

Strengthening resilience of Syrian women and girls and host communities in Iraq, Jordan and Turkey



FACTSHEET: IRAQ

COUNTRY FACTS

POPULATION: Iraq's population is over **38 million** in 2017¹. Humanitarian partners estimate that **8.7 million** Iraqis will need some form of humanitarian aid throughout 2018, with **3.2 million** vulnerable people and at-risk civilians set to receive the protection and support they require².

REFUGEES AND IDPS: Over **5.8 million** Iraqis have been displaced due to conflict since January 2014; more than **2.1 million** continue to be displaced, and over **3.7 million** have returned (as of May 2018)³. More than **250,000 Syrian refugees** are registered in Iraq. **37 percent** are living in camps and **63 percent** live in out of camp locations. **97 percent** of Syrian refugees in Iraq live in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and **69 percent** of them are women and children⁴.

EMPLOYMENT: The overall labor force participation is **46.26 percent**⁵ (women **18.5 percent** (2016)⁶ and men **68.9 percent** (2009)⁷). According to the 2017 UNHCR and IMPACT household survey, **91 percent** of Syrian refugees have had a source of income in the prior 30 days. For **38 percent**, the primary income source was agricultural wage labour, followed by skilled wage labour **21 percent**, and low skilled service **19 percent**.



photo by: Saia Waad / BMA

Bahriya Hussien, Syrian refugee in Iraq, benefits from the small grants to start her own tailoring business.

KEY ISSUES

GENDER INEQUALITY: Despite the Government of Iraq's best efforts to address gender inequality, the situation for Iraqi women has declined steadily since 2003⁸.

DISPLACEMENT: The armed conflict in Iraq has generated mass population displacement and created tens of thousands of widows and female-headed households, escalating women's vulnerability.

¹The World Bank, Iraq. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=IQ>

²UNOCHA. Global Humanitarian Overview 2018. November 2017. P. 33. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GHO2018.PDF>.

³IOM. IOM in Iraq. Available at: <https://www.iom.int/countries/iraq>

⁴UNHCR. Syria Situation Operational Update. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Iraq%20operational%20update%20on%20Syria%20situation%20-%20April-June%202018.pdf>

⁵ % of total population ages +15 (modeled ILO estimate), WB

⁶ % of female population ages +15 (modeled ILO estimate), WB

⁷ % of male population ages 15+ (national estimate), WB

⁸ Vilardo, V. and Bitar, S., Iraq Country Gender Profile: A snapshot situation analysis on gender equality and women's empowerment. July 2018.

POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY: Iraqi women constitute half of the total population and they are the heads of household in one out every **10** Iraqi households. **80 percent** of these female heads of households are widows, divorced, separated, or caring for sick spouses⁹. They represent one of the most vulnerable segments of the population and are more exposed to poverty and food insecurity because of lower overall income levels and particularly disadvantaged in terms of education and access to employment and adequate shelter¹⁰.

VAW AND GBV: Violence against women and girls, and most notably domestic violence, has been consistently prevalent in Iraq in the last decades. It is estimated that the armed conflict in Iraq has led to the violent deaths of approximately **14,000** women since

2003¹¹. A further **5,000 – 10,000** women and girls are estimated to have been abducted or trafficked for sexual slavery or ransom¹².

SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION: The current dire socio-economic situation in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has pushed refugee families to adopt negative coping mechanisms in order to survive, including women and girls exposing themselves to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)¹³.

ACCESS TO SERVICES: Women IDPs continue to face barriers in accessing public services, returning to their areas of origin, and forced evictions due to discriminatory measures related to their perceived affiliation with ISIS, inheritance issues, and legal obstacles related to documentation. The governorates of Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Anbar, Diyala, and Kirkuk continue to struggle with lack of services and wide-scale destruction, which is particularly worrying for female-headed households, who might also be driven towards deploying negative coping mechanisms¹⁴.

ARMED CONFLICT: Women and girls have suffered from the impact of armed conflict, increasing their vulnerability and impairing their access to basic humanitarian services¹⁵.

