

# IRAQ



## Programme Portfolio

- IPr1** Enhanced protection of Syrian refugee women, girls and boys against SGBV
- IPr2** Enhanced basic public services and economic opportunities for Syrian refugees and host communities



## UNDP Response in Iraq

The conflict in Syria continues to push Syrians into neighbouring countries; over 225,000 persons were registered with UNHCR in Iraq at the end of 2014. The vast majority – 98 percent – of Syrian refugees reside in the Kurdistan Region; the density of refugees compared to the local population is relatively high and reaches 20 percent in Dohuk and 10 percent in Erbil. It is estimated that approximately 60 percent of the refugees in the Kurdistan region are accommodated in non-camp settings. In addition, the high level of violence throughout 2014 in Iraq has caused a massive wave of population displacement - estimated at 1.9 million people - that has added a new dimension of insecurity to the ongoing complex emergency.

This has increased the grave burden on protection, shelter and livelihoods sectors. Local governments and communities are encountering unprecedented challenges in providing services equitably and effectively meet an overwhelming and sudden demand. Competition in labour markets causes hostility and tension between refugees and host communities in Kurdistan. Increased incidents of sexual and gender-based violence have become a protection priority.

UNDP Iraq will lead the implementation of the recovery and resilience agendas. The Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) will be a critical contribution to this and serve as a basis for the 3RP. The ICRRP fills critical thematic gaps, especially in terms of community consultation, supporting the local authorities to take leadership to ensure a comprehensive and holistic approach, it also focuses on areas that are not – or so far not sufficiently – covered by other humanitarian clusters or agencies. Where possible, activities are implemented in close collaboration with local counterparts in order to foster local ownership and to contribute to the longer-term resilience of communities. UNDP thereby strongly complements the primarily live-saving and shorter-term activities of other partners through this multi-sectoral, integrated project strategy that has sustainability at its core.

With its proven track record and strong, well-functioning network of cooperation with local and national government and NGOs, UNDP Iraq is thus the ideal partner for efforts to build resilience.

## Enhanced protection of Syrian refugee women, girls and boys against SGBV

### The Project

This project expands Vulnerability Monitoring and Legal Aid Centres (VMLAC) in refugee camps and urban areas in Erbil, Dohuk, and Sulaimania in order to help the affected populations cope with and recover from difficult situations through protection and empowerment of refugee women, girls and boys against sexual and other forms of gender-based violence (SGBV). Key aspects of the project are to expand and streamline legal and vulnerability monitoring centres in refugee camps and to provide the same service to refugees living outside of camps through mobile outreach. The project strengthens the rule of law and improves protection and access to justice to refugees in camps and urban areas.

**Budget 822,000 USD**

As armed conflicts continue to escalate in Iraq, negative economic and security impacts are inevitable. Populations impoverished by these conflicts, such as refugees and IDPs, are especially vulnerable to exploitation and human right violations, such as SGBV. Further deterioration of socio-economic wellbeing of the displaced and local populations increases social tensions, which may result in widespread social unrest and violence. In this context, the project works to enhance the protection of refugee women, girls and boys against SGBV through provision of legal support.

To date, the number of registered Syrian refugees residing in Iraq has almost reached 250,000. The overwhelming majority of them (97%) are hosted in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), Northern Iraq, as they try to escape from the harsh living conditions resulting from the civil war in Syria. Despite the hospitality shown by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and local communities, most of these refugees remain vulnerable and face various difficulties.

### The Issue

Sexual violence against refugees by armed opposition groups has been widely reported. Women, especially those of a young age, as well as boys are currently at high risk of rape, forced early marriages, sexual slavery and abuse. In addition, religious minorities have been systematically subjected to immediate threat of serious human rights violations. The protection of all minorities is urgently required and immediate documentation of these atrocities is crucial to national and international accountability.

Due to on-going conflicts, public service provision has been disrupted in all affected areas. The restoration of basic public infrastructure is essential to alleviate vulnerability of the affected population. The influx of internally displaced persons into the Kurdistan region has adversely affected the capacity of Syrian refugees to sustain themselves as both populations struggle for resources in an already cash-starved economy.

### Strategy

The objective of this project is to increase the protection of refugee women, girls and boys against SGBV and is part of an interagency joint SGBV strategy with UNHCR and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). It will do this by expanding Vulnerability Monitoring and Legal Aid Centres in three refugee camps by creating a mobile legal aid centre to serve refugees in non-camp settings.

Where possible, activities will be carried out in close collaboration with local counterparts in order to increase ownership and sustainability. The activities will have a strong gender focus and aim to address the specific needs and opportunities for affected women and children.

