Walpole recalled some of the areas in which the United Nations is offering support and assistance in Basra governorate, including in response to the latest reported outbreak of water contamination.

**Basra, 27 August 2018** – Deputy UN Special Representative for Iraq Ms. Alice Walpole met with members of the 13,000-strong community of Iraqis of African descent, whose families have lived in southern Iraq’s Old Basra, Zubayr and Abu al-Khaseeb for centuries. Topics of discussion included their situation within the wider community and their concerns about hate speech and discrimination. The United Nations regularly engages with components of Iraqi society as part of the United Nations’ efforts to promote reconciliation, tolerance and human rights; such a discussion is in line with efforts led by the Minorities Department of the National Reconciliation Committee of the Prime Minister’s Office to improve the lives of diverse small-scale components across Iraq. Ms Walpole’s meeting was the first time that a senior United Nations representative has met with members of this community.

**Diyala, 29 August 2018** – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Alice Walpole, today visited Diyala Governorate and met Governor Muthana al-Tamimi, Provincial Council Chairman, Ali al-Daini, and members of the Council, as well as Diyala Chief of Police, Faisal al-Abadi. Discussions focused on political and security developments in the Governorate and preparations for the upcoming provincial elections.
Baghdad, 30 August 2018 - H.E. President Dr. Fuad Massoum received today Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš to discuss the latest political developments, notably the preparations of the inaugural session of the Council of Representatives (COR) on Monday, 3 September 2018, and the process of the forming of the new government. The SRSG acknowledged the convening of the fourth session of the COR within the constitutional timelines. He expressed a strong expectation that all the following steps will be taken in full conformity with and respect of the Constitution and the respective laws of the country, the valid legal framework.

In particular the parties discussed and referred to the verdict of the Federal Supreme Court of 25 March 2010 that has confirmed the definition of the largest parliamentary bloc as well as the Law of the 3rd amendment of the COR Election law and the following ruling on the amendment of the Federal Supreme Court of 21 June 2018 and other relevant pieces of legislation.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the President.

Baghdad, 30 August 2018 – The Acting Representative/Country Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) in Iraq, Ms. Maha Ahmed, met with Ms. Siham Mamand, Assistant Head of the Department of Foreign Relations of the Kurdistan Region. They discussed the current humanitarian situation in the region and in general, as well as ongoing WFP assistance to internally displaced persons and refugees.

Photo: Courtesy of DFR KRG

Baghdad, 31 August 2018 - UN Special Representative for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met with the head of the Iraqi Forces Alliance, Mr. Jamal Karbouli. They discussed the latest political developments ahead of the convening of the Council of Representatives and the formation of the next Iraqi government.

Photo courtesy of Al Hikma Movement.

Erbil, 30 August 2018 – The Acting Representative/Country Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) in Iraq, Ms. Maha Ahmed, met with Ms. Siham Mamand, Assistant Head of the Department of Foreign Relations of the Kurdistan Region. They discussed the current humanitarian situation in the region and in general, as well as ongoing WFP assistance to internally displaced persons and refugees.

Photo: Courtesy of DFR KRG

Baghdad, 31 August 2018 - UN Special Representative Ján Kubis met with former Speaker of the Council of Representatives (CoR) Salim al-Jubouri. They discussed the political developments ahead of the convening of the CoR and the formation of the government.

Photo: Courtesy of NINA

Baghdad, 1 September 2018 - UN Special Representative for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met today Arshad al-Salehi, Head of the Iraqi Turkmen Front. They discussed preparations ahead of the forthcoming session of the Parliament on 3rd September and the formation of the next Iraq Government.

The importance of the Turkmen component’s meaningful participation in the political process, including in the relevant positions in the Council of Representatives and the government was underlined.

Their participation as equal partners in negotiating solutions in particular for situations like Kirkuk and others covered by Article 140 of the Constitution where the Turkmen component is present, is essential for just, stable and sustainable outcomes.
Baghdad, 1 September 2018 - UN Special Representative for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, was received today by Iraq Vice President, H.E. Osama Al-Nujaifi, to discuss political developments including preparations for the forthcoming session of the newly elected Parliament that will take place according to the Constitutional time-frame on 3 September and the formation of the next government.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the Vice President.

Erbil, 2 September 2018 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ján Kubiš, met today with Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) President, Masud Barzani. They discussed political developments ahead of the convening of the parliament and the formation of the government.

The SRSG stressed the importance of the participation of Kurdish political parties in national politics and their valuable contribution to shaping the future of stable and united Iraq while working with other national partners on resolving longstanding issues between Baghdad and Erbil, notably activating the search for solutions to the issues in Kirkuk based on Article 140 of the Constitution. They also discussed the upcoming regional elections in the Kurdistan Region.

Photos: Courtesy of KRG

Najaf, 15 September 2018 - His Eminence Sayyed Muqtada Al-Sadr received today in Najaf the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš. They discussed the general situation in the region and in Iraq specifically, and the need to speed up the government formation to provide the necessary services for the citizens.

Mr. Kubiš expressed hope that with the sincere efforts of all political forces the Council of Representatives will elect the three presidencies so that Iraq can embark on the course of reform and development led by a pro-reform patriotic government that meets the aspirations of the people.

Photo: Courtesy of IRNA
UN Representative Kubiš highlights in talks in Kurdistan Region the need of political forces in Iraq to work together to expeditiously create a national non-sectarian government, to overcome the destabilizing polarization

Erbil, 11 September 2018 – Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq Ján Kubiš visited Sulaymaniyah and Erbil, where he met with leaders of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), Gorran, New Generation Movement and the Coalition for Democracy and Justice (CDJ). Today, he was received in Erbil by Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) President Masud Barzani and met separately with Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani.

At his meetings in the last two days, ahead of the Council of Representatives (CoR) session scheduled for 15 September in Baghdad, Mr. Kubiš discussed with the political and Government leaders of the Kurdistan Region the current political, security and economic situation in Iraq, the formation of the future government and the election of the three Presidencies. The Special Representative expressed his expectation that the forthcoming session of the CoR will elect the Speaker and the two deputies.

There was agreement through all these meetings that for the benefit of the country and its people, Iraq needs to continue with and further develop its balanced approach, including as regards cooperation with all its regional and international partners on the basis of full respect of the principles of sovereignty, non-interference, mutual benefit and good-neighbourly relations. The Special Representative urged political leaders and forces both at the federal level and in the Kurdistan Region to unite and work together for a speedy establishment of a pro-reform, non-sectarian, patriotic national government with partnership participation of all components and segments of Iraq, in full respect for and implementation of the Constitution.

He highlighted his confidence that Kurdistani political forces can foster agreement, consensus and unity, and expressed hope that they will undertake their positive role, as in the past. Mr. Kubiš warned about the destabilizing impact of any procrastination that will only exacerbate the dangerous divisions and polarization across the country, that nevertheless can be overcome by joint efforts of political forces and leaders. He reiterated his appreciation of the guidance provided by H.E. Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and strong hope that the political forces will follow it in their actions.
Baghdad, 16 September 2018 – H.E. Prime Minister of Iraq, Haidar Al-Abadi, received today the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Jan Kubis. During the meeting, emphasis was placed on the importance of speeding up efforts to form the Iraqi government in accordance with constitutional times.

Photo courtesy of PM Office.

Baghdad, 17 September 2018 - The UN’s Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSIG) and Resident Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas, met with Mahdi Al-Alaq, the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers to discuss a range of humanitarian and development issues.

The DSRSG updated the Government of Iraq (GOI) on progress toward establishing a multi-donor trust fund to support recovery, and she encouraged GOI contributions for stabilization projects through the UN Development Programme (UNDP), including possibly new activities in Basra.

During the meeting, they agreed to visit a school recently rebuilt by UNDP in Anbar Governorate and will hold another meeting specifically to consider priorities for Basra.

Photo courtesy of CoM.

Baghdad, 23 September 2018 - Mr. Nouri Al-Maliki, the Secretary-General of the Islamic Dawa Party and Vice President of Iraq, received a delegation of Iraqi women leaders along with UN Women experts. Mr. Maliki confirmed to the delegation the importance of women participation in the next government and the need to find appropriate measures to activate women participation in political life.

The delegation also advocated for the establishment of a fully-fledged Ministry of Women affairs to empower and support the roles of women in politics.

Baghdad, 17 September 2018 - The Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, Dr. Mahdi Al-Alaq, received in Baghdad the Head of the UNHCR Office in Iraq, Mr. Bruno Geddo. They discussed the displacement crisis in Nineveh Province and the obstacles to return of displaced persons and ways to encourage them to return without coercion or coercion by the host community.

Photo courtesy of CoM.

New York, 23 September 2018 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met today with Kuwait’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Among other topics, they discussed ongoing efforts in the search of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 2107 (2013).

Photo courtesy of the Permanent Mission of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations.

Baghdad, 23 September 2018 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (DSRSIG), Ms. Alice Walpole, today met with Mr. Falih Al-Fayad, former Iraqi National Security Adviser.

They discussed the important role of women in Iraq’s political future, including the need for inclusion and representation of women at all levels of decision-making in the incoming Iraqi government. Ms. Walpole delivered to Mr. Fayad a letter from the United Nations Special Representative for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubis, encouraging political leaders to advance and promote the rights of women as part of the democratic entitlement of all Iraqis. The letter urged political leaders and heads of parliamentary blocs to elect women to leadership positions in the Council of Representatives and to ministerial positions in the future government.

DSRSIG Walpole expressed the hope that Iraq’s political leaders would make good use of the talents of the many energetic, capable Iraqi women politicians in building the country for the future.
Kirkuk, 24 September 2018 - The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the UN Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, visited the Tribal Affairs Office in Kirkuk and met with leaders from different tribes in Kirkuk Governorate.

DSRSG Walpole stressed UNAMI commitment to engage with all actors in Iraq, highlighting the relevant role played by the tribal leaders in maintaining peace and stability, as direct representatives of their communities.

Topics such as social coexistence, tribal leaders’ view about the political situation in Kirkuk, their vision for future developments in the governorate and provincial council election were tackled during the meeting.

On their side, the tribal leaders welcomed DSRSG Walpole and highlighted the important role played by UNAMI in supporting Iraq. Furthermore, the leaders requested UNAMI to continue its engagement in support to the return of displaced persons and for the generic stabilization of Iraq.

Kirkuk, 24 September 2018 - The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General (DSRSG), Ms. Alice Walpole, paid a call on Dr. Abbas Taqi, President of the University of Kirkuk, in advance of addressing a group of female academic staff of the university.

In her meeting with Dr. Abbas, Ms. Walpole recognized the important role of academia, in particular the University of Kirkuk, in fostering dialogue and peaceful co-existence among Kirkuk’s different components. Dr. Abbas presented a plaque to Ms. Walpole in appreciation of her service in Iraq, especially in support of the development of Kirkuk.

Ms. Walpole met with female academics and students, women NGO representatives, female journalists and other women activists in the auditorium of the College of Law of Kirkuk University. There was a lively and constructive exchange of views on issues affecting Kirkuk society, including the lack of women’s empowerment and effective representation in decision-making processes, unemployment and inadequate social services, and the untapped role of women in peace and reconciliation initiatives. Ms. Walpole enjoyed the discussion very much.

New York, 26 September 2018 – Iraqi Foreign Minister, Dr. Ibrahim al-Jaafari, met today with Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict. They discussed cooperation between Iraq and the United Nations on addressing and prosecuting perpetrators of violations committed by ISIS terrorist gangs against women as well as compensation for victims.

New York, 26 September 2018 – Dr. Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, Iraqi Foreign Minister, met with Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Undersecretary-General and Head of United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office, and Ms. Michele Coninsx, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. They discussed efforts to boost the bilateral mechanisms of cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism.
Karbala, 26 September 2018 - The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, met today with the Governor of Karbala, Mr. Aqeel al-Tureihi. Discussions focused on security, public services, the return of displaced persons, social coexistence, women's empowerment, government formation and the upcoming Provincial Council elections.

Karbala, 26 September 2018 - The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, met today with Sayyed Ahmed Al-Safi, Representative of the Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, in Karbala. They discussed the current political situation in the country, with a particular focus on government formation, the role of the Popular Mobilisation Forces and the forthcoming Provincial Council elections. Ms. Walpole praised Sayyed al-Safi's role in seeking a solution to the crisis over public services in Basra.

Baghdad, 26 September 2018 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Director a.i., Gerardo Noto, today met with the First Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives (CoR), Mr. Hassan Karim al-Kaabi, to present new UNDP Parliamentary Assistance project. The project will assist CoR to develop capacities of the Parliament and MPs by giving access to 229 new MPs to the induction workshops to strengthen their legislative, representation and control functions. With this programme all new MPs will also strengthen their capacities for gender mainstreaming and women empowering. Currently, 20% of MPs are women.

Amman, 26 September 2018 - H.E. Safia Al-Souhail, Iraq Ambassador to Jordan, received at the Embassy in Amman Ms. Dina Zorba, UN Women Representative in Iraq, and they discussed cooperation on the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Agenda. Ambassador Al-Souhail extended all support by the Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the UN and UN Women. She also stressed on the importance to support the large participation of Iraqi women in international fora noting that Iraqi women are a pride to the country nationally and internationally.

New York, 28 September 2018 - The United Nations Secretary-General met with H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Abdulkarim Al-Jafari, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq. The Secretary-General appreciated the high level of cooperation between the United Nations and Iraq, including on counter-terrorism and accountability efforts.

The Secretary-General and the Minister discussed ongoing developments in Iraq and in the region.

Baghdad, 1 October 2018 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Jan Kubis, met today with the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Mohammed al-Halbousi. They discussed the current political process including the prospects for the formation of the new government.

Photo from UNAMI archives.
Baghdad, 1 October 2018 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Jan Kubis, met today with the former National Security Advisor, Falah al-Fayyad. The discussion focused on the ongoing political process in Iraq as well as in the region.

Photo courtesy of the Office of Mr. al-Fayyad.

Erbil, 1 October 2018 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Jan Kubis, met today with the Leader of the KDP, Masoud Barzani. They discussed the current political situation in the Kurdistan Region and in Iraq.

Photos courtesy of KDP.

Baghdad, 2 October 2018 - President of the Republic of Iraq, H.E. Mr. Fuad Masum, received today the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Jan Kubis, to discuss the current political situation in the country.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the President of Iraq.

Baghdad, 2 October 2018 - Mr. Adel Abdul Mahdi, former Vice President of the Republic of Iraq, received UN Women Representative in Iraq, Dina Zorba, at the Palace of Justice, where they discussed the important role of women in politics and decision-making positions as well as their role and participation in the next government.

Photo by UN Women.

Baghdad, 2 October 2018 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Jan Kubis, met today with the former Finance Minister and Oil Minister, Adel Abdul-Mahdi. The current political situation in the country and in the region was discussed, including prospects for future government formation.

Photo from UNAMI archives.
Baghdad, 4 October 2018 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG), Ján Kubiš, together with Deputy SRSG for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Ms. Alice Walpole, met with the First Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Hassan Karim al-Kaabi. They discussed the current political situation in the country, as well as United Nations activities in Iraq.

Photo courtesy of the Iraq Council of Representatives

Baghdad, 5 October 2018 – H.E. President of the Republic, Dr. Barham Salih, received at his premises in Baghdad, UN Women Representative in Iraq, Ms. Dina Zorba, where they discussed the participation of women in political and economic leadership in the country.
Baghdad, 07 October 2018 – His Excellency Dr. Barham Salih, President of the Republic of Iraq, received today the Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG), Ján Kubiš, together with Deputy SRSG for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Ms. Alice Walpole.

Mr. Kubiš and Ms. Walpole congratulated the President on his election and on assuming the office of President, wishing him all the success, and promised continued UN support for Iraq and that of the international community in the country’s drive towards sustainable peace, stability and prosperity.

The President conveyed his and the Iraqi people’s appreciation of the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the UN Family in Iraq and called for continued UN support in the future.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the President.

Baghdad, 08 October 2018 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met today with the Prime Minister-designate, Mr. Adel Abdul-Mahdi.

SRSG Kubiš congratulated Mr. Abdul-Mahdi on receiving the mandate to form the new Iraqi government. They discussed the future cooperation between Iraq, the United Nations and the UN programs, funds and agencies in the development of a democratic, sustainable, inclusive society and reconstruction of Iraq that will serve all its people.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the PM designate.

Baghdad, 7 October 2018 - Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General (DSRSG) Alice Walpole met in Baghdad with MP Alaa Talabani (Baghdad Alliance) to discuss the government formation process and the role of women in leadership positions. Ms. Walpole expressed disappointment at the exclusion of women from senior roles.

The two also discussed cooperation and UN support for the Council of Representatives, notably the establishment of the women’s parliamentary caucus, the short-term and medium term legislative priorities as well as capacity building for the newly elected MPs. DSRSG Walpole emphasised the need for women to have a strong voice in the Council of Representatives and for qualified women to chair or serve as members of key parliamentary committees.

Baghdad, 8 October 2018 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met with the new Ambassador of Canada to Iraq, Mr. Paul Gibbard. They discussed the current political and economic situation in the country.

Photo courtesy of the Canadian Embassy in Iraq.

Erbil, 9 October 2018 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met today with the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), Masoud Barzani. They discussed the latest political developments in the Kurdistan Region and beyond.

Erbil, 9 October 2018 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met today with Chancellor of the Kurdistan Region Security Council, Masrour Barzani. They discussed current political developments in the Region and Iraq.
Baghdad, 10 October 2018 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met today with Osama Al-Nujaifi, leader of the Iraqi Decision Alliance. They discussed the current political situation in the country with special emphasis on the post electoral developments and formation of the new government.

Photo courtesy of IDA.

Baghdad, 10 October 2018 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met with Sayyed Ammar Al Hakim, leader of the National Wisdom Movement. They discussed the current political situation in the country with special emphasis on the post electoral developments and formation of the new government.

Photo courtesy of NWM.

Sulaymaniya, 14 October 2018 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met the head of the Kurdistan Region Intelligence Agency, Lahur Sheikh Jangi. They discussed the political and security developments in the Region and Iraq.

Photo courtesy of PUK Media.

Sulaymaniya, 14 October 2018 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met with the New Generation President, Shaswar Abdulwahid. They discussed the current political situation in the Kurdistan Region, including the latest electoral developments.

Photo courtesy of NRT.

Sulaymaniya, 14 October 2018 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Iraq, Ján Kubiš, visited the headquarters of the Change Movement, where he met with the General Coordinator of the Movement, Omar Sayyid Ali, and a number of members of the Executive Cell and the Chamber of Diplomatic Relations. The two sides discussed the latest political developments in the Region and Iraq and the efforts of political parties to form a new government.

Photo courtesy of NINA.
Baghdad, 15 October 2018 - Listening to the opinions, views and concerns of Iraq's various components is a key focus for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in its work to assist the country in its post-conflict revival. It also provides an opportunity to enrich our understanding of this country and its unique cultural and religious history.

The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, today met with Sheikh Ahmed Hassan al-Taha, head of the Iraqi Jurisprudence Association, at Baghdad's Abu Hanifa Mosque, a site revered by Sunni Muslims for holding the tomb of scholar Abu Hanifa of early Islam. Ms Walpole and Sheikh Ahmed Hassan al-Taha engaged in a lively discussion of the challenges Iraq faces today in its march towards sustainable peace, reconstruction, development and economic recovery.

Key topics included national reconciliation in the post-Da'esh period, Iraq's political future, and ways to strengthen the atmosphere of coexistence and tolerance. Ms Walpole underlined UNAMI's readiness to support progress in these areas, and reported on some of her recent engagements with Sunni communities across Iraq.

Baghdad, 16 October 2018 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met with Dr. Salim Al-Jubouri, former Speaker of the Council of Representatives. They discussed the latest political developments in Iraq and the efforts of political parties to form a new government.

Baghdad, 17 October 2018 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met with Mr. Khamis al-Khanjar, Secretary General of the Arab Project, National Axis Alliance. They discussed the latest political developments in Iraq and the efforts of political parties to form a new government.

Photo courtesy of Khamis al-Khanjar.

Baghdad, 17 October 2018 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, discussed with eight former women parliamentary election candidates the challenges hindering women's participation in electoral and political processes in the context of the Global Open Day on UNSCR 1325 and 18th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325. He provided an update on UNAMI's activities advocating for the meaningful participation of women at all levels, in particular commending the women for their resilience and determination during the 12 May elections despite the smear campaigns and insults on social media which targeted women candidates.

The women demanded that women with requisite qualifications should be considered for the positions of Deputy Prime Minister and Vice President and be fully appreciated for the unique qualities and abilities they can bring to the jobs.

SRSG Kubiš said he will continue to press on political leaders to consider implementing recommendations from civil society and women activists related to amendments to the HHIC Laws and enactment of Laws on advancing the equal participation of women in political processes including gender perspectives in the government programme.
Baghdad, 17 October 2018 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met today with Chief Justice Fa’iq Zaidan. They discussed the efforts of political parties to form a new government and the role of the Judiciary. Photo courtesy of the Chief Justice Office.

New York, 24 October 2018 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas, was received by Ambassador Mohammed Hussein Bahr Al Uloom, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq to the United Nations, at the Iraqi House in New York.

They discussed the humanitarian situation in the country, and the voluntary, dignified, stable and safe return of displaced persons to their homes. The meeting also highlighted the coordination and collaboration of the United Nations Country Team to implement the UN’s two-year Recovery and Resilience Programme, which is fast-tracking the social dimensions of reconstruction in Iraq.

Baghdad, 24 October 2018 - Dr. Adham Ismail, the Acting Representative and Head of Mission for the World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq, accompanied by Mr. Ihab Khoury, WHO Iraq Administrative and Financial Officer, paid a courtesy visit to Dr. Mahdi Al-Alaq, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers.

Dr. Al-Alaq welcomed Dr. Ismail to his office and expressed his willingness and readiness to work with the WHO Country Office. He pledged full support for WHO as a partner with the Iraqi government in improving the health conditions for the citizens of Iraq.

For his part, Dr. Ismail concurred with Dr. Al-Alaq’s vision and hoped that both parties could maintain the same level of support and cooperation in the coming period. Dr. Ismail also briefed him on WHO past achievements and planned activities in Iraq and how they align with the strategic directions of the country.

Baghdad, 28 October 2018 - The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas, today participated in a meeting of the Government of Iraq’s Executive Committee for Recovery, Reconstruction and Development. Donors and government officials discussed joint collaboration and coordination of programmes and development projects for reconstruction and recovery in Iraq.

Kocho, 29 October 2018 - The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, accompanied by UNESCO Country Director, Louise Haxthausen, paid a visit today to Kocho village, south of Sinjar, to meet survivors of the August 2014 Da’esh massacre, visit Kocho’s mass grave sites and discuss proposals for a memorial in the town’s school. Sheikh Nayif Jassim, Mukhtar of Kocho and head of the Mandakan tribe, underlined his community’s demands for a scrupulous criminal investigation into the dreadful events that took place in Kocho, and called for forensic exhumation of the village’s mass graves.
UN strongly condemns Da’esh terrorist bombing in Iraq’s Anbar

Baghdad, 29 August 2018 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, strongly condemns the terrorist bombing in the Al-Qaim area of western Anbar today that killed and injured a number of victims, including civilians. The United Nations Assistance Mission extends its sincere condolences to the families of the deceased and wishes the injured a speedy recovery. “Although Da’esh has been defeated on the battlefield, the terrorist organisation continues to pose a threat to peace in Iraq, using cowardly and indiscriminate attacks to terrorise people in an attempt to destabilise a country that is recovering from conflict,” Mr. Kubiš said. “An attack such as that carried out today is a reminder to Iraqis that the struggle for peace is not yet over. The resilience and unity of all Iraqis are key to thwarting the terrorists’ schemes and consolidating stability and achieving prosperity,” he added.

