

Iraq – Complex Emergency

JUNE 16, 2021

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

4.1 MILLION	2.4 MILLION	1.2 MILLION	243,121	4.9 MILLION
Number of People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance	Number of People in Acute Need	Number of IDPs	Number of Syrian Refugees Sheltering in Iraq	Number of IDP Returns Since 2014
<i>UN – February 2021</i>	<i>UN – March 2021</i>	<i>IOM – April 2021</i>	<i>UNHCR – January 2021</i>	<i>IOM – April 2021</i>

- 381 Iraqi refugees returned to Iraq from northeastern Syria’s Al Hol refugee camp on May 25, according to the UN.
- A June 4 fire at Shariya IDP camp in Dohuk Governorate displaced more than 130 households and resulted in injuries to more than 30 individuals.
- USAID/BHA partner IOM facilitated the voluntary return of 85 households from Ninewa Governorate’s Jed’dah 5 IDP camp to areas of origin.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

For the Iraq Response in FY 2021

USAID/BHA¹

\$45,829,965

For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 6

Total

\$45,829,965

¹ USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Gol Repatriates 381 Iraqi Refugees from Syria's Al Hol Camp

On May 25, the Government of Iraq (GoI) repatriated 381 Iraqi refugees from northeastern Syria's Al Hol refugee camp to Ninewa Governorate's Jed'dah I internally displaced person (IDP) camp, where they will remain until they are able to return to their areas of origin or relocate to another location in Iraq, relief actors report. The group represents just 5 percent of the approximately 8,000 Iraqi refugees who have been sheltering at Al Hol camp since 2014–2015; based on GoI assessments, relief actors believe the 381 returnees are unaffiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). An additional 23,000 Iraqi refugees arrived at Al Hol camp following the fall of Baghouz town—the last remaining ISIS stronghold in Syria—in March 2019, and many of these Iraqis are believed to have direct or familial affiliations with the extremist group, according to relief actors. Approximately 80 percent of recently surveyed Iraqi refugees at Al Hol camp expressed a desire to return to Iraq, representing a similar percentage of other INGO surveys among camp residents, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The GoI has identified a further 1,600 Iraqis believed to be unaffiliated with ISIS for return in the near- to medium-term.

Relief actors, including USAID/BHA partners, are conducting humanitarian needs assessments and providing a range of humanitarian services for the recent returnees at Jed'dah I, including food and medical assistance, shelter and settlements support, assistance obtaining civil documentation, and protection services, including mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services.

IDP Camp Fire Secondarily Displaces Hundreds of IDPs Sheltering in Dohuk

A large fire at Shariya IDP camp on June 4 displaced more than 130 households and injured more than 30 people, according to the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster. As of June 10, the majority of affected households had temporarily relocated to communal facilities inside Shariya IDP camp or to temporary shelters in nearby Khanke IDP camp, where crowded conditions may increase the risk of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) transmission, relief actors report. In a visit to Shariya IDP camp on June 10, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Irena Vojáčková Sollorano met with households affected by the fire and reaffirmed the UN's commitment to providing humanitarian assistance for IDPs and refugees. Relief agencies are coordinating with GoI officials to provide food, dignity and hygiene kits, and protection services and have installed new tents—provided by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)—to temporarily house displaced families at Shariya IDP camp. In addition, the construction of concrete shelters for the approximately 130 households affected by the fire has begun. Furthermore, the GoI Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Displacement and Migration communicated a plan to relief actors to change the shelter system in all camps across Dohuk from tents to brick shelters, as well as to deliver basic services, including electricity and water networks, in the sites.

Interference, Movement Restrictions Impede Humanitarian Operations

Relief actors reported 14 humanitarian access incidents in Iraq during April, including nine incidents related to movement restrictions and five incidents related to interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities, the UN reports. The figure represents a 50 percent decrease in access incidents compared to March, and an estimated 70 percent decrease compared with the monthly average in 2020. However, the UN noted a higher proportion of incidents in April involving interference in the delivery of humanitarian assistance compared with the monthly average in 2020. Relief actors reported three incidents in Ninewa in which local authorities demanded non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

recruit local staff from the area of operation. In another incident in Ninewa, three Popular Mobilization Forces members threatened NGO staff members, demanding the NGO cease operations, after forcibly entering the organization's premises. The UN estimates that 700,000 people in need—including more than 90,000 IDPs in and out of camps and 285,000 returnees—live in 15 districts with moderate or high levels of access constraints across Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Sulaimaniya governorates. Despite access challenges in some areas of operation, USAID/BHA partners continue to operate and deliver life-saving assistance to people in need across Iraq.

Insecurity in Areas of Origin Continues to Hinder IDP Returns

Security concerns continue to present the largest barrier to IDP returns in areas of origin, relief actors report. An April study conducted by the humanitarian organization REACH, comprising interviews with more than 1,300 IDPs in 15 IDP camps across Dohuk, Erbil, Ninewa, and Sulaimaniya governorates, found that persistent security concerns—particularly sporadic violent clashes and fear of armed actors or extremist groups—were most commonly cited as the primary barrier to returning to areas of origin. Surveyed IDPs also identified damaged houses, the absence of basic services, and limited livelihood opportunities as barriers to returns. Consequently, while nearly 75 percent of displaced households expressed a desire to return to areas of origin, only 1 percent intended to do so within the next 12 months. The UN, U.S. Government (USG), and other relief actors continue to work with Gol authorities to promote safe, voluntary, family-unit, informed, non-discriminatory, durable, and dignified returns for Iraq's 1.2 million remaining IDPs, including by collecting and communicating information to IDPs regarding security conditions in areas of return. In April, with USG and other donor support, IOM facilitated the return of 85 households from Ninewa's Jed'dah 5 camp to areas of origin in Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din.

