IRAQ COMMON COUNTRY ANALYSIS
2020

UNITED NATIONS IRAQ

Prepared by the United Nations Country Team and
The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

الأمم المتحدة – العراق
United Nations Iraq

March 2020

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)
بعثة الأمم المتحدة لمساعدة العراق (يونامي)
Telephone No. +1 917 36 73614 / +39 0831 23 2700
Fax No. +1 917 36 73615 / +39 0831 23 2705

RESIDENT/HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR IRAQ

1 April 2020

Dear Laila,

On behalf of the UN family, I am pleased to present the revised Iraq Common Country Analysis (CCA). For the past couple of months, we have redrafted the entire document to integrate comments from the Quality Assessment of the 2019 CCA and respond to the new guidelines issued in December. We also took into account your guidance, especially from RDCO's technical support mission to Iraq last month.

This new CCA was prepared with extensive input from subject matter experts in the UNCT, UNAMI, and the World Bank. Wherever possible, we included updated data and trends. Unfortunately, because the COVID-19 crisis in Iraq was simultaneous with drafting the CCA, many of the key experts were unavailable or unable to provide detailed contributions, and even the new data does not take into account the latest impacts on Iraq's economy and population. It was extremely difficult to finalize a high-quality document under these conditions, but I feel that the CCA is an accurate snapshot of Iraq just prior to recent events.

It is important to explain the CCA in the context of Iraq's still unfolding crises. Unlike the situation when the previous draft was prepared, Iraq is now struggling to manage five potential catastrophes: mass uprisings that forced the Government's resignation, political paralysis that prevents a new government from forming, increasing military tensions playing out in Iraq between the United States and Iranian proxies, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the collapse of the oil market. It is remarkable that the Iraqi state continues to function under these conditions, but having recently survived an existential conflict with ISIL, Iraq appears to be remarkably resilient.

Nevertheless, the still unknown impacts of these new crises will likely further weaken the state and society, making it much more difficult for Iraq to achieve its SDGs. The CCA should therefore be used as a tool to understand what were the most important entry points for development interventions prior to these events.

I should also note that the political crisis, together with the COVID-19 movement constraints, have severely limited the amount of consultation with Government counterparts. We have of course consulted line ministries at the technical level, as well as our coordination counterpart, the Ministry of Planning. However, all the planned cross-sectoral discussions have had to be postponed or cancelled, with no immediate future possibilities in view.

Sincerely,

Marta Ruedas
United Nations Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator

Laila Baker
Regional Director, Arab States
UN Development Coordination Office
Amman, Jordan

Foreword

Approximately forty million people live in Iraq today. Despite a gross domestic product (PPP) roughly equivalent to its prosperous neighbour, the United Arab Emirates, Iraqis struggle to meet basic needs like housing, electricity, and water. With more than half of Iraq's population under the age of 25, there is growing scepticism amongst the next generations of Iraqis about prospects for their future.

How did Iraq get here? After the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, Iraq suffered from disastrous governance, poor natural resource management, and an unequal distribution of wealth. These problems were exacerbated by widespread corruption. When Iraq finally emerged from the prolonged fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), public grievances started to be expressed openly. In October 2019, mass anti-government demonstrations broke out around the country in response to endemic corruption and lack of services. The government and other armed actors responded swiftly and harshly with a series of violent reprisals. But the protests continued, leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister, without, however, any success in finding an acceptable replacement. The combination of political stalemates, a caretaker government, escalating military tension between Iran and the United States on Iraqi soil, the collapse of global oil prices, and the rapid spread of the COVID-19 has ground Iraq to a halt.

The UN is working to help the Government of Iraq to work through these unprecedented crises. The 2020-2024 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) is intended to support the Government of Iraq and its people in achieving their National Development Plan targets, aligned with the SDGs. In principle, the Government wants to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, Iraq has been in almost continuous crisis since 2014 (and other conflicts since 1980), making it difficult for the country to articulate a practical development agenda anchored in the SDGs. Iraq is a unique case study because political, security, economic, and public health crises are unfolding simultaneously. The likely outcome of these simultaneous challenges and their impact on Iraq's short to medium term prospects is difficult to predict.

A Common Country Analysis (CCA) is usually the first step in developing a new UNSDCF by identifying strategic development priorities through data and analysis, while applying the UN programming principles. For Iraq, this CCA is a snapshot of development issues that the UN prioritised before the full extent of the most recent massive crises were known. It is the result of numerous stakeholder consultations, desk research, and internal analysis that identifies strategic development opportunities, while recognizing the capacity limitations of the government to achieve its goals. While no one can predict what will happen in the coming months in Iraq, the CCA is a useful starting point for discussing long-term development goals if Iraq rebounds to where it was before October 2019.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

1. INTRODUCTION 3

1.1 Country Background and Trends 3
1.1.1 Humanitarian situation 4
1.1.2 Economic situation 6
1.1.3 Status of women 6
1.2 Objective and Scope of the CCA 9
1.3 The CCA Process, Methodology and Partners 9
1.4 Overarching Human Development Challenges and Cross-cutting Themes 10

2. TAKING STOCK OF IRAQ'S PROGRESS TOWARDS FULFILMENT OF THE 2030 AGENDA .. 11

2.1 The SDGs as Defining the Scope of the CCA 11
2.2 Identification and Analysis of Those Who Are or at Risk of Being Left Behind 13
2.2.1 Overview 13
2.2.2 Poverty 13
2.3 Resilience as a Prevention Measure 16
2.3.1 What is resilience? 16
2.3.2 Resilience in Iraq 16
2.4 Durable Solutions 19

3. REVIEW OF MULTI-DIMENSIONAL RISK AND FINANCIAL FLOWS IMPACTING ON SDG PERFORMANCE 24

3.1 Multi-Dimensional Risk 24
3.1.1 Process 24
3.1.2 Overarching risk profile 24
3.1.3 Overarching minimum conditions 25
3.1.4 Country Risk Analysis Matrix 26
3.2 Fiscal Landscape 40

4. ANALYSIS OF UNDERLYING CAUSES AND FACTORS INFLUENCING COUNTRY STATUS ... 44

4.1 Political Economy 44
4.1.1 Political Causes and Factors 44
(i) Political overview 44
(ii) Paramilitaries and armed actors outside state control 45
(iii) Disputed internal boundaries 46
(iv) Political conclusions 47

4.1.2 Economic causes and factors 49
(i) Economic overview 49
(ii) Employment 50
(iii) Oil rentierism 52
(iv) Stimulation of the private sector 53
(v) Agriculture 55
(vi) Economic conclusions 58
4.2 Social Exclusion 61
4.2.1 Human rights and vulnerable populations 61
4.2.2 Minority groups 65
4.2.3 Gender in Iraqi society 67
4.2.4 Adolescents and youth 70
4.2.5 People with disabilities 72
4.2.6 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) 72
4.2.7 Refugees 74
4.2.8 Stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness 76
4.3 Environment 77
4.3.1 Environmental governance and restoration 79
4.3.2 Climate change 80
4.3.3 Gender and environmental management 82
4.3.4 Air pollution 82
4.3.5 Sand and dust storms 83
4.3.6 Water resources 83
4.3.7 Chemicals and waste 85
4.3.8 Environmental impacts of conflict 85
(i) Conflict pollution 85
(ii) Debris management 86
4.3.9 Land degradation and loss of biodiversity 87
4.4 Governance and Institutions 89
4.4.1 Iraq's governance structures 89
(i) Legitimacy and acceptability of the state 90
(ii) Elections 91
(iii) Decentralisation 92
(iv) Participatory governance 94
(v) Public administration reform 95
(vi) Judicial reform 95
(vii) Security sector reform 96
4.4.2 Institutions and services 98
(i) Delivery of services 98
(ii) Infrastructure restoration 101
(iii) Shelter and housing system 102
(iv) Healthcare 105
(v) Education 107
(vi) Food security 111
(vii) Water and sanitation (WASH) 112
(viii) Electricity 115
(ix) Clearance of explosive hazards 116

(x) Cultural heritage restoration 119
(xi) Social protection services 121
4.4.3 Public and Social Factors 124
(i) Corruption 124
(ii) The rule of law and access to justice 127
(iii) Women 130
(iv) Civil society organizations 131
(v) Media outlets 132

5. IDENTIFICATION OF CHALLENGES, CRITICAL GAPS AND POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS 134

5.1 Key CCA Findings 134
Key Finding #1 134
Poor governance has undermined trust, quality of service delivery, and marginalised the recipients of the services – the citizens. The current weak social contract between the state and the people needs to be re-established. The Government needs to implement transparent, responsive, and inclusive structural reforms of state and civil institutions. 134
Key Finding #2 135
Overreliance on oil sector revenue makes Iraq highly vulnerable to shocks. A diversified national economy, preceded by reforms to encourage private sector investment, will make Iraq and its people more resilient to such shocks and boost employment in highly productive sectors. 135
Key finding #3 135
As a prerequisite to a stable developing society, Iraq needs to build human capital while also providing social protection, promoting inclusion and strengthening social cohesion..... 135
Key Finding #4 136
Iraq is very vulnerable to climate change, and the country needs to urgently address several climate change issues regarding climate resilience, the management of its natural resources and the protection of the environment, including risk and disaster management. 136
5.2 UN Capacity and Comparative Advantage Assessments 138

6. ANNEX 140

6.1 Iraq´s international Conventions and Treaties 140
6.1.1 Signed, ratified, or acceded to by Iraq 140
6.1.2 Not ratified or acceded to 142
6.1.3 Iraq has not ratified any of the following Protocols that allow for individual complaints to be made before the Covenants or Treaty monitoring committees 143

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CCA	Common Country Analysis
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
CoR	Council of Representatives
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
CRSV	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSO	Central Statistics Office (Ministry of Planning)
DIBs	Disputed Internal Boundaries
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoI	Government of Iraq
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IHCHR	Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPCC	Iraqi Property Compensation Commission
ISIL	The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq

KRSO	Kurdistan Region Statistics Office
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (or Queer) and Intersex
MENA	Middle East and Northern Africa
MOLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
NAP	National Action Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
NHF	National Housing Fund
NIC	National Investment Commission
NRC	National Reconciliation Commission
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PDS	Public Distribution System
PMF	Popular Mobilisation Force
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
RRP	Iraq Recovery and Resilience Programme
SCD	Systematic Country Diagnostic
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPC	Social Protection Commission
SSN	Social Safety Net
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive Summary

In 2018-2019, Iraq emerged victorious from a protracted conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). When the war ended, Iraqis believed that the Government of Iraq (GoI) would capitalise on an opportunity to transition to reconstruction, rehabilitation, and sustainable development. However, starting in October 2019, Iraq was hit by a perfect storm of crises: widespread mass demonstrations, the resignation of the Prime Minister with a weak caretaker government, an escalation in military attacks between the United States and Iranian-backed militias, the crash in oil prices, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the face of these crises, and amidst the unravelling of the social fabric, the Iraqi people remain resilient. Iraqis have lost homes, loved ones, and livelihoods. Millions are still displaced, with destroyed infrastructure and housing in liberated areas. In short, Iraq still requires massive reconstruction for millions of people to return home and rebuild lives. Compounding stressors on already fragile communities is the fact that Iraq currently hosts 248,162 refugees and asylum-seekers,[1] who require a social safety net and protection.

Despite its diversity and long history of tolerance, many populations are still subject to social exclusion, discrimination, and marginalization. Social exclusion affects IDPs and refugees, minorities, adolescents and youth, people with disabilities, stateless persons, and the LGBTQI community. By far the largest affected group is women and girls, who suffer from limited economic prospects, social barriers, legal restrictions, reduced education opportunities, and intensified vulnerability, in particular for displaced women and female-headed households. Broader Iraqi society also remains fractured from widespread distrust in a government too politically paralysed to take action.

Iraq's political system was already weakened by a sectarian quota system and inconclusive elections in 2018 that dispersed power among ministries, branches of government, and governors so broadly that the Government was unable to enact meaningful policies or reforms. Iraq was equally incapable of implementing governorate-level reforms, particularly within disputed areas, the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region, and places under the control of Popular Mobilization Forces (PMFs). Iraq's governance structures suffer from the same malaise that affects the political system. Public administration is bloated and inefficient, and it lacks the discipline or transparency to execute budgets and combat corruption. Election commissioners, police, and judges lack the professional capacity and autonomy of action to engender trust among citizens, and public participation in governance processes is meagre.

After the defeat of ISIL, Iraq's economy was making a healthy recovery. But Iraq's overreliance on the oil sector and wasteful spending on unnecessary public hiring stifled private-sector job growth. Poverty, corruption, and unemployment (especially among the country's immense youth population), exposed the weaknesses of the national economy and became the main drivers of instability that eventually led to the resignation of the government in December 2019.

Iraq's environment currently is impacted by rapid population growth, climate change, poor land planning, water and soil management, the environmental impacts of conflicts, and encroachment on fragile ecosystems. Its water supply is highly susceptible to upstream states that have significantly reduced flows into Iraq's river systems over the decades, which

[1] UNHCR Operational Portal *Total Persons of Concern by Country of Asylum* https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria?OrgId=50

exacerbates drought, desertification, and dust storms. This vulnerability became apparent in mid-2018 when severe water shortages led to contamination, sickness, and failure of irrigation systems, contributing to violent demonstrations in the south.

The impact of Iraq's dysfunctional structures is most evident in its institutions and services. The delivery of almost all essential services is impeded by a lack of investment in infrastructure and human capital. With some notable exceptions, healthcare, education, electricity, housing, water, and other services cannot deliver at their pre-war levels or cope with Iraq's growing population, and the private sector is unable to fill in the gaps.

A recurrent theme throughout this analysis is the gap between the international community's advocacy for the government to strengthen its systems and plan for the longer term versus the government's persistent tendency to make short-term ad hoc responses to its structural problems. The interrelatedness of Iraq's problems is key to understanding and sustainably resolving them. Issues in one sector link to and impact another.