UN casualty figures for Iraq for the month of August 2018

Baghdad, 02 September 2018 – A total of 90 Iraqi civilians were killed and another 117 injured in acts of terrorism, violence and armed conflict in Iraq in August 2018*, according to casualty figures recorded by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The figures include ordinary citizens and others considered civilian at the time of death or injury, such as police in non-combat functions, civil defence, personal security teams, facilities protection police and fire department personnel. Of the overall figures recorded by UNAMI for the month of August, the number of civilians killed (not including police) was 82, while the number of injured (not including police) was 113. Baghdad was the worst affected Governorate, with 77 civilian casualties (24 killed, 53 injured), followed by Ninewa (29 killed and 10 injured) and Anbar (66 killed and 26 injured). Figures for Anbar were obtained by UNAMI from the Health Directorate in Anbar Governorate, and are updated until 30 August, inclusive.

UNAMI condemns attack in Ahvaz, Iran

Baghdad, 23 September 2018 – The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, including its Liaison Office in Tehran, strongly condemns the terrorist attack which took place on Saturday, 22 September in the city of Ahvaz in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in which military personnel and civilians, including children, were killed or injured. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq offers its sincere condolences to the Government and people of Iran, in particular to the families of those who lost their lives, and wishes the injured a rapid and complete recovery.

UN casualty figures for Iraq for the month of September 2018

Baghdad, 01 October 2018 – A total of 75 Iraqi civilians were killed and another 179 injured in acts of terrorism, violence and armed conflict in Iraq in September 2018*, according to casualty figures recorded by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The figures include ordinary citizens and others considered civilian at the time of death or injury, such as police in non-combat functions, civil defence, personal security teams, facilities protection police and fire department personnel. Of the overall figures recorded by UNAMI for the month of September, 71 ordinary civilians were killed. Baghdad was the worst affected Governorate, with 101 civilian casualties (31 killed, 70 injured), followed by Anbar (15 killed and 37 injured) and Salahadin (90 killed and 38 injured). The figures for Anbar were obtained by UNAMI from the Health Directorate in Anbar Governorate, and are updated until 30 September, inclusive.

UN Representative Kubiš strongly condemns cowardly bombings in Baghdad, Salaheddin and Fallujah

Baghdad, 07 October 2018 - The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, strongly condemns the terrorist bombings that targeted a number of neighborhoods in Baghdad and Salaheddin and Fallujah over the past two days. Mr. Kubiš extends his sincere condolences to the families of the deceased and wishes the injured a speedy recovery. The Special Representative urges the authorities to be extra vigilant in their drive to uncover and destroy the terrorists’ sleeper cells. “The people of Iraq will not be cowed by such cowardly acts from pursuing a life of normalcy. Terrorism will not be allowed to derail the country’s recovery and future of stability and prosperity.”
Baghdad, 01 November 2018 – A total of 69 Iraqi civilians were killed and another 105 injured in acts of terrorism, violence and armed conflict in Iraq in October 2018*, according to casualty figures recorded by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The figures include ordinary citizens and others considered civilian at the time of death or injury, such as police in non-combat functions, civil defence, personal security teams, facilities protection police and fire department personnel. These are the lowest monthly casualty figures since UNAMI began publishing them in November 2012.

“While regretting the casualties, the fact that these figures are the lowest UNAMI has recorded since November 2012, is a positive indicator and shows that the country is gradually coming out of the cycle of violence into which it was forced by terrorists,” said Ján Kubiš, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (SRSG) for Iraq.

Ninewa was the worst affected Governorate, with 65 civilian casualties (29 killed, 36 injured), followed by Baghdad (29 killed and 35 injured) and Anbar (05 killed and 19 injured).

*CAVEATS: UNAMI has been hindered in effectively verifying casualties in certain areas; in some cases, UNAMI could only partially verify certain incidents. Figures for casualties from Anbar Governorate are provided by the Health Directorate and are noted above. Casualty figures obtained from the Anbar Health Directorate might not fully reflect the real number of casualties in those areas due to the increased volatility of the situation on the ground and the disruption of services. For these reasons, the figures reported have to be considered as the absolute minimum.

Iraqi women call for their inclusion in parliament and next government

Baghdad, 2 September 2018 - Iraqi women leaders convened in Baghdad calling for substantive participation at the leadership level in the Parliament and in the new government. At an event organized by the High Committee for the Advancement of Women, chaired by Dr. Zekra Alwash, and supported by UN Women, the women leaders presented a letter addressed to the new parliament a day before its first meeting, calling for the full and effective women participation in parliamentary leadership and in key legislative committees. The women, representing government, parliamentarians, and wider civil society from all over Iraq, also underlined the urgent need to establish a new, full-fledged Ministry of Women’s Affairs. Dr. Zekra Alwash, Mayor of Baghdad, underscored that this message will be delivered officially at the convening of the first parliamentary session.

The Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers' GS applauds UNFPA efforts in Iraq

Baghdad, 6 September 2018 – Today, Mr. Ramanathan Balakrishnan, UNFPA Representative in Iraq, called upon H.E. Dr. Mahdi Al Alaq, Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. During the meeting, Mr. Balakrishnan sought the support of the Secretary-General in expediting the endorsement of Standard Operating Procedures for the establishment of shelters for women in Iraq.

UNFPA Representative also informed Dr. Al Alaq of his end of assignment in Iraq and expressed his gratitude towards the Government of Iraq, and especially Dr. Al Alaq, for supporting UNFPA country programme in Iraq and thus enabling it to become the largest UNFPA programme, globally.

He expressed his confidence that the government and in particular, Dr. Al Alaq will continue to support the UNFPA programme in Iraq under the leadership of the incoming Representative.

In return, Dr. Al Alaq praised Mr. Balakrishnan for the leadership and commitment he demonstrated and acknowledged the important contributions and achievements of the UNFPA programme in Iraq.
UN Women Regional Director Mohammad Naciri visits Iraq

Baghdad, 12 September 2018 - The Iraqi President's Advisor, Ms. Juwan Fuad Masum, met with UN Women Regional Director for Arab states, Mr. Mohammad Naciri. They discussed the participation of Iraqi women in the next government. Ms. Masum highlighted the importance of reestablishment of the Ministry of Women Affairs to support and empower women's participation in the economic and political progress. The meeting was attended by UN Women Representative in Iraq, Ms. Dina Zorba.

Sayed Ammar al-Hakim, head of the National Wisdom Movement, received at his headquarters in Baghdad the UN Women Regional Director Naciri. The two sides discussed ways to support, empower and activate the role of Iraqi women in political and economic life and promote their assumption of public office.

In Erbil, H.E. Nechirvan Barzani, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, received with Regional Director Naciri. They discussed women participation at decision making levels and the importance of advocacy and education to promote gender equality and women empowerment.

UN Women Regional Director for the Arab States, Mr. Mohammad Naciri, along with the Iraq Representative, Ms. Dina Zorba, and UN Women team met with the Secretary General of the High Council for Women Affairs, Ms. Pakhshan Zangana, and her team at the High Council of Women Affairs (HCOWA) of the Kurdistan Region Government in Erbil. They discussed the cooperation and collaboration in terms of current and future projects in order to support, empower and activate the role of Iraqi women in political and economic aspects; and the increase of women's representation in public positions and the role of their participation in the international forums. The meeting was followed by a visit to Erbil Citadel and old city. The Governor of Karbala, Dr. Aqeel Alrhyh, at his headquarters in the Holy City, received the Regional Director, Mr. Mohammad Naciri, and his delegation. They discussed possible ways for cooperation in providing specific women's services in Karbala.

The meeting was followed by a visit to holy Husseiniyeh and a joint meeting with Sheikh Abdul Mahdi Alkrbl, where the needs of women and families in Karbala were discussed.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Ali Cmon, representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Karbala, and Mr. Good Al-Refai, programme officer of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Ms. Dina Zorba, country representative of UN Women.

Women Watch organized a joint meeting with the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), FAO and UN Women with several women leaders in Karbala. During the meeting, emphasis was placed on the importance of women's political and economic empowerment, as well as on efforts to eliminate violence and discrimination against women.
UN Women Regional Director and team visit Women Center and Mosul old city

Mosul, 21 September 2018 - Mr. Mohammad Naciri, Regional Director for the Arab states of the UN Women, visited the Center for women’s support in Mosul, which is managed by the Iraq Renewal foundation for economic development.

The Center for women’s support in Mosul was opened last May by a Renewal foundation in partnership with UN Women and is funded by the European Trust Fund. The Centre is working to restore psychological and physical stability and provide legal support to women affected by war. The Center implemented the cash-for-work programme (C4W), which provides temporary employment opportunities for women, especially women living on the west side of the city because of the difficult conditions they suffered before and after and during the recent war against ISIS in Mosul.

The visit was followed by a tour of the UN Women Regional Director and team visit Women Center and Mosul old city, where he was briefed on the massive destruction of the city, especially the great Noury mosque. Mr. Naciri was accompanied by Ms. Dina Zorba, representative of UN Women in Iraq, Ms. Parveen Yassin, Mr. Asim Jassim and Mr. Means from the Commission’s office in Erbil.

Aspiring for sustainable development and peace: Naciri calls on Iraqi leaders to safeguard women leadership positions

Baghdad, 15 September 2018 - Mr. Mohammad Naciri, UN Women Regional Director for Arab States, called on Iraqi leaders to take practical and decisive steps to ensure that women assume leadership positions in the three presidencies and in the government to achieve sustainable development and peace.

The call followed his visit to Iraq where he met with heads of political blocs, leaders at the highest levels and a large number of women and parliamentary leaders to emphasize the importance of supporting the agenda of women and women's participation in leadership and decision-making.

A joint statement by the UN Women and an assembly of Iraqi women leaders, called for sincere measures to ensure fair participation of women in all parts of the state. The call included a number of viable demands on the governmental and parliamentary levels as follows:

1. Ensure representation of women in the Presidency of Parliament, the Prime Ministry and the Presidency of the Republic.

2. Substantive and leadership roles in parliamentary committees, in particular the Security and Defense Committee, for the importance of women’s role in maintaining peace and security and providing support to the Women’s Committee.

3. Emphasize the participation of women in ministerial portfolios in the government by not less than 25%

4. Support the formulation of a women's bloc that brings together various political blocs in parliament, uniting the efforts of women within a clear framework of action and supporting women's issues and defending their rights.

5. Support the government's efforts to restore the Ministry of Women with full portfolio to give greater impetus to women's issues and to meet Iraq's local, regional and international commitments towards the women agenda.

Mr. Naciri's mission complemented Iraqi women leaders supported by UN Women where they met with the political blocs and leaders at the highest levels to emphasize the importance of supporting the agenda of women and the participation of women in leadership and decision-making. The meetings were also attended by UN Women Country representative in Iraq Ms. Dina Zorba and a number of UN Women staff and experts.

The Regional Director of UN Women said that women's political participation is essential for achieving equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy. “We have great hope to respond to the demands of the women of Iraq mothers and daughters, because the active participation of women, who represent half of society, will achieve security, stability and prosperity and push ahead with progress and sustainable development in Iraq.
National Committee selects 8 Iraqi NGOs for funding

Baghdad, 25 September 2018 - The Iraq Steering Committee for the Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) approved funding for eight national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that implement projects to support women's meaningful participation in peace building and conflict prevention all over Iraq. Each of the 8 organizations will receive funds in the range of 100-300 thousand US dollars for 2-year projects to be implemented all over the country. The total of 2 million US dollars come from the generous contributions of the governments of Canada and the United Kingdom.

The Iraq National Steering Committee is co-chaired by Dr. Mahdi Al-Allaq, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, Ms. Marta Ruedas, UN Resident Coordinator, with membership from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), the Ministry of Planning (MOP), the Department for Women Empowerment (DWE), two civil society members and the representatives of the Embassies of Canada, the UK and Sweden in Iraq in addition to UN Women and UNFPA. The WPHF in Iraq is managed by UN Women Iraq Country Office represented by Ms Dina Zorba.

The Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) is a global partnership that aims to accelerate action and stimulate funding for women's participation, leadership and empowerment in situations of conflict and humanitarian crises around the world. The fund is geared towards women's participation and leadership in conflict and post-conflict environments through the provision of financing.

In the words of Tanya Gilly Khailany: “When it comes to women’s rights, there’s no room for diplomacy”

New York, 26 September 2018 - Tanya Gilly Khailany, from Iraqi-Kurdistan, is a former member of the Iraqi Parliament (2006 – 2010) and a co-founder of the SEED Foundation, an organization that works with survivors of violence and trafficking in Iraq. An outspoken women’s rights activist, Ms. Gilly Khailany was one of the key parliamentarians who legislated the 25 per cent quota for women in Iraqi provincial councils. As an expert on political participation and peacebuilding, she recently spoke at a side event on the margins of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly on 26 September in New York. In this interview, Ms. Gilly-Khailany talks about what motivates her, and what women’s meaningful participation in peace processes means in practical terms:

I am an activist; I came from activism and became a legislator. There were several incidents and moments that led me to this path. I remember one with my son when he was in the fifth grade and had to write a paper on a topic of his choice. I was helping him. He said to me, ‘I could have written my paper on women’s rights, but I didn’t want my friends to make fun of me.’

I was a parliamentarian at the time. I thought, all the work I had done... and here was my son, not feeling comfortable to talk about women's rights. That incident stayed with me and motivated me to push forward. It took my son years to openly talk about women’s issues. Today he’s doing his senior paper on gender-based violence in the tech industry. That’s just one person; we have to make sure thousands and millions of boys feel comfortable talking about women’s rights.

My fight is for the chance of equal opportunity. One of the measures that I worked on as a parliamentarian that I am most proud of, is the quota system for women in the Iraqi Constitution. We asked for 40 per cent but got 25 per cent quota for women in the Iraqi Parliament. I worked with women activists to establish the same quota for women in provincial councils. Having the quota at the provincial level was really important because women could use the provincial councils as a stepping stone to get back into politics, to learn and to grow. Now in the Iraqi Parliament, there are many women who came from the Provincial councils.

My fight is also about peace. Peace is not just about security. It’s about equality and social justice. No one is above the law, and no one should be discriminated by the law.

Peace needs women’s meaningful participation. For that to happen, first, women must get a seat at the table. In my country, there have been many women in political parties, they’ve headed women’s caucuses in the parliament, but when it comes to core issues, women are still not at the table. It’s also about bringing issues that matter to women to the table.

When we talk about sustainable peace, reconciliation is part of that. But people talk about political reconciliations between political parties. There are women who have been impacted deeply by the conflict; how can we not talk about their reconciliation? Simply put, women’s voices must be heard, when it comes to running the country.

Sustaining peace is not only about protecting women during times of war, but also protecting women in times of peace. The UN has the tools for holding countries accountable to resolutions and treaties. Any country not in compliance, should be called on it.

When it comes to women’s rights, there’s no room for diplomacy.”
A meeting of the International Gender Group hosted by UNAMI

Baghdad, 27 September 2018 - The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq this morning hosted the International Gender Group (IGG) which is a coordination mechanism among the Baghdad-based international community for advancing a women, peace and security agenda, in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, who chaired the meeting on behalf of UNAMI and UN WOMEN, underlined that the IGG remained a valuable tool in enabling the UN and the wider international community to collaborate on assisting Iraqis, both the government and civil society, to deliver on Women Peace and Security, improving the situation and agency of women in Iraq. She noted that it was important that the IGG promoted common messages to amplify women’s voices.

Ms. Suzan Aref, the Coordinator and Rapporteur for the Cross-Sector Task Force on UNSCR 1325, provided an update on the status of the National Action Plan report on UNSCR 1325, focusing on its achievements and challenges and suggesting how to address gaps in the next plan. There was then a useful exchange of views on the need for a full role for women in the formation of the next government, and the importance of senior roles in the incoming parliament for Iraq's many talented female politicians.

MPs announce Core Group for Iraqi Women Parliamentarians Caucus

Baghdad, 29 September 2018 - Iraq Women Members of the Council of Representatives (MPs) announced the establishment of the core group for the Iraqi Women MPs caucus within the Council of Representatives. In the meeting, supported by UN Women and in partnership with UNDP, the women also nominated MP Ala Talabani as ad interim chair leading the full formulation of the caucus. The women agreed that this alliance is important in order to address and advance the gender and women empowerment agenda while enforcing Iraqi women participation in political leadership and decision-making at all political, economic and social levels. They also confirmed the importance of collaborating and partnership with the government and civil society.
Support from Korea sustains services for women and girls during Iraq’s post-conflict recovery

Erbil, 27 September 2018 - A new commitment from the Republic of Korea will support UNFPA in strengthening services to address sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence in Iraq, to meet the complex needs of women and girls as the country recovers from three years of conflict.

The $700,000 commitment, signed on 16 August 2018, will fund UNFPA reproductive health interventions in camps for internally displaced people in Duhok and Sulimaniyah in Iraq’s Kurdistan Region, and gender-based violence services across the country. While military operations against ISIL ended over a year ago, 8.7 million of Iraq’s people, including the 1.9 million still internally displaced, remain in need of humanitarian assistance. Among them are women and girls in dire need of sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention and response services.

The war devastated the country’s infrastructure and compromised institutional capacity to provide such services – making UNFPA’s continued humanitarian response as critical as ever.

Throughout the years of conflict, UNFPA undertook a range of humanitarian response activities to meet these needs. From 2014 onward, the organization established over 94 reproductive health service delivery points and 147 women’s safe spaces and community centres offering gender-based violence response services.

During the current reconstruction stage, even as the need for humanitarian assistance persists, new challenges arise. Services established by UNFPA will need to be sustained, while new delivery points will need to be set up in areas serving returnees.

“The demand for health and protection services far exceeds supply in Iraq, despite the end of the conflict,” said Ramanathan Balakrishnan, UNFPA Representative in Iraq. “As humanitarian needs shift and become more complex, this new funding from Korea will support UNFPA in Iraq in ensuring the sustainability of services that address essential needs for women and girls.”

“A critical part of the task at hand,” he added, “is strengthening the capacity of government counterparts, so that they can take over service provision as the country continues its transition.”

Towards women’s economic empowerment in Iraq

Baghdad, 7 October 2018 – The World Bank Group, the Government of Iraq, and the Government of Canada launched today a US$1.95 million grant to support Iraq’s efforts to strengthen systems and deliver programs to empower women economically and politically.

The “Gender and Social Protection in Iraq: Towards Economic Empowerment” program consists of two complementary components: the first component will set in place long-term legislative and institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming, while the second will introduce programs that will support the economic and political empowerment of women in Iraq, including entrepreneurial programs for poor and vulnerable women.

“We are excited to partner with the Government of Canada to support women’s empowerment in Iraq,” said Saroj Kumar Jha, World Bank Mashreq Regional Director. “We are committed to supporting women in Iraq and we’ll work tirelessly to ensure that Iraqi women have the opportunity to participate fully in all facets of life and to contribute to Iraq’s socio-economic development.”

This project contributes to the wider World Bank’s socio-economic intervention in Iraq and is consistent with the Iraq’s Second Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Social Protection Strategic Framework.

“The program will support the ongoing gender empowerment efforts led by the government” said H.E. Dr. Mehdi Al-Alaq, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers. “It will help us achieve women’s empowerment by reducing legal, institutional, and social constraints and unleash their talent and energy to make our economy and society stronger.”

“Canada recognizes that supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women is the best way to build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous Iraq,” said Ambassador Paul Gibbard, Canada’s first resident Ambassador to Iraq since 1991. “With our partners from the World Bank and the Government of Iraq, we will work to empower women so that they are able to play a vital role in establishing and maintaining peace in their communities—a necessary precondition for stronger economic growth in Iraq.

The “Gender and Social Protection in Iraq: Towards Economic Empowerment” program will entail a review of existing women’s empowerment programs and provide technical support through workshops and working sessions to government officials on enhancing the design and implementation of these programs, as well as on strengthening monitoring and evaluation schemes.
In the words of Taffan Ako: “I believe you have to be in the system in order to change the system”

Erbil, 8 October 2018 - A refugee from Iraqi Kurdistan, Taffan Ako fled to Sweden in 1997 with her family. Today she is the Coordinator of One Young World Ambassadors for Scandinavia and Eastern Europe and founder of EmpowHERment, an organisation that assists women and young girls who have been former ISIS sex slaves or victims of human trafficking. Her foundation finances integration projects for children and women in Europe and in Iraqi Kurdistan. Ako was one of the Young Leaders attending the EU Development Days in June 2018 and spoke to UN Women about her experience growing up as a refugee in Sweden and her activism today.

“We fled the civil war in Iraqi Kurdistan with my mother and my sister when I was three years old. We came the same way as people do today, hiding in trucks, in small rubber boats, carrying everything we owned. Eventually, we made it to Sweden. My father followed us into Sweden after a few months, he had been wounded in the war.

I learned Swedish before I learned Kurdish. I grew up with democratic values and knew my rights. But at school, the kids bullied me. They said, you’re a refugee, you’re stateless. They said, I had to say I was from Iraq, not Kurdistan.

I had a lot of identity crisis growing up and that contributed toward my decision to go back to Kurdistan when I was 18 years old. I thought I needed to go back where I belonged, where I would feel accepted.

Having spent my entire childhood in Sweden, I had [a different] vision of humanity, human rights and democracy. But in Kurdistan I couldn’t even go swimming wearing a normal bathing suit; my grandfather would ask me to wear long sleeves. I became curious about why women had a different role in the [Kurd] society. That curiosity was the foundation for my passion for feminism and women’s rights.

When I moved back to Kurdistan, I realized women could only be teachers or housewives; and even if you were a teacher, you couldn’t teach high school students because they were in puberty and that might lead to sexual behaviours. One night, I sat down with my father’s uncle, the oldest man in our family and the most educated. I asked him why women were so oppressed. He said it was because of the culture and people have not been taught to break free from that, because the honour culture is so strong. The men connect everything they have to their women’s honour. A [woman’s] honour reflects on her entire family, and yet, she is not worth anything.

I wrote my first article that night, “Feminism in Kurdistan”, which got published in an online magazine called Kurdistan Tribune. Some local magazines then translated it into Kurdish and publish it. Within 48 hours, I received so much hate from my own community in Kurdistan, from men and from religious groups, that I was scared I didn’t know how to handle the cyber violence. Even my uncles were outraged and said I had dishonoured them.

But then, my father called me and said, “I am so proud of you. I do not want you to stop”.

After a few weeks, I continued writing and started engaging with local organizations. I launched different projects on preventing Female Genital Mutilations in the rural areas in Kurdistan and got a lot of support from the youth community. It was nice to know that even if the older generation or the religious groups would not agree with me, there were others who would.

I launched the first youth empowerment association in Kurdistan. I stayed in Kurdistan for three years, and I developed this work because of the refugee crisis that hit the Middle East before it hit Europe. I believe you have to be in the system in order to change the system.

In 2016 I moved back to Sweden and have been studying there since. If I am allowed to dream really big, I would love to be the Swedish Foreign Affairs Minister one day.”

A workshop for “Iraqi women parliamentarians caucus: objectives and future action plan” held in Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon, 13 October 2018 - A workshop under the title “Iraqi women parliamentarians caucus: objectives and future action plan” was organized by UN Women in Beirut with the participation of more than 60 women and men from the Iraq Council of Representatives, government, civil society and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The conference was organized with the aim to share experiences and strategies to advance Iraqi women agenda.
Annual conference on opposing violence against women held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 13 October 2018 – The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, attended today the 10th annual conference organized by the Al-Hakim Foundation to mark the Islamic day of opposing violence against women. The event coincides this year with the commemoration of the eighteenth anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which sets out a range of ways to involve women in peace and security. The conference, hosted by Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim, was also attended by the President of the Republic, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, parliamentarians, civil activists and representatives of the international community.

In her address to the gathering, Ms. Walpole recalled that “Iraq was the first country in this region to establish a National Action Plan to implement the measures contained in UNSCR 1325”, which made it, she noted, “disappointing that qualified women remain absent from Iraq’s national and local decision-making structures.” She urged the incoming Cabinet and the new Council of Representatives to reflect carefully on measures to help and support women: “not because they are women, but because they are qualified”.

Ms. Walpole also called for the accelerated adoption of laws that would protect women, notably the Anti-Domestic Violence Bill, which is still pending in parliament. And for the establishment of a dedicated, fully-resourced national institution to coordinate the implementation of national frameworks and policies which support women.