## Partnership Framework

The project has, as a foundation, established relationships of trust between UNDP and local authorities, ministries and UNHCR. Local relationships have been built through UNDP's network of sub/field offices in Basra, Dohuk, Erbil and Sulimaniya. UNDP is co-leading, with UNHCR, the Intersectoral Working Group on coordination for refugee resilience support in Iraq. Additionally, UNDP and UNHCR's joint work on the 3RP requires a strong collaboration with national/regional government counterparts so that a longer-term approach is adopted from an early stage. And, UNDP is part of the Humanitarian Country Team, a network of UN organizations working on humanitarian projects and led by the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq. UNDP also manages the cluster for livelihoods and social cohesion for internally displaced persons (IDP).

## Activities

Women and girls are among those most affected by the current crisis. They require gender-specific support and protection during displacement. Activities address immediate social protection needs while working through institutional structures established with UNDP support as part of its broader rule of law and access to justice programmatic support. Specifically, this entails the provision of emergency prevention and protection measures targeting women and girls who are vulnerable to abuse, violations and exploitation. The project also focuses on consolidating protection mechanisms for vulnerable communities, specifically women and youth, with a resilience based approach, building on past and on-going efforts to strengthen the rule of law and improve protection and access to justice and through institutional support.

The project expands VMLAC in refugee camps/non-camps in Erbil, Dohuk, and Sulaimania by:

- Consolidating the work of the three existing Vulnerability Monitoring & Legal Aid Centres in the three governorates of the KRG
- Establishing a mobile team for non-camp refugees in each governorate to monitor the off camp S/GBV and human rights situation
- Training refugee women on the provision of basic legal assistance

The project is part of an interagency joint SGBV strategy with UNHCR and UNFPA, and aims to increase the protection of refugee women, girls and boys against SGBV.

Key achievements to date include:

- Three legal and vulnerability monitoring centers, established and fully operational: one in each of main refugee camps in Duhok, Erbil and Sulaimanya. Three mobile teams, established in each governorate to cover other refugee camps and the refugee population outside the camps
- The Directorate of Combating Violence Against Women (DCVAW) and Independent Board of the Human Rights (IBHR) are both being supported as a collaboration between governmental entities to implement the project. Through the deployment of professional staff working at the legal and vulnerability monitoring centers inside the camps, DCVAW and IBHR staff have responded to and monitored emergency situations relating to issues such as SGBV and trafficking

## Impact

- Three local NGOs are being supported, one in each governorate in the Kurdistan Region, to run legal and vulnerability monitoring centers, with special focus on women and girls who have survived SGBV and trafficking and in direct partnership and collaboration with the above mentioned governmental entities, providing the following services:
  - Legal consultation, follow up and representation through specialized lawyers
  - Social services including social counseling, referral to various service providers and follow up
  - Legal and social awareness-raising to refugee women and girls through regular awareness-raising sessions and the dissemination of awareness raising publication materials
  - Training and capacity development of DCVAW and IBHR staff, as well as selected Syrian refugee women and girls on providing basic service and referral services to survivors of SGBV and trafficking
  - Investigation and follow up service from SGBV incidents through SGBV investigation officer deployed at DCVAW
  - Assessing the SGBV vulnerability risks by reporting on trends of incidents to government and UN agencies for early warning and mitigation of life threatening SGBV consequences through specialized staff deployed by IBHR
  - A total of 1,910 refugees (1,356 female and 554 male) have been provided with the legal services on matters such as SGBV and GBV, as well as legal documentation support
  - Approximately 1,879 Refugee (1,658 female and 221 male) provided with social services
  - About 10,000 Refugees have attended social awareness sessions and received publications on Sexual and Gender-based Violence



This project helps improve public services while providing economic opportunities for Syrian refugees in Iraq. The focus of the project is to:

- Improve basic service delivery, institutional responsiveness and accountability at the district and sub-district levels in services such as water, electricity, schools and health centres
- Provide livelihoods and local economic recovery support to IDPs, refugees and their host communities
- Strengthen social cohesion among Syrian refugees, Iraqi IDPs and host communities through both helping them cope with basic needs and by addressing longer-term, systemic issues

Ultimately the project will increase social cohesion by improving basic service infrastructure for refugees and host communities and by encouraging positive co-existence between locals, refugees and internally displaced persons.

**Budget 14,158,000 USD**

As armed conflicts continue to escalate in Iraq, negative economic and security impacts are inevitable. This could significantly hinder early recovery efforts and further deteriorate socio-economic wellbeing of the displaced and local populations. This may eventually lead to social tensions and peoples' discontent, potentially resulting in widespread social unrest and violence. In response to the on-going crisis, the proposed project focuses on expanding basic public services and economic opportunities for refugee and local populations with social cohesion.

