

# Iraq – Complex Emergency

September 30, 2020

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE



- The GoI designated the DNGO as lead authority for receiving national humanitarian access letter applications.
- COVID-19-related economic shocks continue to disproportionately affect vulnerable Iraqis, harming livelihoods and generating additional humanitarian needs.
- USG partners facilitated voluntary IDP returns to Ninewa Governorate under the durable solutions framework.



### TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

For the Iraq Response in FY 2020

USAID/BHA<sup>1,2</sup> \$120,728,219

State/PRM<sup>3</sup> \$224,455,134

**Total \$345,183,353**

For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 5

<sup>1</sup> USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

<sup>2</sup> Total USAID/BHA funding includes non-food humanitarian assistance from the former Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and emergency food assistance from the former Office of Food for Peace.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

<sup>4</sup> This total includes \$47,005,000 in supplemental funding through USAID/BHA and State/PRM for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) preparedness and response activities.

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### **DNGO Assumes Humanitarian Access Letter Authorities**

In September, the Government of Iraq (GoI) designated the Directorate of Non-Governmental Organizations (DNGO) as the country's lead authority for processing humanitarian access letters, USAID/BHA partners report. The decision is part of a revised process to reinstate a national humanitarian access authorization system after the GoI suspended the previous process in November 2019. The reform follows several months of regulatory uncertainty, with relief actors negotiating access on a governorate-by-governorate basis, which has hindered timely humanitarian response efforts. In July, access-related challenges—approximately 95 percent of which were due to administrative restrictions resulting from access letter issues and COVID-19 preventive measures—affected more than 231,000 people in need in Anbar, Baghdad, Kirkuk, and Ninewa governorates, the UN reports. USAID/BHA partners continue to advocate for the removal of all sub-national access requirements to prevent critical delays to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as temporary exemptions for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with expired letters while the GoI operationalizes the new system.

### **IDPs Face Elevated Protection Risks Amid Economic Downturn**

Socioeconomic shocks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic are exacerbating vulnerabilities faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, further impeding their ability to meet basic needs, USAID/BHA partners report. More than 70 percent of out-of-camp IDPs cited eviction as a concern in July, compared with 5 percent prior to the COVID-19 outbreak in Iraq, according to the Protection Cluster—the coordinating body for humanitarian protection activities, comprising UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders. Across Iraq, approximately 800,000 IDPs live in rented homes, with high rates of informal lease agreements elevating the risk of eviction due to the lack of legal protections. USAID/BHA partners report that evictions undermine COVID-19 mitigation efforts by depriving people of access to essential water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, and increase protection risks—including child labor and the accumulation of debt—as households increasingly adopt negative coping mechanisms to pay rent. U.S. Government (USG) partners continue to support vulnerable Iraqis to help meet basic needs and mitigate protection risks, with State/PRM partner the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) providing nearly 4,200 IDPs and refugees with legal assistance in August and approximately 98,000 IDP and refugee households with COVID-19 cash assistance from April to September.

### **COVID-19 Operating Restrictions Negatively Affect Livelihoods**

Operating restrictions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 have severely affected small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), negatively affecting livelihoods across Iraq, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports. Analyzing nearly 900 SMEs across 15 Iraqi governorates from June 22 to July 7, IOM found that average revenue had declined by approximately 65 percent, with nearly two-thirds of the surveyed SME owners contemplating closing their businesses permanently, the report notes. In a separate UN survey of nearly 3,300 households and nearly 1,200 private businesses from June 16 to June 30, three-quarters of respondents reported a loss of employment and that average monthly income had declined by approximately 40 percent compared with May 2019. Additionally, more than 80 percent of surveyed households reported lack of financial savings; in May 2020, the UN estimated the poverty rate could double by the end of the year. To help meet the needs of those affected by the socioeconomic aspects of the pandemic, USAID/BHA partners prioritize the provision of livelihoods support, with one partner reaching more than 8,900 individuals across five governorates with multipurpose cash assistance

(MPCA) from July to September. Moreover, in Ninewa, a State/PRM partner is providing 460 individuals with cash-for-work opportunities to support public infrastructure projects in the town of Bartella.

### **USG Promotes Durable Solutions in Ninewa**

USG partners facilitated the voluntary return of 120 households from Ninewa’s Salamiyah IDP camp to areas of origin elsewhere in the governorate in September, IOM reports. With support from the Gol Ministry of Migration and Displaced, the operation follows a similar initiative in July, when USG partners supported 40 households sheltering in Anbar’s Amriyat al-Fallujah camp to return to areas of origin in Anbar. The two initiatives are part of a multi-stakeholder effort to promote durable solutions to displacement in Iraq via livelihoods support, MPCA, and shelter assistance, as well as post-return reintegration services. Political instability, ongoing armed conflict, and the lack of a harmonized, whole-of-government policy approach have hindered Gol efforts to sustainably integrate returnees to date, according to a September UN report. The USG continues to work with Gol and relief partners to support Iraq’s 1.3 million IDPs and enable dignified, informed, safe, voluntary, and sustainable returns.