Here is the full text of the statement by DSRSG Walpole:

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted and honoured to be at this significant gathering, which marks the Islamic day of opposing violence against women – a timely event which coincides with our celebration of the eighteenth anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 which sets out a range of ways to involve women in peace and security. And also, as we are all aware, just a few days after Nadia Murad, an Iraqi, was awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon in armed conflict.

Distinguished participants,

The theme of this year’s conference, “empowering women socially and politically”, is instructive because it reminds us, at this time of political change and important social advances in Iraq, that there is a host of capable, competent women standing ready to take up leadership roles, in both their local communities and on the national stage. In parliament, in the judiciary, in state institutions, in academia, in business. After the years of Daesh barbarity and oppression, women are seeking their rightful place in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts across this country. Iraq was the first country in this region to establish a National Action Plan to implement the measures contained in UNSCR 1325, and that plan offers us a blueprint for better engagement by women in peace and security.

Which is why it is disappointing that qualified women remain largely absent from Iraq’s national and local decision-making structures. More than half of Iraq’s population is female, yet not a single woman has yet been promoted to a key public post. I am encouraged by the small positive step of the appointment of a woman as a Council of Representatives rapporteur and as the interim head of the legal committee. I urge all those now engaged in selecting candidates for key public roles to appoint qualified women to ministerial positions. Not because they are women, but because they are qualified.

Special Representative Jan Kubis, at the recent consultative meeting on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, noted that “Gender inequality continues to prevail in Iraq with worrisome signals that it is deepening and requires intensified efforts and coordination in developing a new action plan on implementing United Nations Security Council resolution 1325”. The theme of this conference is a reminder that all stakeholders, at all levels of government, should accelerate implementation of the 1325 National Action Plan – in particular, ensure that it is allocated an adequate budget. I note, in this context, that tribal and religious leaders are a strong force in the community to champion equality rights.

Distinguished Participants,

During the visit earlier this year of Ms. Pramila Patten, United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Government of Iraq and the United Nations jointly launched an implementation plan of the Joint Communiqué on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. Whilst this is a positive step, there is much more to be done. Stigma, shame and silence continue to hinder survivors of sexual violence from rebuilding their lives, returning to their homes, and accessing public services. We all must do much more to promote acceptance of, and support for, survivors of sexual violence and children born of rape.

In summary, I would like to encourage the incoming Council of Representatives to reflect carefully on measures to help and support women. For example, by accelerating adoption of laws that would protect women, notably the Anti-Domestic Violence Bill which is still pending. And establishing a dedicated institution - with a budget and genuine authority - to coordinate the implementation of national frameworks and policies which support women.

The United Nations and its Agencies, Funds and Programmes will continue to provide support to the Government of Iraq and its people in taking forward these important measures. Together we can promote the representation and meaningful participation of women in the life of this country.
This is what happened when a refugee girl took charge at UNHCR

Sandy Alqas Botros from Iraq explains why she is determined to make a difference for women and girls.

Geneva, Switzerland, 15 October 2018 - My name is Sandy Alqas Botros. I am 19 years old and from Iraq. My father is an electrical engineer and my mother is a tailor. I never imagined that one day I would become a refugee.

In 2015, we fled our home after Mosul was taken by militants. We lost everything. In Turkey, we boarded a small boat to Greece, and eventually found safety in Hamburg, Germany.

In Hamburg, I learned the language and was able to continue my secondary education. My favourite subjects at school are mathematics, chemistry and politics. My favourite hobbies are playing the piano, reading books and drawing. I can speak four languages: Arabic, Aramaic, English and German.

When we first arrived, it was difficult, but over time it became easier because I learned the language and found friends.

This is the story of what happened when I was given the chance to take over a high-ranking position at UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, for one day.

The Girls’ Takeover was part of a global action led by Plan International to mark International Day of the Girl.

This year, over 1,000 girls across the world stepped into the shoes of presidents, mayors, head teachers and other leaders, to show that girls should be free to dream and free to lead. I am so proud to have been one of them.

“I believe educated refugees can have a great impact.”

In September, I took over the position of George Okoth-Obbo, the Assistant High Commissioner of Operations at UNHCR. I went through a day of being briefed and discussing refugee matters with representatives, directors and other managers. I had meetings on many topics, including the agency’s work on prevention, its response to sexual exploitation and abuse, the importance of education in refugee camps and the participation of women and girls in refugee programmes. As well as all that, I took over the Twitter account of Mr. Okoth-Obbo and spread my messages across the world. Mr. Okoth-Obbo himself accompanied and supported me as my Special Assistant.

Throughout the takeover, I contributed my point of view and highlighted the importance of education. Too many children in refugee camps have only limited access to education or none at all. More teachers and schools in or nearby the camps are desperately needed. I believe educated refugees can have a great impact and help to teach other refugees within informal classes.

I also wanted to encourage UNHCR to involve more women and girls in decision-making processes. I believe the International Day of the Girl should serve as a reminder that there is still too much gender-based violence and not enough girls in powerful positions.

For example, in Iraq, most girls never get the chance to participate in refugee programmes like I do in Germany. I think it is important for more women to lead programmes and to facilitate the participation of girls.

While working with the Plan International Youth Group (Youth Advocates), I saw for myself how important female participation is to make sure that girls receive the right protection and support. With the Girls’ Takeover, I want to show other girls that political participation is important and encourage them to do the same.

I hope my takeover sets an example. The positive reaction I received after the takeover has inspired me to continue my engagement with Plan International and UNHCR to campaign for equality and children’s rights. After finishing school, I want to study at university and get the qualifications I need to continue my work in refugee programmes that support boys and girls worldwide.

Women Advisory Group (WAG) in Reconciliation and Politics in Iraq established to bring in Iraqi women’s perspective into the national reconciliation process

Baghdad, 15 October 2018 - Women remain excluded from political and decision-making in Iraq despite their active role in society. To advance women’s role in politics and make their voice heard, a Women Advisory Group (WAG) has been established with the support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The group will act as an independent source of expertise and advice to the United Nations Special Representative for Iraq in support of the good offices mandate of UNAMI. Comprising 22 women from diverse backgrounds, the group will serve as a political inclusion mechanism to ensure that voices, concerns and experiences of Iraqi women are included in political processes that shape the national reconciliation vision, based on the principles of peaceful coexistence, respect for diversity and non-discrimination. The Women Advisory Group will inform UNAMI’s activities in implementing its mandate of advising and assisting the Government of Iraq to advance inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation and will work closely with the Civil Society Situation Room where both women and men will be consulted on a regular basis.

This mechanism will ensure women’s views and recommendations reach the Mission leadership in a timely manner and that women engage closely with the Mission in strategizing action related to gender perspectives in the national reconciliation and political processes.
The situation of Iraqi women in the next government and parliament discussed with a senior State Department official

Baghdad, 19 October 2018 – United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Mr. Andrew Peek met with a number of Women MPS from the Iraqi Council of Representatives to discuss the situation of Iraqi women in the next government and parliament; as well as the challenges facing Iraq. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of State listened to the Women MPS, as they specifically thanked UN Women for their support and assistance in forming the “Women MPS Assembly”. UN Women supported the formation of the assembly through a workshop a few days ago and helped prepare a roadmap and action plan for the Women MPS Assembly; which was announced at a press conference on 15/10/2018. The women stressed that the representation of women in the next government is an important indicator to the progress of democracy in Iraq in the Post-ISIS Stage, as Iraq is on the path of a comprehensive development renaissance and women are a basic component of the Iraqi people.

Iraqi women parliamentarians met with European Ambassadors, who confirmed their support for the empowerment of Iraqi women

Baghdad, 22 October 2018 - The European Union Delegation in Iraq and UN Women sponsored a meeting for Iraqi women parliamentarians with European Ambassadors in the country as well as the Ambassadors of Britain, Canada, the United States and Japan at the Italian Embassy in Baghdad. The women parliamentarians presented the formation of the MPs caucus and the goals they wish to achieve. They also confirmed the need to represent women in the next government by at least 25% with the return of the Ministry of Women Affairs in view of the challenges facing Iraqi women. The MP's demanded the chairmanship of the important committees in the parliament, not less than one quarter of the chairmanship of the committees. The Ambassadors confirmed their full support for these demands and their support for the empowerment of Iraqi women economically, politically, socially and culturally, especially that Iraq is on the verge of a comprehensive development renaissance. The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister of Economy and Energy Thomas Parisi, who confirmed his country's support for the demands of women and the parliamentary group.

UN Women Iraq organized a workshop on Results Based Management (RBM) and Sound Reporting

Baghdad, 23 October 2018 - In its continuous efforts of building and enhancing the capacities of its partners, UN Women Iraq office has organized a workshop in Baghdad on Results Based Management (RBM) and Sound Reporting. During the workshop, participants have also discussed key challenges encountered during the implementation of their projects and proposed mitigation actions for such challenges. The workshop aimed at ensuring effective implementation of projects as well as maximizing the benefits of UN Women’s interventions for the Iraqi Women and girls.
UNFPA representative focuses on women and youth in meetings with Iraqi officials

Baghdad, 24 October 2018 – Dr. Oluwem Sogunro, UNFPA Representative to Iraq, held high level meetings with Mr. Mohammed Al-Halbousi, Speaker of the House, Dr. Mahdi Al-Alaq, Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, and Dhiaa Khadum, Head of the Central Statistical Organization, respectively.

With Mr. Al-Halbousi, Dr. Sogunro discussed the cooperation between the Parliament and UNFPA in regards to the National Strategy for Combatting Violence Against Women in Iraq and the importance of endorsing the law protecting women and girls from domestic violence.

For his part, the Speaker applauded UNFPA's interventions in Iraq and announced his sponsorship of the workshop aiming to finalize the launch of the National Strategy for Combatting Violence Against Women.

Dr. Sogunro also met with Dr Mahdi Al-Alaq who reiterated the Iraqi Government's support to UNFPA mandate and interventions across Iraq.

The talks focused on the establishment of two new Women Shelters in Iraq: one in Basra and one in Anbar with the support of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The two officials also went over the Census planned for Iraq in 2020 and the implementation process.

To underline the importance of the strategic partnership with Ministry of Planning, the UNFPA Representative visited the Head of the Central Statistical Organization with whom he discussed population related-projects, mainly the National Adolescents and Youth Survey and the upcoming Census for Iraq.

UNFPA has committed to providing technical support and external expertise to organise specialized workshops for decision makers in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq on the implementation and various preparatory stages required to conduct a census.

A comprehensive gender study on the status of women’s and girls’ rights in Iraq launched in Baghdad

Baghdad, 28 October 2018 - UN Women in partnership with Oxfam launched the study ‘Iraq Gender Profile: A snapshot situation analysis on gender equality and women's empowerment’, a comprehensive gender study on the status of women’s and girls’ rights in Iraq. The conference launching was held at Al Rasheed Hotel in Baghdad on the occasion of the 18th Anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

The Gender Profile, funded by the Government of Japan, aimed to inform and facilitate the development of gender responsive policies, strategies and programmes in Iraq. The launching conference presented the study in relation to identification of gaps and opportunities to advance the gender equality agenda and women’s and girls’ empowerment, with a focus on the political, legal, health and economic sector.

The conference was attended by more than 100 representatives of the Government of Iraq, women’s parliamentarians, the police and justice sector, international cooperation agencies, the UN System and civil society organizations.
Statement from Nadia Murad on winning the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize

New York, 5 October 2018 - This morning the Nobel Committee informed me that I was selected as a co-recipient of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize. I am incredibly honored and humbled by their support and I share this award with Yazidis, Iraqis, Kurds, other persecuted minorities and all of the countless victims of sexual violence around the world.

As a survivor, I am grateful for this opportunity to draw international attention to the plight of the Yazidi people who have suffered unimaginable crimes since the genocide by Daesh, which began in 2014. Many Yazidis will look upon this prize and think of family members that were lost, are still unaccounted for, and of the 1,300 women and children, which remain in captivity. Like many minority groups, the Yazidis, have carried the weight of historical persecution. Women in particular have suffered greatly as they have been, and continue to be the victims of sexual violence.

For myself, I think of my mother, who was murdered by DAESH, the children with whom I grew up, and what we must do to honor them. Persecution of minorities must end. We must work together with determination – to prove that genocidal campaigns will not only fail, but lead to accountability for the perpetrators and justice for the survivors.

We must remain committed to rebuilding communities ravaged by genocide. Survivors deserve a safe and secure pathway home or safe passage elsewhere. We must support efforts to focus on humanity, and overcome political and cultural divisions. We must not only imagine a better future for women, children and persecuted minorities, we must work consistently to make it happen - prioritizing humanity, not war.

Congratulations to my co-recipient, Dr. Mukwege, a man I admire greatly who has dedicated his life to helping women of sexual violence.

Thank you to the Nobel Committee for this honor. I will organize a press conference this Sunday in Washington DC. The time and place will be announced tomorrow on this page.

Nadia Murad

UN Secretary-General remarks to Press on the awarding of the 2018 Nobel Prize for peace to Dr. Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad

New York, 5 October 2018 - [as delivered] I congratulate Nadia Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege on being awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize. In defending the victims of sexual violence in conflict, they have defended our shared values.

Nadia Murad gave voice to unspeakable abuse in Iraq when the violent extremists of Daesh brutally targeted the Yazidi people, especially women and girls. As a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime since 2016, she has pursued support for victims of human trafficking and sexual slavery and justice for perpetrators. Her powerful advocacy has touched people across the world and helped to establish a vitally important United Nations investigation of the harrowing crimes that she and so many others endured.

Dr. Denis Mukwege has been a fearless champion for the rights of women caught up in armed conflict who have suffered rape, exploitation and other horrific abuses. Despite regular threats to his life, he made the Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo a haven from mistreatment. The United Nations has supported his efforts. He has been a strong voice calling the world's attention to the shocking crimes committed against women in wartime. As a skilled and sensitive surgeon he not only repaired shattered bodies but restored dignity and hope.

Ten years ago, the Security Council unanimously condemned sexual violence as a weapon of war. Today the Nobel Committee recognized the efforts of Nadia Murad and Denis Mukwege as vital tools for peace.

By honouring these defenders of human dignity, this prize also recognizes countless victims around the world who have too often been stigmatized, hidden and forgotten. This is their award, too. Indeed, the award is part of a growing movement to recognize the violence and injustice disproportionately faced by half of our population. Let us honour these new Nobel laureates by standing up for victims of sexual violence everywhere.
SRSG Kubiš congratulates Nadia Murad for Nobel Peace Prize: Her bravery and the resilience of Yazidi and Iraqis helped defeat the terrorist Da’esh

Baghdad, 5 October 2018 - The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, congratulates Nadia Murad for being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, a recognition she receives on behalf of all Yazidi and other Iraqis who were victims of and gravely suffered from the genocidal barbarism of the terrorist Da’esh ideology.

"Nadia Murad showed heroism, bravery and resilience in the face of her torturers and abusers. With the same resolve she spoke out publicly after escaping her jailers to tell the world about these atrocities and rally support for the cause of defeating the terrorists. Her resilience and that of her Yazidi community and Iraqis at large was instrumental in the ultimate victory against Da’esh last year."

In awarding her the Peace Prize, the Nobel Committee said Murad, herself a victim of war crimes, “has shown uncommon courage in recounting her own sufferings and speaking up on behalf of other victims.”

Mr. Kubiš stated: “Nadia Murad’s Nobel Peace Prize is an honour and tribute not only to victims of Da’esh atrocities in her Yazidi community but also to all victims of sexual violence in conflict, Iraq and worldwide.”

The recognition gives impetus to the efforts to locate and free the more than 3,000 Yazidi and other women and children who remain missing after their kidnapping by Da’esh, and to the efforts to hold accountable those responsible for these crimes.

UNFPA congratulates Nadia Murad for the Nobel Peace Prize, calls to end all forms of GBV and harmful traditional practices in Iraq

Erbil, 5 October 2018 – The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Iraq congratulates the Yazidi Kurdish human rights activist, Nadia Murad, who was awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict.

Nadia is a survivor of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) perpetuated by ISIL. Through her strength and bravery, she has become the voice of women suffering from sexual violence in conflict (SVC).

"Today, the world applauds Nadia Murad's courage. However, we must not forget that there are currently close to 3,086 Yazidis remaining in captivity, among these approximately 1,126 are women,” said Dr Oluwemiji Sogunro, UNFPA Representative to Iraq.

“UNFPA in Iraq calls for action to rescue these women and girls and reiterates its readiness to continue its support to SGBV and GBV survivors through the Women Survivor Centres and Women Social Centres that provide medical services, psychosocial support services and legal counselling,” he added.

UNFPA also takes this opportunity to emphasize the importance of ending all forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices and enabling a law that protects women's rights in Iraq.

Special Representative Patten congratulates Ms. Nadia Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege on being awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to end sexual violence in conflict

New York, 05 October 2018 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, warmly congratulates long-standing partners of her Office Ms. Nadia Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege on being awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war and terrorism.

Nadia Murad, who was abducted by ISIL in 2014 and held in sexual slavery, has become an activist and defender of human dignity who has given voice to the plight of the persecuted Yazidi community. Her courageous advocacy has spurred global efforts to investigate and prosecute these crimes and to shift the blame, shame and stigma from the victims to the perpetrators.

Dr. Denis Mukwege, a renowned gynaecologist, surgeon and founder of Panzi Hospital in the war-torn eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, has restored health and hope to countless survivors of sexual violence, helping them to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of unspeakable atrocities.

Both Ms. Nadia Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege have spoken out about the pervasiveness of rape in war and the vicious cycle of impunity that perpetuates these crimes. Despite threats to their personal safety, they have addressed the United Nations and travelled the world advocating on behalf of sexual violence survivors. Ten years ago, with the adoption of resolution 1820 in 2008, the United Nations Security Council recognized conflict-related sexual violence as a self-standing threat to security and impediment to the restoration of peace. The UN's signature Stop Rape Now campaign called for the categorical prohibition of sexual violence as a war crime, a crime against humanity, and an act of genocide to be integrated into global peace and security policy.

Indeed, sexual violence is a silent, cheap and effective weapon with devastating effects for individuals, the cohesion of families and communities, and the prospects of inclusive and durable peace. Aside from the medical consequences, such as sexually transmitted diseases, traumatic fistulae and unwanted pregnancies, rape and other forms of sexual violence lead to long-lasting trauma and suffering, often compounded by social stigma and shame.

“This year's Nobel Peace Prize shines a spotlight on a crime that has long been hidden in the shadows of history and sends a strong message that all the women, girls, men and boys who have suffered sexual violence deserve justice and redress,” concludes Special Representative Patten.
IOM congratulates Nobel Peace Laureates Nadia Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege

Erbil, 10 October 2018 - The UN Migration Agency, IOM, congratulates the 2018 Nobel Peace Laureates Dr. Denis Mukwege, a Congolese doctor and advocate, and Nadia Murad, a prominent Yazidi human rights activist, for their efforts to end the scourge of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict.

For Ms. Murad, the prize comes more than three years after she escaped her ISIL captors in Iraq and resettled to Germany as part of the Humanitarian Admission Programme, jointly implemented by the German State of Baden-Württemberg and IOM Iraq, in close partnership with the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq.

During the summer of 2014, thousands of Yazidi women in northern Iraq were subject to conflict-related sexual violence after being abducted while their hometowns were overtaken by ISIL. Many saw members of their families, relatives and friends brutally murdered. The abuse sexual violence survivors have suffered is impossible to measure, but the strength of survivors and advocates like Ms. Murad and Dr. Mukwege has created tremendous impact, recognized by the Nobel Committee.

“Awarding Nadia Murad with this prestigious prize is of crucial importance to keep the focus of the international community on the fight against gender-based violence in conflicts, which often go hand in hand,” said Gerard Waite, IOM Chief of Mission in Iraq.

Through this programme, more than 1,000 survivors of ISIL violence, mainly from the Yazidi community of northern Iraq, were resettled to Germany and enabled to rebuild their lives after their terrible experiences.

IOM supported this programme with comprehensive pre-departure assistance, including psychosocial counseling, cultural orientation, education, medical care, transportation and accompaniment to Germany.

“Baden-Württemberg greatly appreciated the partnership with IOM on the Humanitarian Admission Programme and is grateful for the close collaboration with the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government as well as local civil society organizations in Dohuk, in the northwestern part of the country, which continues to host many internally displaced persons,” said Michael Blume, Head of the Special Quota Project from the German State of Baden-Württemberg.

After settling in Germany, Ms. Murad began her campaign to end sexual violence not only in Iraq, but around the world, by raising awareness about ISIL's brutality, recounting her own story and demanding recognition and justice for her fellow survivors.

As an organization working on transitional justice and reparations for victims of conflict related sexual violence in Colombia, Sierra Leone, Nepal, Bosnia and Herzegovina and other locations, IOM is very appreciative of Ms. Murad’s efforts to advocate for and defend the rights of the survivors across the world.

In her role as UN Office on Drugs and Crime Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking, Ms Murad and her fellow activists, advocated on behalf of the Yazidi community, resulting in the unanimous adoption of United Nations Resolution 2379 (2017) and the establishment of a UN investigation into ISIL crimes.

IOM Iraq continues to work closely with local partners to support victims of trafficking and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence with psychosocial support, specialized mental health care and access to livelihood opportunities both in and outside of camps for the internally displaced.

However, the needs are great for the 1.89 million Iraqis still displaced, including access to employment, food and shelter. IOM provides these essential services, remedies and reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, in partnership with affected communities, civil society partners, the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government and international partners.

The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded annually to laureates who promote peace and restore justice in their work. Occasionally the prize can be shared between multiple recipients who have been deemed exceptional. Dr. Mukwege, a co-recipient of the award this year established the Panzi Hospital in his native eastern Democratic Republic of Congo which provides specialized assistance to sexual violence survivors.
Special Adviser on Da’esh Accountability: Nadia Murad a symbol of resilience, highlights the need to deliver justice for Da’esh crimes

New York, 10 October 2018 - Commending the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad as a symbol of the resilience of the victims of ISIL/Da’esh crimes, the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to promote accountability for Da’esh/ISIL crimes (UNITAD), Mr. Karim Khan, said her bravery and selfless sacrifice will serve as further impetus for his Team’s work in supporting the Government of Iraq to hold those responsible to account.

Mr. Khan congratulated Ms. Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege, who shared the Nobel Peace Prize 2018 for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war and terrorism.

“Through her exceptional bravery, Nadia Murad has chosen to confront those who have kidnapped, tortured and abused her in order to draw attention to the plight of her Yazidi community, and other victims, who have suffered immensely. In doing so, she has highlighted the need for the international community to ensure that justice is delivered for all victims.”

Mr. Khan said, “For this, we salute her courage and applaud the impact it has had in removing the stigmatization of victims and reminding us that their suffering should never be forgotten.”

“Dr. Denis Mukwege, a physician, spent years helping thousands of victims of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, becoming a symbol of the struggle to end sexual violence in conflict. He deserves all the recognition for his activism and courage.”

Mr. Khan said that the heroic acts by Ms. Murad and Dr. Mukwege cry out for accountability and justice, announcing that his investigative team will soon deploy to Iraq to commence its investigative activities.

“Our team in Iraq will prioritize investigating crimes of sexual and gender-based violence in Iraq,” he promised.

“In her statement after being awarded the prize, Ms. Murad said ‘We must work together with determination – to prove that genocidal campaigns will not only fail, but lead to accountability for the perpetrators and justice for the survivors.’ Our pledge as UNITAD, to the world, and to her, is that we will work tirelessly through our independent investigations to support proper accountability for Da’esh crimes.”

UNITAD was created under UN Security Council resolution 2379 (2017). According to the terms which established the Team, the Special Adviser will support efforts to hold ISIL/Da’esh accountable by collecting, preserving, and storing evidence in Iraq that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide; and to promote throughout the world accountability for such crimes, and work with survivors in a manner consistent with relevant national laws, to ensure their interest in achieving accountability for ISIL/Da’esh are fully recognized.