The CCA identified gaps, challenges, and potential partnerships that support Iraq to meet its SDGs. It concludes with four key findings:

> **Key finding #1:** Poor governance has undermined trust, quality of service delivery, and marginalised the recipients of the services – the citizens. The current weak social contract between the state and the people needs to be re-established. The Government needs to implement transparent, responsive, and inclusive structural reforms of state and civil institutions.
>
> **Key Finding #2:** Overreliance on oil sector revenue makes Iraq highly vulnerable to shocks. A diversified national economy, preceded by reforms to encourage private sector investment, will make Iraq and its people more resilient to such shocks and boost employment in highly productive sectors.
>
> **Key Finding #3:** As a prerequisite to a stable developing society, Iraq needs to build human capital while also providing social protection, promoting inclusion, and strengthening social cohesion.
>
> **Key Finding #4:** Iraq is very vulnerable to climate change, and the country needs to urgently address several climate change issues regarding climate resilience, the management of its natural resources and the protection of the environment, including risk and disaster management.

The CCA views Iraq's challenges through the lens of resilience; one that looks past immediate crises. Assuming that Iraq can recover from its current difficulties, the 2020–2024 period will be a crucial time for the next government to progress toward Iraq's Sustainable Development Goals and deliver services to its population in a way that lays a sound basis for growth and development.

Establishing a new social compact with civil society is an essential part of that process. Building trust through transparency and delivering tangible results for the broader population builds peaceful, stable, prosperous, and resilient nations.

1. Introduction

1.1 Country Background and Trends

Official Name: Republic of Iraq

Geography: bordered by Turkey (north), Iran (east), Kuwait (southeast), Saudi Arabia (south), Jordan (southwest) and Syria (west). See map below.

Capital: Baghdad

Ethnic Diversity: Arabs, Kurds, Assyrians, Turkmen, Shabakis, Yazidis, Armenians, Mandeans, Circassians and Kawliya

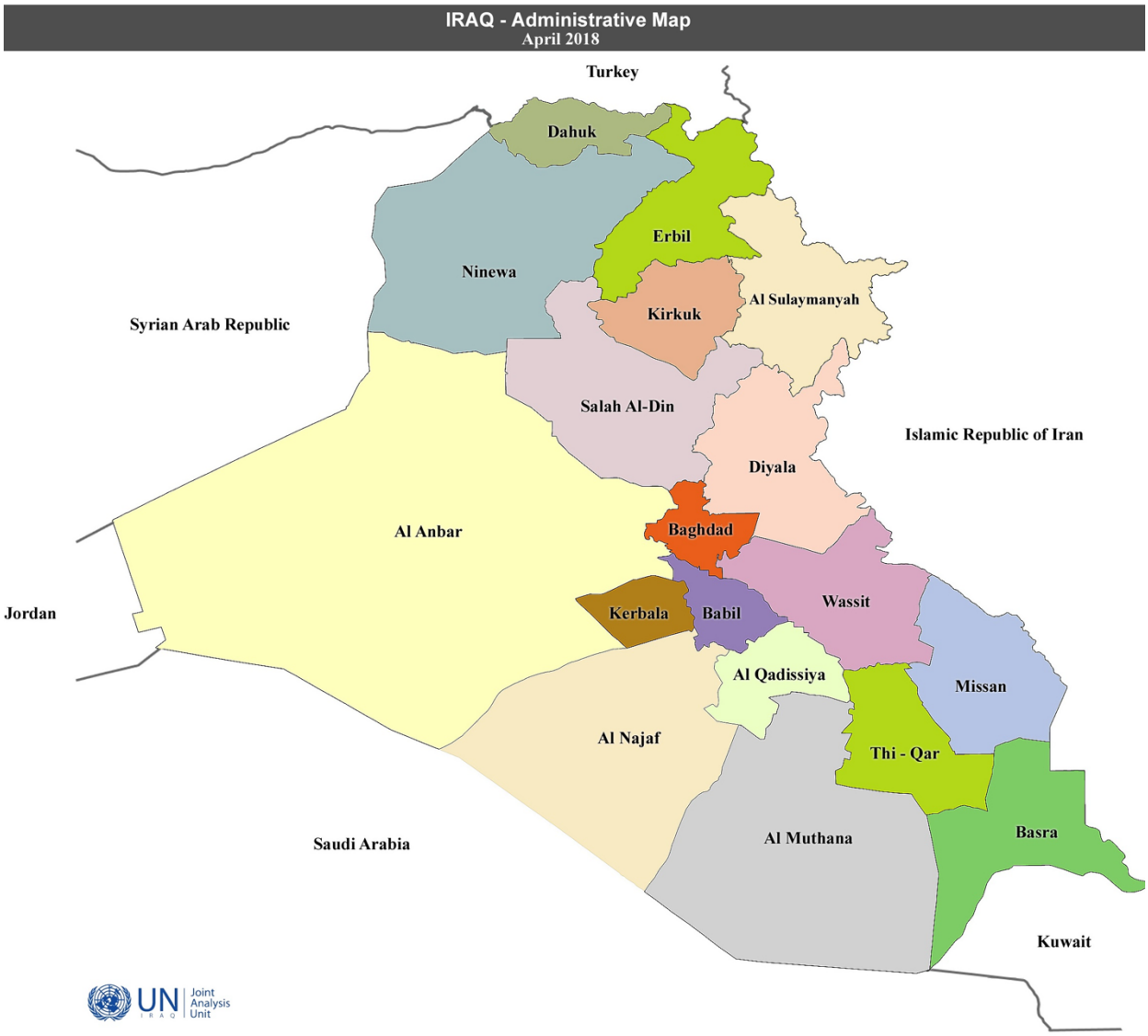
Iraq has been in a perpetual state of conflict and sanctions for nearly forty years. After an inconclusive war with Iran from 1980-1988, Iraq invaded Kuwait, which resulted in a disastrous war with the international community, followed by crippling sanctions that did not end until the US-led invasion in 2003.

Since 2003, the long-lasting, persistent effects of conflict and the failures of the Iraqi state and international community to build effective governance have been cyclical. Deepened distrust of government contributes to instability and instability leads to more violence. More violence means weakened resilience to external shocks and stressors. Poor relations between the Iraqi people and the state has led to a near break in the social contract, as demonstrated by mass protests demanding government reforms and/or change of Government.

From 2014 until late 2017, ISIL occupied almost half of Iraq in the north and east of the country. When armed forces defeated – or pushed back significantly – ISIL from Iraq, it was an opportunity for the GoI to implement governance and economic reforms and create a more equitable and resilient country for all Iraqis. Unfortunately, the Government delayed decision making, blocked from significant reforms by political power dynamics between competing blocs. The ultimate result was a weakening of governance systems, poor essential services, and unemployment.

The low voter participation rate and inconclusive results of the May 2018 elections created a political deadlock that culminated in massive demonstrations in October 2019 leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister and a renewed stalemate to confirm a successor.

Rather than capitalising on the liberation from ISIL, Iraq has slipped into another cycle of instability. In addition to security volatility, Iraq faces deteriorating social and economic conditions amplified by the global COVID-19 pandemic, a collapse in oil revenue, and military one-upmanship between the United States and Iran and its proxy militias.



1.1.1 Humanitarian situation

In 2020, humanitarian partners in Iraq continue to support the 1.77 million people in acute need of humanitarian assistance;[2] the residual impact of the ISIL conflict, which upended communities across Iraq from 2014-2017. Priorities include helping internally displaced persons (IDPs) with acute needs achieve durable solutions, assisting returnees who are returning to areas of high severity; and protecting vulnerable people with critical needs, particularly refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons.

While the 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) identifies critical resilience and recovery issues, partners agree that development and stabilization actors are best equipped to address such challenges. Several planning assumptions guide the response: first, humanitarians expect that the number of IDPs in informal camps will continue to decrease, given Iraqi Government directives to close all camps. However, in the absence of durable solutions, the

[2] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) *2020 Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan* <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/iraq_hrp_2020.pdf>

caseload of out-of-camp IDPs is expected to persist or even increase, as is the number of returnees living in areas of high severity who will require humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian Overview (2020)

4.1m - Estimated number of people in need

1.9m – Estimated children in need

1.4m - Estimated number of IDPs

1m - Estimated number of IDPs not in camps

289,000 - Estimated number of refugees in Iraq

Source: OCHA

The number of refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons across the country is projected to remain steady during the year. Unpredictable elements may also impact the response. Sustained demonstrations against the Government of Iraq in the last quarter of 2019 and the first quarter of 2020 have seen a considerable impact on humanitarian operations. Political division or paralysis among different government actors are likely to strain humanitarian partners' capacity to serve people in need. Unrest in neighbouring north-east Syria may impact the humanitarian landscape, as evidenced by the arrival of over 17,000 Syrian refugees into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq during the last quarter of 2019 following the escalation of military action in NES. In parallel, unexpected needs may arise from natural hazards such as floods and earthquakes, or the outbreak of disease, such as the novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

When preparing the 2020 Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview, approximately 370,000 IDPs were living in camps. As of January 2020, the number decreased to 288,000 and is expected to decline in 2020, with a projected median figure of 250,000 persons in camps. Humanitarian partners will prioritize providing services and assistance to camp-based IDPs under established minimum standards, while also working closely with relevant government partners to facilitate safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable returns. In parallel, recognizing the increased number of people living in secondary displacement in out-of-camp settings, partners will also strengthen their response by better tracking population movements and humanitarian needs in informal sites and non-camp environments.

In the short term, humanitarian partners will continue to offer essential services to the most vulnerable returnees, who face acute needs like livelihood assistance, security, and access to basic services. In the long term, partners will have to find ways to support Iraqis to build social cohesion. Humanitarian support also remains essential for the estimated 289,000 refugees and asylum seekers living in Iraq, as well as the 47,000 stateless persons in the country.

After years of protracted displacement, and with few opportunities to return, humanitarian assistance will remain crucial to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers can meet their most basic needs and access essential services. At the same time, strengthening humanitarian, development, and stabilization actors through structured transitional linkages, including through UNSDCF 2020-2024, will support reducing vulnerabilities of all Iraqis and promoting a transition from dependency on humanitarian assistance to durable solutions and sustainable development. Increasing development assistance for the forcibly displaced through investment in priority sectors (e.g., access to quality services, documentation, socioeconomic inclusion, recovery, and reconstruction) is the key to achieve inclusive development in Iraq.

1.1.2 Economic situation

It is estimated that 2.8 million Iraqis fell into poverty as a direct consequence of the war against ISIL, particularly in the Kurdistan region, Anbar, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and among IDPs.

According to World Bank statistics[3], the cost of the numerous conflicts in Iraq, and particularly from its battle against ISIL, has left infrastructure and social sectors requiring USD88 billion, most of which remains unfunded. The 2018 Iraq Damage and Needs Assessment (DNA)[4] identified that industry, commerce and agriculture were the most severely damaged productive sectors, while infrastructure in the power, oil and gas sectors received the most severe damages. Within the social sector, the DNA found that housing, social protection, employment and livelihoods were severely impacted. The governance sector experienced had the most significant losses, and in cross-cutting sectors, the environment had the highest needs.

Aside from the ISIL conflict, global oil price reductions and a shrinking of the agriculture sector in 2014-2015 impacted Iraq's economy in addition to decreased government investment in non-oil sectors. Increased government borrowing to finance the deficit contributed as well to economic stresses. In the wake of the ISIL conflict and despite the gradual recovery of oil prices, Iraq requires a diversified economy to protect itself from future shocks. Unpredictable oil prices and spending pressures increase Iraq's economic vulnerability and weaken financial buffers.[5]

Iraq's 2019 budget indicates a significant increase in recurrent spending, without addressing programmes needed to promote growth and productivity. The budget is set at ID133.1 trillion/USD122.6 billion – the third-largest, after 2013 and 2014. Wages, goods and services have increased, while financing of programmes aimed at improving human capital, competitiveness and productivity remains insufficient. There is some increase in non-oil investment allocation, but if it is not matched with enough capacity and public investment management systems, it may have limited impact.

Overall, Iraq needs to move from short-term needs-based planning focused on expanding oil production to a measured, targeted, long-term development planning process, within the framework of the SDGs. Diversification, growth of the private sector, reduction of dependency on imports while increasing exports, all contribute to a more resilient and inclusive economy.

1.1.3 Status of women

The shortage of reliable data continues to hamper the prioritization of the needs of Iraqi women, and this context has not been conducive for the government to deliver on the gender equality agenda. Iraq ranked 120th out of 189 countries in the UN Human Development Index in 2018, and 123rd on the UN Gender Inequality Index (GII).[6]

[3] World Bank Group, 2019. *FY19-FY24 Country Partnership Framework for the Republic of Iraq (draft).*

[4] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction and Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates* <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29438>

[5] Against internal and external factors impacting stability (oil prices, conflict, etc.).

[6] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII

However, it is essential to look more deeply to understand the realities faced by women and girls in the country. Women comprise half of the total population and head one in 10 Iraqi households. Out of these, 80 percent are widows.[7] Violence against women and girls, and most notably domestic violence, has been consistently prevalent in Iraq in the last few decades. It is worth noting that the Presidency of the Republic launched a draft anti-domestic violence law, on September 15th, 2019 and sent it to Parliament. However, due to the current political situation, it hasn't been possible to debate it in Parliament, and as of March 2020 it has not been enacted.

While there are no past statistics available on sexual harassment in Iraqi society, a 2015 survey published by the Iraqi Women Journalists' Forum uncovered that eight in ten Iraqi women surveyed reported having suffered from some form of sexual harassment.[8] The Iraq Family Health Survey (IFHS) 2006/7 underlines that 21 percent of women and adolescent girls aged 15–49 were subject to physical domestic violence.[9]

The armed conflict against ISIL, (Daesh), which began in 2014, has disproportionately affected women: significant displacement, forced migration, and unprecedented sexual violence.[10] As a result of conflict, more than four million Iraqis have been displaced, with women under 65 years of age accounting for 54.5% of the number of displaced, including 9.7% widows, according to the 2014 National IDP Survey.[11]

Socio-cultural norms limit the participation of women in their community, including in decision-making processes of importance to the community. A structured gender-response, conflict-sensitive programming (humanitarian, development, and recovery), is the best way to address the gender drivers that fuel conflict, exacerbate tensions, and increase vulnerability. These types of programmes also enhance drivers that contribute to building trust, strengthening cohesion, and building resilience.

