

This report was produced by OCHA Iraq in collaboration with humanitarian partners and from news sources

### KEY MESSAGES

- 1415 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of 16 April 2020
- 78 fatalities confirmed due to COVID-19 as of 16 April 2020
- 812 patients who have recovered from the virus
- Extension of curfew in federal Iraq
- Operating license of Reuters may be re-instated
- UN agencies concerned about reported rise in domestic abuse
- UN-Habitat releases new COVID-19 dashboard

### SITUATION OVERVIEW

As of 16 April 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed 1415 cases of COVID-19 in Iraq; 78 fatalities; and 812 patients who have recovered from the virus. The number of confirmed new daily cases has steadily fallen over the last week, from 47 new cases on 10-April to 15 new cases on 15-April. The Government of Iraq has extended curfews and movement restrictions in federal Iraq until Ramadan (23 or 24-April). The Kurdistan Regional Government had extended curfews and movement restrictions until 16-April (likely to be extended again), and has announced that government offices will continue to be closed until 2-May. Airports throughout Iraq and KRI are presently closed until 18-April.



Map Sources: ESRI, UNCS.  
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Map created in Sep 2013.

The President of Iraq, Barham Salih, said in an interview<sup>1</sup> that he was working to reinstate the operating license of Reuters news agency. On 2-April, Iraq's Communications and Media Commission suspended Reuters from operating in Iraq for three months after the publication of an article in which suggested that the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Iraq was higher than what the government had reported. The UN Mission in Iraq published a press release on 3-April stating that "in Iraq, as elsewhere, the underreporting of COVID-19 cases is inevitable, due to factors such as fear, cultural issues including stigmatization, undocumented asymptomatic patients, lack of active surveillance and limited testing...WHO has been closely monitoring and evaluating COVID-19 laboratory results since the beginning of the spread of the virus in Iraq, and dismisses the prospect that the government is deliberately hiding or falsifying the results...while the government tackles a complex emergency with imperfect data, it must also continue to defend independent reporting, as media freedom is one of the pillars of a democratic society."<sup>2</sup> President Salih called the decision to suspend Reuters' operations "regrettable."

Four UN agencies released a statement on 16-April urging Parliament to adopt a law on domestic violence in the face of rising reports of domestic abuse during the COVID-19 lockdowns and curfews across the country. UNFPA, OHCHR, UNICEF and UN Women expressed their concern at the multiple reports that were emerging about spousal abuse, self-immolation and self-inflicted injuries due to spousal abuse, sexual harassment of minors, and suicide. The agencies asked the authorities in Iraq to prioritize the protection of women and children as part of their COVID-19 response.<sup>3</sup>

UN-Habitat has developed a new dashboard to track the impact of COVID-19 on Iraq's most vulnerable, including those living in informal settlements who may be without adequate WASH infrastructure and health facilities.

<sup>1</sup> "Iraqi President working to reinstate Reuters after suspension," (15 April): <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/14/middleeast/iraqi-president-reuters-suspension-intl/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> UNAMI Press Release (3 April): [https://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=12081:covid-19-putting-numbers-in-perspective&Itemid=605&lang=en](https://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=12081:covid-19-putting-numbers-in-perspective&Itemid=605&lang=en)

<sup>3</sup> Multi-agency Press Release (16 April): [https://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=12156:un-in-iraq-raises-the-alarm-time-to-endorse-the-anti-domestic-violence-law&Itemid=605&lang=en](https://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=12156:un-in-iraq-raises-the-alarm-time-to-endorse-the-anti-domestic-violence-law&Itemid=605&lang=en)

## IMPACT ON HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS

Humanitarian clusters in Iraq undertook an initial mapping of activities in Iraq to summarize critical humanitarian COVID-19 preparedness and response activities which could be implemented in the short term, if funding were available. Clusters detailed activities which could help to mitigate the problems identified as a result the measures put in place to help stop the spread of the virus, including the following challenges:

- Difficulties in delivering and monitoring essential services in IDP camps
- Interrupted education-related activities
- Disrupted livelihoods, including casual labor
- Increased food insecurity
- Inadequate capacity of health facilities
- Disruptions to critical shelter upgrades
- Suspension of in-person protection monitoring
- Interrupted psychosocial service for children
- Temporary discontinuation of housing, land and property casework
- Suspension of mine and UXO awareness activities
- Restrictions on access to GBV services
- Scale back in WASH services
- Disrupted disbursement of multipurpose cash assistance

To prepare for, prevent, mitigate, and respond to the COVID-19 health emergency, the clusters require an estimated US\$296 million for a total of 56 priority activities. US\$161 million is already requested within the HRP. The additional US\$135 million is needed to either expand existing HRP activities or stand up new activities specific to COVID-19.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON COVID-19

WHO Dynamic Dashboard for Iraq:

- <http://ow.ly/6Ghn50z9UTh> [link abbreviated for ease of reference]<sup>4</sup>

World Health Organization Situation Reports:

- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>

Global dashboard tracking COVID-19 cases:

- <https://who.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

HumanitarianResponse.info page on COVID-19 Resources in Iraq:

- <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/iraq/covid-19>

Link to the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19:

- <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Global-Humanitarian-Response-Plan-COVID-19.pdf>

Overview of funding for Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19:

- <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/952/summary>

UN-Habitat Dashboard in COVID-19 impact on vulnerable communities in Iraq:

- <https://covid-19-unhabitat-iraq-unhabitat-roas.hub.arcgis.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Full link: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrJjoiNjIjMDhiYmItZTlhMS00MDIhLTg3MjltMDNmM2FhNzE5NmM4IiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQlNGIzOS04M0tBILTnkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCIslmMiOjh9>