UNAMI-HRO human rights training for police officers in Halabja

Halabja, 30 August 2018 - Police officers in Halabja city have completed a two-day training course organized by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Human Rights Office (HRO) on core human rights principles relating to police work.

The training course on 29 and 30 August, entitled “Rights of Persons Under Investigation,” is part of a series of activities by UNAMI HRO to support regional institutions and civil society organizations in protecting and promoting human rights in the Kurdistan Region. The course was attended by 40 officers (39 men and one woman) from the Halabja Directorate of Police.

The training course examined general principles and concepts of human rights law, including United Nations reporting and review mechanisms and state obligations. It also addressed the rights of detained persons under international, Iraqi, and Kurdistan Regional law, and the role of police in protecting the rights of freedom of expression and assembly.

In opening remarks, Mr. Eric Husketh of the UNAMI Human Rights Office, expressed the hope that the training course would help participants to see human rights law as a tool, and the United Nations as a partner, to perform their important work to the highest standards.

The Head of the Halabja City Center Police Department, Mr. Barzan Othman Mohammed, said that the training course was crucial to spread awareness among the police and to improve their skills. “It is important for us to learn best practices for the treatment of detainees and develop our awareness of important human rights discussed in the training. As our governorate police are very new, we need UNAMI’s support and training and are grateful for UNAMI coming to Halabja.”
UNAMI-HRO human rights training for police officers in Garmiyan

Kalar, 23 September 2018 – Police officers in Garmiyan Administration have completed a two-day training course organized by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Human Rights Office (HRO) on core human rights principles relating to police work. The training course on 18 and 19 September, entitled “Rights of Persons Under Investigation,” was part of a series of activities by UNAMI HRO to support regional institutions and civil society organizations in protecting and promoting human rights in the Kurdistan Region. The course was attended by 21 officers from the Kalar Directorate of Police and Assayish (Security) and directorates of police in the surrounding districts like Kifri, Darbandikhan and Rizzgari within Garmiyan Administration.

The training course examined general principles and concepts of human rights law, including United Nations reporting and review mechanisms and state obligations. It also addressed the rights of detained persons under international, Iraqi, and Kurdistan Regional law, and the role of police in protecting the rights of freedom of expression and assembly.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Nedim Osmanagic of the UNAMI Human Rights Office, expressed the hope that the training course would help participants to see human rights law as a tool, and the United Nations as a partner, to perform their important work to the highest standards.

At the end of the course HRO distributed the Human Rights Booklet on the Core 9 international human rights treaties among the participants.
Erbil, 26 September 2018 - Survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) can now dial “119” to receive support, counselling, and referrals to community-based services and resources in the region. On 26 September, UNFPA and the General Directorate for Combating Violence Against Women (GDCVAW) in KRI launched the first helpline for gender-based violence survivors. The Helpline is a 24-hour call centre established to provide confidential support and guidance to survivors of GBV. Callers will be connected with trained social workers as well as legal and psycho-social support counsellors, both female and male. UNFPA also organised two trainings for GDCVAW social workers and phone operators on the helpline procedures and guidelines for answering, probing, supporting, and following up on calls received at the call centre. “The Helpline initiative will enable GDCVAW trained operators to provide counselling, advice, and support to GBV survivors and vulnerable individuals in the Kurdistan region of Iraq”, said Mr Kareem Sinjari, Minister of Interior in KRI.

Mr Ramanathan Balakrishnan, UNFPA Representative to Iraq, emphasized the importance of this project: “While remedial services require strengthening to ensure the best possible care for GBV survivors, the helpline is definitely a positive step forward in that direction. We are confident that the helpline 119 is a solid tool that will help the Government in its efforts to combat gender-based violence and support survivors.” The project, supported by the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP), is expected to reach more than 3,600 survivors in the first year of its operations.

UNAMI-HRO human rights training for detention facility officers in Erbil

Erbil, 26 September 2018 – Officers at the Police Pre-Trial Detention Facility (Tasfirat) in Gwer, near Erbil, have completed a two-day training course organized by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Human Rights Office (HRO) on core human rights principles relating to work in detention facilities. The training course, entitled “Rights of Persons in Detention,” is part of a series of activities by UNAMI HRO to support regional institutions and civil society organizations in protecting and promoting human rights in the Kurdistan Region. The course, held on 23 and 26 September, was attended by 32 officers (31 men and one woman), all working in the Gwer facility.

The training course examined general principles and concepts of human rights law, the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the rights of detainees at the stages of arrest, investigation and prosecution, and the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials. It also addressed the right to bodily integrity and protection against torture. Sessions included video presentations, working groups and applied exercises.

In opening remarks, Mr. Eric Husketh, UNAMI HRO human rights officer, noted that the participants interact with the reality of human rights every day in their work and that treatment of detainees reflects the fundamental values of a society.

The director of the Gwer facility, Lt. Col. Khasro Ghazi Khoshnaw, thanked UNAMI HRO for delivering the training course. He stressed the importance of human rights in law enforcement and encouraged the officers to consider human rights principles in their daily work, especially when dealing directly with detainees.

UNAMI urges thorough investigation into killing of Basra civil society activist

Baghdad, 26 September 2018 – The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) voices its grave concern at the shooting to death of a civil society activist, Ms. Suad al-Ali, in Basra on 25 September 2018. The Mission urges the authorities in Basra thoroughly to investigate the circumstances surrounding the killing to determine its motives and to bring the perpetrator(s) to justice.

UNAMI condemns all acts of violence, in particular against women, including murder, threats and intimidation, as wholly unacceptable.
UNAMI Human Rights Office conducts training on monitoring IDP rights in camp setting

Kirkuk, 27 September 2018 - Today, the Human Rights Office of UNAMI conducted a training session with staff of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) in Kirkuk City. The training was aimed to increase the capacity of IHCHR’s human rights monitors in documenting violations of human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) living inside camps.

The training focused on the human rights of IDPs that are most prone to violation in a camp setting. In visiting IDP camps, human rights monitors should observe whether IDPs have access to adequate food, clean drinking water, shelter, appropriate clothing and medical services. They must also note whether there is special protection given to vulnerable groups in the camp population, including IDPs with disabilities, pregnant IDPs, the sick or elderly IDPs, and unaccompanied IDP children.

Around fifteen staff members of IHCHR, including five women, actively participated in the one-hour training and discussion.

UNAMI training on rights to freedom of opinion and expression

Kalar, 01 October 2018 – Journalists, media workers and civil society activists have completed a training course on the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and the importance of responsible journalism in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The training was delivered by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Human Rights Office (HRO) in Kalar city in the Garmiyan Administration of Sulaymaniyah governorate.

The one-day training on 25 September 2018 course aimed to enhance the knowledge of participants about the United Nations human rights protection system as well as international and domestic laws relating to freedom of opinion and expression in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. The course also examined ethical principles for media relating to reporting on human rights violations and the role of the media in promoting public discourse in line with human rights values and principles.

The 20 participants (9 women and 11 men) represented civil society organizations and newspapers, TV channels, radio stations and news websites in the Garmiyan Administration.

UNAMI HRO Human Rights Officer, Mr. Eric Husketh, opened the course by noting that journalists are human rights defenders. This is because people depend on news and the free exchange of ideas to obtain and protect all their other human rights. He also noted that journalists face security risks for doing this important work.

The head of the Dostani (“Friends”) Garmiyan Organization, Mr. Koshish Mekaeili, stated that “this was the first specialized training of this kind ever conducted on freedom of expression by a UN agency in this area. Awareness about human rights laws and values, the safety of journalists, and responsible journalism, helps to develop healthy and productive members of society.”

UNAMI Human Rights Office training workshop held in Baghdad


Other areas included transitional justice and national reconciliation, protection of civilians, rule of law and administration of justice and the Iraq’s human rights reporting obligations.

The aim of the training was to equip the participants with the necessary knowledge and skills that would enable them to raise awareness among their peers, students and the public to claim their human rights and in advocating and lobbying for improved human rights promotion and protection regime in Iraq. Participants appreciated the training and requested more specific trainings for their students and peers.
Consultative forum on concerns of the civil society regarding the application of Article 38(9) of the Iraqi Penal Code held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 21 October 2018 - In the context of the Global Open Day on UNSCR 1325 and on the 18th anniversary of the adoption of the resolution, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized a consultative forum with civil society, women's rights activists, human rights defenders, journalists and members of the Iraqi Bar Association as well as the High Judicial Council to discuss concerns of the civil society regarding the application of Article 38 (9) of the Iraqi Penal Code, which permits the nullification of rape charges when perpetrators of rape marry their victims.

Lawyers and volunteers from the Baghdad Women Association provided a detailed briefing on the activities of a network of 20 civil society activists, who in 2015 launched the campaign #Marriage_Does_Not_Nullify_Rape. The campaign raises awareness against rape, calling for accountability for perpetrators of rape who often marry their victims to escape conviction. The meeting also discussed the lessons learned from the advocacy campaign and the development of new strategies and collaboration aimed at lobbying the Council of Representatives’ (CoR) relevant Committees so that they may revise, amend or abolish the Article. Participants called for:

- The possible revision, amendment or abolishment of Article 38 (9) of the Penal Code 111 of 1969
- The CoR to adopt laws to protect women and children from violence
- Enactment of a Sexual Offences Law to penalise the various types of sexual violence crimes
- Further Consultations with the High Judicial Council, Council of Representatives Committees - Legal, Human Rights, Tribal, Women’s Committees - as well as the newly established women caucus/bloc and the United Nations support to highlight the plight of victims of rape.

UNITAD

Special Adviser and Head of the investigative team to promote accountability for Da’esh / ISIL crimes (UNITAD), Mr. Karim Khan, concludes visit to Iraq and stresses centrality of justice and accountability to Iraq’s future stability

Baghdad/New York, 06 September 2018 - The Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations investigative team to promote accountability for Da'esh / ISIL crimes (UNITAD) under UNSCR 2379, Mr. Karim Khan, recently visited Iraq during which he heard first-hand the heart-wrenching accounts of survivors of Da’esh’s violence. Mr. Khan stressed the need to ensure that survivors of conflict-related violence are protected, their interests advanced, and that perpetrators of these heinous crimes be brought to justice. Mr. Khan also met during the 6-14 August 2018 visit with senior officials from the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government at the federal, regional and provincial levels in Baghdad, Erbil and Dohuk. He engaged directly with survivors, civil society groups and with members of Christian, Shia, Sunni, Turkmen Shia, Kakai and Yazidi communities. “Iraqis of all communities experienced immense suffering from the violence and oppression wrought by Da’esh. The loss suffered by these communities is profound. I realise that the wounds of sorrow remain open and that even when there is healing, the scars will run deep. Many measures are necessary to address what has happened. The involvement of different
Special Adviser and Head of the investigative team to promote accountability for Da’esh / ISIL crimes (UNITAD)...

... (continued)

parts of the United Nations and the wider international community will remain vital. My mandate, however, has one main purpose which is to ensure credible and thorough investigations take place that meet international standards, so that we may properly identify those members of Da’esh / ISIL who are most responsible for crimes. The aim is to ensure that such individuals are subjected to fair accountability processes, based on evidence. An irrefutable record which withstands scrutiny, even generations from now, is essential to record the harm done and establish the crimes committed by Da’esh / ISIL.

Turning to the issue of survivors of Da’esh’s crimes, Mr. Khan said, “The investigations we conduct will undoubtedly uncover acts of heroism displayed by the many survivors from all communities. I have met some of these survivors who bear witness to the crimes committed. Those witnesses that speak the truth courageously to record for history the evil that they experienced deserve our full support and thanks. Indeed, they are heroes in my view. Without their support and participation, no proper accountability process will be possible. In this regard, it is imperative that we collectively ensure that no stigma whatsoever should attach to victims. It is those proved guilty that should be stigmatized. It is essential that survivors be protected and that the investigative and judicial process do not traumatize this category of individual a second time. My team will do our utmost to ensure we engage with victims with full regard to these requirements.”

Mr. Khan’s visit to Iraq was an essential precursor to the commencement of UNITAD’s activities to work to collect, preserve, and store evidence of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed by Da’esh / ISIL. According to the terms UNSCR 2379 (2017) which established the Team, the Special Adviser will promote accountability for acts that may amount to atrocity crimes committed by ISIL/Da’esh, and work with survivors, in a manner consistent with relevant national laws, to ensure full recognition of their interest in realizing accountability.

The Team will operate with full respect for Iraq’s sovereignty and jurisdiction over crimes committed on its territory. Iraqi investigative judges and other criminal experts will be appointed to work on the team alongside international experts and on an equal footing. The Special Adviser will also promote, throughout the world, accountability for Da’esh / ISIL crimes. The team formally commenced its work on 20 August 2018.

The Security Council has encouraged Member States, and regional and intergovernmental organizations, to provide appropriate legal assistance and capacity-building to the Government of Iraq to strengthen its courts and judicial system, and called on all other States to cooperate with the team, including through mutual arrangements on legal assistance.

Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Khan meets Iraqi Permanent Representative to the United Nations

New York, 11 September 2018 - The Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, Ambassador Mohamed Bahr Al-Uloom, met today with Mr. Karim Khan, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Head of the investigative team to promote accountability for Da’esh / ISIL crimes (UNITAD). They discussed the latest developments regarding the composition of the investigation team and the results of Special Adviser’s recent visit to Iraq.
Iraq displacement figures drop below two million for first time since 2014; nearly four million have returned home

Erbil, 4 September 2018 – For the first time in nearly four years, the number of displaced Iraqis has fallen below two million, according to a milestone IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) report released today (04/09).

Data collected by IOM staff for the 100th DTM report, concluded that 1,931,868 people remain displaced, the lowest figure since November 2014. Round 100 also reported that nearly four million people have returned home. Publication of this data is significant for IOM, the UN Migration Agency, as it marks more than four years of tracking displacement in Iraq. Since January 2014, Iraq’s war against ISIL has caused the displacement of six million Iraqis – around 15 per cent of the entire population of the country. In December 2017, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared the end of the country’s war against ISIL.

Across Iraq, IDPs continue to return home at a steady though slower pace than in 2017. The governorates with the greatest number of returnees are Nineawa (1.49 million), Anbar (1.27 million), Salah al-Din (nearly 553,000), Kirkuk (296,000), Diyala (222,000) and Baghdad (77,000). Virtually all (97 per cent) have returned to their habitual residences, two per cent to private settings, while one per cent (19,000 individuals) remain highly vulnerable having sought shelter in religious buildings, schools and unfinished or abandoned buildings.

The remaining IDPs are concentrated in: Nineawa (602,000), Dahuk (349,000), Erbil (217,000), Salah al-Din (169,000), Sulaymaniyah (151,000) and Kirkuk (124,000). Of those who continue to be displaced, 1.2 million are in private settings, 574,000 are in camps, and 176,000 are in critical shelters.

According to latest DTM data, returnees cited the improved security situation, availability of housing, lack of financial means to remain in displacement, the encouragement of community leaders and support from friends and relatives as factors in their decision to return.

Obstacles to return shared by families who are still in displacement include damage or destruction of housing and infrastructure, lack of financial means and job opportunities, and security concerns.

“IOM DTM data has documented the phases of the crisis and has been critical for planning humanitarian assistance,” said Marta Ruedas, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq. “Data on returns is also essential for this next phase of our support for recovery and reintegration.”

IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Gerard Waite said: “DTM makes an important contribution to humanitarian efforts in Iraq by informing the direction of resources to displaced and returnee populations. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi families continue to be displaced and face significant obstacles to return. Both displaced and returnee populations are often vulnerable and need humanitarian assistance to regain their livelihoods and support their families.”

The DTM is IOM’s information management system to track and monitor population displacement during crises. Since early 2014 IOM Iraq has been producing data sets, monthly reports and thematic reports, including on the Mosul crisis, obstacles to return, location assessments and emergency tracking. This information is shared publicly to inform humanitarian efforts.

The IOM Iraq DTM is supported the US Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM).

DTM round 100 can be downloaded at: http://iraqdtm.iom.int/LastDTMRound/ Round100_Report_English_2018_July_31...

IOM Iraq DTM portal address is: http://iraqdtm.iom.int
Rebuilding a life from scratch

Dohuk, 7 September 2018 - "It was during Ramadan in 2016 when my wife, my brother and I went to Turkey by bus. From there we paid a smuggler to take us to Greece and Bulgaria. In Bulgaria we walked for two and a half days to reach Germany, but we were caught by the Bulgarian police and put in jail for four days before being released. We decided to go to Germany by any means. I had heard that Germany was good to refugees," said Dler who migrated from Iraq to Germany in November 2016 in search of a better life for his family. "We walked through forests during the cold season. We paid a lot of money to the smuggler and spent a lot during the journey as well. I had a car in Iraq and I owned a store for repairing bicycles and motorbikes; I sold everything to collect US$20,000 and I spent every cent during the journey and during our six-month stay in Germany," he added. "We were in a refugee camp in Frankfurt for six months. I was trying to find a job but during this time my child, who was born there, got sick several times and we were often in hospitals; it was a very stressful time for me. On top of it, my brother was moved to another camp, seven hours away from us. That made us all very frustrated. And then my mother had an accident here in Iraq, which forced me to come back. I contacted IOM to support my return and we returned from Germany after about seven months." IOM assisted Dler and his wife with their travel back to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and helped Dler to reopen his bicycle and motorbike repair shop in Dohuk. "When I returned, I had to start from scratch, but thanks to this store I did not have to struggle a lot. I am working here five days a week and on the weekends, I go to Erbil to buy parts and bicycles at wholesale prices, which are lower than prices here in Duhok, and sell them in my store. I have spare parts as well as accessories; young boys especially like horns and LED lights for their bicycles and motorbikes," Dler who migrated from Iraq to Germany in November 2016 in search of a better life for his family. "I have daily customers and what I make here is enough to support my wife and two children. I can save some money too. If things go well I will expand the store and buy more spare parts and items." IOM’s assistance to Dler was funded by Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), through the German Corporation for International Development (GIZ) and the German Center for Jobs, Migration and Reintegration in Iraq (GMAC).

By Raber Y. Aziz/IOM

Republic of Korea supports UNHCR’s humanitarian activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 17 September 2018 - The Government of the Republic of Korea continues its support to UNHCR’s humanitarian activities in Iraq with a new donation of US$ 1.2 million. Despite promising signs of recovery in parts of the country, millions of Iraqis still need comprehensive humanitarian and protection assistance. Some 1.9 million people are displaced; hundreds of thousands are in camps. Many will not be able to return home any time soon. Rebuilding Iraq is no small task. As the country gets back on its feet, it is vital that the people who need emergency assistance continue to receive it for as long as they need it. Communities affected by the recent conflict are beset by hardships. Thousands of vulnerable people arrive in UNHCR-managed camps every month because they cannot find work or pay rent in their home areas, because progress in clearing explosive hazards is slow, or because services like water and electricity are not functioning. In July alone, 1,700 families - over 10,000 people - arrived in camps across Iraq. The majority of the new arrivals were displaced at least once before. With each displacement, people become more vulnerable. H.E. the Korean Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Song Woong-Yeob, said, “The Republic of Korea is deeply committed to supporting humanitarian activities in Iraq and will continue to stand by Iraqi people who are in need of humanitarian assistance. I firmly believe that Korea’s continuing support for the activities through the Iraqi Government and international organizations like UNHCR will further help the endangered Iraqi people to recover and rebuild their communities by imbuing them with hope for a new future.”

“There is no quick fix for Iraq,” said Mr. Bruno Geddo, UNHCR’s Representative in Iraq. “For people to see tangible improvements in their lives we must continue to respond to the situation and stand beside the Iraqi people until they can return home safely. Sustainable return is a cornerstone of long-term peace and stability, and thanks to donors like the Republic of Korea, UNHCR is able to backstop Iraq’s journey to recovery. We will support the country’s most vulnerable people for as long as they need us.”
IOM unconventional approach to Communication with Communities

Jeddah Camp, Iraq, 26 September 2018 - In an unconventional approach to Communication with Communities, IOM Iraq engage a group of displaced people in Jeddah camp to develop theatrical pieces to express themselves, create ways to communicate, tackle certain issues and be involved in finding solutions. This project was supported by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.

With new funding, the EU reaffirms its commitment to continue providing lifesaving assistance to vulnerable children in Iraq

Baghdad, 30 September 2018 – The European Union (EU) has contributed EUR 3 million to provide vulnerable children with lifesaving assistance, including safe drinking water, health services, quality education and psychosocial support to alleviate toxic stress from prolonged exposure to violence.

An estimated 4 million children need urgent and sustained humanitarian assistance across Iraq.

“The humanitarian crisis in Iraq presents a major challenge where children are among the most vulnerable,” said Christos Stylianides, the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. “Providing access to life-saving emergency supplies for displaced people, and assisting Iraqi children with healthcare, safe access to quality education, psychosocial assistance and legal protection, remain top EU priorities in Iraq.”

The conflict in Iraq has left critical infrastructure in parts of the country, including schools and hospitals, partially or completely destroyed. More than half a million people are still living in displacement camps and rely on humanitarian support to survive.

“We are very grateful for this timely contribution from the European Union which continues to be a steadfast and generous donor for UNICEF’s work for children in Iraq,” said Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa. “Vulnerable children and their families face countless hardships which soaring temperatures have made far worse in recent months. This contribution will make a real difference in the lives of thousands of children.”

The latest funds from the EU will build on previous achievements, including maintaining services in the camps, rehabilitating damaged schools, providing teacher trainings and learning materials so that children can learn in safe and protective environment and aspire towards a better future.

In the first seven months of 2018, UNICEF delivered education supplies for nearly 200,000 children (including 80,000 girls) across Iraq and trained 256 teachers on education in emergencies and providing psychosocial support to students. Over 100,000 children have received psychosocial support to aid their psychological recovery.

In support of the Iraqi government, UNICEF will also continue carrying out vaccination campaigns in areas that were affected by conflict to immunize children under five years of age against preventable diseases such as polio and measles—nearly half a million children have been immunized this year.

The EU contributions to UNICEF in Iraq totaled €10.7 million between 2017 and 2018. The funds have supported lifesaving activities such as nutrition, water and sanitation as well as improving access to education for children displaced by conflict.
Republic of Korea supports displaced families through cash assistance in Iraq

Baghdad, 3 October 2018 – A contribution of US$1.5 million from the Republic of Korea will enable the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to provide cash assistance to some 68,000 vulnerable displaced Iraqis through electronic cash cards and mobile money transfers.

“The Republic of Korea is delighted to join the efforts of the international community in responding to the immediate humanitarian needs in Iraq,” said His Excellency Song Woong-Yeob, Korea’s Ambassador to Iraq. “Korea’s contribution will support activities aimed at helping people in Iraq suffering from hunger and malnutrition, especially women and children.”

WFP provides cash assistance to displaced Iraqi families, giving them access to a wide range of food items which provide diversity to their diets. Cash transfers also contribute to the local economy, befitting markets and farmers alike.

“As the situation in Iraq remains fragile, we need to continue providing assistance to the most vulnerable families, while supporting people’s efforts to rebuild their lives and economic independence,” said WFP Acting Country Director in Iraq, Maha Ahmed. “WFP has always counted on the Republic of Korea for support in Iraq, and this latest contribution demonstrates Korea’s continued commitment to helping the country move forward.”

Since 2014, Korea has supported WFP activities in Iraq by contributing US$6.3 million. These funds have enabled WFP to provide a significant increase in food assistance for the most vulnerable Iraqis and Syrian refugees in Iraq.

World Food Programme will launch soon a school meals programme

Baghdad, 7 October 2018 - The World Food Programme Iraq, in cooperation with the Iraq Ministry of Education, is currently preparing to launch of a school meals programme, following the success achieved by its pilot project in West Mosul, carried out in the first half of 2018.

The new round will cover the 2018-2019 school year in 11 provinces across Iraq, focusing on underprivileged areas. WFP will provide school meals to nearly 304,000 students in 963 schools across the country.

The first phase will start in December 2018 in the governorates of Basrah, Thi-Qar, Muthanna, and in displacement camps of Ninewa and Kirkuk. In January 2019, the activities will expand in 6 additional governorates.

