

# Social Cohesion Programme Update

United Nations Development Programme Iraq July 2021

## NINEWA & SALAH AL-DIN INTERFAITH RELIGIOUS LEADER CONFERENCES

UNDP Iraq in partnership with the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MOMD), the Governorate of Ninewa, and supported by the Government of Denmark, held a two-day interfaith religious conference for around 100 religious leaders from 01-02 June. The conference elaborated on how best to advance reconciliation, coexistence and combating violent extremism, as well as encourage the return and reintegration of displaced families in Ninewa Governorate. Participants had the opportunity to discuss critical topics like the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and preventing violent extremism within communities in Ninewa and raise important issues directly with the Minister of Migration and Displaced, Her Excellency Mrs. Ivan Faiek Jabru and the Governor of Ninewa, His Excellency Mr. Najim Aljabouri. A similar conference for around 70 religious leaders from Salah al-Din took place under the auspices of the Minister of Migration and Displacement and in partnership with the Council of Ministers Secretariat and Salah al-Din Governorate from 14-15 July in Baghdad. Both the Deputy Minister of Migration and Displaced, Mr. Karim Hussein Ali Al-Nuri and the Deputy Secretary General of Council of Ministers Secretariat, Mr. Jasim Al-Habousi, were in attendance to discuss important issues with attendees. Based on the recommendations of these conferences, UNDP will work closely with the religious leaders on building their capacities and supporting their efforts on advancing the return and reintegration process for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in partnership with local and national authorities. An upcoming third conference in August will target religious leaders from Anbar Governorate.



## MY SON VOLUNTEERED HIS SOUL TO IRAQ: FORGIVENESS TOWARDS RECONCILIATION



“Good intentions lead to forgiveness and peace,” declares Sayed Jawad, a Shi'ite Muslim religious leader from Tal Afar, Ninewa Governorate, who attended the religious leader conference in June. Since 2004, Sayed has been working to fight sectarian tensions between groups in his community and bring people together in the name of peace. As a member of the Tal Afar Local Peace Committee, Sayed plays an important role in encouraging communal reconciliation and managing local conflicts in Ninewa. In 2005, Sayed's 21-year old son Ala'a was killed during a clash between policemen and insurgents.

“

Ala'a died, and I said we have to forgive everyone. We don't have to revenge. The success of the Iraqi people, whether Sunni, Shi'ite, Yazidi, and all others, depends on forgiveness and avoiding collective punishment. There is no difference between us, anyway. We are all made from clay and water.

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## CELEBRATING CULTURE AND DIVERSITY IN THE NINEWA PLAINS

On 06 June, UNDP Iraq held a festival celebrating strength in diversity that brought together community leaders and members of various ethnic and religious groups from the region in celebration in Bartella in partnership with Al-Tahreer Association for Development and Wasel Tasel Organization. The event featured traditional dancing, music, live painting, and home cooked cuisine.



## PEACEBUILDING FROM THE GROUND UP

Creating meaningful impact at the grassroots level is vital for peacebuilding in fragile contexts. From 06 to 08 June, swisspeace, in partnership with UNDP Iraq, led a capacity building workshop in Baghdad on mediation for 15 local peacebuilding practitioners and academics from Anbar, Erbil, Salah al-Din, Baghdad, Dohuk, Diyala, Babel, Maysan and Kirkuk governorates. The overall purpose of the training aimed at laying the foundation to develop a common language around mediation tools and dialogue and identifying needs and opportunities at the local level in Iraq. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNDP Iraq and swisspeace in April 2021 to strengthen efforts for peacebuilding and social cohesion in Iraq through a two-year partnership.

## SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISORY/NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR COMBATING AND PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN IRAQ

On 11 June, UNDP Iraq and the National Committee on the Implementation of the Strategy to Combat Violent Extremism at the National Security Advisory launched a four-day workshop on the role of the assigned teams and committees at the presidency, parliament, and prime ministry offices and at the governorates in implementing the strategy to Combat Violent Extremism in Iraq. Additional specialized sessions will follow, targeting other national and local partners including civil society, governorate teams, youth and religious leaders to enhance their role in the implementation of the national strategy to combat violent extremism.



## NEW MOU BETWEEN UNDP IRAQ AND FOLKE BERNADOTTE ACADEMY SIGNED

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Iraq and Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) to enhance local capacities for peacebuilding in Iraq with concentration on gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding. With a mandate to support international peace and security-related efforts, Folke Bernadotte Academy is a governmental agency based in Stockholm, Sweden. Focused on effective peacebuilding, FBA and UNDP Iraq's new partnership aims at advancing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 agenda on women, peace, and security, within the realm of social cohesion and the promotion of peaceful co-existence. Through working to advance a gender perspective in community peace processes, this partnership also contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of Gender Equality (Goal 5) and Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (Goal 16).



### GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SOCIETAL PEACEBUILDING

For sustainable change to occur, a gender perspective must be considered at every level of society. From 15 to 17 June, UNDP Iraq, in partnership with Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) and Al-Tahreer Association for Development (TAD), trained 21 representatives of Community-Based Organizations on gender mainstreaming during the design of community peace initiatives. Participants attended from Diyala, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Kirkuk, Anbar and Erbil governorates. The training included in-depth discussion on the concept of gender, how conflict impacts the lives of men and women differently, national and international policy frameworks on gender, and organizational structures to support gender mainstreaming.



### ENGAGING YOUTH TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN IRAQ

In Iraq, engaging youth on issues related to preventing and combating violent extremism is vital to securing a peaceful future after decades of conflict. On 12 July 2021, UNDP Iraq and the National Committee on the Implementation of the Strategy to Prevent/Combat Violent Extremism at the National Security Advisory concluded a two-day workshop engaging fifty youth representatives from across Iraq on the implementation of the strategy at national and local levels. Representatives from the Ministry of Youth and Sports were also present to respond to questions from the youth and discuss their role in the strategy's implementation. The 11-12 July session is part of a series of engagements, including the previous workshop with deputy governors in June 2021, and next steps include specialized sessions to build the capacity of main actors at the governorate level to enhance their role in the implementation of the national strategy to prevent/combat violent extremism.

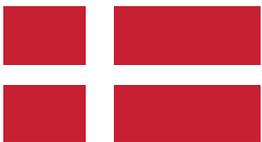
Learn more about  
The Social Cohesion Programme



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on UNDP Iraq's Social Cohesion Programme, please contact  
Nadia.Alawamleh@undp.org or Abdelmoneim.Mustafa@undp.org.

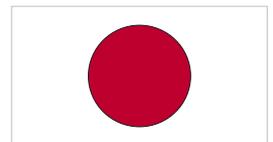
**THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS. WITHOUT YOUR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT, THESE PROGRAMMES WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE.**



swiss  
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FBA



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