Iraq and the KRI held national parliamentary elections in 2018 with more than 2,000 female candidates. Unfortunately, there were reports of intimidation and harassment, and as a result, many female candidates withdrew, though in line with the quota required by the Constitution, women gained 25.5 percent of seats in parliament. The ensuing government did not have any female cabinet members until parliament appointed a woman as Minister of Education in 2019, after many nominations of women to cabinet posts were vetoed. The nomination of the Minister of Education was mostly a response to public protests demanding urgent reform. Today, only 3 of 20 parliamentary committee chairs are women. Also, at the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC),[12] only nine staff - 14 percent - are women. IHEC's working group on gender does not have a dedicated budget or staff. In the KRI, by law,

[7] UNDP Iraq Human Development Reports, Gender Inequality Index <www.iq.undp.org/content/dam/iraq/docs/Gender_final.pdf>

[8] *Ibid*.

[9] Iraqi Women Journalist Forum, 2015. *#Shahrazad: Mobilizing Media and Public Opinion to Combat Violence Against Women and Girls.* <http://www.iraqicivilsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Shahrazad-Study-FINAL.En_.pdf>.

[10] The UN Special Envoy on Sexual Violence in Conflict Ms. Zainab Hawawi met with a group of Iraqi women activists in Baghdad April 2015. who describe the level of sexual violence 'unprecedented.'

[11] Iraq Ministry of Planning (MOP), Central Statistical Organization Central Bureau of Statistics,2015: *National Survey for Displaced People in Iraq*, p. 107.

[12] The first woman was appointed as IHEC Chief Executive Officer in December 2019.

at least 30 percent of seats are allocated to women. Thirty-one percent of the candidates for parliamentary seats were women, and the regional government has three women ministers.

In terms of voting, for women to register before the elections, voters must travel to registration centres to obtain biometric voter cards. Given fluid insecurity and childcare responsibilities, it is harder for women to register to vote.

Since October 2019, women have played a significant role in the political sphere. In particular, their involvement in the protest movement, that demands political, economic and social reforms, may have a future influence in including women more in decision-making processes. The security situation, which had improved in 2019, deteriorated significantly in the last few months as a result of the violent crackdown on the protests and the military showdown between the United States and Iran in Iraq. In February 2020, several feminist marchers protested the Shi'a cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr's call for gender segregation in the demonstrations, despite the threats and harassment levelled at the women joining these marches. Already in 2018, attacks against women participating in more localized protests had escalated, and at least six prominent women, seemingly those who were outspoken in social media, were assassinated between August and September, sparking an investigation ordered by the former Prime Minister.

In 2017, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers created the Directorate of Women's Empowerment as one of its subdivisions. The SG defines its composition and role as the community development section responsible for coordinating with gender units in government institutions and women's offices in governorates. At the policy level, the Directorate integrates gender and women's political, social and economic empowerment in all government plans and policies and report on the impact of social development programs and make decisions from a gender perspective.[13] However, the portfolio and authority of the Directorate of Women's Empowerment remain limited, and its recommendations are not binding.

In 2010, the Kurdistan leaders created the High Council of Women's Affairs.[14] In Iraqi politics, the High Council is the only official policymaking entity that sets strategies on strategies women's issues in political, economic, and cultural life.

Gender-responsive national and sub-national planning and monitoring processes require attention and rigour, at all levels. Nationally, there is a need to reflect gender and women's rights holistically throughout NDP and SDG programming. Many gaps remain in gender review processes and follow-up. Robust monitoring and evaluation systems must be put in place, and any data collected, via surveys or other, must be disaggregated by sex and age.[15]

[13] The Commission also ensures implementation of gender national plans and strategies, act a coordinating body to raise gender awareness, including liaising with international forums to support issues impacting women.

14 The KRG Council of Ministers established the Kurdistan High Council of Women's Affairsin December 2009. See KRG Council of Ministers Law number 3 of 1992.Article 8, para 3.
http://www.ekrg.org/files/pdf/High_Council_Womens_ percent20Affairs_English.pdf

[15] *Ibid*.

1.2 Objective and Scope of the CCA

In addition to the expiration of the 2015-2019 UNDAF, changes in the national and regional environment require the UN to conduct a new analysis via the CCA process to inform the UNSDCF 2020-2024. The CCA includes contextual, political, economic, and social challenges that Iraq faces, and it reduces the duplication of effort by other development actors who need updated background information about Iraq to guide and focus their interventions. It also enables the UN System to develop a focussed UNSDCF that 1) supports national priorities and obligations, 2) contributes to the achievement of the SDGs, and 3) defines parameters within which the UN system can operate at a level to achieve results.

While the full consequences of the current crises are unclear, this new CCA comes at a favourable moment coinciding with expected national elections as a result of the recent resignation of the Prime Minister. Therefore, the CCA process is an excellent opportunity for the next government to engage with the international community, national and sub-national stakeholders, review and (re-)align itself with SDGs, and inform UN support for national development plans.

When the next Government takes leadership in 2020 or 2021, the UN will revise the CCA and UNSDCF according to socio-economic conditions and the priorities and expectations of the incoming administration. The events that could trigger the need to renegotiate the UNSDCF with the Government are addressed in the Multi-Dimensional Risk section of this paper.

1.3 The CCA Process, Methodology and Partners

The CCA process was initiated at the end of 2018, and a consulting firm was hired to carry out the required research, consult with partners, and draft the CCA document. The CCA process was re-examined after the desk review report was presented to UN stakeholders, taking into account the state of governments in Baghdad and Erbil and the changing operational environment. Consultations during the initial stages of the process were conducted with thematic focus groups comprised of civil society, donors, government, and UN representatives. The groups examined perceptions regarding trends impacting the country and the UN system's comparative advantage and capacity to address those trends.

Following the consulting firm's report, the UN convened internal workshops to dig deeper into trends and areas of comparative advantage and capacity. The results of the workshops led to UNCT identification and endorsement of strategic priorities and priority statements. Once endorsed, the CCA was finalised, translated into Arabic and Kurdish, and shared with all stakeholders in advance of the Strategic Prioritisation Retreat (SPR). The SPR was a two-part process essential to the conclusion of the CCA process and leading into the UNSDCF preparation. The first part of the SPR, attended by representatives of all stakeholders, provided a platform for the presentation of results from the CCA, including the proposed strategic priorities for UN engagement. The second part was characterized by government-UN meetings to finalise the prioritisation of the strategic areas for the UNSDCF.

At the end of the process, the UN issued the *UN Common Country Analysis Companion Piece to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guidance* on 20 December 2019. This guidance required a revision of the CCA, which is reflected in the design of this document. The UN, including the UNCT, UNAMI, and other key informants, updated the CCA in March 2020.

Unfortunately, due to the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, many critical sections of this document were not updated because several key Iraq subject matter experts in the UN system were unavailable to contribute or update information. This report is, therefore, a work in progress, which will be updated when more experts can contribute and there is time to reflect on the impacts of the multiple crises that Iraq faces at this challenging time.

1.4 Overarching Human Development Challenges and Cross-cutting Themes

Under the December 2019 global guidelines, this CCA analysis is based on four key elements:

1. Taking Stock of Country's Progress Towards Fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda
    - The SDGs as defining the scope of the CCA
    - Identification and analysis of those left behind or at risk of being left behind
2. Review of Multi-Dimensional Risk and Financial Flows Impacting on SDG Performance
    - Multi-Dimensional Risk
    - Financial Landscape
3. Analysis of Underlying Causes and Factors Influencing Country Status
    - Political Economy
    - Social Exclusion
    - Environment
    - Governance and Institutions
4. Identification of Challenges, Critical Gaps and Potential Partnerships to Support Implementation of Commitments

Other cross-cutting considerations include:

- Resilience as a prevention measure
- Durable solutions for Internally Displaced Persons
- Human rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment

2. Taking Stock of Iraq's Progress Towards Fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda

2.1 The SDGs as Defining the Scope of the CCA

The Government of Iraq, with its development partners, is tackling the challenge of a transition from a crisis context to a sustainable development context. With support from the UN, there are several initiatives underway with international donors and development partners aligned with the SDGs, Iraq's National Development Plan (NDP 2018-2022), the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), the Reconstruction and Development Framework (2018-2027),[16] and its Vision 2030.[17]

Despite recent humanitarian, security, and political challenges, the Government continues to integrate the SDGs into its NDP 2018-2022, which is crucial to highlight development sectors for Iraq, namely, economic and social development, environmental protection, management, and good governance. As part of this process, the GoI has put in place structures to facilitate the integration of the SDGs across different sectors. A National Committee on Sustainable Development (NCSD) chaired by the Minister of Planning was formed, mandated to monitor the progress on the SDGs, and to submit reports on the country's growth to a "high-level follow-up group". Iraq's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) was introduced to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2019 with the support of UNDP.[18]

Additionally, many specialized technical committees have been put in place to support the NCSD, as indicated in the table below:

Table 1 [19]

Specialized Technical Committee	SDG(s) addressed
Poverty Reduction	**1, 2, 10**
Environmental Sustainability	**6, 13, 14, 15**
The Green Economy	**7, 8, 9, 12, 17**
Cities and Human Settlements	**11**
Human Development	**4, 5**
Population and Development	**3**
Awareness Raising	**Across all sectors/SDGs**
Good Governance	**16**
Statistics and Information	**Across all sectors/SDGs**

[16] Which targets the most vulnerable groups.

[17] aims to identify and address medium-term strategic development priorities See United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2018. *Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGS: Project Annual Report*. Baghdad: UNDP.

[18] Iraq's Voluntary National Review 2019 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/iraq>

[19] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2018. *Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGS: Project Annual Report*.

The NCSD also supports the Governorate Committees on Sustainable Development (GCSDs), which are chaired by the governors and include representatives of local line ministries. GCSDs are tasked to monitor the progress of SDGs at the governorate level and submit reports to the NCSD.[20] In 2019, the Anbar, Basra and Karbala governorates submitted the first governorate-level SDG Report to the NCSD. Additionally, Regional Committees on Sustainable Development in the KRI and the KRI Vision 2030 has been established as of March 2020, Chaired by the Minister of Planning, Kurdistan Regional Government. Moving forward, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO) need to synchronize, analyse and disseminate data related to the implementation of and progress on the SDGs, drawing together data from a variety of sources and identifying trends and changes.

However, as indicated in the report referenced above, there remain significant challenges for the GoI to fully integrate the SDGs into the operationalisation of the NDP as well as other national planning and strategy development processes[21] consistently and sustainably, with the necessary complementary monitoring and reporting mechanisms. Furthermore, understanding the financing gaps and identifying models for financing the achievement of the SDGs in Iraq remains a challenge. The GoI has acknowledged this and there has been a request for continued assistance from the UN in this regard.

[20] *Ibid*.
[21] *Ibid*.

2.2 Identification and Analysis of Those Who Are or at Risk of Being Left Behind

2.2.1 Overview

Vulnerable persons are most at risk of being left behind in any society trying to achieve its SDGs. It is essential to have a clear and widely accepted understanding of the usage of terms such as "vulnerable populations". The definition or criteria have been shifting within the humanitarian and development crises, from those directly and negatively impacted by ISIL to a broader awareness of differentiated needs: those in protracted displacement with no immediate prospects of returning home, those who had returned home but found there was a lack of security or services and those who wanted to return home but found they could not for various reasons.[22] As a result, vulnerable groups can be defined broadly as "Women, children and persons belonging or perceived to belong, to groups that are in a disadvantaged position or marginalised" (European Institute for Gender Equality)[23]; or more concretely as:

> *Any group or sector of society that is at higher risk of being subjected to discriminatory practices, violence, natural or environmental disasters, or economic hardship than other groups within the state; any group or sector of society (such as women, children or the elderly) that is at higher risk in periods of conflict and crisis.*[24]

The UN in Iraq has generally identified the following categories of the population as vulnerable, particularly in humanitarian/crisis contexts. It should be noted that such groups are not exclusively in camp environments, but also host communities and communities not necessarily impacted by recent conflict, but facing challenges nonetheless as indicated in the above definitions. A list of vulnerable categories includes but is not limited to:

- Women and girls
- IDPs and returnees
- Youth
- People with disabilities
- Religious and ethnic minorities
- LGBTQI
- Persons with perceived or actual affiliation to ISIL
- Refugees
- Stateless individuals or persons at risk of statelessness
- Detainees

A social exclusion analysis of these groups can be found below in Section 4.2.

2.2.2 Poverty

Poverty is a cross-cutting factor affecting those left behind. Despite its economic and human potential, Iraq continues to suffer from more than four decades of conflict and displacement.

---

[22] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2019. *Humanitarian Response Plan 2019.* <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iraq_2019_hrp_15_01_2019final_english.pdf>

[23] European Institute of Gender Equality, 2019. <https://eige.europa.eu/>.

[24] US Agency for International Development (USAID) *A Glossary on Violent Conflict; Payson Graduate Program in Global Development*<*https://definedterm.com/a/document/11570*>

Though the economy was gradually recovering after the defeat of ISIL, recurrent conflict and global economic shocks intensify poverty rates and threaten the livelihoods of millions of Iraqis.