WFP, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, will procure the food from local suppliers, positively contributing to the revitalization of local economy and food production. Such practice has been already employed during the school meals programme implemented in 2015 in Thi-Qar Governorate. The school meal will comprise bread, fruits or vegetables, cheese, milk or fruit juice.

WFP’s support is geared to ensuring children have a nutritious meal at school – an incentive to increase attendance and learning, especially in impoverished areas where vulnerable families struggle to feed their children.

The high-level coordination meeting held at the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) in Erbil

Erbil, 10 October 2018 - The Deputy Special Representative for Iraq for Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretary-General, Resident Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas, attended a meeting in Erbil of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) together with the United Nations and its partners.

The high-level coordination meeting held at the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) discussed the mid-year 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) review and 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview and Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience for the displaced families in the Kurdistan Region and return of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Ms. Ruedas reiterated the commitment of the UN Agencies to work with the KRG and central government partners to help the displaced people and the return process of the IDPs.
U.S. Consul General in Erbil visited the IOM Iraq warehouse

Erbil, 23 October 2018 - U.S. Consul General in Erbil, Steven Fagin, visited the IOM Iraq warehouse today to review relief and contingency supplies. He supervised the loading of heaters, part of the winterization kits that will be distributed to displaced families in Mount Sinjar, Ninewa, tomorrow. More than 20,000 winter non-food item kits donated by USAID-OFDA will be distributed to provide warmth to over 124,000 vulnerable displaced people and returnees across Iraq.

The Netherlands substantially increases support to stabilization in Iraq

Baghdad, 26 August 2018 – The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has contributed an additional USD 23.2 million (EUR 20 million) to UNDP’s Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS), which finances fast-track initiatives to stabilize areas liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). This brings the Netherlands’ total contribution to USD 65.4 million (EUR 57 million).

“The impact of stabilization activities is clearly visible across the country. Schools are reopening, clean water is flowing and bridges are reconnecting communities”, said Marta Ruedas, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq. “Almost 70 percent of the 5.9 million people who fled during the conflict have returned home. The scale of work still left to do cannot be underestimated, however, which is why this generous contribution from The Netherlands comes at exactly the right time.”

“It is of the utmost importance to restore stability here and in other places destroyed by ISIS,” said Sigrid Kaag, Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. “Giving people the prospect of a brighter future is essential because their property and livelihoods lie in ruins. This includes re-establishing water and electricity supplies, schools and other basic services.” The Minister recently visited the Old City of Mosul to assess the impact of stabilization activities in the region. At the request of the Government of Iraq, UNDP established the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) in June 2015 to facilitate the return of displaced Iraqis, lay the groundwork for reconstruction and recovery, and safeguard against the resurgence of violence and extremism. The Facility currently has over 2,400 projects underway in 31 liberated cities and districts, helping local authorities to quickly rehabilitate essential infrastructure. Almost 1,200 projects have now been completed, with some 95 percent of projects carried out by the local private sector employing local labour. In Mosul alone, FFS is implementing over 750 projects. With over 300 projects now completed across the city, residents have improved access to healthcare, education, electricity, and clean running water. Since the start of the most recent conflict in 2014, almost 70% of the 5.8 million displaced Iraqis have returned to their homes. The impact of FFS has been significant in supporting people upon their return home. FFS has 26 donors that have committed over USD 800 million to stabilization efforts in Iraq.
In Iraq, experienced engineers serving as UN Volunteers are helping refugees return home

Baghdad, 5 September 2018 - After the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a vast part of Iraq was destroyed. The war against ISIL left Ninawa Governorate, the city of Mosul and many surrounding villages reduced to rubble. Houses were damaged, the supply of water and electricity was cut, schools were destroyed, bridges bombed, and roads were paved with grenade holes.

Fifteen UN Volunteers, all experienced engineers, are collaborating with UNDP Iraq to help support the huge reconstruction effort needed in the country. They are assisting the UNDP project Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS), with the aim of helping displaced families return home safely. A lot of work is needed because internally displaced persons (IDPs) are going back to their cities and villages. By the end of April 2018, over 3.6 million Iraqis had returned home.

UN Volunteer Phub Tshering, an electrical engineer from Bhutan, had 16 years of work experience as an engineer in his home country, before arriving in Mosul in 2017. "People living in war-destructed places sometimes feel like new born kids having lost both parents. They lack everything, and they need tremendous support, especially senior citizens, women and children," Phub Tshering, UN Volunteer Engineer with UNDP Iraq.

Phub follows up and oversees the rehabilitation of schools, hospitals and public buildings by verifying that the projects meet all the necessary requirements to move forward. He also carries out inspections of construction sites, materials and equipment and checking the quality of work done by local contractors.

The Funding Facility for Initial Stabilization (FFIS) project started in 2015 after ISIL was ousted from Mosul. In April 2016, a second channel of the Funding Facility was opened for meeting the expanded needs at governorate level for larger projects. This channel has been named the Funding Facility for Expanded Stabilization (FFES). The FFIS and FFES jointly form the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS).

In the last months, all territory has been liberated from the control of ISIL and the activities of the FFS have been expanded to the entire area. Twenty-five donors have contributed with more than US $787 million as of March 31, 2018 (Source: UNDP).

Since 2015, nearly 8,000 houses have been rebuilt or rehabilitated and 12,000 women have benefited from cash for work activities.

Mosul's second largest water treatment plant now works again and provides clean water to half a million people. Furthermore, a major milestone was reached with the completion of Saidati Al Jamila Bridge, the first permanent concrete bridge to be restored in Mosul. In East Mosul, 13,000 households (78,000 people) once again have access to electricity thanks to a new 8.5 km underground cable put in place by the project.

At Mosul University, 1,200 female students can use again their dormitories and go back to their studies. Working in Iraq is a big challenge, especially since persistent political instability and security issues make everything harder.

Despite these challenges, UNV engineers have never stopped working; not even during the political crisis that followed the referendum for the independence of Kurdistan in September 2017. "All the borders were sealed, the airport was closed and clashes started in Iraqi Kurdistan. At times, we had to cross 5 to 10 security checkpoints to reach our project sites," Phub recalls.

Every time that a project reviewed by Phub's team is approved and then implemented, UNV engineers feel proud of their work and celebrate. Sometimes these projects cost millions of dollars and impact hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries like the one that helped provide electricity to the entire city of Kirkuk.

"I personally learned that the level of satisfaction we get from such volunteering assignments is enormous and incomparable to anything else. I'm getting the opportunity to help millions of people return home after the war and this is very motivating" - Phub Tshering, UN Volunteer Engineer with UNDP, Iraq.

* * * * *

Gladys Gbegnedji is a Civil Engineer from Spain. Together with 14 other UN Volunteers and engineers, she is in Iraq to support UNDP reconstruction efforts in Mosul Governorate, in the areas liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

FFS is currently implementing more than 1,100 reconstruction and rehabilitation projects in 28 locations in Iraq.

"I can see every day that our impact is huge. Kids can go back to school. Families can return to their villages, because electricity, water supply and sanitation services have been restored. They feel safer, because hospital and clinics have become accessible again". -- Gladys Gbegnedji, UN Volunteer Civil Engineer with UNDP Iraq.
In Iraq, experienced engineers serving as helping refugees return home (continued)

Gladys supports a team of twenty-four local engineers, directly involved in the reconstruction of water treatment plants, schools, electrical substations and hospitals. “My responsibilities include conducting field visits to assess reconstruction projects, review and improve construction designs and develop technical tender documentation,” she explains. Gladys comes from the private sector and has 15 years of experience as Civil Engineer. She worked within some of the largest construction companies worldwide in Spain for 10 years. After spending two years in Ghana and contributing to the construction of nine hospitals there, she decided to offer her expertise to the United Nations and to volunteer with UNDP in Iraq. She describes it as a rewarding experience. “I remember with special affection when we went to visit several schools in Tel Kaif, a city of 40,000 inhabitants north east of Mosul,” she recalls. Iraqi forces recaptured the town from ISIL in January 2017. “A year and a half later, the rehabilitation of the schools was already completed, and kids were attending classes. Everybody was so grateful to UNDP and to the work done by our team. They all wanted to take pictures with us. That day, I felt really happy and proud.”

The surge of violence in Iraq has produced three million internally displaced persons across the country and over 11 million Iraqis in need of humanitarian assistance. Over 90 per cent of displaced persons live in host communities, predominantly in the Kurdish Region, which experienced a 30 per cent increase in population over two years due to the crisis. Moreover, many Syrians have taken refuge in Iraq.

International meeting on the "Revive the Spirit of Mosul" initiative organized in Paris

Paris, France, 10 September 2018 - The first International Meeting on the "Revive the spirit of Mosul" initiative was organized by UNESCO in collaboration with the Government of Iraq, at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, on 10 September 2018. The meeting brought together representatives from the Iraqi Government and Member States, leaders of relevant international and regional organizations, development cultural and educational institutions, UN organizations, and representatives of relevant humanitarian non-governmental organizations. The objective of the meeting was to mobilize the international community for the reconstruction and recovery of Mosul, to take stock of the current situation on the ground, and to present a list of major projects that will contribute to the rehabilitation of Mosul's heritage sites, reviving its cultural life and its educational institutions.
Removing scars of war in Iraq through education

Paris, France, 13 September 2018 -

“The scale of the city's devastation is heartbreaking and the psychological trauma that Mosul residents endured is as bad as the damage to the infrastructure,” says Dr. Hamid Ahmed, Advisor to the Prime Minister of Iraq. He attended the International Conference for the “Revive the Spirit of Mosul” initiative at UNESCO Headquarters on 10 September 2018 and spoke to UNESCO about the state of the education system in the country and the long road ahead to recovery.

With the destruction of educational facilities, homes and major population displacement, there are multiple priorities and major challenges in education for the Iraqi Government. One of the main tasks is rebuilding the infrastructure as many schools and educational facilities have been heavily damaged and others are not up to the standards that the country aspires for its children and young people. Another huge task is to update and replace outdated teaching equipment, learning materials and curriculums that are currently used throughout Iraq to catch up with the rest of the world. “It is important to remember that Iraq was isolated for over 35 years and hindered from accessing and participating in the advancements of the modern world,” says Dr. Ahmed, who explained that the education system in his country was considered one of the best in the Middle East by UNESCO during the 1970s. However, since 1980, starting with the long conflict with Iran, followed by sanctions and two Gulf wars, the education sector in the country was crippled and took a back seat.

“Time stood still in Iraq between 1980 and 2005 while the world leaped over by what seems like 200 years with a remarkable technological revolution,” he says. “The country remained stagnant and there has been very little change in education, science, technology and administration procedures in Iraq.”

Reform efforts put on hold

Starting in 2009, Dr. Ahmed was in charge of drafting a national strategy for education and higher education to modernize the sector, with the assistance of UNESCO and other international organizations. A wide range of analysis was conducted over a three-year period to assess all aspects of the education sector including infrastructure, curriculums, quality of education, capacity building and overall governance of the system. The strategy was designed to be implemented for the 2011-2020 period. Unfortunately, ISIS took over a third of the country including three major provinces in June 2014.

“At that point, all of our programmes and initiatives to reform the education system were put indefinitely on hold as there was not enough funding allocated to education: the government redirected its full efforts and resources towards its military,” says Dr. Ahmed. “Now that the territories occupied by ISIS have been liberated, we are assessing our previous national education strategy and updating it in order to align it with the Education 2030 agenda.”

According to Dr. Ahmed, at least 20 per cent of the government’s budget must be dedicated to the Ministry of Education in order to rebuild, rehabilitate and modernized the entire system. There is a major shortage of schools throughout the country and at least 3,000 new ones have to built in order to accommodate the urgent need.

Education to restore values of peace and tolerance

Besides the physical rebuilding of schools, there is a lot of work ahead to reverse and undo the damage caused by ISIS to the minds of children and young people. “We have to update, insert and restore a lot of values into the curriculum system in order to tackle ISIS’s dogmatic views and brainwashing methods that were imposed on children and young people,” says Dr. Ahmed. “It will require a lot of effort but it is absolutely essential if we want future generations of Iraqis to share the same human values that UNESCO and other international institutions uphold. ISIS forced the education institutions to operate using their own teaching methods in order to distort young people’s views, brainwash them with their hateful ideology, and justify their barbaric actions. We need to ‘rewash’ and get rid of those views to instill values of peace and tolerance.”

Dr. Ahmed wants to ensure that the new school curriculums in Iraq include all the learning of all the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 because they are key to nurturing the peaceful values that all human beings should possess. He also plans to incorporate educational materials and learning tools such as UNESCO’s policy guide on preventing violent extremism through education.

“ISIS thrives in ignorance: they are more afraid of children and young people with books rather than soldiers with missiles because they know that knowledge and education is what will ultimately defeat them and their ideology,” he says. “We need to tackle their ideology through education because unfortunately, there are still pockets of safe havens for their hateful rhetoric in our society. This will be a challenge for the Iraqi government and education institutions.”

Rehabilitation of the University of Mosul

Among the countless schools, monuments and homes destroyed in Mosul is the University of Mosul Library, which was set ablaze and gutted during the war. UNESCO is committed to supporting the rehabilitation and modernization of the library through the “Revive the Spirit of Mosul” initiative.

“We hope that the funds allocated to the “Revive the Spirit of Mosul” initiative will come through and that we start the reconstruction and rehabilitation projects as soon as possible,” says Dr. Ahmed. “The University of Mosul is now operational, but many of its facilities have sustained heavy damages during the war. The library, which represents a beacon of knowledge and freedom, is already receiving books from other Iraqi universities and international institutions.”

“Revive the Spirit of Mosul” is a UNESCO priority for the coming years and is the most important reconstruction campaign undertaken by the Organization in recent times. The initiative is a joint effort to rebuild the heritage and revitalize the educational and cultural institutions of Mosul, in close cooperation with the Government and people of Iraq, especially young people. UNESCO will invest its technical expertise and mobilize funding to support the country rebuild the education sector.
Grant to support social protection implementation in Iraq

Baghdad, 12 September 2018 - The World Bank Group and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) signed today a US$500,000 (£400,000) grant agreement to support Iraq’s efforts to strengthen social protection systems, working closely with its Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The “Social Protection Support Program Phase II” builds upon the successful implementation of a first phase of interventions which made several achievements including the introduction of new poverty targeting mechanisms, strengthening the social worker program, development of the welfare database, and the launch of the pilot conditional cash transfer program.

“The Government of Iraq has made great strides in reforming its social protection systems. We are excited to continue our partnership with the Government of the United Kingdom to support these reforms,” said Saroj Kumar Jha, World Bank Mashreq Regional Director. “This program will complement the national-level efforts by providing strong coordination and integration mechanisms across social protection programs.”

The program would contribute to the wider socio-economic intervention by the World Bank in Iraq and will be consistent with existing strategies and frameworks, namely Iraq’s Second Poverty Reduction Strategy (2018-2022) and the Iraq Social Protection Strategic Framework, which has been under implementation since 2015.

“The program will support the ongoing social protection reforms led by the government” said H.E. Engineer Mohammed Shiyaa Al-Sudani, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, “It will help us strengthen existing programs relying on the international experience of the World Bank”.

Jim Carpy, Head of DFID Iraq in Baghdad said “The UK is very pleased to provide support to the reform agenda in Iraq. We hope to do more if this kind of activity in future alongside the World Bank and other partners. This specific grant will allow the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to continue with activities that can ensure the improved delivery of Iraqi social protection assistance to over a million Iraqi households in need across the country.”

This program will strengthen the systems and resources shared amongst social protection schemes, while leveraging existing capacities to scale-up resilient interventions in the future. The continued development of the Iraq National Unified Registry is critical to ensure common systems planning and benefit provision across social protection programs. These are also foundational elements for the harmonization across the development and humanitarian aspects of cash (and in-kind) transfers, the utilization of the enhanced role of social workers, and the improvements needed in poverty targeting mechanisms to minimize errors of inclusion and exclusion.

It is more important than ever that government systems are part of the response to assist Iraqi families left devastated by the conflict with Da’esh. A new component of this program will focus on building stronger linkages with international humanitarian actors to reach those most in need with more sustainable and cost-effective support.

UNHCR supports 130,000 Iraqis taking the first steps on the road to recovery, thanks to funds from the UK DFID

Baghdad, 13 September 2018 - UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, completes a year-long series of activities this month, supporting 130,000 vulnerable Iraqis as they take the first steps on the road to recovery, thanks to the generous donation of £9 million from the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

With these funds, UNHCR was able to reach approximately 90,000 people with cash assistance, and support 40,000 people to obtain the legal documents that are essential for them to access social welfare services provided by the Iraqi government.

The recent conflict cast a long shadow across Iraq. As the country begins to recover, the challenges faced by millions of people diversify. Although different to the situation endured during the years of extremist control and conflict, the current problems are no less acute for the people facing them. By promoting self-sufficiency, reducing the burden of debt and encouraging reintegration into existing social mechanisms, programmes like cash assistance and access to legal documentation help to lay the groundwork for longer-term recovery.

“The UK continues to stand by vulnerable Iraqis affected by the devastating conflict with Da’esh,” said Mr. Jim Carpy, Head of DFID Iraq. “Through UNHCR’s programme, UK aid is providing families displaced by conflict with cash assistance, allowing them to buy food and other essential items, re-build their lives, and ultimately return home when it is safe to do so. Our support to displaced people – including many female-headed households – offers them dignity while empowering them to prioritise their own needs in a flexible and cost-effective way.”

“Cash assistance and access to new and replacement documents are crucial for Iraqis making the jump from crisis to recovery,” said Mr. Bruno Geddo, UNHCR’s Representative in Iraq. “The first step can be the hardest to take, and we must continue to stand by the people of Iraq as they start the long journey to peace and stability. UNHCR is grateful to DFID for its long standing support on cash assistance. At a time when global interest in Iraq is diminishing, I urge key donors to maintain the support they have so generously provided throughout this critical time. There is no quick fix for Iraq, and underfunding could severely impact many vulnerable people still unable to return home in a safe and sustainable way.”
The Statistics Office, IOM, and UNFPA launch the demographic survey of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Erbil, 13 September 2018 - The Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO), UNFPA, and IOM launched today the demographic survey of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), one of the largest statistical exercises conducted in the region since 1987. The survey provides a comprehensive profile of the current population demographics, employment and income, housing, household possessions, literacy and education levels. This socio-demographic study gathered information from 12,699 households, including long term residents and displaced families in the three KRI governorates of Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.

This research is timely as it comes at a time where the country is emerging from the conflict and economic hardship; while a significant portion of displaced families have returned or are considering to go back home. The 2014-2017 war against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has had a severe impact on the Kurdistan Region: from the start of the crisis, KRI has provided refuge to more than one million displaced Iraqis and continues to host more than 800,000 internally displaced persons.

Dr Ali Sindi, Minister of Planning for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), said, “The information in this survey establishes a reference base for future statistical studies, and will address the Kurdistan Regional Government with better planning and allocation of resources.”

Mr. Gerard Waite, IOM Chief of Mission said, “This survey is a true collaborative effort with the KRG and UNFPA and hopefully will contribute to addressing the needs of the most vulnerable households, in this critical post-crisis period.”

Mr. Ramanathan Balakrishnan, UNFPA Representative to Iraq added, “This demographic survey fulfils the need for updated population and socio-economic statistics and will serve as a roadmap for future, policy development and planning with KRG and partners.”

The survey was made possible through the collaboration of the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO) within the Kurdistan’s Regional Government’s Ministry of Planning; IOM – the UN Migration Agency - and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

World Bank and European Union support Iraq’s public financial management systems and institutions

Baghdad, 16 September 2018 – The World Bank Group and the European Union signed today a €15.6 million (US$18.1 equivalent) technical assistance program to strengthen public financial management (PFM) oversight and accountability Institutions in Iraq and increase the efficiency in the management of public resources and delivery of services.

The initiative, which will be implemented jointly by the European Union and the World Bank, complements the €41.5 million “Modernization of Public Financial Management Systems” program launched by the World Bank in 2017. It addresses some of the key vulnerabilities in Iraq's PFM and supports the commitments and objectives for PFM reform currently under implementation.

“PFM is an essential part of any development process”, said Saroj Kumar Jha, World Bank Mashreq Regional Director. “Sound PFM supports aggregate control, prioritization, accountability and efficiency in the management of public resources and delivery of services, which are critical to the achievement of public policy objectives, as well as to restoring the trust and social contract between Iraqi citizens and the country's institutions”. As aid is increasingly provided through modalities that rely on well-functioning systems for budget development, execution and control, a sound PFM system is fundamental to the appropriate use and effectiveness of donor assistance. A more efficient PFM system is also instrumental in reducing inequalities in wealth distribution and promoting a dynamic and prosperous economic environment more conducive to business development.

“As was pledged in the Kuwait Conference, the European Union is committed to stand by Iraq in reconstruction and economic and political reforms,” said Ramon Blecua, European Union Ambassador to Iraq.

Data was collected from October to November 2017. Support for the publication of the report is provided by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, and by UNFPA.

Key Finding & Statistics:
- 87 per cent of households have a monthly income of less than 1,000,000 Iraqi Dinar (approximately 850 United States dollars).
- More than 20 per cent of youth (18-34 ages) out of workforce are reported to have lost hope in finding a job.
- In 27 per cent of households the head of household had not worked in the week preceding the survey. Over 40 per cent of the KRI population aged between 15 and 64 years is an active part of the labour force with the public sector employing nearly half of the working population.
- 35 per cent of the population is younger than 15 years.
- KRI families currently enjoy an adequate standard of living; nearly all possess most common household appliances (television, stove or refrigerator). Three quarters of all families own the house they live in connected to the public water (90 per cent) and electricity networks and equipped with sanitation facilities.

“Our cooperation with the World Bank has been very fruitful and this project complements ongoing efforts supporting public finance management. The focus of the project we are signing today will be on the coordination of government and donors, more efficient management of resources, enhanced oversight and accountability, and fighting corruption. The EU is ready to help Iraq in facing the challenges ahead to secure a better future for Iraq.”

The program comprises of three pillars and nine sub-components. Each sub-component corresponds to a specific Government reform commitment/objective and has been assigned to a lead government institution/department acting as WBG-EU counterpart. While some components will be recipient-executed with support from the World Bank, others will be initially WBG-EU executed on behalf of the recipient due to capacity constraints.
The inaugural meeting of the Development Coordination and Planning Council held in Kirkuk

Kirkuk, 24 September 2018 - The acting Governor of Kirkuk chaired today the inaugural meeting of the Development Coordination and Planning Council. H.E. Mr. Rakan Saeed Al-Jubouri invited Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (DSRSG), Ms. Alice Walpole, to perform the opening. Government Directorates, UN actors, NGOs and local mayors were present to discuss development gaps and needs throughout the Governorate.

DSRSG Walpole thanked the acting Governor for his vision in bringing many diverse actors to the table. The "one-stop-shop model" in which the Government, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the security permit office are co-located inside the Kirkuk Government Building greatly facilitates daily interactions and shortens lines of communication. As Kirkuk makes the transition from emergency relief to early recovery and development, new coordination mechanisms are required. The Development Coordination Planning Council was established as a multi-partnership forum that unites Governmental actors, the UN and Civil Society to improve coordination. The acting Governor thanked UNAMI's new Development Coordination Office for their assistance in organising this innovative new partnership and looks forward to this New Way of Working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Embassy of Canada delegation visited the Community Resource Center in Western Mosul

Mosul, 25 September 2018 - IOM hosted a delegation from the Embassy of Canada at the Community Resource Center in Western Mosul. Prior to the Embassy delegation’s visit, IOM rehabilitated a section of the factory with support from Canada in Iraq. 10% of the textile factory was rehabilitated, enabling hundreds of women to resume work. Before the conflict this factory had over 1100 employees, 80% of them female.

With additional support IOM can help many Mosul to return to their previous jobs.