Amid Decline in New COVID-19 Cases, Gol to Boost COVID-19 Vaccinations

The UN World Health Organization (WHO) reports that new daily COVID-19 caseloads have declined in recent weeks, with the number of new cases recorded during the week of May 31 constituting less than one-half of the number of new cases reported at the peak of Iraq's second wave of COVID-19 infections during the week of April 19. Despite the declining number of new daily cases, WHO noted that community transmission remains widespread throughout the country and has urged the Gol to accelerate a national action plan for COVID-19 vaccinations. As of June 10, the Gol had administered at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to nearly 679,200 people—approximately 1.6 percent of the country's total population.

In an effort to boost COVID-19 vaccinations, on June 9 the Gol announced mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations—or evidence of a negative COVID-19 test—for international travelers, as well as mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for employees of businesses seeking to renew Gol-issued health licenses, among other measures, international media report. In addition, Gol health officials are seeking to procure additional COVID-19 vaccines beyond the 16 million doses allocated to Iraq via the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) facility, of which approximately 1 million had been delivered as of early June. USAID/BHA partners continue to support Gol efforts to improve COVID-19 mitigation efforts. In April, a USAID/BHA partner organized critical trainings on COVID-19-related topics—such as case management, infection prevention and control, and vaccination hesitance and safety—to more than 20 health care staff in Ninewa. The partner also organized two COVID-19 workshops in Iraq's capital city of Baghdad and Ninewa's Mosul city for health care workers and Gol health officials in April.

KEY FIGURES



22,000

Number of people reached with COVID-19 and hygiene awareness messages by one USAID/BHA NGO partner in April



22

Health care facilities supported by IOM in April



15,200

Individuals secured vital civil documentation through UNHCR in 2021

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

WASH

USAID/BHA and U.S. Department of State's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) are supporting IOM, UNHCR, and NGO implementing partners (IPs) to provide essential water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services for vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas of Iraq. USAID/BHA partners are providing safe drinking water, including trucking water where necessary; providing operations and maintenance support for WASH infrastructure in IDP camps; rehabilitating WASH infrastructure outside of camps; and promoting sanitary and hygienic living conditions that protect communities, promote dignity, and limit the spread of communicable diseases. In addition, USG partners are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by conducting hygiene awareness campaigns and distributing hygiene kits. Partners have also installed handwashing stations at informal settlements, camps, and public areas in out-of-camp locations and rehabilitated WASH facilities in primary health care centers across eight Iraqi governorates.

HEALTH

With USG support, NGOs and UN partners—including IOM, UNHCR, and WHO—continue to provide primary health care services for IDPs in camps and out-of-camp locations across conflict-affected areas of Iraq. USG implementing partners are improving the quality and accessibility of primary health care services, including mental health care services, through the provision of staff capacity-building, staff salaries, and medical supplies and equipment. 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.

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, Syrian refugees, and host communities. With funding to IOM, UNHCR, and other NGO partners, State/PRM promotes durable solutions for displaced populations in Iraq by facilitating sustainable integration and 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 (GBV) prevention and response services, increased access to PSS services, legal assistance for civil documentation, and mine risk education. A State/PRM partner also works to mitigate protection risks for Syrian refugee women through activities to

prevent and respond to GBV.



7

Number of USG implementing partners providing shelter and settlements services

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

USG funding supports IOM, UNHCR, and 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, upgrades to unfinished or abandoned buildings, and improvements to camp and informal settlements infrastructure to provide safe and dignified living conditions that align with humanitarian standards. A State/PRM NGO partner also provides support to Syrian refugees to upgrade shelters in refugee camps.



280,000

Individuals received food assistance from WFP through USAID/BHA and other donor funding in April

FOOD SECURITY

Through FY 2020 funding to the UN World Food Program (WFP), USAID/BHA continues to deliver emergency food assistance in the form of cash transfers to populations in need in Iraq, providing critical assistance to the most vulnerable IDPs and Syrian refugees living in camp settings while also supporting local markets. WFP is also supporting the Gol's efforts to modernize one of its social safety net programs and capacity building to improve the planning and delivery of food assistance for IDPs and support the transition of emergency food assistance programming to Gol-managed safety net activities.

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- In January 2014, 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 Kurdistan Region, to escape fighting.
- 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. 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 in 2021, 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 the Kurdistan 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 December 23, 2020, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Matthew H. Tueller redeclared a disaster in Iraq for FY 2021 due to the ongoing complex emergency and humanitarian crisis.

USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ RESPONSE IN FY 2021¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA			
IPs	Health, Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA), Humanitarian Policy, Studies, Analysis, or Applications, Multipurpose Cash Assistance, Protection, WASH	Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Basrah, Dhi Qar, Diyala, Dohuk, Erbil, Karbala, Kirkuk, Maysan, Muthanna, Najaf, Ninewa, Qadisiya, Salah al-Din, Sulaimaniya, Wasit	\$38,535,000
UNICEF	Protection	Anbar, Baghdad, Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din	\$4,000,000
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)	HCIMA	Countrywide	\$1,050,000
UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	HCIMA	Countrywide	\$2,150,000
	Program Costs	Countrywide	\$94,965
TOTAL USAID/BHA HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ RESPONSE IN FY 2021			\$45,829,965
TOTAL USG FUNDING FOR COMPLEX EMERGENCY IN IRAQ IN FY 2021			\$45,829,965

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of June 16, 2021.

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)