### **COVID-19-Related Access Barriers Result in Reduced Food Consumption**

The economic impact of COVID-19 continues to negatively affect food security conditions in Iraq, as many vulnerable households report loss of incomes and livelihoods, hindering the ability to purchase essential commodities such as food. In addition, market disruptions and other COVID-19 economic impacts have diminished food access countrywide. In August, more than 90 percent of agricultural vendors reported difficulty transporting goods to market due to inter-governorate movement restrictions imposed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. As a result, two-thirds of those surveyed in August reported reducing meal frequency since the start of the pandemic, increasing the need for humanitarian assistance. As of September 28, approximately 3.5 million people were experiencing food insecurity in Iraq, representing an increase of 320,000 people compared to the previous month, the UN reports. In response to increased food needs, USAID/BHA partner the UN World Food Program (WFP) continues to support food-insecure populations across Iraq, providing emergency cash and food assistance to approximately 256,000 IDPs, 69,000 refugees, and 56,000 returnees and people from vulnerable communities across 12 governorates in September.

## **KEY FIGURES**



**14**

Number of partners providing essential WASH services

## **U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

### **WASH**

With USAID/BHA support to IOM and NGO partners and State/PRM support to UNHCR and implementing partners, the USG helps to provide essential WASH services for vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas of Iraq, particularly people residing in IDP camps and informal settlements. With a focus on the delivery of water, the operation and maintenance of WASH infrastructure in camps, and the rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure out of camps, USAID/BHA partners strive to provide safe drinking water and enable sanitary and hygienic living conditions that protect communities, promote dignity, and limit the spread of communicable diseases. To mitigate COVID-19 transmission risks, USG partners are conducting hygiene awareness campaigns; distributing hygiene kits; installing handwashing stations at informal settlements, camps, public areas, and out-of-camp areas; and rehabilitating WASH facilities in primary health care

centers across eight Iraqi governorates.



**\$27 Million**

In dedicated USG support for life-saving health care programming

## HEALTH

Working with USAID/BHA NGO partners, as well as IOM, UNHCR, and the UN World Health Organization (WHO), the USG aims to support primary health care services for Iraqis in camps and in out-of-camp areas across conflict-affected areas of Iraq. USG partners are supporting primary health care facilities through the provision of staff training, staff salaries, and medical supplies and equipment, both in camps and in out-of-camp settings. In addition, USG partners are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by training medical professionals on screening, identification, triage, and treatment of suspected cases; strengthening disease surveillance systems; implementing risk communication and community engagement activities; and providing critical medicines, medical equipment, and other supplies.



**\$26.7 Million**

In dedicated USG support for critical protection initiatives

## PROTECTION

Addressing protection concerns remains a top priority for the humanitarian response in Iraq, with USG partners supporting a range of critical protection initiatives for IDPs, returnees, and host communities. With funding to IOM and UNHCR, State/PRM promotes durable solutions to the ongoing conflict in Iraq by facilitating the sustainable integration of displaced Iraqis, helping provide accurate information on security conditions and livelihood opportunities in host communities and areas of origin. In addition, USAID/BHA supports IOM and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as NGO partners, to provide protection services, including case management support, gender-based violence prevention and response services, increased access to psychosocial support services, legal assistance for civil documentation, and mine risk education.



**7**

Number of USG implementing partners providing shelter and settlements services

## SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

USG funding supports IOM, UNHCR, and USAID/BHA NGO partners to provide critical shelter services for displaced Iraqis, primarily in conflict-affected areas. USG partners distribute shelter kits and other relief commodities; provide coordination and management services at camps and informal settlements; and support the rehabilitation of conflict-damaged houses and unfinished or abandoned buildings to provide safe and dignified living conditions that align with humanitarian standards.



**\$34.3 Million**

In dedicated food assistance funding provided through WFP

## FOOD SECURITY

Through WFP, USAID/BHA continues to deliver emergency food assistance using cash-based transfers, providing critical assistance to the most vulnerable populations while also supporting local markets. WFP is also supporting the GoI's efforts to modernize its social safety net program to improve the delivery of food assistance for IDPs and support the transition of emergency food assistance programming to GoI-managed safety net activities.