To date, the number of registered Syrian refugees residing in the Iraq has almost reached 250,000. The overwhelming majority (97%) are hosted in the Kurdistan Region (KR), Northern Iraq, as they try to escape from the harsh living conditions resulting from the civil war in Syria. Despite a relatively hospitable response from the KRG and local communities, most of these refugees remain vulnerable and face various difficulties.

Due to on-going conflicts, public service provision has been disrupted in all affected areas. The restoration of basic public infrastructure is essential to alleviate the vulnerability of the affected population. The influx of IDPs into the KRI has adversely affected the capacity of the refugees to be self-reliant as both populations struggle for resources in an already cash-starved economy.

While Government policy allows refugees to register in Iraq, these individuals have difficulty finding employment outside of the informal sector and competition within and between the host communities and refugees is a reality faced by many. UNDP is therefore supporting livelihoods stabilization and local economic recovery efforts aimed to: i) alleviate immediate tensions over access to employment and other livelihoods assets between host community members and refugees; ii) increase the overall economic absorption capacities and resilience of host communities to support refugees; and iii) support more diversified livelihoods opportunities, enterprise recovery and skills development for the most vulnerable groups within communities, to strengthen their resilience beyond the crisis.

Social tension between host communities and refugees is on the rise countrywide, and is likely to increase further as refugees continue to reside in Iraq. Maintaining peaceful relations, or at least tolerance, between host communities and the displaced is essential to build an environment conducive for humanitarian actors to identify and promote durable solutions. Mechanisms for inclusive dialogue and

## The Project

## The Issue

stronger community solidarity between local authorities, host communities and refugees will be fostered using existing structures in addition to media and other non-traditional channels of communications.

Community consultations inform prioritization of cash for work programs, which not only result in emergency job creation, but also in increased access to essential public services, complementing the education, WASH and Health clusters' initiatives. Community consultations also have risk education and emergency safety information sessions with regards to land mines since Syrian refugees often lack familiarity of contaminated areas in KRG and are more vulnerable to unknowingly entering contaminated land.

Socio-economic factors associated with refugees (e.g., ethnicity, sectarian/religious divide, violent conflicts, multiple displacements, and possible security risks) are extremely complex and have great impacts on the social fabric of the communities. This can increase tensions between the local communities and refugees. Support for social cohesion and resilience building is therefore critical to prevent further deterioration of social capital of the local communities and the potential escalation of violence.

The objective of this project is to increase social cohesion by improving basic service infrastructure (such as water, electricity, schools and health centres) for refugees and host communities and by providing emergency employment and vocational training for refugees and internally displaced persons.

The programme is fully rooted in the resilience approach, which ensures that the foundations are laid to meet medium and long-term needs, with a growing capacity of communities for self-reliance and increased government service delivery to affected communities. UNDP strongly complements the primarily life-saving and shorter-term activities carried out by other partners including multisectoral and integrated strategies to enhance self-reliance of the affected populations.

In order to make the affected population more self-reliant and less dependent on external aid, livelihood support is a cornerstone of the UNDP crisis response. UNDP focuses on both emergency livelihoods stabilization as well as local economic recovery for longer-term employment and income generation. The Emergency Markets Mapping and Analysis (EMMA), supported by UNDP with other partners such as DRC and UNHCR, is a key tool to prepare the affected population more effectively for the growing labour opportunities.

## Strategy

Activities will be carried out in close collaboration with local counterparts where possible, as a critical basis for national and local ownership and to contribute to the longer-term resilience of communities. This includes local authorities, central and regional Ministries, and local stakeholders working with UNDP's network of field offices in Basra, Dohuk, Erbil and Sulimaniya.

## Partnership Framework

The project is helping refugees cope with loss of income by providing emergency employment in the short term and by revitalizing local economies in the medium term. To address social cohesion issues, the project is strengthening basic service infrastructure which benefit both host and refugee communities. Key activities are highlighted below.

Greater economic opportunities generated:

- Create short-term emergency employment/ livelihoods opportunities for refugees
- Conduct vocational training, targeting the most vulnerable people, including female household heads, women and youth
- Support micro, small and medium businesses/enterprises for refugees
- Revitalize local economies with start-up business grants.

Socio-economic infrastructure restored or constructed:

- Rehabilitate or construct priority basic service infrastructures (such as water, electricity, schools and health centres), in the selected refugee camps

The project will build self-resilience within vulnerable segments of the Syrian refugee population by enhancing their vocational skills, strengthening local economies, and facilitating small-business start-up. Pressures on social cohesion will be addressed by revitalizing basic service infrastructure in refugee camps and by promoting co-existence and co-prosperity between local, refugees and internally displaced persons.

In 2014, UNDP supported job opportunities through training and small business creation for 14,000 people who directly benefitted. The support has been balanced as beneficiaries are from refugees/IDPs and host communities. Over 2,000 people in 11 communities participated in social cohesion platforms to reduce community tensions.

Impact