Iraq officials trained in assessing oil contaminated sites from the ISIL conflict

Baghdad, 27 September 2018 – In Iraq’s post-conflict period, characterized by extensive destruction of infrastructure and looting - from oil resources to archaeological artefacts - by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), UN Environment conducted a five-day training workshop on oil-contaminated site assessment in Baghdad from 23-27 September 2018.

The workshop trained 26 national experts from the ministries of environment and oil on practical aspects of oil-contaminated site assessment, with a focus on sampling strategies and techniques. At the end of the event, a package comprising portable oil-contamination analysers and sampling tools, as well as personnel protective equipment was handed over to the Environment Ministry to support the assessment campaign.

“I cannot overstate the need to strengthen the capacity of our environmental experts in assessing contaminated sites and oil activities, and to develop pollution monitoring programmes which represents not only a threat to local communities, but whose impacts will also extend for generations to come?” said Dr. Jassim Humadi, Iraq’s Deputy Environment Minister. “During the past few years, Iraq has undergone a transformative leap in its oil production driven by large investments. This poses a major capacity challenge for environmental staff to monitor and oversee the industry’s performance, assess the current situation and extrapolate future projections.”
Iraq officials trained in assessing oil contaminated sites from the ISIL conflict (continued)

As an immediate follow-up to the workshop, a preliminary field-based mapping survey of oil-contaminated sites in the four conflict-affected governorates (Nineveh, Salah El-Deen, Kirkuk and Diyala) will be conducted by a joint team from Iraq’s ministries of environment and oil in October-November 2018. The survey will aim to identify priority sites for cleanup that pose a serious risk to human health and the environment. UN Environment is guiding this mapping campaign through the provision of assessment protocols and an initial inventory of around 60 oil-contaminated sites, including satellite image maps. UN Environment will also review the survey findings and provide guidance to the site prioritization process and conducting of detailed assessments.

“We commend UN Environment’s contaminated site assessment training programme, which is assisting environmental institutions in Iraq to fulfill their responsibility in achieving environmental security in accordance with the objectives of sustainable development to protect the environment and the public health of citizens,” added Dr. Jassim.

This is the second training course on contaminated site assessment which UN Environment has held in Baghdad this year to support Iraqi institutions address conflict pollution from the ISIL conflict. The training programme is generously supported by Norway’s Oil for Development Programme and conducted in collaboration with Spiez Laboratory of the Swiss Federal Office for Civil Protection and ALS Global Laboratory in the United Kingdom.

USAID contributes $ 750,000 to UNICEF to help provide clean water to people in Basra

Baghdad, 27 September 2018 – the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has contributed $750,000 USD to assist vulnerable Iraqis in Basra in getting access to clean water. This contribution will be used to install five pumps, rehabilitate an existing water treatment plant, and maintain water treatment projects which will bring clean and safe water to an estimated 750,000 people.

“This contribution will help us bring clean water to some of the most at risk communities in Basra” said Peter Hawkins, UNICEF’s Representative in Iraq “and will help UNICEF ensure that 750,000 people will get safe drinking water at this critical time and a further 50,000 children will have access to clean water when they go back to school.”

The latest funds from USAID will build on UNICEF’s water and sanitation work in the areas most affected, including its collaboration with the government of Iraq to help increase the output of R Zero, which will provide much needed relief to the residents. Increasing water scarcity in southern Iraq has led to low river water levels, reduced water flow and an extended saline tongue up the Shatt Al Arab river, which is exacerbated by pollutants that have contaminated Basra’s main source of drinking water. This had led to a sharp increase in gastric intestinal illnesses.

The US government’s contributions to UNICEF in Iraq totaled $95,542,000 million between 2017 and 2018. The funds have supported lifesaving activities such as water and sanitation, child protection, and safeguarding vulnerable IDPs from the effects of winter.
**Delivery of improved essential services provides immediate income opportunities for 819 individuals**

**Sulaimaniyah, 7 October 2018** – The Federal Republic of Germany, UNDP’s Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP), along with the administrative authorities of Halabja and Sulaimaniyah Governorates and Garmiyan and Raparin Administrations today initiated 12 projects to improve essential services for an estimated 680,000 people. The projects target critical needs in the electricity, water, roads, and sewerage sectors and provide jobs for 819 people - including host community members, Syrian refugees and IDPs.

At the ceremony to launch the projects, the Deputy Governor of Sulaimaniyah, H.E Mr. Ahmed Ali Ahmed, said: “Today we are signing agreements with UNDP to launch infrastructure projects with a total budget of close to US $2.5 million across Sulaimaniyah Governorate and Garmiyan and Raparin Administrations. This generous support from the Federal Republic of Germany, and collaboration with UNDP, comes as the KR-I continues to suffer from a severe economic crisis that began in 2013. Many challenges and increased pressure due to the large number of IDPs and refugees who are settling in the Kurdistan Region will be addressed through these fundamental basic services projects, including improved electricity, water, roads, and sewerage systems.”

The Deputy Governor of Halabja, H.E Mr. Kawa Ali Kareem, added: “On behalf of the inhabitants of Halabja Governorate, including the IDPs, refugees and host communities, the office of Governor of Halabja expresses sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Federal Republic of Germany and UNDP’s Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) for supporting implementation of four important basic services projects that will improve internal roads and sewerage systems. Implementation of these infrastructure projects will benefit close to 107,000 community members and create over 255 temporary job opportunities in Halabja alone.”

The construction of effective wastewater and sewerage networks across Sulaimaniyah City, Qaladiza, Hajjawa and Khurmal Sub-Districts, and Hawari-New Neighbourhood in Kifri City, will reduce environmental pollution and the spread of diseases amongst vulnerable populations during periods of high rainfall. In Sulaimaniyah City, the construction of an electricity distribution network will provide regular electricity supply to hospitals, schools, and water supply stations – benefitting the whole community.

In 2018, with continuous funding from the Federal Republic of Germany, ICRRP and governorate authorities in the Kurdistan Region or Iraq have supported 28 projects benefiting over 1,240,121 host community members, IDPs and refugees and providing livelihood opportunities for 1,273 individuals.

UNDP’s Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) promotes the recovery and resilience of communities vulnerable to multi-dimensional shocks associated with large-scale returns and protracted displacement of Iraqis and Syrian refugees. This is achieved through a medium-term, programme integrating crisis management capacity building, rehabilitating basic service infrastructure, livelihood recovery and social cohesion.

**UN-Habitat assessing the status and reconstruction opportunities of Mosul’s basic infrastructure and services**

**Mosul, 8 October 2018** - As part of the coordination efforts undertaken for the development of the ‘Initial Planning Framework for the Reconstruction of Mosul’, the UN-Habitat team organized two consultation workshops dedicated to updating the status of basic infrastructure and services sectors, reflecting completed, ongoing, planned projects. The damage inflicted to Mosul’s public infrastructure system during the recent conflict has been severe, however many of the challenges that people are facing today predate the occupation by ISIL. For instance, because of the lack of sufficient schools – local authorities estimated already after 2003 a deficit of some 1,000 schools in Nineveh – most facilities today have to operate two or three shifts, a factor that severely affects the quality of learning of children.

Identifying remaining gaps in the water, electricity, sewage, transportation, health and education sectors is critical to respond to the Framework’s Goal 4: “Infrastructure and public services recovered, and where possible built back better”.

The success of the reconstruction and subsequent return of the population is intertwined with establishing a broader and durable framework, starting with the rebuilding of public services and utilities for people to restore their lives and to bolster their livelihood. Aside from housing rehabilitation, access to basic services should be prioritized on the short and medium term as the groundwork for reconstruction and recovery, and as mitigation of further deprivation of the community, reducing the potential of re-emergence of violent extremism.

The findings and the proposed practical approach for reconstruction will be presented and validated at an event to be held in November 2018.
Mosul, 9 October 2018 – Today, UN’s Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG), Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative, Ms. Marta Ruedas, visited Mosul with members of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIL, to view progress on UNDP’s stabilization efforts in the area. More than 700 projects have either been completed by UNDP or are underway in Mosul, including the rehabilitation of houses, schools, universities, hospitals, water networks and electricity systems.

Progress on UNDP’s stabilization efforts in the Mosul area assessed

Baghdad, 16 October 2018 - Iraq is committed in its efforts to achieve climate security. Mitigation efforts, employing local and international resources, that ensure food and water security are met and are a priority for the government due to them being major effects of climate change. This was stated at the stakeholders’ consultation on Iraq’s nationally determined contributions to the UNFCCC.

In Collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Environment, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized a two-day workshop attended by senior level representatives from the Ministry of Oil, Ministry of Electricity, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Reconstruction and Municipalities and Baghdad Mayorality. In addition to Leading and research NGOs, including the National Center for Climate Change and the Centre of Earthquake Prediction.

Deputy Minister of Health and Environment, Dr. Jassim Al Fallahi, highlighted the progress on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that is critical for effective follow up of the implementation of the Climate Agreement signed at the 2015 Paris Summit. “The sacrifices of the youth that had made Iraq secure today would not be allowed to go in vain. We are committed to redoubling our reconstruction efforts that are fully sustainable. Several Ministries have lined up projects that are designed to reduce emissions from their inception,” said Mr. Al Fallahi.

UNDP Country Director a.i, Mr. Gerado Noto, said “The collaboration and partnership amongst Iraqi institutions in the development of the NDCs is a clear signal that Iraq is serious in responding to the global call of action, for addressing the cause of climate change”. Adding that: “Environment protection is core to UNDP’s development mandate. UNDP plays a strong role in forging connections between development and environmental sustainability, for achieving the sustainable development goals”.

UNDP is also engaged in supporting Iraq by implementing the first full-size Global Environment Facility GEF project on Catalyzing the Use of Solar Photovoltaic Energy in Iraq. The objective is to reduce Green House Gas emissions, by catalyzing the application of distributed solar power, to meet the energy needs of small businesses, residences, and small-town services.

Iraq committed to progressing climate change mitigation

Baghdad, 21 October 2018 – A child born in Iraq today will be 40% as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health, according to the World Bank’s new Human Capital Index (HCI) released October 11 in Bali. Decades of conflict have impacted a range of the country’s human and economic development indicators. Iraq is an early adopter of the World Bank’s Human Capital Project and plans to invest in its people to overcome development deficits with programs such as increasing early childhood development and the expansion of social protection systems.

The Human Capital Project aims to encourage policymakers to invest more in children’s health, education and social protection to boost the incomes of people—and of countries—and build the human capital that is a central driver of sustainable growth and poverty reduction. The HCI is a key element of the Project that allows countries to measure how much income they are foregoing because of human capital gaps, and how much faster they can turn these losses into gains if they

Building strong human capital in Iraq to unleash economic potential
act now.

“We fully understand that rebuilding our country requires investment in our people first and foremost, to build our human capital...” said Dr. Maher Johan, Deputy Minister of Planning. “We will continue with our efforts to invest in education that teaches the skills of the future, and in health to ensure healthy generations able to contribute to economic growth. We want not only to take Iraq’s human capital to where it was before, but to take it to higher grounds to enhance our productivity and the future of our country.”

The HCI shows that a child born in Iraq today will be 40 percent as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health. Children in Iraq can expect to complete 6.9 years of pre-primary, primary and secondary school by age 18. However, when years of schooling are adjusted for quality of learning, this is only equivalent to 4 years with a learning gap of 2.9 years.

“Investments in people are the most valuable, long-term investments a country can make,” said Saroj Kumar Jha, World Bank Mashreq Regional Director. “Through our partnership with Iraq, we are supporting the development of human capital with emphasis on health, education and social protection. We will also continue to offer the benefits of our global experience to help Iraq develop the capacity to measure its progress and further refine its policies for investing in people as the source of equitable growth.”

As an early adopter of the Project, Iraq has nominated focal points within the government to partner with the World Bank Group. Early adopter countries have begun work on elevating human capital policy dialogue across all government ministries and identifying national priorities for accelerating progress on human capital, based on each country’s own development plans.

**UN-Habitat and UNESCO hold the first community forum in the old city of Mosul**

Mosul, 22 October 2018 – Today UN-Habitat launched the first ‘Mosul Old City Forum’ where it shared the work conducted so far on the ‘Initial Planning Framework for the Reconstruction of Mosul’, in partnership with UNESCO. This framework will deliver a comprehensive reconstruction and planning approach for the city Mosul, with special attention for the Old City. The development of a vision for the coordinated reconstruction of Mosul will be finalized in close collaboration with the governorate and all related stakeholders.

The Forum event – focusing on the Old City – was held in the Al-Chalabi house, one of the finest examples of surviving heritage building in the Old City following the recent conflict with ISIL. After a short walk along narrow alleyways dotted by destroyed homes, attendees gathered in the large central courtyard dominated by a square Aiwan with its pointed arc opening and facades enriched by decorations in typical Al Hillan limestone and Mosilian grey-veined Alfarsh (marble) for its interior. The large presence of local resident provided a fruitful opportunity to directly engage the citizens of the historic quarters, as part of its effort to raise awareness of the unique but endangered cultural value of traditional architecture in Mosul.

Local government representatives, heritage experts, academia, civil society, and local media were invited to learn about and contribute to the development of the analytical tools and essential planning instruments that are being developed in support of the reconstruction efforts conducted by local authorities. UN-Habitat looks forward to future public engagement, aiming to deliver tangible solutions for the recovery of the Old City. It fully embraces the chance to learn about the diversity of opinion on critical issues that lie at the heart of the recovery of the entire city.

**Evolving communications - UNFPA Iraq helps implementing partners become better communicators**

Erbil, 24 October 2018 - To provide governmental and non-governmental organisations with skills for developing coherent and compelling messaging in order to communicate with impact, UNFPA in Iraq organised three workshops in Duhok, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah bringing together a total of 60 humanitarian workers to discuss the best practices in story-telling and photography.

The workshop provided an overview of the ethics and principles of quality reporting and story-telling on critical issues such as gender-based violence and reproductive health, particularly on how to ensure the safety and dignity of women and girls while communicating their stories to the public.

As multimedia is a key component of strong communication, the workshop also addressed visual communication, including the core elements of a successful brand, the importance of effective and impactful photography, and the best practices and tools for ensuring consistent quality.

UNFPA plans to replicate the training in the Central South area of Iraq in December in order to ensure that the key messages of the workshop reach as many stakeholders and audiences as possible.
Portals providing detailed, up-to-date information on registering enterprises honored at World Investment Forum

Geneva, Switzerland, 24 October 2018 - Armenia, Iraq, Lesotho and Montenegro have received Global Enterprise Registration (GER.co) awards for the quality of online information portals that provide detailed, up-to-date information on creating a business, during UNCTAD’s World Investment Forum in Geneva, Switzerland.

Armenia, Iraq, Lesotho and Montenegro are among 134 countries listed on GER.co that have information portals describing the business creation process step-by-step, from the user’s point of view, showing all the necessary contacts, forms, costs and other requirements for each step. They gained a maximum rating on GER.co by making their business creation process entirely transparent.

GER Awards

“GER’s objective is not to give countries good or bad marks but to promote the exchange of good practices and offer criteria to assess the quality of business registration websites,” UNCTAD’s director of investment and enterprise James Zhan said at the 24 October awards ceremony.

To meet this goal, Mr. Zhan announced he was launching a campaign to invite all countries in the world to put their business creation requirements online by the year 2020 and to list them on GER.co. He also thanked the United States of America for its generous support of this project.

Iraq

What the judges said: The Republic of Iraq has been recognized for the government’s efforts to clarify and publish business registration procedures on the Iraq eRegulations portal. In the reconstruction phase currently underway in Iraq, swift and transparent administrative procedures are essential to boost entrepreneurship and attract foreign investment.

Launched in October 2014, the GER.co portal is a world index of online business information and registration sites developed by UNCTAD, in partnership with the Kauffman Foundation’s Global Entrepreneurship Network and the United States Department of State. Its primary objective is to enable entrepreneurs worldwide to comply with laws and regulations and build thriving formal businesses.

The portal lists and rates information portals and single windows. Information portals describe the business creation process with single windows enabling online business registration.

GER.co enables investors and entrepreneurs to obtain information on business creation procedures in any country in the world and register their businesses online. The complicated, multiple steps and processes involved in carrying out legitimate business in any given country are then simplified and transparent, helping micro, small and medium-sized enterprises that do not always have the means to tackle these complex procedures.

The Government of Germany supports the expansion of resilience activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 25 October 2018 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomes a contribution of €6 million (US$7 million) from the Government of Germany, which will support resilience and recovery efforts in Salah al-Din, Anbar and Ninewa governorates, as well as in the city of Mosul.

With this contribution, WFP will be able to scale up resilience building and livelihoods activities, supporting 70,000 vulnerable Iraqis through the rehabilitation of damaged water canals, agriculture infrastructures, productive assets and markets along the food value chain, creating the conditions to restart production at household level. This contribution will directly benefit 6,300 individuals who will participate in cash-for-work labour intensive schemes, supporting nearly 37,800 families in areas of return.

“The war against Islamic State has resulted in unprecedented displacement of people and the destruction of infrastructure in many regions of the country,” said Germany’s Ambassador in Iraq, Dr. Cyrill Nunn. “But now that Islamic State has been driven out, more and more people are returning to their places of origin. Immediate income generation opportunities are needed to stabilize these regions,” he stressed. “Our contribution to WFP will directly address those needs and I am happy that we can continue and expand our collaboration with WFP in this field,” the Ambassador highlighted.

In collaboration with the Government of Iraq, WFP supports vulnerable households at risk of becoming food insecure due to increasing pressures on livelihoods and unsustainable coping strategies.

“As the situation in Iraq remains fragile, we need to continue providing assistance to the most vulnerable families, while supporting people’s efforts to rebuild their economic independence,” stated WFP Iraq Country Director Sally Haydock. “WFP has always been able to count on Germany for support in Iraq, and this latest contribution demonstrates Germany’s continued commitment to helping the country to move forward.”

The funds stem from the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Since 2014, Germany has supported WFP activities in Iraq by contributing €89.5 million (US$104 million). These funds have enabled WFP to provide a significant increase in food assistance for the most vulnerable Iraqis, and to engage in resilience-building activities of local communities.
Promoting the alignment of development plans with the Sustainable Development Goals

Baghdad/ Erbil, 29 October 2018 - The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in partnership with the Ministry of Planning in Baghdad and the Ministry of Planning in Kurdistan region, organized two consecutive workshops to review and discuss the alignment of plans and policies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and identify priorities. This initiative comes at a particular juncture, as Iraq will be presenting its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) report at the High-Level Political Forum in 2019 to share about its experience with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The Government of Iraq has prepared the National Development Plan (NDP 2018-2022) with the support of UNDP and other UN Agencies; it also developed a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) with the purpose of targeting the most vulnerable groups, especially in most deprived and peripheral areas; as well as a Reconstruction and Development Framework (2018-2027).

The Government has also engaged in developing a ‘Vision 2030’ that is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs and identifies and addresses medium and long-term strategic development priorities.

The two-day workshop (October 3-4, 2018) organized in Baghdad engaged over 60 professionals and representatives from different ministries and civil society organizations on assessing and discussing alignment of the National Development Plan (2018-2022) and Iraq draft Vision 2030 with the SDGs targets and indicators. In Erbil, the two-day workshop (October 7-8, 2018) was attended by 20 representatives from different ministries and discussed the alignment of KRI Vision 2020 (Kurdistan Region of Iraq: A Vision for the future) as well as the Kurdistan Region Government’s new Economic Reform Roadmap from an SDG lens.

During the workshops, experts from UNDP Regional Hub, Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development Team in Amman (Dr. Nathalie Milbach Bouché, Team Leader, and Mr. Fekadu Terefe, Specialist) familiarized participants with UNDP Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA), a tool which has now been used by more than 60 countries to assess the level of alignment between the SDGs targets and indicators and national priorities in existing policy and planning frameworks at national and sub-national levels. The experts presented preliminary findings of the RIA of the National Development Plan (2018-2022) of Iraq and the draft Vision 2030 of Iraq, as well as the Vision 2020 of Kurdistan Region of Iraq. These initial findings suggest a significant degree of alignment between the strategic priorities of Iraq and KRI existing Visions, plans, SDGs and targets, including a significant focus on people and prosperity issues, as well as effective and accountable institutions (SDG 16). However, some gaps, including inclusion and environmental sustainability issues deserve attention, alongside efforts to strengthen the availability of monitoring indicators.

Group sessions were organized to discuss these findings, allowing participants to both deepen their knowledge of the SDGs and help them connect their own plans and work with the SDGs through the RIA.

The exercise also proved critical in raising awareness about SDG implementation responsibilities and needs to strengthen inter-sectoral coordination. In Baghdad, participants were also introduced to various methodologies for SDG target prioritization, which stressed the need to consider inter-linkages between the SDGs and targets when setting priorities for SDG action.

The Deputy Minister of the Planning, Iraq - Baghdad, Dr. Mahar Jawhan, has said that “we commend the effort of UNDP in supporting the government in launching the Iraq Vision 2030 and preparing the voluntary national report (VNR) at the High-level Political Forum to be submitted in 2019”. In addition to that, the representative of UNDP - Baghdad, Sundus Abass, has mentioned that “aligning of the SDGs Goals, Targets, and Indicators with the Iraq National Development Plan 2030 is our roadmap to implement the SDGs agenda in Iraq”.

As a follow-up to the workshops, the preliminary findings from the RIAs will be further validated and consolidated by national and KRG stakeholders across sectors, also in light of other strategic documents. Findings will be disseminated and used to further harmonize Iraqi National Vision 2030 with the SDGs. In KRI, these shall contribute to informing the formulation of an updated Vision for KRI that is aligned with SDGs. The analysis shall also help Iraq showcase how the country has gone about integrating the SDGs in its core policy and planning frameworks during the country’s Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report at the 2019 UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).
UNHCR provides ongoing support to vulnerable people in Iraq with new funds from the United States of America

Baghdad, 29 October 2018 - UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, warmly welcomes the generous 2018 contributions from the Government of the United States of America, which reached a cumulative total of US$ 128.8 million for Syrian refugees and internally displaced Iraqis. With the support of donors like the United States, UNHCR can continue to provide assistance to the millions of people who are still in need in Iraq.

While the country recovers from conflict, the needs of Iraqis diversify. Even as cities are rebuilt and communities begin to flourish, approximately two million people, many of them extremely vulnerable, are still displaced.

An essential component of the protection of displaced people is voluntary, safe, and sustainable return, which in turn is at the heart of the recovery and stabilization of Iraq. Sustainable return is an important step on the road to peace and stability. Cities like Mosul and Ramadi were heavily damaged during the conflict. Restoring these cities is an immense task, and the work is far from over. In parts of West Mosul, Sinjar, the Ninewa Plains, and Anbar, rubble is not yet cleared of explosives and services like water and electricity are not fully functional. In such instances, conditions for sustainable return are not yet met. It is of the utmost importance that assistance for displaced Iraqis continues to avoid premature returns to these areas, which could result in further displacement.

At the same time, the communities hosting displaced people also face increased hardship, and resources are stretched. Without ongoing support, many among the displaced and hosting population would struggle to make ends meet. U.S. Ambassador Douglas Silliman commented: “The United States is deeply committed to providing life-saving humanitarian assistance to refugees in Iraq and Syria... [The U.S. Government] contribution will assist those who are not yet able to return home voluntarily, safely, and with dignity.”

“A year since the end of large-scale fighting in Iraq, our work is far from over,” said Bruno Geddo, UNHCR Representative in Iraq. “The wounds inflicted by years of conflict on people and communities will take a long time to heal. Major efforts are underway by the authorities, UN agencies and partners to support displaced Iraqis as they return. Rebuilding Iraq is not just about bricks and mortar, but the coming together of cohesive and inclusive communities, which will take time. With the extraordinary support of donors like the United States, UNHCR will continue to stand with the people of Iraq until the job is done.”

The Republic of Korea’s support is helping to stabilize the newly liberated areas


Korea’s contribution will be channeled through UNDP’s Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) which finances fast-track initiatives in areas retaken from ISIL. This is Korea’s fifth contribution since 2015 to FFS.

Based on priorities identified by the Government of Iraq and local authorities, FFS helps quickly repair essential public infrastructure, boosts the capacity of local government, and provides short-term employment through public works schemes.