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- In January 2014, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) forces began seizing control of parts of northern and central Iraq, generating significant population displacement as civilians fled to areas of relative safety, such as the Iraqi Kurdish Region, to escape fighting.
- In August 2014, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)—a global humanitarian coordination entity comprising UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders—activated a system-wide Level 3 (L3) response for Iraq due to the pace and volatility of the humanitarian crisis. L3 responses are activated in the most complex humanitarian emergencies, where the highest level of mobilization across the humanitarian system is required to scale up and meet needs. In late December 2017, the IASC downgraded the Iraq emergency from an L3 designation.
- On August 11, 2014, USAID deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to Iraq to coordinate USG efforts to address the urgent humanitarian needs of newly displaced populations throughout the country. USAID also established a Response Management Team (RMT) based in Washington, D.C., to support the DART. DART and State/PRM staff worked closely with local officials, the international community, and humanitarian actors to identify critical needs and expedite assistance to affected populations. On August 31, 2019, USAID demobilized the DART and RMT. USAID/BHA staff based in the region and in Washington, D.C., continue to coordinate with USG, UN, and other humanitarian partners to provide life-saving assistance in Iraq.
- Approximately 4.1 million people require humanitarian assistance in Iraq, according to the UN. Prolonged displacement is exhausting the resources of IDPs and host community members alike at a time when the capacity of both the GoI and Kurdish Regional Government to respond to humanitarian needs remains challenged by budgetary constraints. Meanwhile, UN agencies, NGOs, and other relief actors face funding shortages, logistical challenges, and security constraints that complicate efforts to meet critical needs.
- On October 22, 2019, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Matthew H. Tueller redeclared a disaster in Iraq for FY 2020 due to the ongoing complex emergency and humanitarian crisis.

### USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ RESPONSE IN FY 2020<sup>1</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>FUNDING FOR COMPLEX EMERGENCY IN IRAQ</b>			
<b>USAID/BHA</b>			
Non-Food Assistance			
	Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management (HCIM)	Countrywide	\$1,800,000
Implementing Partners (IPs)	HCIM	Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Basrah, Dhi Qar, Diyala, Dohuk, Erbil, Karbala, Kirkuk, Maysan, Muthanna, Najaf, Ninewa, Qadisiya, Salah al-Din, Sulaimaniya, Wasit	\$553,187
	HCIM	Countrywide	\$413,624
	Health, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Anbar, Diyala, Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din	\$45,016,376

IOM	Health, Protection, Shelter and Settlements	Countrywide	\$13,000,000
UNICEF	Protection	Anbar, Baghdad, Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Sulaimaniya	\$6,000,000
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	HCIM	Countrywide	\$1,300,000
	Program Support		\$1,597,528.00
<b>TOTAL NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING</b>			<b>\$69,680,715</b>
Food Assistance			
WFP	Cash-Based Transfers for Food	Countrywide	\$18,547,504
<b>TOTAL FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING</b>			<b>\$18,547,504</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$88,228,219</b>
<b>STATE/PRM</b>			
IPs	Durable Solutions, Education, Emergency Response, Health, Livelihoods, Protection, WASH	Countrywide	\$63,270,220
	Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), Education, Health, Non-Food Items, Protection, Refugee Response, Shelter and Settlements	Jordan, Lebanon, Syria	\$10,850,000
International Labor Organization (ILO)	Livelihoods	Turkey	\$429,914
IOM	Durable Solutions, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Livelihoods	Countrywide	\$34,000,000
UNHCR	CCCM, Non-Food Items, Protection, Shelter and Settlements	Countrywide	\$79,100,000
UNHCR	Multi-Sector Assistance, Refugee Response	Jordan, Lebanon, Syria	\$20,800,000
UNICEF	Education	Countrywide	\$1,500,000
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING</b>			<b>\$209,950,134</b>
<b>TOTAL USG FUNDING FOR COMPLEX EMERGENCY IN IRAQ IN FY 2020</b>			<b>\$298,178,353</b>

<b>FUNDING IN IRAQ FOR COVID-19 OUTBREAK PREPAREDNESS &amp; RESPONSE<sup>2</sup></b>			
<b>USAID/BHA</b>			
Non-Food Assistance			
IPs	Health, MPCA, Protection, WASH	Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Sulaimaniya	\$18,650,000
IOM	Health, Protection, WASH	Anbar, Baghdad, Dohuk, Erbil, Ninewa, Salah al-Din	\$7,600,000
<b>TOTAL NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING</b>			<b>\$26,250,000</b>
Food Assistance			
WFP	Cash Transfers for Food	Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Sulaimaniya	\$6,250,000
<b>TOTAL FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING</b>			<b>\$6,250,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$32,500,000</b>
<b>STATE/PRM</b>			
IPs	Health, MPCA, Protection, WASH	Countrywide	\$5,605,000
UNHCR	CCCM, Health, MPCA, Protection, Refugee Response, WASH	Countrywide	\$8,900,000
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING</b>			<b>\$14,505,000</b>

<b>TOTAL USG FUNDING FOR COVID-19 OUTBREAK PREPAREDNESS &amp; RESPONSE IN IRAQ IN FY 2020</b>	<b>\$47,005,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ RESPONSE IN FY 2020</b>	<b>\$120,728,219</b>
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ RESPONSE IN FY 2020</b>	<b>\$224,455,134</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ RESPONSE IN FY 2020</b>	<b>\$345,183,353</b>

<sup>1</sup> Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of September 30, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Figures represent supplemental International Disaster Assistance (IDA) and Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) funding committed for COVID-19 preparedness and response activities as of September 30, 2020.

## PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)