

WFP News Release

30 November 2020

WITH CONTINUED SUPPORT FROM THE UNITED STATES, WFP ASSISTS THOUSANDS OF VULNERABLE FAMILIES IN IRAQ

BAGHDAD – The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has gladly received a generous contribution of US\$16.8 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA). It will directly support food assistance for displaced and refugee families, and the digitalisation of the national Public Distribution System (PDS) for food rations.

The latest contribution makes USAID WFP’s most vital donor in 2020, supporting up to 280,000 displaced Iraqis and 76,000 Syrian refugees through cash and voucher assistance that meets their immediate food needs. This fresh support comes at a time when COVID-19 and the associated disruption to food access particularly exposes some of Iraq’s most vulnerable families.

“The United States continues its support of WFP to provide life-saving assistance to crisis-affected people in Iraq, including internally displaced people and refugees,” said USAID Mission Director John Cardenas. “It helps families get through this difficult time of increased need caused by COVID-19.”

Meanwhile, the digitalisation of the PDS together with the Ministry of Trade is aimed at a more efficient food ration system, helping ensure the right food reaches the right people at the right time. The recent introduction of the ‘Tamwini’ (‘My Food Ration’) smartphone app allows families to update data and upload supporting documents from home, limiting unnecessary movement to PDS offices. In the longer term the ‘ePDS’ and Tamwini aim to cover all 8 million households in Iraq.

“We are thankful to the people and government of the United States for their support to help families in Iraq put food on the table,” said WFP Representative in Iraq Abdirahman Meygag. “During the pandemic, many people have resorted to negative coping mechanisms – such as eating less, or borrowing food or funds. Such support from USAID/BHA is helping families to make ends meet at this time.”

WFP’s latest ‘Hunger Snapshot’ analysis indicates that since last week there has been an increase of over 75,000 households resorting to negative coping strategies, and that 2.7 million people in Iraq do not have enough food to eat. WFP urgently requires an additional US\$20.7 million to continue providing life-saving food assistance to support families over the next six months.

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The United Nations World Food Programme is the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. We are the world's largest humanitarian organization, saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change.

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