In 2019, more than one-fifth of the Iraqi population - 22.5 percent - live in poverty.[25] This number doubles to 41.2 percent when factoring IDPs and formerly-ISIL occupied governorates. Basra remains one of the poorest regions due to oil shocks, corruption, and reduced natural and economic management.[26]

Presently, an estimated 2.5 percent of Iraqis live below the income poverty line of D1.90 per day. It is important to note that income poverty only tells part of the story. In Iraq, 8.6 percent of the population is considered 'multidimensionally' poor and an additional 5.2 percent classified as 'vulnerable to multidimensional poverty'. The fact that multidimensional poverty is 6.1 percentage points higher than income poverty suggests that individuals living above the income poverty line may still suffer health, education or standard of living deficits.[27]

Poverty and humanitarian needs

An estimated 4.1 million people require some form of humanitarian assistance. Of people in acute need, 50 percent are concentrated in two governorates; Ninewa and Anbar.[28]

The fact that 90 percent of IDPs and 60 percent of refugees reside outside the camps has strained the already overstretched public services. When subtracting IDP numbers, Iraq's urban population has increased by 3 percent each year since 2011, and 71% of Iraqis now live in urban areas. More than half of the urban population live in slum-like conditions. [29]

Ongoing conflict and insufficient livelihood opportunities equate to a massive need for social protection. The hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people, particularly women, children/youth, the disabled, refugees, returnees and IDPs require specialized support and services, yet they live in areas outside the coverage of permanent and temporary social protection schemes.[30] Also, many IDPs do not have civil documentation to enrol in critical social programs. As such, authorities are not able to complete registration procedures.

Amongst elderly populations, pension schemes and other social safety nets are inefficient and lack sustainable funding. The state pension system, which currently covers only public sector workers, reached less than 20 percent of the poor. [31]

---

[25] World Food Programme (WFP) (2019) Iraq Country Brief <https://www.wfp.org/countries/iraq>

26 *Ibid.*

[27] UNDP, 2019Human Development Report *Inequalities in Human Development in the 21st Century, Iraq* <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/IRQ.pdf>

[28] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), Nov 2019, *Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview* 2020.

[29] United Nations Iraq *Country Profile*,2019<http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=941&Itemid=4&lang=en >

[30] International Labor Organization (ILO): *Decent Country Programme Iraq*: Recovery and Reform (2019-2023).

[31] World Bank Group (2019) *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion* via the *Iraqi Economist Network* <http://iraqieconomists.net/en/2019/03/22/world-bank-iraq-economic-monitor-toward-reconstruction-economic-recovery-fostering-social-cohesion/>

Current Government responses

The Government of Iraq (GoI) established a specialized technical committee to support the National Committee on Sustainable Development (NCSD) for poverty reduction.[32] Strategies are being developed to integrate the SDGs into three key GoI development strategies: 1) The Iraq National Development Plan (NDP);[33] 2) the Iraq National Strategy for Poverty Reduction;[34] and; 3)the Iraq National Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child and Adolescent Health Strategy.[35] The hoped-for result is to stimulate job growth across Iraq, particularly helping vulnerable groups like women, youth, disabled persons and IDPs, and improving access to quality essential services. These efforts are crucial to eradicating poverty, bolstering stabilization and peacebuilding efforts and promoting sustainable development.

[32] A consultation session was held in Baghdad on April 6, 2019, with the members of parliament, which endorsed the mechanisms for the participation of members of the House of Representatives and heads of parliamentary committees in the national efforts for sustainable development and the national commitment to achieve the 2030 agenda and promote it among the members of the Council and identify the roles of stakeholders in the development process. See Government of Iraq *First National Voluntary Review on the Sustainable Development Goals* (2019).
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23789Iraq_VNR_2019_final_EN_HS.pdf

[33] The Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning *National Development Plan 2018-2022* http://www.iraq-jccme.jp/pdf/archives/nationaldevelopmentplan2018_2022.pdf

[34] Outcomes include higher and sustainable income for the poor from work; improved health status of the poor; improved education for the poor; suitable housing and environmentally responsive to challenges; and effective social protection for the poor, among others.

[35] The *National Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Strategy (RMNCAH)* 2018–2020 was launched 20 July 2017. Strategies were developed to align with the National Development Plans to galvanise actions towards achieving the SDGs for health in Iraq <http://www.emro.who.int/irq/iraq-news/launch-of-national-reproductive-maternal-newborn-child-and-adolescent-health-strategy-2018-2020-in-iraq.html>

2.3 Resilience as a Prevention Measure

The United Nations in Iraq – across all its axes - supports the Government of Iraq to ensure it provides the path to a healthy and independent Iraq; one equipped to safeguard sovereignty and stability in a region susceptible to multiple, political, social, economic, and security crises. Paraphrasing John F. Kennedy, *a nation can be no stronger abroad than she is at home.* It is thus necessary for Iraq to build its strength internally to ensure durability in the international sphere.

Few countries have had as many crises in as short a timeframe as Iraq; nearly four decades of persistent upheaval, dictatorship and conflict have sapped the nation's resilience and strength, painting a picture of Iraq as one crisis away from total collapse. Indeed, it is easy to focus on Iraq's prolonged instability, but it is Iraq's resilience that has kept the country together. As one Iraqi presidential advisor remarked, "if the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) could not break up Iraq after it conquered a third of our country, then nothing can."[36]

2.3.1 What is resilience?

The strength of a nation can be derived in part from its capacity to resist, cope, and recover from crises. Resilience is thus the ability of a country to anticipate, prevent, respond to, and recover from shocks and stresses

The term 'resilience' in General Assembly Resolution 71/276 describes "the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management."[37] A resilient society in today's world recognizes the important transformative forces at play; climate change, globalization, urbanization, technological progress and demographic patterns – and develops strategies to address systemic challenges and transform them into opportunities.

It is important to note that the ability to endure stresses and shocks and being able to anticipate and plan for them are not mutually exclusive, but to the contrary, mutually reinforcing. In the long term, strengthening the resilience of communities can reduce the impact of crises, save lives and livelihoods, protect development gains and long-term investments, lessen the need for humanitarian aid and more broadly, ensure a faster, healthier recovery.

2.3.2 Resilience in Iraq

As noted above, Iraq has successfully shown high resilience after decades of wars and other crises. Many other societies would not have been able to survive such a long series of unrelenting shocks. However, Iraq has still not prepared itself for future shocks and stresses,

[36] Confidential Interview, Baghdad, November 2019.

[37] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/196362018backgroundnotesResilience.pdf. See also http://www.fao.org/3/ca7487en/ca7487en.pdf.

which are numerous. Figure 1 below illustrates a sampling of some shocks that may occur in Iraq's future. It is useful to consider the likelihood and severity of their impacts.

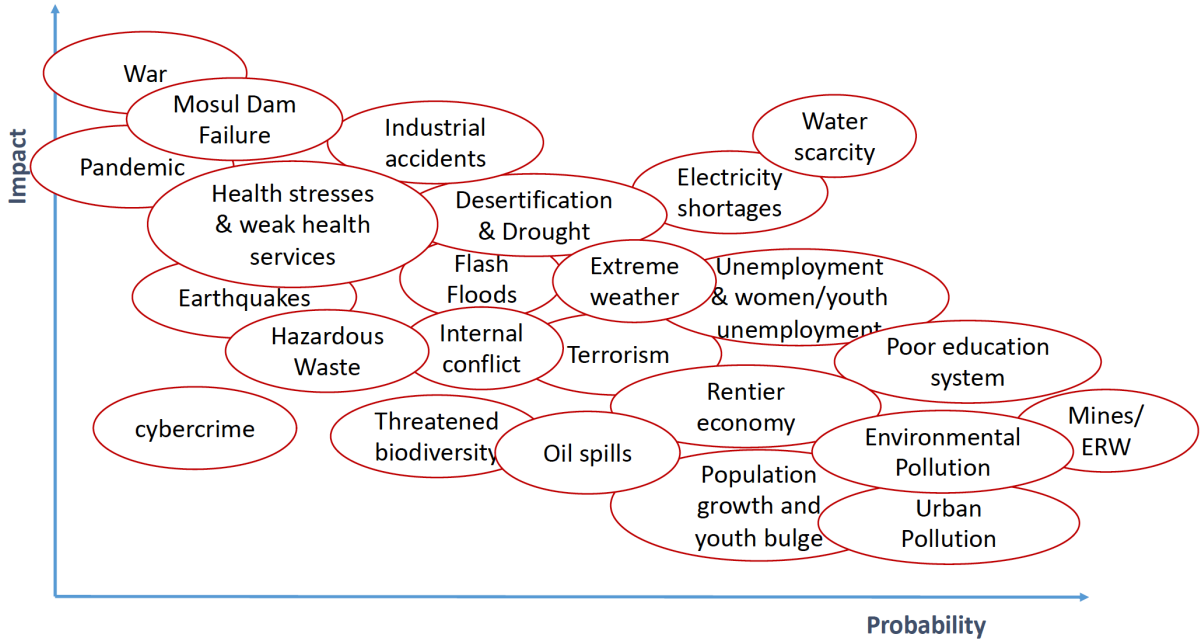


Figure 1 – A conceptual sample of possible future shocks in Iraq mapped according to their possible likelihood and impact. Source: Adapted from UNDP Iraq.

Iraq is especially vulnerable to interference from its neighbours and other world powers. Everyday political considerations force Iraq, like other states, to calibrate its foreign policy with powerful countries.[38] Iraq is further constrained by weakened sovereignty and fragmentation. A resilient Iraq will be significantly equipped to manage outside influence. Building resilience at home will strengthen Iraq's capacity to diversify its international relations, and better enable Iraq to navigate the regional and global rivalries that threaten its sovereignty.

Iraq should invest now in concrete steps to mitigate a prolonged crisis. This will help the country move from a state of continuing crisis management to a state of crisis anticipation, prevention, preparedness, and mitigation. The cost of investing in resilience now is far less than the cost of recovering from another catastrophic shock in the future.

There is a pressing need for Iraq to move away from perpetual crisis management towards a more sustainable and productive approach that builds resilience at the state and societal levels. This requires a comprehensive, long-term structural reform program based not on short-term political calculations but the future sustainability of the Iraqi state and society. The challenges being addressed are more extensive than any single government, and so too should be the response. Civil unrest, insurgency, political instability, foreign interference, economic and ecological collapse are not hypothetical risks but salient, in some cases structural, threats.

A country cannot build resilience piecemeal; instead, it requires a holistic, long-term vision that addresses all facets of state and societal resilience (see Figure 2 below). Otherwise, gains

[38] For an overview see Fanar Haddad (*ed*), Jan. 2020 'The Statecraft of Small States: foreign Policy and Survival Strategies,'. *Insights*, Middle East Institute.

made in one area will be undermined by neglect in another. The scale of the challenges is greater than the capacity of the GoI. As is evident in liberated areas, the effectiveness of the state is not uniform on the ground, and this often leaves complex and even existential issues at the mercy of informal arrangements and hybrid actors that may or may not be up to the task. This arbitrariness risks exacerbating existing problems and creating new ones further down the line. The magnitude and urgency of resilience-building require GoI's buy-in, but it also requires the involvement of local communities and international partners.

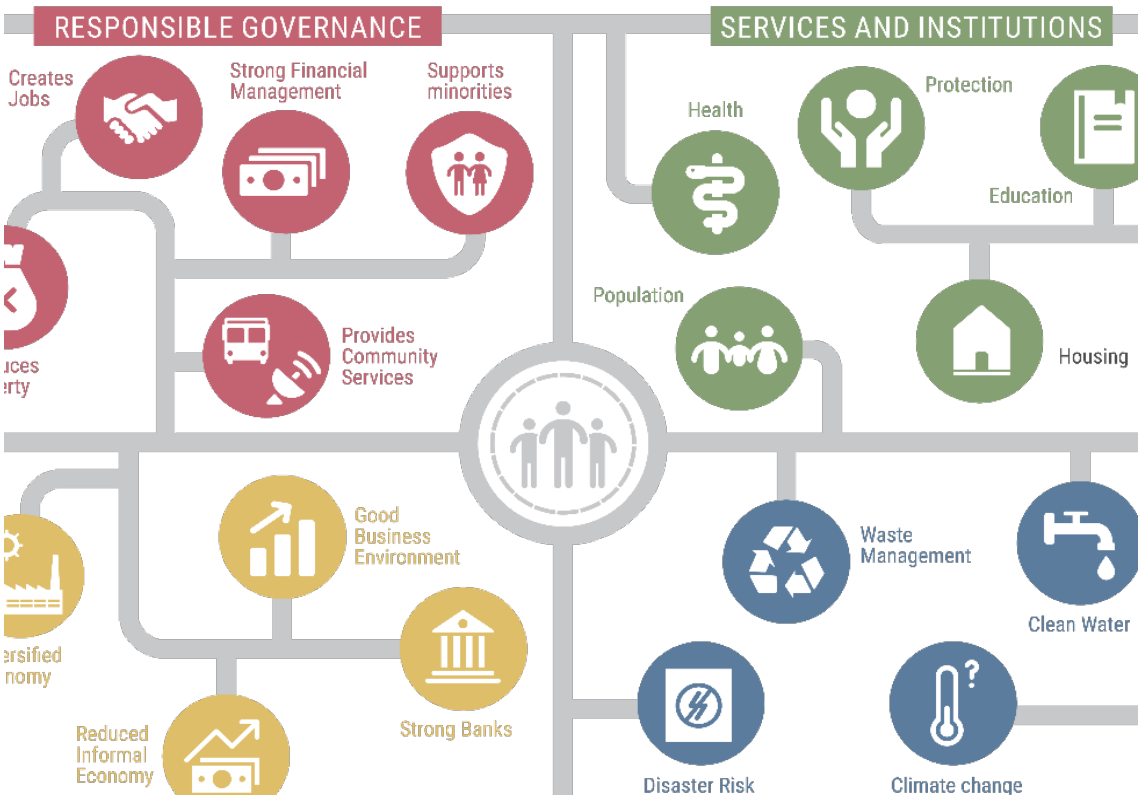


Figure 2 – A conceptual diagram illustrating how national resilience depends on strengthening multiple pillars of society at the same time

2.4 Durable Solutions

With weak central governance and limited progress towards recovery and development, the displacement situation has become protracted. It is estimated that 4.1 million people across Iraq remain in need of humanitarian assistance.[39] The most vulnerable people in Iraq and those in acute need of humanitarian aid are those directly affected by the 2014-2017 conflict against ISIL, particularly those who were displaced and whose lives and livelihoods were uprooted and destroyed" (HNO 2020). Out of the 6 million people displaced during the 2014-2017 conflict against ISIL, approximately 1.4 million currently remain internally displaced, 70 percent of them for more than three years.

