



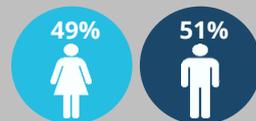
World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Iraq Country Brief March 2020

In Numbers



308,222 people assisted
in March 2020*

50.3 mt of food assistance distributed

USD 3.13 million distributed through
cash-based transfers

USD 55.3 million six months net funding
requirements (May – October 2020)

Operational Context

In Iraq, intermittent conflict continues to aggravate the poverty rate and threaten livelihoods. Following the return process that began in 2018, the situation and needs of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees remain precarious. WFP Iraq's assistance focuses on saving lives and protecting livelihoods – supporting the government of Iraq's social safety nets towards zero hunger. The challenges of rebuilding infrastructure, providing basic services, promoting social cohesion, creating jobs, and progressing towards gender equality whilst maintaining security have impeded the country's efforts to make progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 2: Zero Hunger.

WFP's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2020-2024 in Iraq has an all-encompassing goal of supporting the government of Iraq to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, shifting WFP's role from implementer to enabler. This is critical in the transition towards greater resilience, and a longer-term peace and development. Mainstreaming gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive programming is also key.

The first case of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 was recorded in Iraq on 24 February. Given the increasing cases reported by the Ministry of Health, and the decision taken by the Iraqi Government to limit gatherings, WFP and its partners are taking additional measures to safeguard the health and wellbeing of people assisted.



Population: **39 million**
(Ministry of Trade, 2019)

Poverty rate: **22.5%**
(World Bank, 2017)

2019 Human Development Index:
120 of 188 (lowest)

1.4 million IDPs (IOM)
247,440 Syrian refugees in Iraq (UNHCR)

Operational Update & COVID-19 Response

- In March, WFP delivered food and predominantly cash-based assistance to 308,222 people in 9 governorates, reaching 99 percent of the monthly target of 310,875 people. 224,885 IDPs and 15,694 refugees from the February cycle were also reached in March.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a lockdown was imposed by the government across the country. UN agencies, NGOs and humanitarian actors are excluded from the restriction of movement from/to the camps. The provision of food assistance to IDPs and refugees is ongoing. The school meals programme is suspended due to nationwide school closures. Livelihoods programmes are likewise suspended. Due to COVID-19 and the lockdown, cash distributions were delayed as unfortunately some Financial Service Provider (FSP) agents were restricted from visiting camps. WFP continued to follow up with authorities to assist FSPs to ensure the continuity of cash distributions in IDP and refugee camps.
- WFP is developing a COVID-19 response plan to assist additional vulnerable groups affected by COVID-19 in Iraq, including emergency livelihoods projects.
- Food and cash distributions by WFP to IDPs and refugees in camps continued, but at a slower pace, in order to accommodate health protocols and Government regulations. Key messages on the precautionary measures against COVID-19 during cash distributions were disseminated throughout the camps, as part of ongoing work on communication with communities.
- Demonstrations continue in Iraq (except in the Kurdistan Region), but at a far lower level, due to fears regarding the spread of COVID-19 and the persistent enforcement of related curfews. However, the protesters remain committed to government reforms. Adnan al-Zurfi was designated Prime Minister-elect but later rejected.
- By the end of March, 21,535 people had fled from northeast Syria into Duhok in the Kurdistan Region, following the Turkish operations that started in October. WFP has delivered food assistance for over 21,000 refugees in Bardarash and Gawilan camps. In both camps, WFP distributed ready-to-eat food packages (IRR

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Photo: During distributions in HTC Camp, Anbar, and in all camps, WFP and its partners implement precautionary measures against COVID-19. @WFP/Photo Library

Country Strategic Plan (CSP, 01 January 2020 – 31 December 2024)

Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)
473 m	75 m
Total Requirements for 2020 (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (May – October 2020)
179 m	55.3 m

Strategic Result 1: Access to food (SDG Target 2.1)

Strategic Outcome 1 (SO 1): Crisis-affected people in Iraq, including IDPs and refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises throughout the year

Focus area: Crisis Response

Activities:

- Provide unconditional food assistance to IDPs, refugees and other crisis-affected people.

Strategic Result 4: Sustainable food systems (SDG Target 2.4)

Strategic Outcome 2 (SO 2): Targeted communities, including farmers, have enhanced livelihoods and increased resilience to shocks by 2024

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide livelihood support, asset creation and climate adaptation activities, including capacity strengthening, to targeted farmers and communities.

Strategic Result 5: Capacity strengthening (SDG Target 17.9)

Strategic Outcome 3 (SO 3): National and subnational institutions have strengthened capacities and systems for targeting and assisting food-insecure vulnerable people by 2024

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide institutional capacity strengthening to government officials and partners.
- Provide support to government officials and partners in enhancing information technology for managing PDS modernization and in strengthening the safety net component of the government social protection system.

- (cont'd) – Immediate Response Ration) for new arrivals, and one-month rations (FFR – Food Family Ration) after two days. In March, a “hybrid” of in-kind food / cash assistance was distributed to the northeast Syrian refugees, to be followed by full cash assistance in April.
- WFP prepared a contingency plan in case camps are locked down and the affected people may not be able to access market locations to purchase food. WFP’s Supply Chain team is arranging and facilitating for local traders to sell food in Mobile Money Transfer (MMT) camps through “mobile shops,” using cashless transactions, in case MMT operators are unable to distribute physical cash. WFP is also arranging for a contingency stock of one-month of FFRs for 330,000 people, plus IRRs for 60,000 people.

- Awareness and training sessions on COVID-19 precautionary measures were held with people assisted, as well as cooperating partners and e-voucher retailer staff.
- Due to COVID-19 schools across the country were closed as a precautionary measure the last week of February, meaning that the delivery of school meals remains on hold. Given the current lockdown and curfew, school feeding activities have been suspended until the next academic year. Resilience activities (EMPACT (“Empowerment in Action” digital skills training, and Food for Assets) are also on hold. WFP is preparing emergency quick action livelihoods projects, for people who lost their income as a result of COVID-19 and the lockdown, such as day labourers.

Monitoring and Assessments

- The WFP Vulnerability Analysis & Mapping (VAM) and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) teams are working with FAO and the World Bank on a joint assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on food security in Iraq, including price rises, on vulnerable groups in- and out-of-camps. The results are expected in May.
- WFP is putting in place a method to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the socio-economic stability of the poorer communities, using an adaptation of the mVAM (mobile Vulnerability Analysis Mapping) system used during the conflict with ISIL. WFP is now collecting price data for essential food items by calling the retailers. Monitoring missions were reduced and only conducted for critical needs. No focus group discussions were organised, however M&E telephone surveys were conducted as needed.
- In March, WFP and its cooperating partner conducted 115 site monitoring sessions, 77 of which were conducted remotely because of COVID-19 national precautionary measures. The sites included two in-kind food distribution points, 47 cash-out points for internally displaced people (IDPs) and Syrian refugees, 41 e-voucher points and 25 shops. In addition, 57 monitoring interviews were carried out, mostly remotely.

Funding and Pipeline update

- WFP needs an additional USD 55.3 million to ensure that operations can continue without interruption through October 2020.

Donors

WFP would like to thank all donors for their contributions including:

Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, the government of Iraq, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and the United States.

N.b. all assistance-related numbers are provisional estimates, and may be revised upwards or downwards after reconciliation.