



# Social Cohesion Programme Update

United Nations Development Programme Iraq October 2021

## REACHING THE UNREACHABLE

This year, thanks to support from the Government of Japan, our Social Cohesion Programme has launched a project to return 9,000 families to four areas of Iraq along with a full reintegration package. UNDP Iraq's Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration Project supports families perceived as affiliated with ISIL in Anbar, Ninewa and Salah al-Din governorates and those affected by increased gender-based violence and harsh economic conditions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. During an interview with UNDP, Ahmad and Mariam\* share their story after fleeing their home in 2014 when their son joined ISIL.

“ We were badly affected by our son's act [joining ISIL]. We left him behind. We know nothing about him. We couldn't do anything about it because he chose this road on his own and we did not agree.”

Ahmad

The project's phased approach includes area-based conflict sensitive assessments, facilitation of dialogue, mediation and reconciliation processes relating to the development of local peace agreements, and a full-scale socio-economic reintegration support package in communities of return, including shelter rehabilitation and psychosocial and livelihood programming.

\*Names have been changed.



Learn more about the Social Cohesion Programme online [here](#)



## CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

Over half of Iraq's total population of more than 40 million are under the age of 25. Young people are one of the most valuable resources for building a prosperous and inclusive Iraq, a country at a pivotal stage of development, following decades of conflict, economic crises and now, the COVID-19 pandemic. To celebrate International Youth Day, we asked young people supported by UNDP Iraq to raise their voices and share their thoughts on the importance of involving youth in decision-making toward a better future.

**“By empowering young people, the roots of extremism and violence will be eradicated, and we will head towards recovery.”**

Kawthar Almohammed, Member of the Anbar Youth for Peace Group supported by UNDP Iraq's Social Cohesion Programme.

## SUPPORTING REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEES FROM AL-HOL CAMP

From 13-14 August, UNDP Iraq in partnership with the Ministry of Migration and Displaced and National Security Advisory, with participation of several government officials, brought together 74 community and tribal leaders from Anbar, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Diyala governorates in a workshop aimed at fostering acceptance and understanding among local leaders to facilitate the reintegration of Iraqi families returning from Al Hol camp. The comprehensive workshop builds on UNDP's community-based reconciliation and reintegration programming to ensure the safe and dignified return and reintegration of Iraqis displaced by the conflict with ISIL. The workshop included discussion of government efforts on the return of IDPs from the camp and the role of community leaders and local government in facilitating the community acceptance and reintegration of those IDPs in their original areas.



## TOWARDS HEALING IN IRAQ

Aiming to enhance peaceful coexistence in areas of return, five workshops were held in August on mediation and conflict resolution for a total of 114 attendees from Anbar (Habbaniyah and Al Qa'im), Ninewa (Ayadiyah and Muhalabiya), and Salah al-Din (Tuz Khurmatu). The workshops focused on practical applications of mediation and conflict resolution techniques, as well as the role of moderate religious discourse. Participants will use the training to help prevent any potential communal tensions resulting from the return of families to their communities through the Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration Project, supported by the Government of Japan.

## RETURNING HOPE: WORKSHOPS ON REINTEGRATION

As part of UNDP Iraq's Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration Project, a series of comprehensive workshops on return and reintegration was held for 89 local government members, security officers and other officials from the governorates of Anbar (Al Qa'im and Habbaniyah), Salah al-Din (Tuz Khurmatu) and Ninewa (Ayadiyah and Muhalabiya).

**“Our goal is to reintegrate returnees back into their communities, to end hatred, and rehabilitate our cities. This workshop is helping us to facilitate the return of the remaining IDPs in our area.”**

Akram Abode, Administrator, Habbaniyah.



## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

September 21 was International Day of Peace and this year's theme focuses on recovering better for an equitable and sustainable world, allowing time for reflection on our collective recovery from the global pandemic.

“During the COVID-19 pandemic, people from different countries, religions and backgrounds faced the same problem and this is why we need to continue as a united front. As a religious leader, I believe that we should all listen to the advice of medical experts.”

Omar Yassin Hussein, Religious Leader, Anbar

Omar attended the Social Cohesion Programme's Anbar Interfaith Religious Leader Conference in September 2021 to discuss moderate religious discourse and religious diversity in Iraq, supported by the governments of Denmark and Germany.



## EMPOWERING CBOS IN IRAQ

With support from the Government of Germany, UNDP Iraq has launched a project to provide 300 CBOs in five Iraqi governorates with four days of skills training on community outreach, proposal writing, and the design of local peace initiatives. This training is part of a series of training sessions that will cover other topics such as networking and project and financial management. Following these training sessions, 50 CBOs, evenly distributed among the governorates, will be supported with grants to implement community initiatives that contribute to societal peace and improving social cohesion in their areas. The first group of training sessions took place from 28 August to 23 September in Anbar, Diyala, Ninewa, Kirkuk, and Salah al-Din governorates, bringing together CBOs with a wide variety of specialties from community health to livelihoods and peacebuilding.

## NATIONAL CHAMPIONS PARTNER WITH UNDP TO ADVOCATE FOR PEACE AND UNITY

Nashat Akram, former professional Iraqi footballer, has partnered with UNDP Iraq through the Social Cohesion Programme to spread messages of peace and unity. A joint video released on 21 September received over 65, 000 views on social media. [Watch here.](#)

“Anyone who plays a sport knows that trust, teamwork, and respect are important for success. Everyday life is no different.”

Nashat Akram



## RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

*Reintegration in Iraq: A perception survey to assess community readiness for return and reintegration of families with perceived ISIL affiliation in pilot areas.*

This report analyzes the results of a community perceptions survey conducted by UNDP in September 2020 in four pilot locations where UNDP will implement programming to facilitate peaceful reconciliation and reintegration of families perceived as formerly associated with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Published on 12 August 2021, this publication builds on builds on Pathways to Reintegration: Iraq, Families Formerly Associated with ISIL released by UNDP Iraq in March this year.



## MOU ON REINTEGRATION SIGNED WITH MOMD AT ANBAR RELIGIOUS LEADER CONFERENCE

On 08 September, UNDP Iraq and the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MOMD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) strengthening the partnership between the two parties to support the return and reintegration of displaced people in Iraq. The three-year agreement emphasizes cooperation, including support to programmes and provision of technical advice and knowledge, in line with national plans and policies to support reintegration of the displaced and an enabling environment for stabilization in Iraq. The agreement was signed at a conference held in Erbil that convened 84 religious leaders from Anbar Governorate to create an interfaith dialogue platform and build their capacities to enhance their role in encouraging community coexistence and advancing the return and reintegration process for IDPs in partnership with local and national authorities. Similar conferences have been held for religious leaders from Ninewa (June 01-02) and Salah al-Din (July 14-15) governorates this year.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on UNDP Iraq's Social Cohesion Programme, please contact [Nadia.Alawamleh@undp.org](mailto:Nadia.Alawamleh@undp.org) or [Abdelmoneim.Mustafa@undp.org](mailto:Abdelmoneim.Mustafa@undp.org).

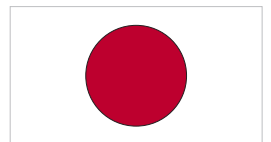
**THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS. WITHOUT YOUR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT, THESE PROGRAMMES WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE.**



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