Restored houses bring families back home to Batnaya

Batnaya, 30 May, 2019 – The first 10 families are returning home to Batnaya in Iraq’s Ninewa Plains after fleeing ISIL, thanks to the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) housing rehabilitation efforts.

The housing project – implemented by UNDP and financed by Germany’s Ministry for Economic Cooperation through KfW – includes the rehabilitation of 400 houses in Batnaya and will enable about 1,600 people to return.

“Batnaya, like many of its surrounding areas, is a special place, as it’s home to many of Iraq’s ancient minority communities who suffered terribly at the hands of ISIL,” says UNDP’s Resident Representative Zena Ali Ahmad.

“The project will not only help bring a sense of normalcy back to the area for communities who have been away from home for more than four years, but it’s also critical to maintaining the unique social fabric that the Ninewa Plains is proud of and known for,” she adds.

Ms. Ali Ahmad also thanked Germany for their continued support in bringing stability to Batnaya, and Iraq generally.

“As our biggest donor, our work across the country wouldn’t have been possible without the generous contributions made by Germany over the past few years, so we’re extremely grateful for their support,” she adds.

“This housing project is not our first in the area; we’re building on the success of other housing projects in Bartela and Bashiqa where 2,600 homes have been rehabilitated and handed back to their owners,” added Head of UNDP Stabilization Dr. Mohammedsiddig Mudawi.

As part of the housing works, essential elements such as rebuilding and plastering walls, painting, securing windows and doors, undertaking electrical work and restoring sanitation are included.

The project is anticipated to be completed by the end of this year.

Approximately 19 stabilization projects have either been completed or are underway by UNDP in Batnaya, including rehabilitation of the main water network which provides 250 houses with reliable running water, three schools, a healthcare centre and the rehabilitation of the electricity network, which includes 21km of cables and wires. These activities have been financially supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Fourteen local shops have also been rehabilitated with support from the Government of New Zealand.

Across the Ninewa Plains, 469 projects are complete or underway. The projects also focus on restoring water and electricity networks, rebuilding educational institutions and healthcare facilities, and providing job opportunities for residents.

Photos of the Batnaya housing project are available. Contact Fay Daoud for access.