“Since Iraq was declared free from ISIL, significant progress across the country has been made – schools and hospitals have reopened, bridges are functioning, and water and electricity networks are up and running,” says UNDP Resident Representative for Iraq, Marta Ruedas.

“But we still have a long way to go – a number of key areas are in desperate need of stabilization efforts. We are very grateful to the Republic of Korea for this generous contribution. It comes at exactly the right time,” she adds.

H.E. the Korean Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Song Woong-Yeob, said, “The Iraqi people have achieved a great victory in the war against ISIL, and have also exerted enormous efforts to stabilize and rehabilitate the affected area by the violence of the terrorist group. As a responsible member of the international community and a close friend of Iraq, the Republic of Korea is deeply committed to supporting the stabilization and recovery efforts in Iraq, and I firmly believe that our continuing support will contribute to laying the foundation for peace and prosperity in Iraq.”

UNDP’s Funding Facility is implementing over 2,800 projects in key areas of Anbar, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Kirkuk and Ninewa.
UNDP trains mid-ranking police officers to improve the effectiveness of local police

Baghdad, 30 August 2018 - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Training and Qualification Directorate in the Ministry of Interior’s (MoI) jointly delivered two pilot courses on training of trainers (ToT) on the topic of ‘Improving the Effectiveness of Local Police (IELP)’. The course duration was two weeks and was attended by 38 mid-ranking police officers from the training academies in Baghdad, Anbar, Ninewa, Basra, Salah Al-Din, Kirkuk and Diyala provinces. The overall course objectives were to introduce and upskill participants’ knowledge and techniques in improving public security in the operational environment and, to introduce new and practical training presentation techniques. The pilot IELP TOT was designed and delivered as a follow-up to the basic IELP pilot training that took place in March 2018. Improving the Effectiveness of Local Police (IELP) is also known as Knowledge Led Policing and, primarily focuses on improving the skills and techniques of local police on how to collect, validate, analyze and prioritize information to ensure effective and timely use of information in the police operational context. It also focuses on building effective partnerships with relevant stakeholders at local level to improve public safety and security while also building trust and confidence between the police and the local communities. Furthermore, the MoI’s Police Affairs Agency has identified IELP as a core police function in its on-going efforts to transform Iraqi police from a fighting force against ISIL to a more service-oriented police service in post-war Iraq.

The TOT course curricular was developed through a collaborative partnership between MoI Training and Qualification Directorate, UNDP and the Danish National Police and, the courses were delivered by qualified instructors from the Danish National Police. The pilot courses were well received by the participants and the MoI Training and Qualification Directorate. Among others, the participants found the new training techniques on dual presentations and very useful and highlighted that it was the first time they received training on such techniques.

Major General Zeyad, the Director General of Training and Qualification Directorate, MoI attending the course closing ceremony said: “Policing principles as IELP is very important and has been identified by MoI as one of the core police functions that would significantly benefit to develop the Local Police in Iraq. By educating police trainers from various police training centers, we have now started the basis for a nationwide rollout of IELP policing principles in Iraq. It is important to have a pool of qualified trainers when new principles/topics are introduced and implemented - therefore as the first batch who successfully completed the IELP ToT you have an important role to play”. UNDP Senior Police Advisor, Finn Bernt Hansen said: “UNDP believes that highly qualified police trainers are a key precursor to take forward the implementation of new and highly relevant policing principles such as IELP in Iraq. Over the past four weeks of the course delivery, the participants have demonstrated that the professional standard of Iraqi Police trainers is high and, we are confident that the Iraqi Police trainers will contribute to the successful rollout of IELP Policing principles”. UNDP is grateful to Germany, United Kingdom and Denmark for their generous funding in efforts to improve local Police in Iraq. UNDP Rule of Law Programme supports a comprehensive programme on security sector reform in Iraq to assist the Government in advancing its Security Sector and Justice Reform Programme. The overall programme of work is implemented through collaborative partnerships with the Office of the National Security Advisor, Ministry of Interior, Higher Judicial Council, Ministry of Justice, Parliamentary Security and Defense Committee, Iraqi civil society and a range of International Partners.

Improving peace and security in Iraqi communities by strengthening the role of women in policing

Baghdad, 7 September 2018 - As Iraq continues to face complex post-conflict challenges, the importance of an inclusive dialogue on peace and security is vital. Women are an important part of that discussion, and Iraq was the first Arab nation to issue a National Action Plan based on UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2014. Through IOM’s Community Policing project, supported by the Government of Canada, the role of female police officers in law enforcement and security agencies in Iraq has been strengthened to create more peaceful and safe communities. According to the Directorate of Police Affairs within Iraq’s Ministry of Interior, women account for approximately 2% of the total police force. However, despite their limited numbers, female police officers play an important role in resolving safety and security matters in the community, including family and domestic violence, as women generally feel more comfortable reporting to women. In
Improving peace and security in Iraqi communities by strengthening the role of women in policing

security mappings completed under this project, IOM found that women had different perceptions of security in their communities and would choose not to report to the police directly as they see it as male dominated.

IOM Iraq has been working closely with the Ministry of Interior and government authorities at governorate and district level to enhance the role of female police officers in community policing, with a focus on safety needs of women and girls in the community. These efforts have included training women and girls in communities to be stronger advocates in security discussions, establishing steering committees consisting of female police officers and local civil society and community members, and rolling out gender sensitive policing for all police officers.

In this context, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), who are part of the Coalition Joint Task Force in Iraq, approached IOM to invite a delegation of female police officers from Iraq to participate in the International Association for Women Police (IAWP) Conference in Canada, to expose these women to an international audience of fellow police officers from around the world and enhance their awareness of best practices.

Eight female Iraqi police officers were selected to participate in the IAWP Conference in Calgary, Canada on 26–31 August, the first female Iraqi police delegation to represent their country internationally. These officers came from all sectors of the Directorate of Police Affairs including Investigations, Training, Human Rights, the Inspector General’s office, Human Resources, Media and Communications and Police Intelligence. They attended sessions on responses to domestic violence, diversity and inclusion, creating organizational change and leadership. They interacted with female police officers from all over world and participated in sessions delivered by officers from Bangladesh, Ghana and Ukraine.

They also had the privilege to meet RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki, accompanied by RCMP Chief Super Intendent Maureen Levy, and visited the Cochrane police station, outside of Calgary. The Calgary Police Service also introduced the participants to members of the Iraqi diaspora living in Calgary who work with the police to facilitate integration of Iraqi migrants in the city.

Throughout the week, the women were inspired to learn from their fellow officers from across the world on how they have overcome challenges. “Every single story we heard has given us hope and strength. Police officers in other countries face many similar challenges as we do in Iraq, but this has not prevented them from pursuing their goals. Their presentations have been truly inspiring”, said one of the Iraqi policewomen.

One of the major lessons learned was the importance of finding good mentors among both men and women in the police force, to serve the most vulnerable and marginalized communities and to support each other. In the examples presented from different parts of the world, it was clear that if any group is excluded from the community, insecurity and conflict continue.

Through the Community Policing programme, IOM Iraq continues to support both male and female police officers to work with all community members in an inclusive way to contribute to more sustainable community peace and security.

Fight against corruption

Workshop session for Federal Board of Supreme Auditors on anticorruption and fraud investigation

Baghdad, 30 September 2018 - To boost Anti-Corruption national efforts, a Two-Day Workshop Session organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on 29th and 30th of September 2018 to enhance the capacity of the Federal Board of Supreme Audit BSA on Anti-Corruption and Fraud Investigation. This Workshop is a kickoff of series of capacity building activities targeting BSA's auditors to equip them with latest international standard know-how and techniques on forensic audit by combining accounting knowledge with investigative skills. The session is meant to be interactive session to analysis the Anti-Corruption Framework in Iraq compared to international standard and best practices on Corruption Eradication as guided by key global documents including the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

To emphasis on the importance of this event and demonstrate commitment, the BSA’s senior management chaired by the president of Federal Board of Supreme Audit of Iraq, Dr. Salah Noori Khalaf attended the first day’s full session. “BSA will assume its role to support other investigative and corruption prevention government entities as mandated by its Law. In 2019 the BSA will perform forensic audit in the public sector, especially in the government bodies where there are no inspector general offices available. With UNDP’s support, we hope to complete this capacity building programme within three months”. Said Dr. Khalaf.

Inspired by the government commitment, UNDP asserted its intention to continue the support provided to various government entities including Integrity Commission, Federal Board of Supreme Audit and Inspector General Offices to fight corruption, which forms a part of a larger UNDP led project that is framed by a MoU signed between UNDP and the Iraqi government in 2016. This support is provided by UNDP through the Funding Facility for Economic Reform-Federal Project that started in 2016 to provide technical assistance through the deployment of high caliber international experts to support national Economic Reform and Anti-Corruption initiatives.
UNDP support to the Commission of Integrity to fight corruption

Seoul, Republic of Korea, 30 August 2018 - A technical study visit is currently being organized in Korea by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with support from UNDP Seoul Policy Centre (USPC) for a high-ranking delegation from the Iraqi Integrity commission, to benefit from the Korea’s innovative, well tested-and-proven policy tools to compact corruption. This activity is part of a larger UNDP led programme to support the Iraqi government in its efforts to fight corruption, that is framed by the MoU signed between UNDP and the Iraqi government in 2016.

This visit also comes under the framework of the recently signed MoU between the Iraqi Integrity commission CoI and Korea Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC). The aim of the visit is to equip the Iraqi Commission of Integrity with the technical knowledge and insight on the implementation of Korea's policy tools especially the Anti-Corruption Initiative Assessment (AIA), implemented in Korea since 2002 for effective monitoring and implementation of anti-corruption measures in public institutions. The AIA will be customized to the Iraqi context to implement a National Corruption Index.

The inaugural session was chaired by the Standing Commissioner of the ACRC Mr. Hyeon Kim. “Iraq is the first Arab State who signed an MoU with Korea, and also the first country from the Arab region who would like to benefit from the Korea’s experience and the innovative policies and tools that have been in place and tremendously, helped in improving the corruption prevention measures in the public sector.” Said the commissioner.

The head of Iraqi Delegation expressed the eagerness to actualize the MoU signed between the CoI and ACRC in last April. this study visit is the kick off of a long-term collaboration and knowledge sharing between the two entities and a significant milestone towards building an effective partnership that is supported by joint efforts by the UNDP Iraq and the Seoul Centre to reinforce the Iraqi government’s efforts in fighting corruption.

Mine action

The Virtual Reality goggles used by the UNMAS in Iraq to raise awareness of the scourge of unexploded remnants of war

Baghdad, 19 September 2018 - In line with the United Nation’s Secretary-General’s commitment to deepen the United Nations’ internal capacities and exposure to new technologies, the Deputy UN Special Representative for Iraq, Alice Walpole, test tries the Virtual Reality (VR) goggles which the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is employing in Iraq to raise awareness of the scourge of unexploded remnants of war, and also to generate empathy and support among international donors. It shows, in astonishing detail, scenes from demining operations in northern Iraq. “The use of this modern technology will certainly boost understanding of the UN operations,” Ms. Walpole said enthusiastically. “It gives this viewer, sitting in the comfort of her office, the opportunity to take part in the story, get the sensation of being present, for example, in the field among the sappers clearing the mines. It creates an experience for us to be at the scene without actually being there.”

What does “The Right to Peace” mean to you?

Mosul, 21 September 2018 - To the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), peace is achieved by creating a safe environment for people to live in, without the threat posed by explosive hazards.

Arts, especially in the form of music, is another way of promoting peace. Maestro Karim Wasfi and UNMAS Programme in Iraq recently joined efforts to promote explosive violence reduction and reconstruction. Maestro played the cello in the destroyed buildings of Al Shifa Hospital Complex where approximately 2,000 explosive hazards were removed by UNMAS.
After the Battle: a warning from Mosul

Organized combat in Iraq’s second city ended more than a year ago, but the city remains crippled by deadly munitions that still lie hidden beneath huge mounds of rubble.

By Pehr Lodhammar

Mosul, 17 September 2018 — As the calamitous civil war next door in Syria grinds on toward a final battle in Idlib, with an unthinkably tragic end in sight, it’s worth taking a look farther east, at this shattered Iraqi city. Today, Mosul stands as a measure of how difficult “recovery” can be in this part of the world, even after the gunfire stops.

Here, more than a year after the formal end of fighting that drove out the Islamic State’s fighters, the path to recovery runs literally through a three-dimensional minefield with the dangers of war still present everywhere.

Explosive hazards implanted by the Islamic State, too dangerous and numerous to deactivate, still drew destruction, allowing the terrorist group to continue fighting in absentia and on the cheap. Their strategy has been, in a word, shrewd: Retreat from Mosul only after making life unlivable by making infrastructure all but impossible to fix.

So this remains a city of debris, nearly seven million tons worth, much of it concealing improvised explosive devices — I.E.D.s — and conventional ammunition that failed to detonate. Yes, an international team of experts is working to defuse both types of ordnance. But real security is still distant, given the slow pace at which we can clear the hazards with minimal funding and too few experts. So, the terror planted here by terrorists continues to stifle the economy and society in Iraq’s second city.

I.E.D.s are everywhere — lethal needles placed in haystacks of uncleared rubble, some triggered by infrared sensors, some by tripwires.

Teams like ours from the United Nations Mine Action Service (Unmas) find the needles, but the going is slow: They can never be sure how many still lie there as they assess the risk, probe, and render safe the armaments that they find.

The work takes a practiced eye and a delicate touch. Tools range from hook-and-line kits used to disarm I.E.D.s to armored heavy equipment that can help dispose of 500-pound bombs buried under several feet of debris. Both tasks take time, lots of it. At the present pace, clearing just Mosul is expected to take teams like ours at least 10 more years.

Sometimes the I.E.D.s provide sad and grisly evidence of Islamic State tactics. More than once, our teams in Mosul have found suicide belts among the corpses of unwilling human shields, deployed by the terrorists to cover their retreat. The victims included children, some not more than 10 years old. After each new discovery, heavy equipment on the scene to clear the site of explosive hazards would stop work to allow the government to recover, identify and return the remains for proper burial.

For the moment, the explosive hazard “footprint” left by the Islamic State still covers one-third of Iraq — an area the size of New York State — and rebuilding much of that area remains at a near standstill because destroyed or degraded infrastructure cannot be repaired until the hazards are cleared.

To be sure, there have been some strides forward. In a recent 12-month period, Unmas teams alone (there are others working to clear Mosul as well) assessed and cleared 1,248 critical sites. For example, highly trained divers worked in near zero visibility and against a strong current for more than 17 hours to remove two submerged I.E.D.s from one bridge. That allowed the span to be repaired over the next two months, rendering nearby Falluja’s maternity hospital accessible again in five minutes of travel instead of two hours.

Is another $5 billion spent over 10 years enough to free Iraq of explosive hazards? Perhaps, but nobody can be sure. Working at our current pace, UNMAS in Iraq can expect an unfunded shortfall of $170 million for 2018 alone, despite generous support from 11 countries that make voluntary contributions to the United Nations, our sole source of funding.

For the international community at large, one reason to step up efforts to accomplish more, and quicken the pace, should be clear: Delaying stabilization works to the Islamic State’s advantage and against Iraq’s people and efforts to pacify the region. Stabilization can ultimately deprive terrorists of a safe haven, but it can’t begin without the clearance of deadly hazards.

As soon as areas are cleared, work crews from other agencies — notably the United Nations Development Program — can seamlessly move in to make stabilization a bricks-and-mortar proposition, even here in parts of devastated Mosul. The repaired Al Qasoor Water Treatment Plant now supplies clean and safe water to more than 300,000 people. In Nineveh Province, clearance work has allowed the High Court to access deeds that validate land claims of residents seeking return.

Hanging in the balance is the future of Iraq, already a middle-income country and primed for recovery. Each of the 1.9 million displaced persons still waiting to return safely home to resume a normal life in a normal community bolsters Iraq’s own chances for a turnaround. But not before their homes are free of hazards, the roads are safe to travel, the power works, and basic services are restored.

After open combat in Idlib ends, the recovery needed to achieve true pacification among bitter enemies and terrorist renegades will begin. As in Mosul, we expect I.E.D.s and unexploded munitions to complicate and challenge a recovery that is long, difficult and contested by enemies of reconciliation operating as they do here — hide in plain sight and, when they choose, fight from shadows.

Without a restoration of normalcy, the terrorists can still “win from home” if we let them.

Pehr Lodhammar is the senior program manager of the United Nations Mine Action Service in Iraq.

This OpEd was published in The New York Times on 17 September 2018.
The Coalition Stabilization Task Force Sub-Working Group on explosive hazard management met in Baghdad

Baghdad, 24 September 2018 - The Coalition Stabilization Task Force Sub-Working Group on explosive hazard management met on 24 September in Baghdad. Chaired by the European Union, the meeting brought together the diplomatic community under the umbrella of supporting operational efficiency of the Mine Action response as an enabler of Stabilization activities. “The work of UNMAS here in Iraq is critical and, in a way, UNMAS and other mine action operators are writing a new chapter in the mine action manual, they are literally breaking new ground,” said DSRSG/RC/HC Marta Ruedas in her opening remarks. The joint UNMAS-UNDP presentation was kicked off by Mr. Mohammed Mudawi, UNDP Head of Stabilization who emphasized that although “FFS will be concluded by 2020 but the work of UNMAS will certainly be required well beyond that” after which Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Senior Programme Manager reminded the attendees that “in other countries, mine action is one dimensional, here in Iraq, it is multi-dimensional with clearance in 7-storey buildings, clearance divers and suicide belts on human remains”. Ms. Giorgia Depaoli, UNMAS Gender Specialist provided a brief on gender mainstreaming in mine action and debunked some of the common myths while encouraging the attendees to help break down gender barriers. Tomas Reyes-Ortega closed the meeting by saying “We, as Iraq’s partners and friends, can make a substantial contribution through support to Stabilization. This is a time of transition, and mine action is an element that needs to be taken in account in current and future planning.”

The Government of New Zealand donates USD 160,000 and deploys in-kind specialized personnel to support UNMAS explosive hazard management activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 25 September 2018 - The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) welcomes a contribution of NZD 250,000 (USD 160,000) from the Government of New Zealand and is grateful for the deployment of an in-kind Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Threat Mitigation Advisor to support explosive hazard management activities in Iraq. Extensive conflict in Iraq involving the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Iraqi Security Forces, Kurdish Forces (Peshmerga) and other armed actors has resulted in the displacement of more than 5.8 million people between 2014 and 2017, amongst which 1.9 million are still displaced today and a significant increase in contamination from explosive remnants of war and IEDs in areas liberated from ISIL occupation.

The scale and complexity of the explosive hazard problem is substantial, unprecedented and exceeds existing and available response capacities. In Iraq, UNMAS is leading and coordinating a blended response to assist stabilization and humanitarian efforts supporting the return of displaced people to areas previously under ISIL occupation.

Given this challenging environment, the role of the IED Threat Mitigation Advisor is crucial to support UNMAS activities in Iraq and mitigate the threat posed by explosive hazards. By analyzing information and technical data relating to the IED threat within the region, continually assessing the operational situation in Iraq for areas of improvement in efficiency, effectiveness and safety and conducting IED awareness briefings, the Advisor plays a key role in prioritizing, coordinating and implementing explosive hazard management projects.

The financial contribution will also address gaps identified to support the work of the IED Threat Mitigation Advisor.

The Ambassador of New Zealand to Iraq, Mr. Bradley Sawden, participated in a field visit to Mosul last week. This was an opportunity to introduce the IED Threat Mitigation Advisor and to better understand his role and responsibilities in support of explosive hazard management with UNMAS in Iraq. The Ambassador visited a few sites in West Mosul including Danedan 2 Water Treatment Plant, Al Shuhudaa Park and Al Maedan district, where clearance operations are ongoing or have just been completed. An extensive briefing about the task and the outcome of the clearance was delivered in each location.
UNMAS hosted a Risk Education, Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Evaluation training course in Erbil

Erbil, 9 October 2018 - The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq hosted a Risk Education, Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Evaluation training course in Erbil for the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) to strengthen the support it provides to the mine action sector.

Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq expresses condolences on death of deminer

Baghdad, 9 October 2018 - The Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Marta Ruedas, is deeply saddened by the death of a deminer working for the international NGO Mines Advisory Group (MAG) while undertaking humanitarian clearance operations in the area north of Tel Afar in northwestern Iraq. On behalf of the United Nations and the humanitarian community, Ms. Ruedas extends condolences to the family of the deceased and to his colleagues at MAG. “The humanitarian community lost a brave member who made the ultimate sacrifice while performing one of the most difficult jobs in the world and among the most noble missions, clearing unexploded ordnance in order to save lives.”

UNMAS supports the United Kingdom DFID delegation’s recent visit with Mine Action organizations in Mosul

Baghdad, 18 October 2018 – The presence of explosive hazards, including improvised explosive devices in areas liberated from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), will continue to impede security and stability efforts as well as development initiatives until these are cleared and rendered safe.

A delegation from UK Department for International Development (DFID) was recently hosted by UNMAS in Mosul and had the opportunity to speak with Iraqi and international implementing partners and hear their stories about how and why they work to clear of explosive hazards. Ms. Stefanie Nijssen, Policy & Programme Manager for Demining and Arms Control, and Ms. Susan Erb, Humanitarian Advisor, together with Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Senior Programme Manager, saw firsthand that within a few days a water treatment plant can be made free from explosive hazards for engineers to commence rehabilitation work – but no matter how quickly this can be done, the emphasis is on making the site safe. “Safety is the most important”, G4S Team Leader Faisal Abdul Rida Obaid Farham Al-Zaid explained to the visiting delegation. “We can fix a park or building after an explosion, but we cannot fix a lost limb or lost human soul”. DFID also met with a number of national and international mine action organizations, as well as local authorities.

UNMAS work in Iraq focuses on clearance of explosive hazards in areas previously under ISIL occupation, risk education with life-saving messages in advance of internally displaced persons (IDP) return and capacity enhancement of local and national authorities to manage, regulate and coordinate an effective response to new threats. This is done in close coordination with agencies engaged in the rehabilitation of infrastructure and humanitarian programmes, which collectively define the way forward for development. Deputy British Ambassador to Iraq, John Tucknott, said: “Until mines are cleared and areas made safe, normal life cannot return. Mine clearance is an essential step in regenerating war damaged areas. The UK is proud to be supporting UNMAS in delivering this essential work”.

“Explosive hazard management is the first step and of crucial importance to allow displaced people to safely return to their homes,” said Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Senior Programme Manager in Iraq. “The continued and generous support provided by the Government of the United Kingdom is crucial to create a safe environment for people to live in and to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Iraq in mitigating the threat posed by explosive hazards”. The United Kingdom is one of the largest contributing member states to UNMAS in Iraq.
The Faces of Mine Action

Baghdad, 24 October 2018 – On this UN Day meet Noor Al Naser. She speaks two languages (Arabic and English) and has worked in mine action for three years. As one of a select group of women who work in mine action, and the even fewer number of local Iraqi women in mine action, she has spent her years at UNMAS cultivating a relentless professional portfolio that has impressed management, national authorities and colleagues.

Noor initially joined UNMAS as an administration assistant in the Support Services team, and she quickly established herself as an invaluable team player. She embodies the fierce drive of a woman determined to succeed in spite of the numerous challenges, in what can be often considered as a male-dominated work environment. Currently, Noor is the Associate Operations Officer for UNMAS in-Iraq, assisting the Head of Projects in coordinating all operational activities.

For this UN Day, UNMAS would like to acknowledge and thank all of its employees whose collective efforts have contributed to the significant progress made in mine action in Iraq.

Healthcare

Erbil, 23 August 2018 - Many women grow up dreaming about the day when they find their significant other, get married, have children, and create a haven they can call home. However, not all women are able to complete their dreams of bringing life to the world.

“Infertility can rock your very foundation: your sense of control over your future, your faith in your body, and your feelings about yourself as a woman,” said Rawa, a 43-year-old Syrian refugee from Damascus.