Iraqi IDPs live both in camps and out of camps, in host communities or other informal settlements. Also, they may be in various stages of the return process (e.g. planning to return, started the return process, or arrived in their areas of origin. Among returnees, many face continued challenges, which affect the sustainability of their return. Some are secondary displacements, meaning they left again or failed to return to their origin after having started the process. Others have successfully resettled out of camps, but not in their area of origin. More urgently, the destruction of infrastructure, housing and services in formerly occupied territories requires massive reconstruction and clean up as well as services put in place to allow conditions for people to return and rebuild lives and livelihoods.

The ongoing waves of displacement and protracted crises have torn the social fabric. A social safety net and special protections are necessary for youth, women, girls, religious and ethnic minorities, and persons with perceived affiliations to ISIL. Also, gender inequalities impede social and economic development for these vulnerable groups.

Addressing displaced Iraqis' problems and finding durable solutions is a prerequisite for the country's socio-economic development and minimises the risk of further crises. Local reintegration and resettlement elsewhere is not a viable option in the current insecure context of Iraq. Thus, whatever the circumstance, IDPs who cannot return to their areas of origin remain IDPs.

It is worth noting that the government has acknowledged that some IDPs may not be able to return, mainly due to perceived ISIL affiliation, belonging to minority groups, originating from disputed territories or experiencing a variety of security and safety issues. In some areas, the government is issuing ID or residency cards for IDPs, which allows them to work, trade or conduct business, thus providing a buffer in the event return is not possible. [40]

However, advocating for different solutions than return should be done incrementally, based on IDP intentions, political will, available resources and available options. Defining a pathway for the caseloads of IDPs with perceived affiliation with extremists, as well as other categories of IDPs for whom returning is not an option remains a critical priority.

Ideally, IDPs themselves, and the national/local government, should be the principal actors to define and work towards long term solutions and sustainable returns, with the support of the humanitarian and development partners. In Iraq, this is hindered by, among others, continued challenges related to access to communities in need, limited government capacities, exacerbated ethnic and tribal issues, and the current political unrest. Modalities

[39] UN OCHA, (Jan 2020) Humanitarian Needs Assessment (HNO) 2020. https://www.sheltercluster.org/iraq/documents/2020-iraq-humanitarian-needs-overview-november-2019

[40] ID cards are valid for five years in the KR-I.

for effective programming between humanitarian and development actors are challenging and calls for a renewed approach. It should be noted that achieving durable solutions for all (current and future) returnees, roughly 4.6 million as of Dec. 31st, 2019 [41]) is complex and will require time, human and financial resources and long-term commitments from the Government of Iraq, donors, humanitarian and development actors.

According to the World Bank Damage and Need Assessment (DNA) presented at the Kuwait conference (2018) "The overall reconstruction and recovery needs are estimated at IQD 104.3 trillion (USD 88.2 billion), with IQD 27 trillion (USD 22.9 billion) needed for the short term, and IQD 77.3 trillion (USD 65.4 billion) needed for the medium term. IQD 20.6 trillion (USD 17.4 billion) is needed for the recovery and reconstruction of the Housing sector alone". Even though not all this relate specifically to the resolution of the displacement situation, the resources required are nevertheless staggering.

The situation of individual segments of the population before the last was already precarious. A sustainable Durable Solutions methodology will enable returned or returning IDPs to have similar or better, standards of living to from what they had before displacement, identical to resident communities. The methodology also advocates for alternative solutions for those who cannot or do not want to return.

Current needs often combine with problems that existed before the ongoing conflict. For example, gaps in the housing sector (e.g. lack of social housing solutions for the poorest) have been exacerbated by the conflict, leading to large numbers of people living in informal settlements. Tenure insecurity and lack of adequate shelter are prevailing in such sites. Addressing structural poverty in Iraq is a more significant issue than IDPs' future; however, sustainable returns and durable solutions to displacement will contribute to the resilience of the whole community and will help to contribute to the country shock-responsive capacities in the future.

Multiple activities and projects have been implemented by various actors since the World Bank DNA report and are currently underway. For example, the UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) started in 2015, mobilized more than D1.2 billion from 27 donors and implemented 3,600 rehabilitation and livelihood projects. The FFS was explicitly geared up to support returns and contributed to the arrival of IDPs within its mandated 31 localities across the five previously occupied ISIL governorates.

However, urgent needs remain. Projects and programs currently being implemented have not always been explicitly designed with durable solutions as an identified target, or social cohesion, or the resilience of the communities. Recently, aid actors at large have planned their actions more specifically towards durable solutions and area-based programming, and a Durable Solutions Network has been created at the end of 2019.

DNA considerations are related to material issues and needs, with identified solutions that can be costed. It does not mean they are easy to tackle, on the contrary. But the crucial and underlying issues related to security, social cohesion, reintegration and, eventually, reconciliation, are more challenging; they are nonetheless essential to the sustainability of IDP return and the resilience of the population.

Overall, the complicated, protracted type of displacement in Iraq calls for a new approach; one that transitions from emergency care to solving the root causes of displacement and its

[41] January 2019 IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)<http://iraqdtm.iom.int/>

consequences, particularly sustainable return and durable solutions (see Table 2 below). Thus, a key priority is comprehensive, responsive framework (durable solutions) that provides continuous support to forcibly displaced and wider displacement-affected communities, i.e. the hosting communities (the *whole of society approach*) with particular attention to the marginalized/disadvantaged groups (*leaving no one behind*), while at the same time preparing the ground for longer-term solutions.

Success requires bringing together key humanitarian and development actors *delivering as one*, building on each other's *comparative advantage* and delivering *collective outcomes*, in line with the country's development framework, i.e. National Development Plan (2018-2022), National Reconstruction and Development Framework (2018-2027), Iraq Vision 2030, KRI 2020 – A Vision for the Future, Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty in Iraq (2018-2022), and as well as the SDG 2030 Agenda.

CATEGORY 1 **Service delivery and or material interventions**	CATEGORY 2 **Community reconciliation, dialogue and social interventions**	CATEGORY 3 **Advocacy and negotiation**
Criteria 2: Adequate standard of living **Criteria 3:** Access to livelihoods & employment **Criteria 4:** Access to effective mechanisms to restore housing, land and property (HLP) or to provide compensation **Criteria 5:** Access to and replacement of personal and other documentation	**Criteria 6:** Voluntary reunification with family members separated during displacement **Criteria 7:** Participation in public affairs **Criteria 8:** Access to effective remedies and justice	• **Criteria 1**: Long-term safety, security & freedom of movement
Resource, material and individual service need, in both areas of origin and areas of displacement	**Social cohesion issues**	**Access and security related challenges**
• Damaged / destroyed housing • Land tenure and other HLP issues • Lack of economic opportunity / jobs • Mental health issues (e.g. trauma, depression, PTSD, etc.) • Lack of basic services (water, electricity, education, health, etc.) • ERW / UXO / IED contamination • Debris preventing reconstruction • Lack of basic documentation/ protection services	• Ethno-religious tension, protection • Perceived ISIS affiliation (allowed to return by authorities but fearful of revenge, reprisal, community acceptance) • Other issues preventing acceptance of returnees by communities (e.g. mental health) *Communities facing these challenges may also face category 1 issues*	• Areas blocked (militias) • Perceived ISIS Affiliation (blocked from return by authorities) • Security clearance • House occupation (by armed groups) *Communities facing these challenges may also face category 1 and category 2 issues*

Table 2: Priorities for sustainable return (identified by IDPs and returnee communities)

The durable solutions plan has two main components:

- Pilot area-based projects aimed at facilitating the return of displaced Iraqis and support an integrated and multi-stakeholder (including government and NGOs) approach to reconstruction, rehabilitation, and recovery, through infrastructure rehabilitation, provision of support to social and economic inclusion, and local (national) capacity development for effective service delivery.

The pilot projects 14 locations represent various locations, all with different size, issues and challenges. Concerning extensive geographical coverage, location selection is still arbitrary and will have to be refined. If the approach is endorsed, there will be a lot of consultations with authorities, resident communities and IDPs, and in-depth assessments to identify and chose the projects. Resources will have to be made available.

In parallel, all actors need to take steps to reinforce coordination between humanitarian and development actors, initiate a collaboration between clusters and the priority working groups (PWG) in charge of the preparation and implementation of the UN Development Cooperation Framework, scale up the work on Legal Documentation and HLP (House, Land and Property sub-cluster), prepare and deliver a robust advocacy strategy at all levels, among many other steps. Some of these activities do not involve high costs and could be implemented rapidly.

Both approaches should be used to develop methodologies and best practices and should "feed" each other. Coherence and coordination will be vital. In the long term, a failed return and resolution of the displacement situation in Iraq might result in the future resurgence of conflict, and a lack of human and economic development.

3. Review of Multi-Dimensional Risk and Financial Flows Impacting on SDG Performance

3.1 Multi-Dimensional Risk

3.1.1 Process

The UNCT undertook the risk assessment exercise on a consultative, multi-agency basis including individual inputs followed by joint discussions to agree on a consolidated set of 15 shared risks which relate to the UNSDCF objectives including the four strategic priorities. The Programme Management Team (PMT) was tasked with coordinating the various inputs from agencies in two rounds of collaborative consultation. Upon completion of the final draft, the matrix was sent to the Regional Development Office for the Arab States for review and further endorsement as part of the Common Country Analysis (CCA).

3.1.2 Overarching risk profile

Fifteen Risk Areas have been identified, falling roughly into three distinct thematic areas: Political, Sectoral, and Process-driven risks.

The overarching risk identified relates to the various political risks that manifest themselves in the Iraqi context, including the lack of political agreement among different segments, accountability and transparency of public institutions, and the budgetary challenges to meeting and improving livelihoods and the basic needs and services of Iraqi citizens.

The likelihood and impact of the political risks are assessed as high in the current environment in Iraq, meaning that unless there is a fundamental change in government priorities, the objectives of the UNSDCF may be significantly impacted. Mitigation of this overarching shared risk necessitated a holistic approach from all relevant actors. Mitigating actions by the UN in this area include advocacy and support to democratic governance reforms as well as strengthening civil society actors. External actors should not drive such change, but instead, Iraqi leadership pave the way for needed reforms with the help of Iraqi society.

The sectoral risks identified relate to the machinery that allows for the institutional capacity to deliver. These risks include threats to the economy, health, justice, the rule of law, essential and social services, environment, agriculture/food security, and internal security. It should be noted that while these risks remain a crucial deciding factor in the success or failure of the cooperation framework, it does not necessarily undermine UN programming in its entirety. Any shortcomings to achieve such objectives will impede UNSDCF objectives, and undermine durable solutions for the most vulnerable groups, including refugees and IDPs.

The third group of risks relate to the process of how the UN system seeks to achieve the objectives laid out across the UNSDCF. This includes the principles of accountability and transparency to the Iraqi people, as well as the progression from humanitarian priorities to a more resilient state.

3.1.3 Overarching minimum conditions

Three overarching minimum conditions affect most, if not all, the risk areas listed in the below matrix. These represent tipping points, the very minimum requirements needed to continue with the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

Political will

The two signatories to the UNSDCF remain the United Nations System in Iraq and the Government of Iraq. For this reason, GoI must have the political commitment to implement the objectives of the UNSDCF, extending beyond cooperation directly with the UN. Ultimately, if the UNSDCF is to be successful, it will require genuine political determination to establish essential legislative, resources, and governance reforms, including significantly improved anti-corruption measures.

Regional influencers, and the international community in general, play an essential role in the success or failure of the UNSDCF. For instance, donors can provide political advocacy, bilateral assistance with government interlocutors and other constituent funding support to the objectives of the UNSDCF. At the community level, local civil society actors will also play an indispensable role in the implementation of the framework.

Capacity to operate

All the relevant actors involved in the UNSDCF must be able to operate, at a minimum, to allow the UNSDCF to be implemented. These actors include the Government of Iraq, UN agencies, as well as further relevant stakeholders. To remain operational, these bodies need to be able to maintain the minimum institutional and technical capabilities and systems required to engage with their initiatives. These capabilities include useful capacities for crisis/disaster management, response and coordination, or ensuring that sufficient technical equipment and staffing exists to implement effectively.

Access

Ensuring the success of the UNSDCF relies heavily on the ability of UN Agencies and other stakeholders to access institutions, locations and all social groups to be able to implement initiatives in line with the cooperation framework. Without full access to operate across the country, it would be challenging to implement the full range of programmes planned.

3.1.4 Country Risk Analysis Matrix

The Country Context Analysis identifies risks from the perspective of the 15 common risk areas and identifies some additional risk areas when necessary.