The objective is to ensure that women, girls and their communities are resilient to conflict, displacement and other crises. The expected results are:

- i. Women and girl's refugees, displaced and host country nationals increased their social and economic recovery and livelihood opportunities through job placement in compliance with decent labour standards.
- ii. Women and girls benefit from preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) through comprehensive legal and psychosocial services, provided particularly in women safe spaces.
- iii. National justice chain is trained on GBV to hold perpetrators accountable for violence against women.

MADAD PROGRAMME

Largely funded by the [European Union Regional Trust Fund to the Syria Crisis \(EU Madad Fund\)](#)¹.

The UN Women's integrated two-year refugee response programme (2018-2019) in Iraq, Jordan and Turkey, Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women, Girls and Host Communities aims to strengthen the resilience of Syrian and host community women through protection, economic empowerment, and increased access to multi-sectoral services.

In Iraq, the programme seeks to support displaced Iraqi women, Syrian refugee women and girls and host-country nationals across areas affected by conflict. The programme aims to reach over 11,000 direct beneficiaries, including female internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and host communities. UN Women will implement the programme across seven governorates, through four national NGO partners and in partnership with six government agencies.

1 (80% of the project is funded by the EU, and the rest by the Government of Japan as well as by UN Women's core resources)

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Vilardo, V. and Bitar, S., Iraq Country Gender Profile: A snapshot situation analysis on gender equality and women's empowerment. July 2018.

¹² No Place to Turn: Violence against women in the Iraq conflict. Minority Rights Group. 2015. <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/no-placeturn-violence-against-women-iraq-conflict-enar-0>

¹³ JVA, UNHCR & WFP. Joint Vulnerability Assessment. June 2018. Available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/65023>

¹⁴ National HLP Sub-Cluster assessment and reported findings

¹⁵ Vilardo, V. and Bitar, S., Iraq Country Gender Profile: A snapshot situation analysis on gender equality and women's empowerment. July 2018.

PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

In collaboration with four implementing NGO partners (Baghdad Women's Association, Tajdid, Women's Empowerment Organization, Women's Leadership initiative), and six government bodies (three at the federal level: Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and Department for Women Empowerment; and three at the regional level in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Directorate of Combating Violence Against Women, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the High Council of Women's Affairs), UN Women will work toward three interrelated outcomes:

- I. **ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RESILIENCE OF WOMEN:** UN Women will support **800** women to meet basic needs, develop income generating activities, and build confidence and business skills through livelihoods activities that include: cash for work, up skilling trainings, business trainings, business grants, and job placements within the private sector. UN Women will also work closely with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) to form women advocacy coalitions to promote decent work standards in a specified sector.
- II. **IMPROVED SERVICE PROVISION FOR WOMEN AND GBV SURVIVORS:** UN Women will work with NGO partners to provide multi-sectoral services to **10,000** women and GBV survivors through women's safe spaces, complemented by awareness raising activities and more specifically engage men and boys to work serve as allies in combating GBV. UN Women will also build the capacity of five first line responders, focusing on protection principles, do no harm and extending services to vulnerable and physically marginalized women. The program will support MOLSA to provide services in the four shelters in the Kurdistan Region to women fleeing violence, while also training **50** justice sector professionals on how to engage with and better adjudicate GBV/CRSV cases.
- III. **WOMEN LEAD AND INFLUENCE PEACEBUILDING, RECONCILIATION AND CONFLICT PREVENTION:** Partners will form seven women's committees in each governorate to serve as a forum for capacity building (training **120** female community leaders) and to identify and communicate how to improve aid delivery and design, with recommendations compiled and share with local government (Provincial Councils), humanitarian actors working within the area, and international bodies. UN Women will also hold **10** consultative meetings with key women leaders

from government and CSOs, building consensus to advocate for women's engagement in reconciliation and peacebuilding, and hold **4** forums with national decision makers to link consultations to national policy making.

UN Women will engage male partners and family members of female participants, to engage in activities and projects that aim to build trust and recognition of key equality challenges



Syrian refugees and host community women benefited from the Cash for Work activity implemented by Baghdad Women Association in Seje Village, Duhok