At the age of 30, kindergarten teacher Rawa met a man and fell in love. “It was perfect back then. We fell in love, decided to get married and start a family. It was all I was looking forward to; after all, I love children, and that’s why I worked at a kindergarten,” she added.

Things did not go as planned for her and her husband: a year into their family was forced to leave Damascus. In 2011, eight years into the marriage, the war broke out in Syria and the family was forced to leave Damascus. In 2013, they sought refuge in the Kurdistan Regional of Iraq, more specifically in the Gawelan camp.

The burden of displacement took its toll on Rawa as it exacerbated her sense of loneliness and rejection and led her into a complete state of depression. One day, she saw a leaflet in front of her tent about the UNFPA-supported Women’s Social Centre at the camp. The leaflet presented the services offered to women, especially those in need of psychosocial support.

“At the centre, the social workers told me that I am not alone – that I may suffer in silence, but I am far from alone. They restored some of the faith I had lost in myself and made me feel that I should not be judged by my ability to procreate,” recalls Rawa of her first visit to the centre. “They made me feel as if I had a place in the world.”

The social workers sheltered her and provided her with advice and knowledge on infertility. They also encouraged her to attend the recreational activities and life-skills sessions offered, which she happily took in the hope of ending her isolation.

“The centre and social workers not only held my hand when I needed it, but they also reached out to my husband and convinced him to attend the focus group discussions for men and young boys on gender-based violence and women’s rights,” explains Rawa.

“I have learned to live with the idea that I am unable to have children, so now I fill my time with arts and crafts instead of feeling sorry for my situation. My husband has also improved considerably. His disrespectful statements have stopped, and he is slowly embracing the situation with a more compassionate and understanding attitude,” added Rawa, smiling.

*name changed for privacy and protection
The EU supports reproductive health services in Iraq with a new contribution to UNFPA

Erbil, 27 August 2018 - The European Union continues its support to UNFPA in Iraq through a EUR 5 million contribution to sustain reproductive health and clinical management of rape services across Iraq. The United Nations estimates that around 825,000 women of reproductive age are in need of humanitarian assistance in Iraq. The delivery of health care services in both conflict affected areas and Internally Displaced People’s hosting areas has been severely impacted, as a result of the three-year devastating war against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

With this funding, UNFPA will support comprehensive emergency obstetric care in six hospitals in Telafar, Hawija, Qaim, Hammam Al-Aeel, Qayarra and Shirqat, Basic Emergency Obstetric Care, in four facilities in Beiji, Ana, Qayarra airstrip and Sunoni, five reproductive health clinics in Jadaa, Salameya and Hamman Al-Aeel camps, and 26 RH clinics in West Anbar, West Nineva, North Salhuddin and Kerbala.

"The EU will continue to provide critical medical assistance in Iraq. Facilitating access to essential reproductive health services for displaced population and assisting victims of gender-based violence are top European priorities in Iraq,” Mr Christos Stylianides, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, said.

"The new EU contribution is much appreciated as it will go a long way in addressing the serious shortfalls in reproductive health services resulting from the wide destruction of Iraqi hospitals and health facilities,” said Dr Natalia Kanem, UNFPA Executive Director. "This will also allow UNFPA to continue providing health facilities with urgently needed medical supplies and services and ensuring that tens of thousands of women and girls can enjoy quality reproductive health services.” The EU has been a strategic partner to UNFPA in Iraq since 2015 with a total contribution of EUR 21 million to the Fund's reproductive health and gender-based violence interventions.

Iraq Humanitarian Fund allocates US$5M to support nation-wide campaign to vaccinate 5M children at risk

Baghdad, 13 September 2018 - With pockets of measles outbreaks affecting both internally displaced people (IDPs) and host communities, and considering the current epidemiological situation, the Iraq Federal Ministry of Health has declared an outbreak of measles and requested support from UNICEF and WHO for an emergency measles vaccination campaign across the country.

To support the nation-wide campaign, the Iraq Humanitarian Fund (IHF) has launched a Reserve Allocation to channel up to $5 million to vaccinate 5 million children of 9-59 months. Risk management activities – including field project monitoring, financial spot checks and audits – will continue to be conducted to ensure the Fund’s effective and accountable management. Since its inception in 2015, the Fund has disbursed some $221 million to support 388 humanitarian projects of 93 partner organizations. Established in June 2015, the IHF has quickly become one of the largest country-based pooled funds in the world. The Fund supports humanitarian partners to respond to the complex and dynamic crisis in Iraq, including through direct and indirect funding to national frontline responders.

Prioritizing protection, water, sanitation and health in 2018 Despite government-imposed bureaucratic impediments and persistent access constraints affecting parts of the country, humanitarian partners have expanded their operational presence including in some newly accessible areas. Together, 105 humanitarian partners reached 1.3 million (38 per cent) of 3.4 million people targeted under the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) in the first five months of 2018. The IHF is providing a critical lifeline to such activities. As the Fund finalizes its first Standard Allocation for the year, $34 million are going into supporting 82 projects carried out by 53 partners, targeting a total of 3.3 million people with humanitarian assistance, in line with the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) Strategic Objectives. The top three sectors covered by the allocation are Protection, Water and Sanitation, and Health. The allocation focuses on assistance to vulnerable populations in areas where displaced families are returning, support to principled returns and service provision in the remaining displacement camps.

Funding status The IHF has received US$18.2 million in donor contributions towards 2018. With a carry forward from 2017 of $45.4 million, which includes $43 million received from the governments of Germany and the United Kingdom in late November and December 2017, the cumulative contributions to date stand at $63.6 million. The Fund's programmable balance available for future allocations is around $24.6 million.
WHO supports access to assistive technologies for people with physical disabilities in Mosul

Mosul, 18 September 2018 - The World Health Organization (WHO) has been actively engaged in providing lifesaving health care at the frontlines during the Mosul operation in 2016-2017. The setup of mobile trauma stabilization points (TSPs) and 4 field hospitals close to the battle lines have significantly contributed to saving hundreds of lives. However, the almost 4-year conflict in Ninewa governorate has left many victims with lifelong disabilities. It is estimated that the operation resulted in over 300 cases of amputation bringing the number of people disabled with injuries as a result of the conflict in the governorate to approximately 5000 cases.

Improving access to assistive technologies like wheelchairs, walkers and walking canes, hearing aids and others has been the focus of WHO, donors and local health authorities for the new phase of recovery in conflict-affected governorates.

In April 2018, WHO welcomed a contribution from the Government of Italy to support rehabilitation services for people who suffered disabilities as a result of the conflict in Mosul. The contribution focused on supporting the prosthetics and rehabilitation centre in Mosul. The project aimed to provide over 450 people, including 30 under the age of 5 and 300 older than 5 with specialized medical care and rehabilitation services dedicated for this vulnerable population in the governorate.

Mosul had one prosthesis facility and two rehabilitation centres prior to the crisis in 2014. Conflict since then has seriously damaged them leading to the closure of the prosthesis facility and one rehabilitation centre, and the partial closure of the other centre.

"Without a wheelchair, individuals must rely on their families or friends for transportation or resort to crawling," said Dr Imad Hassan from the Mosul Rehabilitation Centre. "Our humanitarian duty is to provide this vulnerable population with assistive technology until a new factory to manufacture these aids is established in Mosul," he added.

Restoring mobility and hope in Mosul

Mosul, 8 October 2018 - The night her house was shelled, Fatima Khider Thanoon was asleep in her bed.

“I woke up to the sound of shelling. I wanted to get up, but I couldn't. I felt that I was paralyzed.”

Fatima had been studying to become a teacher, but her plans were placed on hold that night, and, she feared, forever. After being treated at the hospital she returned home and lay immobile and depressed for seven months, convinced she would never walk again.

“When I became handicapped, my life turned upside down. I wasn’t conscious of life around me. When somebody would talk to me I would talk to them, but without focus or concentration,” she says.

But Fatima’s family, especially her four brothers, refused to give up hope. They encouraged her to stand, again and again, physically holding her up. Each time she would collapse. But her brothers’ persistence paid off. One day, for a few fleeting seconds, Fatima stood.

“I was relieved and happy,” she said. After that breakthrough, it was recommended that she undergo rehabilitation therapy, and she figured she had nothing to lose.

Now, she continues to take tentative steps towards recovery. Every other day her mother brings her to the WHO-supported Ninewah Rehabilitation Hospital in East Mosul. Years of conflict destroyed most of the medical facilities in the Mosul, and the hospital is under immense pressure – the rehabilitation unit sees up to 100 patients every day.

“Our time is not enough for the number of people, but we do our best,” says Dr Maher Alsamaq. Many patients need prosthetic limbs, and since the hospital doesn’t have a prosthetics unit, WHO support has paid for wheelchairs, and enables patients to be driven to Sulaymaniyah to be fitted for prostheses.

Fatima’s doctors, pleased with her progress, predict that she will make a full recovery and that the life she dreams of will become a reality. “I can go back to walking. I am in a state of happiness.”

WHO’s support for rehabilitation services in Iraq is funded by generous donations from the Government of Italy.
Shaheed Raouf Hospital in Halabjai Taza now operational thanks to the Government of Kuwait

Halabjai Taza, 24 October 2018 - The UN Migration Agency (IOM) Iraq was pleased to accompany Kuwait General Consul in Erbil, Dr. Omar A. Al-Kandari, to Shaheed Raouf Hospital in Halabjai Taza, in coordination with local officials. The hospital, damaged by an earthquake in 2017, was rehabilitated by IOM with funding from the State of Kuwait. Due to the scale of damage, the hospital was unable to provide services to the 75,000 residents of the town and surrounding villages and displaced Iraqis. It is now operational thanks to the Government of Kuwait. This hospital is only one of the many public health facilities damaged by the 2017 earthquake that needed rehabilitation. IOM is looking into implementing other rehabilitation projects for health facilities damaged by the earthquake.

Restoring specialized medical care for returnee communities in West Anbar districts, Iraq

Anbar, 25 October 2018 - As part of its support to enable communities returning home to have access to secondary health care services, the World Health Organization (WHO) has established and equipped a new emergency healthcare unit and an ambulance call center in Ana district in the west of Anbar governorate. The emergency unit that is annexed to the hospital offers services that include treatment and stabilization of medical and surgical emergency cases, laboratory and referral services for 41000 returnees in Ana and Rawa districts and from the neighboring villages. It will reduce gaps in secondary health care service delivery by bringing emergency medical services closer to the people in need while the ambulance call center will respond to emergency calls from patients who need immediate transfer to health facilities. Dary NGO, WHO’s implementing partner, is managing the facility.

The initiative by WHO follows a request from the Anbar health authorities to restore and equip hospitals affected by the 3-year crisis in Iraq. In 2017, more than half of Anbar’s health infrastructure including hospitals in Ana, Al-Qaim, Rawa, and Al-Obaidy were either looted and/or destroyed. As a result, many departments in this hospital and three other hospitals remain closed and more resources are required to reopen them. WHO also supports the Ministry of Health in Iraq with medicines and other medical supplies and to strengthen primary health care services, human resources which contributes to the prevention of non-communicable diseases. This marks a significant step towards the transition from emergency response to early recovery, reconstruction, and resilience-building to enable attaining regularity in health care service-delivery especially at this point where the situation in conflict-affected parts of Iraq remains unpredictable, made worse by the destruction of primary health care facilities that remain closed to date.

Thanks to the United States Agency for International Development Office (USAID)/ The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) that generously funded the project and supported the initiative.
World Food Day 2018 celebrated in Iraq under the theme “Our Actions Are Our Future, Ending World Hunger by 2030 is Possible”

Baghdad, 22 October 2018 –The Ministry of Agriculture in Iraq, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme in Iraq (WFP) celebrated the World Food Day under the patronage of H.E. Minister of Agriculture at the Ministry in Baghdad. The theme for this event is “Our Actions Are Our Future, Ending World Hunger by 2030 is Possible”.

The World Food Day coincides with the 73rd anniversary of the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on 16 October 1945. It is organized in more than 150 countries around the world, making it one of the most important days of the United Nations calendar. These activities aim to raise global awareness and to unify efforts for millions of people who suffer from hunger in order to eliminate it and ensure food security and effective food systems for all. This event focuses on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, ending hunger in the world by 2030. To end hunger is at the heart of FAO and WFP’s mandate which work to ensure that people obtain enough high-quality food in order to have an active and healthy life. The organizations work with their partners and countries in order to implement policies aimed at ending hunger.

“I would like to express my pleasure in joining the celebration of World Food Day,” said Deputy Minister of Agriculture Dr. Mahdi al-Qaisi. “On this occasion, we would like to invite the international community, and specifically Arab organizations, to focus their efforts on improving food security. We would also like to emphasize the role of FAO that supports our projects that have contributed in introducing technology for a number of agricultural activities in order to provide more support to improve the efficiency of agricultural production, both animal and farming. This aims to achieve national food security that harmonizes with the aspirations of FAO to achieve global food security.”

“Today, FAO celebrates World Food Day to send a clear message to the world about hunger,” said FAO Iraq Representative Fadel El Zubi. “It is the worst kind of malnutrition mankind can face, but SDG 2, Zero Hunger, does not entail the battle against hunger only, but also deals with all forms of malnutrition as well as sustainable agricultural development.”

“We call on the international community to work together in order to benefit from capacities and available mechanisms, as it is still possible to achieve zero hunger if the efforts are unified through all countries, continents, sectors and cities during the few remaining years to 2030,” he added.

“World Food Day brings us together to focus our attention and efforts on SDG 2, which aims to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030, in Iraq and around the world,” said WFP Iraq Deputy Country Director Marianne Ward.

“Thanks to the work of leading Iraqi experts and the international community, Iraq knows what needs to be done to ensure that Iraq meets the goal of Zero Hunger by 2030. But we can’t do any of this alone—we need partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Ministry of Agriculture and Civil Society--everyone has a role to play.”

At the conclusion of the ceremony, FAO representative and the Deputy Agriculture Minister signed a document of a FAO project to prevent the spread of the red palm weevil in Iraq. The project aims to coordinate with the Ministry of Agriculture, national and regional partners in order to develop an active implementation mechanism for the appropriate botanic health measures on a global scale. This devastating pest was documented for the first time in Iraq in the Safwan area of the Basra governorate in October 2015.

The ceremony was concluded with a presentation of FAO’s activities and programmes which aim to achieve the SDG 2.

Diplomats, national and international representatives attended the ceremony as well as representatives of the public and private sectors in Iraq, and a large number of staff from the Ministry of Agriculture.
The 9th commemoration of the 2009 attack on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 3 September 2018 - Remarks by Mark Rutgers, UNAMI Chief of Staff, at the 9th commemoration of the 2009 attack on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Baghdad, Iraq:

Excellency the Foreign Minister,
Distinguished Guests,
All protocols observed,

Today we are gathered in commemoration of one of the darkest pages in Iraq’s recent history. Nine years ago, on 19 August 2009, Baghdad was rocked to the core by three car bombs and several mortar strikes, targeting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, as well as other parts of the capital. Because of these attacks, more than 101 people lost their lives, and at least 565 were injured.

The terrorists who had planned and perpetrated these attacks meant to destabilize the Government, which had just taken over full responsibility for the security in the country. By no coincidence, these heinous attacks took place exactly six years after the UN headquarters in Baghdad were torn apart by a massive bomb blast, killing twenty-two UN staff members, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sérgio Vieira de Mello. More than a hundred people were injured.

The message behind both attacks was clear: all those who aim to bring peace and prosperity to Iraq will have to fear for their lives. Just as survivors of the attack on the UN in 2003 are still working with the United Nations, I am sure that as we speak, there are people among us who witnessed the attack on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs firsthand. Despite the horrors of that day and the many catastrophes that have befallen Iraq since, they remain committed to playing their role in building a peaceful, long-term future for their country.

I wholeheartedly commend them for their tenacity and courage. Not only those colleagues who witnessed the attacks firsthand deserve praise, but also the new generation of civil servants that have since joined the ranks of the Government, striving to improve the lives of ordinary Iraqi citizens; ensuring that their rights are respected, and their needs are met.

These are not easy tasks. If there’s one thing that history has taught us, it is that the path of progress is not always linear. Another important conclusion is that progress does not only depend on grand ideas, but also on the dedication of civil servants – civilians who go about their every-day lives and business in keeping with the laws, traditions and practices that govern civilized and regulated existence.

As United Nations, we are grateful for the tireless support that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has continued to render to us, which has allowed us to jointly accompany the people of Iraq on this journey. As a result of the joint efforts of the Government and citizens of Iraq, we can state that, nine years on from that murderous attack and the subsequent waves of terrorism, Iraq has become a safer place that is clearly resuming its rightful place in the community of nations.

Whilst appreciating this progress, we remember the sacrifices of those civil servants and citizens who fell during the attack in August 2009 and pay tribute to them. Let the future of this illustrious country be their legacy.

Photo courtesy of MOFA.

Lowered UN flag on the occasion of the funeral of Kofi Annan

Baghdad, 13 September 2018 - Sunrise in Baghdad, Iraq, where we begin our day with lowering of the United Nations Flag to half-mast on the occasion of the funeral of Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, taking place in Ghana today.
**World Clean-Up Day marked in Iraq**

Erbil, 16 September 2018 - On World Clean-Up Day, UNDP shared photos of volunteers united to clean the cities of Erbil, Sulaymania, and Duhok to raise awareness and implement changes for achieving a plastic-free and zero-waste planet.

**International Day of Peace celebrated in Erbil**

Erbil, 21 September 2018 - General secretariat of the Council of Ministers in Iraq celebrated International Day of Peace in Erbil on 21 sept 2018, gathering around 80 displaced youth Shabak, Christians, Turkman, Yazidis, and Muslims coming from camps in the Governorates of Erbil, Duhok, and Nineveh. Discussions took place on the role of youth in promoting reconciliation and community peace giving the floor to everyone to express views and measures they can take to reach peaceful coexistence, with ideas submitted to the Iraqi government. UNDP supported this event.

**DSRSG Walpole visited the awe-inspiring Imam Al Husayn Shrine and the museum inside Al Abbas Mosque**

Karbala, 26 September 2018 - After meetings with political and religious leaders in the holy city of Karbala, the Deputy Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Alice Walpole, visited the awe-inspiring Imam Al Husayn Shrine and the museum inside Al Abbas Mosque.
3K race held in Erbil to strengthen social networks

Erbil, 27 September 2018 - Today in Erbil, a 3km “marathon” race was held from Sari Blind Community Center to Kani Gani Village with nearly 100 participants. The event aims to strengthen social networks and build trust and acceptance between the displaced and host communities. This event supports participants to build self-esteem and encourages participation in sports and healthy living. The race was organized by IOM and attended by local authorities and community leaders.

Supported by Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, the IOM community center in Sari Blind provides a range of activities, including community events, sports, courses, group discussions and counseling.

“The race was nice because we are gathering and running together. Everyone can participate. It’s fun and good for our health,” said Wria Khidr.

“We like sports. We are happy to be here and hope to have more activities like this,” said Sarah Hana.

“We create friendship and are like brothers together. We are friends with the displaced youths at the community center. It is a different life when we go there. From hair-cutting to football, we learn many things,” said Mohammed, Ahmed and Harem.

International Translation Day

30 September is International Translation Day and United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq is paying tribute to the work of language professionals, their important role in bringing nations together, strengthening peace and security.

Rachid Jaafar, interpreter and head of Translation Section at UNAMI (middle) interprets English-Arabic during the visit of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, to liberated Mosul in April 2018.

Ms. Dina Ramadan, a UN interpreter working for UNAMI interprets English and Arabic during a meeting in Karbala of the SRSG Kubiš with Sheikh Abdul Mahdi al-Karbalai, representative of the Grand Ayatollah Sistani.

UNAMI interpreter Dheyaa Al-Qaysi (in dark blue suit) interprets English-Arabic during a visit of Deputy Special Representative for Iraq, Alice Walpole, to the Sabean community, on the occasion of their traditional baptism ceremony Eid Bronaya in Baghdad in March 2018.

UNAMI public information officer, Rashwan Salih (first from left) interprets English-Kurdish during the meeting of SRSG Jan Kubis and the Speaker of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq Parliament, Yousif Mohammed (Erbil, 2017).
New UNFPA representative to Iraq assumes office

Baghdad, 4 October 2018 – Newly-appointed UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Oluremi Sogunro, has assumed official duties after presenting his letters of credence in Baghdad to the Head of the Protocol Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Manhal Alsafi, on Thursday 4 October, 2018.

Dr Sogunro brings more than 35 years of international experience working in the medical and humanitarian sectors. “I look forward to working with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to help improve the reproductive health and gender-based violence services provided to women and girls across the country. Together with partners, we will conduct population-related studies in order to guide the programming of international and national organisations, as well as policy-making in the country,” said Dr Sogunro.

A Nigerian-American national, Dr Sogunro comes with extensive experience at UNFPA, WHO, PLAN International and other international and national health-focused entities. Dr Sogunro holds a Bachelor degree in Health Science, a Master’s degree in Medicine from the University of Ile-Ife, Nigeria, a Master’s degree in Public Health from the University of California at Berkley, USA, and a Diploma in Family Planning from Emory University, Georgia, USA.

Most recently, in his capacity as UNFPA Representative in Liberia, Dr Sogunro managed complex operations through his leadership, teamwork, and technical knowledge of refugee-related programming. Before joining UNFPA in 2012, he worked as the Country Representative of the National Unity and International Co-operation (YGC) in Nigeria, and as the Country Representative at the Conseil Santé at the European Union Immunization project in Nigeria.

Dr Sogunro takes over from Mr. Ramanathan Balakrishnan, who completed his assignment in Iraq on 30 September 2018.

Erbil International Book Fair held in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq

Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq, 10 October 2018 - The Erbil International Book Fair, one of the country’s most important cultural festivals, was held in Erbil. The United Nations Iraq was proud to participate and display achievements of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the UN Country Team in Iraq.
Baghdad, 10 October 2018 – The Special Representative for Iraq of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ján Kubiš, attended today the ceremony organised by the Fijian United Nations Guard Unit to commemorate the 48th anniversary of the Fijian Independence.

On the occasion of the Fiji Day celebration the Fiji Guard Unit at the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) donated 40 school bags to orphans in Baghdad, through the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Commanding Officer (CO) Lieutenant Colonel Simione Tuinabavatu said that “this is to commemorate the 40 years of Fiji’s commitment to World Peace through service with the UN as peacekeepers.”

The Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) is pleased and thankful that Fiji’s troops continue to contribute positively to the countries and areas in which they serve, not only as peacekeepers, but as responsible global citizens.

New York, 24 October 2018 - The Secretary-General Awards honour and recognize outstanding, ground-breaking, inspiring and exemplary work of UN Secretariat Staff who have contributed above and beyond the call of duty, or advanced projects with great impact and potential. The winners were announced at the awards ceremony on 24 October 2018.

With staff members from shortlisted projects in attendance in the ECOSOC Chamber at Headquarters on 24 October 2018, Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, representing the Secretary-General, recognized the record number of almost 170 nominations as “a welcome sign of staff engagement.”

She noted that the “Innovation” category had received the highest number of entries, 70, remarking that “many of the projects focused on using technology to accelerate our work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.” She commended the nominees by concluding that “thanks to the imagination of our staff, our Organization is bursting with creativity.”

Ms. Jan Beagle, Under-Secretary-General for Management, who chaired the ceremony, noted that the Secretary-General Awards "celebrate inspiring achievements by UN staff, which are helping to drive forward our collective efforts and to realize the Secretary-General’s vision for a transformed Organization.”

After brief introductions of the finalists through narrated slide shows, she announced the winners in each category.

And the winners are: Client Service - Critical Incident Stress Management Unit – DSS; Multilingualism - Harmonization of Language Learning and Assessment throughout the United Nations Secretariat – UNOG and DM; Mentoring - Clearing Mines and IEDs in Iraq – UNMAS, Mr. Pehr Lodhammar; Innovation - UN Online Examinations and Tests System – DGACM, OHRM and OICT.

Congratulations to Mr. Lodhammar and the UNMAS Iraq team for their incredible efforts to raise awareness and reduce the threat of explosive devices.