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
1	**Democratic Space:** Risks to democratic and human rights institutions, and to civil and political rights resulting from shrinking civic space, exclusion, repression, and intimidation	1. Political Stalemate 2. Increased sectarian tensions, marginalization/stigmatization of communities with perceived affiliations including harassment or violence against human rights defenders and journalists 3. Delayed and non-transparent Elections 4. Continued increase in mistrust between the state and the people of Iraq which lead to the collapse of the public administration impacting the delivery of services 5. Foreign influence, pressure and interference in the political system and processes which lead to continued civil demonstrations which turn/are violent, 6. Deteriorating Protection space for forcibly displaced (refugees, IDPs, returnees)	1. High 2. High 3. Low 4. Medium 5. High 6. Medium	1. High 2. Medium 3. Medium 4. High 5. High 6. Medium	• Continued UN dialogue with political actors on the importance of safeguarding the democratic space in Iraq • Advocate for electoral reform through UNAMI • Programming aimed at vulnerable groups including youth participation in the political life • Step up protection measures and expose threats on democratic space • Support to the national institutions including civic and social institutions • Advocate with political actors for increased engagement with civil society and vulnerable groups	• Continued access to implement programmes • Policy and legal framework ensuring protection framework for forcibly displaced	1, 3 & UNAMI

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
2	**Justice and the rule of law:** Risks to the air, useful sufficient and compre-hensive im-plementation and applica-tion of the principals of justice, the rule of law and account-ability from issues	1. Outdated and non-functional legal and institutional frameworks continue to weaken due process and the rule of law 2. Lack of access to legal services for refugees, IDPs, returnees, marginalized including perceived affiliations 3. Efficient, transparent and accountable justice and the rule of law institutions and service delivery continue to weaken 4. GoI is unable to maintain law and order.	1. High 2. High 3. High 4. Medium	1. Medium 2. Medium 3. Medium 4. High	• Programs are designed to build trust in justice and legal protection • Continue to actively protect human rights and the rule of law as judicial priorities for the Iraqi government, incl. women's rights and the rights of minorities • Continued documentation and advocacy at domestic and international levels • Increased attention to advocacy as a channel to bring together civil society and donors to improve the rule of law • Stepped up advocacy and search for incentives together with donors and civil society • Work to focus on the protection of civilians and humanitarian activities • Where possible, support is provided to the court system and police structures to maintain justice and security	• Respect for freedom of expression and fundamental human rights in terms of personal and civil status. • UN can operate with the minimal rule of law but affects the breadth of programming • Even if widespread violence absorbs resources for risk mitigation, it will seldom stop all activities • Security/the rule of law and justice sector institutions are operational and willing to engage with the UN and receptive and responsive to undertake priority justice sector reforms and institutional capacity development initiatives • Strong coordination and collaboration with development actors/partners active in justice and the rule of law reform initiatives	1 & 3

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
3	**Regional and global influences:** Risks to the integrity, stability, safety and prosperity of the territory and its people as a result of the actions of external actors, or the influence of external events	1. Iraq becomes an arena for international disputes to play out with regards to international disputes (USA, KSA, Iran, Russia, etc.) (Risk Area 1) 2. Regional interference and influence from neighbouring countries increase (Risk area 1) 3. Global/cross border health crises that also results in socio-economic challenges for Iraq (Risk area 1 & 2)	1. High 2. High 3. High	1. High 2. Medium 3. High	• Maintain impartiality and dialogue with national leadership • Iraq's demonstrate political unity in addressing regional competition. • UN support Iraq to insulate itself from regional interferences • Iraq takes the lead in coordinating anti-terrorism efforts and operations.	• Political will from all relevant governance actors. • Capacity to operate and implement the programmes • Continued access to programmes	All PWGs

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
4	**Forced Displacement and migration:** Risks, including humanitarian risks, to the population from pressures associated with the forced displacement and/or migration (Link to Risk Area 7)	1. Failed or unsustainable social reintegration of displaced people. 2. Insecurity, the resurgence of terrorist activities 3. Challenges for the inclusion of (refugees, IDPs, returnees, and marginalized including perceived affiliation) into national systems and development programmes 4. Failed security and justice mechanism to protect returnees or the displaced. 5. Increased tensions among displaced populations and host communities due to access to limited resources	1. Medium 2. Medium 3. High 4. Medium 5. Medium	1. High 2. High 3. Medium 4. Medium 5. Medium	• Social Cohesion Programmes with a focus on the most vulnerable groups • Durable Solutions Programmes • Systems strengthening to ensure humanitarian-development continuum and integration of services • Area-based and multisectoral programmes (civil/legal documentation, profiling and registration, stabilization, recovery, reconstruction, HLP issues including compensation, livelihoods, social cohesion and reconciliation etc.) • Sustained advocacy with the GoI on the need for durable solutions for displaced populations	• Enabling policy, legal, and budgetary framework for durable solutions (return, integration, and reintegration)	1 & 3

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
5	**Economic stability:** Risks to the economic, financial and fiscal stability of the country which could impact governance, social cohesion, or people's ability to satisfy their needs	1. Weak oil production growth (in the wake of continued implementation of OPEC production cuts) or a fall in oil prices 2. Increased levels of corruption 3. Weak generation of job opportunities 4. Lack of investments in non-oil sectors 5. Lack of state funding for national development programmes 6. Fiduciary risk management 7. No functional financial and banking system in place and a breakdown of the National Financial System	1. High 2. Medium 3. High 4. High 5. Medium 6. Low 7. Low	1. High 2. Medium 3. Medium 4. Medium 5. Medium 6. Medium 7. High	• In partnership and coordination with the World Bank, advocate with the GoI for policy reforms which promote economic diversification, including less dependency on the oil sector • Support GoI to strengthen priority systems and capacities for anti-corruption/ demonstrate models to safeguard against corruption by promoting UN principles • Public Financial Management reform • Support GoI in developing sector-specific plans and policies to create an enabling environment for investment	• Free and transparent governmental leadership • The political will to allocate budgets to non-oil sectors	2

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
6	**Environment and climate:** Risks to the ecology of the territory, its ecosystem and its people resulting from issues associated with the environment, climate and natural resources	1. Water shortages/lack of access to water through drought/lack of river flow/transboundary restrictions. 2. Increased intensity of natural disasters including earthquakes, climate change, drought, floods, fires and sandstorms. 3. Land degradation and loss of biodiversity. 4. Low capacity for water infrastructure management/maintenance. 5. The decrease in systematic dam safety and management. 6. Energy insecurity 7. Climate change-induced displacement 8. Toxic and chemical pollution which impacts natural resources such as land and water such as medical waste.	1. Medium 2. Low 3. Low 4. Medium 5. Medium 6. Low	1. Medium 2. High 3. High 4. Low 5. Low 6. Low	• Foster political and technical cooperation on transboundary river resources in support of sustainable water strategies, in line with the Hague Declaration. • Enhance the government ability to manage water resources such as identifying alternative water resources options like groundwater • Build capacity to improve disaster response and risk-coping strategies • Increase funding for re-vegetation, pilot implementation of more effective irrigation methods and support the implementation of the National Environment Strategy and Action Plan (NESAP) launched by UNEP in 2013. • Support the drafting of Resilience Plans for cities and provinces most vulnerable to sand and dust storm • Disaster Risk Management and Response mechanism supported • Climate Change Action Plan activated at the local and national levels. • Emergency policy reform in support of agro-industry supported	• Public spending on the water sector increased • Government institutions' capacity to support the needed reform on issues of environmental sustainability and green economy • Continued access to implement programmes	4

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
7	**Food security, agriculture and land:** Risks to people, agriculture, and/or food production in the territory resulting from crop, food production, livestock and land-related issues	1. Disruption to value chains 2. Disruption to PDS 3. Availability and access to food (low production and high food prices) 4. Transboundary animal diseases 5. Plants pest diseases 6. ERW/UXO resulting in lack of access to farmland 7. Land disputes/competition over arable/ grazing land 8. Housing, land and property issues including compensation mechanisms 9. Weak local food production	1. Medium 2. Low 3. Medium 4. Medium 5. Medium 6. Medium 7. Low 8. Low 9. Medium	1. Medium 2. Low 3. Medium /low 4. Medium 5. Low 6. Low 7. Low 8. Low 9. High	• Encourage efficient and regulated use of water for irrigation and human/animal consumption (water resource management) • Support the GoI to create an enabling environment for sustainable agribusiness and food value chains inside Iraq • Support the diversification of the economy, including agricultural land use, through the private sector by providing funding/loans for food production projects • Continue to strengthen and advocate for the respect of HLP rights of minority groups. • Support communities with capacity development and new technologies for agro-processing/value chains • Support the rehabilitation of water infrastructure • Border control and capacity development (quarantine). • Advocate with the GoI to pilot climate-resilient models for developing the agriculture sector • Promote models for integrated livelihood interventions	• Price stability • Availability of resources for food production /agriculture programme • Affected communities continue to believe in the role and impartiality of the UN and therefore are willing to engage in programming.	2 & 4

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
8	**Infrastructure and access to basic and social services:** Risks to the population, the economy and stability in the territory resulting from inadequate and lack of public and private physical infrastructures and basic social services	1. Poor governance systems continue to deteriorate 2. Restrictions on availability/use/accessibility to transport/road/electricity/Internet networks 3. Quality and spread of education services deteriorates 4. No adequate provision of basic services in the areas of returnees.	1. Medium 2. Medium 3. High 4. High	1. High 2. Medium 3. Medium 4. Medium	• Guide donor and government investments towards assisting the most vulnerable population in both urban and rural areas, including peri-urban informal settlements that lack most basic services. • Push the sustainable agenda "*leave no one behind*" to help overcome the geographical and socio-economic disparities that are inhibiting the whole country's potentials. • Use the 2021 census and CSO development indicators to lobby for a more equitable repartition of the national budget (i.e. population + development index). • Improve the provincial authorities' capacity in financial management and budget execution • Robust education management information systems, including providing access to distance learning and ALP classes. • Advocating for funds stabilization programming in the returnee's areas • Continued advocacy with the GoI to invest national budgetary resources in the rehabilitation of priority infrastructure in key sectors to enable people's access to services in areas affected by and vulnerable to conflict • Support the GoI to develop financing models for service delivery in priority sectors (education health etc.) which enables increasing the quality of services • Same as above in addition to providing capacity building to teachers through national partners if there are no sites' accessibility	• Ability to advocate for stabilization funding for returnees' communities • Fundamental human rights of informal dwellers are respected, and suitable solutions are explored (i.e. no forced evictions or destruction of property) • Public spending on the water sector increased (Link to Risk Area 4) • Government approval on using alternative means including certifying them • Government nomination of teachers and national partners' access to schools	1 & 3

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
9	**Internal Security:** Risks to the security of the territory, its people and infrastructure , and to the ability of the international community to operate effectively as a result of security issues (Link to Risk Area 2.)	1. Increase in the lack of impartiality of the security services 2. Increased lack of GoI ability to manage, command and control militias/informal armed groups/PMF 3. Excessive use of force/killings by security forces	1. High 2. Medium 3. High	1. Medium 2. High 3. High	• Advocate for sustained and free access to hard to reach areas • Coordinate with governmental counterparts and security personnel to adjust plans of action according to needs, accessibility and security • Continued documentation and advocacy at domestic and international levels • Continued support, advice and assistance by the UN to promote democratic security services that are accountable and transparent. • Promote civilian and parliamentary oversight and accountability on security service providers and institutions. • Support civil society at national and local levels to play an active role in civilian oversight of the security sector. • Promote community - security sector collaborative partnerships to build mutual trust and confidence and to address local safety and security issues. • Keep low profile operations especially for International staff • Focus more on secure governorates /areas until the situation is more stable • Be more dependent on national staff and partners for implementation • Dialogue and awareness of security forces to reduce/stop using force and killings	• The host government guarantees minimum operational conditions and security • Security services do not stop UN work, even if some access restrictions exist • Supporting environment to advance coordination and collaboration with like-minded development actors/ partners active in justice and the rule of law reform initiatives • Donor approval on changing targeted governorates • Availability of national staff	ODA & DSS

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
10	**Political stability:** Risks to the stability of established political and governmental structures in the territory resulting from politically-driver factors	1. Inability to conduct the necessary reforms	1. High	1. Low	• Technical assistance and support to improve capacities in service delivery or Government undertake better resource management and anti-corruption measures. • Strengthen the role of Conflict Resolution mediators at the community level • The government takes steps to address public grievances and takes measures to improve governance at the sub-national level • Adhere and promote UN principles against corruption • Encourage political reform • Government review national security architecture, finalize the National Security Strategy and SSR Programme • Continued advocacy and advisory assistance by the UN to promote inclusive and democratic political processes	• GoI corruption level reduced (Shown in Risk Area 3) • Sufficient levels of political stability exist, enabling the UN to support the implementation of political reform and related projects.	1 & 3 & OPA/UNAMI
11	**Public health:** Risks to the population, the economy and stability of the territory resulting from actual and emerging public health emergencies	1. Pandemic threats occur 2. Children and mother mortality rates increase 3. Increase of malnutrition and malnourishment rates 4. Adequate hygiene standards in public health facilities are not implemented 5. Rise in cases of mental and psychosocial stress	1. High 2. Low 3. High 4. High 5. Medium	1. High 2. Low 3. Medium 4. High 5. Low	• Joint Review of hygiene procedures in public health facilities • Implementation of the new surge policy, deployments from the emergency roster and Implementation of SOPs for emergencies • Support MOH to provide universal health coverage through strengthening primary health care & priority public health program • Support MOH to strengthen MCH centres to remain open 24/7 and enhance the system of surveillance • Support MOH in establishing a robust surveillance system to identify the malnourished population and start a food support programme.	• Hygiene Technical Support especially in areas on monitoring • Food support to mothers, children (especially in schools) and other marginalized groups of the population	3

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
12	**Social cohesion, equality and non-discriminatio n:** Risks to social unity and equality resulting from direct and indirect discriminatio n, horizontal inequalities and demographic trends	1. Marginalizing actions against minorities and other vulnerable groups increases 2. Lack of trust between actors, discrimination 3. Obstacles to the return of IDPs to areas of origin continue (protracted displacement continues)	1. Medium 2. High 3. High	1. Medium 2. Medium 3. Medium	• Dialogue and advocacy with policymakers to support the development of policy and legal frameworks • Promotion of inclusivity and equality • Inclusive area-based approaches with the active involvement of both state actors and communities • Promote interdisciplinary dialogue and partnerships across stakeholder groups, including youth, community peace committees, faith-based groups, reinforcing reconciliation and social cohesion efforts • Advocate for the reform of social protection systems to promote effective targeting of social protection schemes and social services to the poor and vulnerable • GoI institutions with a clear mandate to work on issues of social cohesion are in place and operational to engage with the UN • Civil society organizations have the enabling environment to work on issues that impact social cohesion, including in partnership with the UN. • Affected communities continue to believe in the role and impartiality of the UN and therefore are willing to engage in programming • Organize campaigns to raise awareness for inclusion of all minorities • Activate social protection mechanisms	• Rights of minorities are not curtailed	1

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
13	**Financing:** Donor funding, public financing, private sector	1. Donor funding collapse (especially in the UMIC context) 2. Weak financial institutions 4. Poor public financing management (PFM)	1. Medium 2. Medium 3. Medium	1. High 2. High 3. Medium	• Advocacy with donors, joint UN programmes • Reforming the PFM system at the national and sub-national level • Strengthen Iraqi provincial and city authorities' capacity to engage donors directly • Improve UNCT's understanding of shifting priorities of donors • Improve UNCT communication strategy and reach out to new donors	• Continued funding of basic UN operations	DCO

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
14	**HDP Nexus** Risks related to the structured transition from humanitarian to development systems; delay in development actors and or government programming ; Durable Solutions; failure to reach DS for IDPs/Returnees ineffective transitioning – hindering the inclusion of population and country's socio-economic development and stability	1. Weak/inefficient humanitarian-development architecture/systems 2. Lack of platforms to successfully operationalize *Durable Solutions* 3. Gaps in the funding or operational transition from humanitarian to development frameworks 4. Inefficient 'inclusion' systems 5. Exclusion resulting from the hum-dev divide 6. Political instability hindering programme implementation 7. Lack of political will and clear government commitment on HDP nexus 8. Inability to engage political and stabilization actors (e.g. UNAMI, Human Rights etc.)	1. High 2. Medium 3.High 4. Medium 5. High 6. High 7. Medium 8. Medium	1. High 2. High 3. High 4. Medium 5. High 6. High 7. High 8 Medium	• Key humanitarian and development system architecture is clearly defined ensuring the DS/Transition • Coordination and field level • Engagement at the field level for DS • Actively engage in integrating communities in donor and national development plans and funding • Identify opportunities and advocate/support Government to include communities in national systems and services increasingly	• Conducive government policy framework, including at the provincial level (provincial response plans) for transition programming and Durable Solutions (DS) • Established and functional platform and engagement for DS • Joint programme/ programming among UN agencies • Sufficient and or continued funding/resources for transition and DS • Availability of specialized implementing partners	HC/RC, OCHA, DCO, PWGs, UNAMI

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood of the event	Impact on ability to achieve results	Mitigation measures	Minimum Conditions for UNS to implement *(What is needed to operate)*	PWG monitorin
15	**Accountability and Transparency** Risks related to Ethics, SEA, Accountability to Affected Population (AAP), Gender equity and equality	1. Inclusion: Policy and legal environment, as well as lack as coordination and programme (interventions) not conducive for and or unable to promote the integration of the forcibly displaced into national system and services 2. Exclusion: Marginalized population, who are deprived of services because of their status (ethnicity, affiliation, gender etc.) are unable to benefit from the national system services, including those provided by programme activities 3. DO NO HARM: programme interventions do not create any tensions at the political, societal, and community levels	1. Medium 2. High 3. Medium	1. High 2. High 3. Medium	• Dialogue and advocacy with policymakers; supporting the gender-responsive policy and legal framework • Working at policy and field level, with relevant government bodies and communities (tribal leader, faith-based organizations, community peace communities, youth and women groups etc.) to ensure 'leaving no one behind.' • UN agencies PWGs (strategic and technical) providing the joint programming for Delivering as One and promote the inclusion and gender equality • Effective and efficient community mobilization and sensitization; community readiness, and preparedness; and Gender-responsive and gender-sensitive programming • Participatory planning methods involving all stakeholders in planning, design, implementation, M&E • The programme adopts consultative, the whole of society, and area-based approaches ensuring that state actors, community leaders, and communities are part of the programme planning, design, implementation, and M&E. • Increased capacity building for the UN and partners • Compliance and feedback mechanisms, at all levels, including strengthening of safe & confidential reporting tools, particularly at community-level • Age Gender and Diversity mainstreamed into policies • Strengthened collaboration with clusters and UN agencies to reinforce the rule of law, reducing impunity and strengthening safe & confidential GoI investigation procedures • Strengthen access to support services and protection assistance for survivors (HCR) • Report, document and intervene on individual cases (HCR)	• Conducive policy and legal environment for gender equity and equality • Robust compliance and feedback mechanisms (established and functional) at all levels • 'Inclusion' as the centrality of UN and government programming • Community Driven Development (CDD) is an integral part of the programming/planning, at all levels • Functional case management and referral systems • The platform for dialogue on social cohesion and reconciliation involving policymakers, community and tribal leaders, and communities	UNCT, PMT, HC/RC

3.2 Fiscal Landscape

For Iraq to achieve sustainable development, the state must harness enough financial resources to propel the country forward in the post-conflict environment. Public financial management is key to achieving sustainable development and the state's reconstruction goals, including the USD 88 billion the government estimated it needs to rebuild areas directly affected by ISIL. It is also crucial for establishing the legitimacy of the state and ensuring accountability and efficiency in the management of public resources; delivering basic services to its citizenry and residents; achieving gender parity; and stimulating job growth as a means to counter the spread of radicalism among youth and disadvantaged populations. Iraq's NDP prioritizes the need to achieve economic reforms, including financial, fiscal and trade reforms, linked to SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth and SDG 12 on responsible production and consumption.[42]

A structural imbalance between operational expenditure, including the public payroll and the acquisition and provision of goods and services, and investment expenditure, which encompasses infrastructure investment and goods and services as well as research, has dominated and undermined the economy for years. The Iraqi state has faced an imbalance between operational costs and investment costs, with most operational costs being allocated to the security forces in response to ISIL and other security matters. There is a growing need for realignment, as indicated by the protests in Basrah, focusing on the lack of basic services.

Under the proposed 2019 budget law, current expenditure is set to constitute the bulk of all government spending at 75 percent of the total with estimates to grow annually, leaving the remaining 25 percent or less dedicated to investments.[43] Of the 25 percent usually allocated to investment expenditure, between 50 to 60 percent is allocated to oil infrastructure, most of which is considered to be poorly executed due to a lack of capacity and skilled labour. Productive investment spending, such as those on electricity, water, housing and education, accounted for 33-75 percent of all non-oil expenditure during the years 2015 to 2017.[44] In other resource-rich countries, spending on oil usually leads to the development of ancillary industries. However, Iraq has not yet seen such spillover from oil into the local economy.[45]

The public sector wage bill remains Iraq's single largest and fastest-growing budget item, accounting for 15.6 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).[46] Successive governments since 2003 have sharply increased the public payroll and subsidies at the expense of investing in infrastructure.[47] The consequences of these decisions were masked during the years of high oil production and prices when government and consumer consumption drove

[42] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2018. *Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGS: Project Annual Report*. Baghdad: UNDP.
[43] Tabaqchali, A., 2018. *Iraq's Investment Spending Deficit*. [pdf] Institute for Regional and International Studies. Retrieved from <http://www.auis.edu.krd/iris/sites/default/files/ Investment Spending Deficit Final for Publication.pdf>.
[44] *Ibid*.
[45] *Ibid*.
[46] World Bank Group 2019, Iraq Economic Monitor: Turning the corner: Sustaining growth and creating opportunities for Iraq's Youth. Fall 2019. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/publication/iraq-economic-monitor---fall-2019
[47] Tabaqchali, A., 2018. *Iraq's Investment Spending Deficit*. [pdf] Institute for Regional and International Studies. Retrieved from: <http://www.auis.edu.krd/iris/sites/default/files/ Investment Spending Deficit Final for Publication.pdf>.

economic growth.[48] Between 2003 and 2016, wage expenditures quadrupled due to the unchecked hiring of employees, raises in employee compensation, and payroll fraud as the public sector is plagued by ghost employees and people illegally receiving two salaries.[49] Under an agreement between the GoI and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the GoI has committed to addressing these issues by reducing the number of employees through natural attrition.[50] To mitigate payroll fraud, the GoI also implemented public sector hiring freezes beginning in 2016 as well as payroll audits of at least 45,000 employees.[51] Additionally, the GoI has introduced strategies towards an eventual move to the monthly collection of reporting of detailed payroll data as well as to transition the payment of government salaries from cash to electronic means and to track employee attendance using biometric technologies.[52]

The cost of the war with ISIL resulted in the crowding out of priorities related to development, reconstruction and social spending.[53] For example, in 2018 the federal budget law allocated more than USD 18 billion on security and defence, or an estimated 21 percent of the total public expenditure, compared with 9.5 percent on education and 4 percent on health.[54] Additionally, the dominance of the public sector wage bill in government expenditure and the political incentives within the state to maintain its current spending levels has over time resulted in a lack of investment in non-oil infrastructure and other sectors of the economy as a means to diversify.[55] The ratio of public debt to GDP stood at 67.3 percent in 2016.[56]

While GDP growth is expected to accelerate to 4.8 percent in 2019 due to higher oil production that in turn creates greater revenue and greater fiscal space for reconstruction,[57] reliance on oil will continue to exclude the private sector and other sectors of the economy by decreasing the incentives to diversify the economy into non-oil sectors. As a result, post-conflict recovery will likely remain the driving force of the non-oil economy in the coming years.[58]

---

[48] *Ibid*.
[49] *Ibid*.;
World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL-cleared-02132017.pdf
[50] Ali Al-Mawalawi, "Analysing Growth Trends in Public Sector Employment in Iraq," London School of Economics, July 31, 2018, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/07/31/analysing-growth-trends-in-public- sector-employment-in-iraq/>.
[51] *Ibid*.
[52] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/ curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18- web.pdf> .
[53] *Ibid*.
[54] *Ibid*.
[55] Tabaqchali, A., 2018. *Iraq's Investment Spending Deficit.* [Institute for Regional and International Studies. : <http://www.auis.edu.krd/iris/sites/default/files/ Investment_Spending_Deficit_Final_for_Publication.pdf.
[56] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion*<http://documents.worldbank.org/ curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18- web.pdf>.
[57] *Ibid*.
[58] Ergon Associates, 2018. *Decent Work Country Diagnostic: Iraq*. International Labor Organization.

This structural imbalance in the economy between operational and investment expenditure exposes the country to external shocks. In response to the fall in the price of oil in 2014 and the start of the war with the Islamic State that year, the government cut investment spending given the political deadlock while simultaneously increasing defence and military spending.[59] A lack of sophisticated borrowing or credit operations and a climate not conducive to borrowing has further contributed to the GoI's tendency to trim investment spending over other sectors, such as the public sector wage bill.[60]

Furthermore, any surpluses generated over time, in part fuelled by continued borrowing from the IMF in 2016, have gone unspent; it is estimated that Iraq will accumulate between USD22 to 25 billion by the end of 2018, but political and economic constraints impede the government's ability to spend it.[61]

While the government received an estimated USD 30 billion in loans and bank credits to help finance the USD 88 billion it needs to finance reconstruction in liberated areas, greater capital is needed to fill the fiscal gaps. Maintenance of the status quo by neglecting to offset the structural imbalance between current and investment spending could reduce the space for fiscal consolidation and thus impede efforts at reconstruction. Realignment of the budget to augment revenue and decrease spending, accompanied by a curb to corruption and diversification of the economy, can help mobilize greater national funds. Iraq's National Development Plan (NDP) 2018 to 2022 notes the need to improve "the degree of integrity and transparency and reduce administrative and financial corruption."[62]

The nascent private sector can also contribute to national mobilization for reconstruction, as well as greater public-private-partnerships (PPPs) and greater engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs). However, engagement of the private sector is not expected to happen on a large scale in the initial stages of reconstruction given the need to strengthen Iraq's financial sector, develop stronger capital markets, and improve the overall climate for private investments.[63] Private sector investment is expected to be mobilized in agriculture, manufacturing, transport and services - sectors that already have the largest share of private sector participation.[64] Other possible contributors to improving the situation would include tax reforms, including a need to incentivize laws on customs and import tax, to enhance the development of local industries, and stimulate and support private sector growth as well as agricultural development.

Impediments in Iraq's development finance and mobilization of funds to finance reconstruction are significant. They include, but are not limited to, the cost of the war against ISIL, which superseded priorities related to development, reconstruction and social spending in the national budget; and political uncertainties with the formation of the new government following national elections in May 2018. Other issues include oil rentierism and lack of economic diversification; a structural imbalance in the federal budget tied to low

[59] *Ibid*.
[60] *Ibid*.
[61] *Ibid*.
[62] Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, 2018. *National Development Plan 2018 - 2022. [* : <http://www.iraq-jccme.jp/pdf/archives/ nationaldevelopmentplan2018_2022.pdf>
[63] Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction and Investment Framework*. Baghdad: Republic of Iraq.
[64] *Ibid*.

investment absorptive ability and low capacity to implement projects;[65] and endemic corruption, which has exacerbated existing economic weaknesses and contributed to low citizen trust.[66] Failure to implement measures to contain such economic lapses could limit the country's fiscal space for reconstruction.

[65] World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL- cleared-02132017.pdf>

[66] Tabaqchali, A., 2018. *Iraq's Investment Spending Deficit,* The Institute for Regional and International Studies<http://www.auis.edu.krd/iris/sites/default/files/ Investment_Spending_Deficit_Final_for_Publication.pdf>

4. Analysis of Underlying Causes and Factors Influencing Country Status

4.1 Political Economy

4.1.1 Political Causes and Factors

(i) Political overview

Of Iraq's political challenges, the ongoing protest movement, inability to form a new government, and the risk of regional tensions being played out in Iraq, are perhaps the most acute. Post-2003 Iraq has had a series of 'consensus governments' that have left the critical role of formal opposition unoccupied. As a result, the electoral system has deterred new entrants into the system.[67]

This governance stalemate has over time translated into a breakdown of the social contract, poor public service delivery, high rates of unemployment and corruption, eroding trust between the governed and the governing, and repeated anti-government protests over the past years.[68] The lack of confidence of the Iraqi people in their political leaders has, in turn, undermined the state's legitimacy, hindering its ability to function – including preventing it from enacting much legislation that is key to strengthening resilience across sectors.

Because both Iran and the US wield considerable influence in Iraqi politics, Iraq must manage a delicate balancing act between the two, which restricts the GoI's room to manoeuvre while increasing its vulnerability to rising regional/geopolitical tensions.

The Iraqi state has demonstrated elements of resilience in terms of maintaining a status quo despite the significant stresses it has faced on the political, economic and social fronts over the past decades. At the core of the political state's relative ability to absorb (without however adapting to) shocks, lie stable interpersonal and inter-organisational structures which had been in place before 2003 and remained intact after the fall of the Baath regime. Of note was the peaceful transition of power after elections, a rarity in the region.

Throughout the mass demonstrations that began in October 2019, the GoI also recognised the need to manage an improved approach to development – politically, institutionally, fiscally and socially. It realised that critical institutional capacities for service delivery and data to guide planning and investment processes need to be developed and that the population at large does not trust that current structures and mechanisms will deliver on their needs.

Against this backdrop, a resilient Iraqi state should rely on building inclusive, democratic, transparent and legitimate political processes, institutions and systems, based on long-term gains for all of society and a social contract setting the foundations for trust to be established between the Iraqi people and their leaders. Robust institutions, led by leaders seen as

[67] The elections of 2018 were the subject of widespread allegations of fraud. See, for example, Ali mamouri, "Disputes over election results flare after Baghdad ballot fire," *Al-Monitor*, June 12, 2018, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/06/iraq-election-fraud-civil-war.html; "Confusion reigns in Iraq amid election fraud charges," *France24*, May 30, 2018, https://www.france24.com/en/20180530-confusion-reigns-iraq-amid-election-fraud-charges.

[68] Joel Wing, "Iraq's Troubles Fighting Corruption. Interview with Vincent Foulk, Former US Anti-Graft Official," *Musings on Iraq*, June 4, 2018. http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2018/06/iraqs-troubles-fighting-corruption.html

legitimate, focused on upholding the national interest should act as the guarantors of political stability, an essential condition for resilience within the Iraqi state and society.

While the October 2019 unrest starkly highlighted the government's shortcomings in fulfilling its responsibilities towards the Iraqi people, it also brought about a valuable opportunity for reform. Heightened domestic tensions and the large-scale socio-political movement tested the Iraqi state's resilience; the result was the eventual resignation of the Prime Minister and discussions around various reform processes.

The demands of the protesters should, therefore, be seen as a chance to address the deficiencies of the political system, the electoral processes and the Iraqi Constitution of 2005, ensuring the definition of clear frameworks that will enhance the state's ability to adapt to changes and respond to crises, i.e. its resilience. Efforts should focus on strengthening democratic processes, including combating corruption and reaffirming the role of the executive, legislative and judicial powers to give way to new forms of governance that will create the conditions conducive to building a resilient Iraqi state.

(ii) Paramilitaries and armed actors outside state control

The war against ISIL left a highly fragmented security landscape dominated by hybrid and informal actors. Chief amongst these is the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU). The PMU itself is a hybrid actor with a formal state role (*Hashd al-dawla*) and an informal extra-state role (*al-Hashd al-wala'i* or *fasa'il al-muqawama*).[69]

The hybrid nature of Iraq's security sector and the fragmentation of elite politics are structural issues that cannot be addressed with piecemeal or short-term measures. As it is widely acknowledged, the fact that paramilitaries are deeply embedded in Iraqi political life and Iraq's security sector makes wholesale security sector reform (SSR) or demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) impractical.[70] However, selective DDR measures alongside sustained long-term SSR efforts, in tandem with political reform, may improve some of the issues relating to the PMU.[71]

The proliferation of arms outside of state control have weakened its authority at the sub-national level and further impeded its ability to provide security and services, further weakening the state. The lack of state authority in some parts of Iraq has also led to the reinforcement of the informal justice system, further eroding the legitimacy of the state, and therefore its resilience and that of the society.

ISIL may have been territorially defeated but the group retains a foothold in Iraq and has continued to mount small-scale attacks. The fragmentation of Iraqi politics and security works in ISIL's favour as seen in disputed areas and contentious settings such as Kirkuk,

[69] Renad Mansour, "The Popular Mobilisation Forces and the Balancing of Formal and Informal Power," *LSE Middle East Centre Blog*, March 2018, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/03/15/the-popular-mobilisation-forces-and-the-balancing-of-formal-and-informal-power/

[70] Yezid Sayigh, "Hybridizing Security: Armies, Militias and Constrained Sovereignty," *Diwan*, Carnegie Middle East Center, Oct. 30, https://carnegie-mec.org/2018/10/30/hybridizing-security-armies-militias-and-constrained-sovereignty-pub-77597; Hayder al-Khafaji, "Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces: The Possibilities for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration," *LSE Middle East Centre*, Nov. 2019.

[71] Fanar Haddad, "Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units: A Hybrid Actor in a Hybrid State," *Auxiliaries in Conflict: How militias impact post-conflict peace, stabilization, and justice*, United Nations University, Centre for Policy Research, 2020.

where divisions and rivalries in security and politics increase insurgents' room for manoeuvre. In addition to SSR, reducing Iraq's vulnerability to insurgency and civil conflict should take a proactive, preventive stance including identifying and engaging at-risk youth, promoting long-term social resilience through education curricula reform, media campaigns and others.

(iii) Disputed internal boundaries

The status of Iraq's disputed internal boundaries (DIBs) remains a point of contention between the Federal Government and Kurdish regional authorities, which have resulted in violence and insecurity due to disagreements over political, security as well as resource issues, not least due to the vast oil and gas deposits in these areas. The DIBs are also affected by the diverse ethnic and religious communities, presence of different security actors as well as the interests of international/regional actors in these areas.

Both the transitional laws of the provisional administration following the downfall of Saddam's regime in 2003 and the 2005 Iraqi Constitution sought to redress the injustices the Ba'ath regime had committed against many Iraqi citizens who had their properties taken as the result of the Ba'ath Party´s Arabization campaign, as well as the reorganization of the administrative boundaries between the Kurdistan Region and the Iraqi federal state. Article 140 of the Constitution, integrating Article 58 of the Transitional Administrative Law, sets out three sequential phases for addressing the situation in the DIBs: normalization, census and a referendum in Kirkuk and other DIBs to determine the will of their citizens.

The implementation of Article 140 of the constitution concerning the disputed internal boundaries (DIBs) on how to settle the legally and politically open boundaries between the central government and the KRG, including, but not limited to the resolution of a final status of Kirkuk governorate, continue to taint the complex and elusive façade that characterizes the Baghdad-Erbil relations as well as Arab and Kurds relations. Concrete administrative steps to address internal boundaries in Article 140 of 2005 Constitution are unimplemented due to political impasse and deep divisions.

While successive governments in Baghdad expressed support for Article 140, ambiguity of parts of the article meant that it required further negotiations between Baghdad and Erbil on the boundaries, voter eligibility and the referendum. This, together with changing power dynamics between Baghdad and Erbil, means that Article 140 has still not been implemented. Obstacles include the lack of agreement on what constitutes a disputed area (Article 140 refers to Kirkuk 'and other disputed areas') and also that many of those displaced by the previous campaigns do not want to return to their areas of origin. The political implications mean that authorities have been unable to complete a national census since 1987.

Under the 2 December 2014 agreement, Erbil and Baghdad agreed to prepare a timetable for future negotiations on the implementation of Article 140 of the constitution, aimed at resolving the final status of the disputed boundaries and Kirkuk in particular. The Kurdistan Alliance had conditioned its participation in the new government then on the completion of the Article 140 process within one year. In his ministerial programme of 2018, PM Abadi thus pledged to implement Article 140 and to revive the Commission on the normalization of the status of Kirkuk, established by former PM Maliki in 2007. No concrete steps were

taken or implemented during Abadi's tenure as the advent of ISIL diverted the attention again as the focus was on the liberation operations while the Kurdish leadership were satisfied with the de facto Peshmerga control of northern Kirkuk and other disputed areas in northern Iraq following the withdrawal of the federal forces in June 2014 and considered Article 140 completed.

While the volatile situation in Baghdad post-2003 allowed Kurdish parties to exercise somewhat political and security dominance over the DIBs, including Kirkuk, this began to change in 2014 when Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani issued a fatwa calling for all to mobilize in the fight against ISIL, which caused a surge in the presence of Shiite paramilitary groups, the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF), in the DIBs.

Furthermore, in 2017, tensions over the DIBs intensified when the KRG announced its plan to conduct a referendum on the independence of the Kurdistan region and to include the inhabitants of the DIBs in the referendum. Arabs, Turkmen and other minorities inhabiting the disputed areas protested as did the Federal Government, but the KRG pushed ahead and held the referendum in October 2017. Shortly after, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), supported by the PMF, drove up from the south and pushed ISIL out of Kirkuk's western districts. They entered Kirkuk and other disputed areas, and pushed the Peshmerga back toward the Kurdish Region, causing Kurdish decision makers and Kurdish population in Kirkuk to flee as well. While some returned, the tensions have ever since challenged provincial council activities in Kirkuk.

In Ninewa, tensions continue to play out between Baghdad and Erbil, especially in Sinjar, with implications for the unity of the Yezidi community. Other disputed areas possess fertile irrigated lands suitable for agricultural development, such as the Nineveh Plains and the Al-Jazeera region in Tal Afar.

The Federal forces regaining of control in October 2017 and Baghdad asserting its authority in northern Kirkuk and other disputed areas in northern Iraq brought new dynamics to future Baghdad-Erbil negotiations and engagement on the DIBs with renewed calls by the Kurds for the completion of the Article 140 process.

At the core of the disputes is the access to and ownership of the economic resources of the disputed lands. Kirkuk´s oil reserves are among the largest of the country, representing a significant source of revenue; similarly, Makhmur and Sheikhan are rich in oil and gas. The conflict over the control of the territories has further been aggravated and polarized by the use of nationalist claims and identity politics by politicians and community leaders to rally citizens and justify territorial claims.[72]

(iv) Political conclusions

Resilience programming can help reverse the breakdown in trust between the public and the government moving forward by making space for more inclusive decision-making,

[72] Greenberg Quilan Rosner Research Group. *Improved security provides Opening for Cooperation (March-April 2017): Survey Findings* <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Iraq%20April%202017%20Survey%20Public%20Final%20%281%29%20%281%29.pdf>.

implementing political and administrative reforms aimed at increasing political inclusion, and participation and competition to overturn the low voter turnout from 2018 elections.[73]

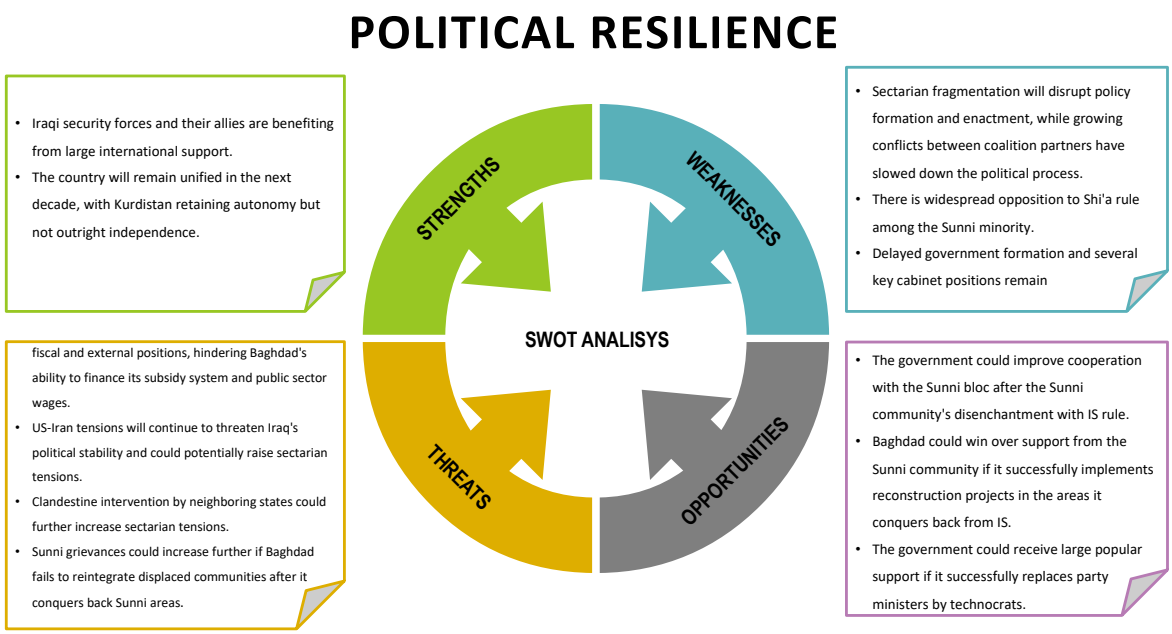


Figure 3 – A political SWOT analysis of Iraq. Source: UNAMI 2020.

If political trust is not re-established, new electoral procedures will not fully engage the public, nor will the results satisfy them. The electorate must be convinced that their vote can yield alternatives to establishment figures.[74]

Iraq needs reforms that create room for new entrants into politics and that encourage the emergence of parliamentary opposition. This will go a long way towards building trust in the broader system. Whilst parliamentary debates over new electoral laws are welcome, electoral reform will not be effective without political reform. Electoral reform should also address technical issues such as the need for accurate data in order to correctly map voting constituencies.

In tandem with electoral and political reforms, the government should build capacity to improve governance and frontline services. State institutions and the appointment of senior civil servants need to be separated from sectarian political affiliation; regulatory entities need to be empowered to do their job; state institutions need to be more responsive to public concerns and governance mechanisms need to improve transparency and service delivery.

[73] In the 2018 election voter turnout was (at least 4.5 percent- possibly lower, depending on sources). Polling by the National Democratic Institute in 2019 revealed a lack of faith in Iraqi politics. See "Iraq Post-Daesh: Improved Social Cohesion, but Iraqis Remain Dissatisfied with Government," National Democratic Institute, July 2019, https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Poll%20-%20July%202019%20%28English%29.pdf.
[74] Iraq undoubtedly has electoral politics, but its democratic credentials are being seriously questioned. The Economist Intelligence Unit recently ranked Iraq 118th out of 167 countries in its 'Democracy Index' for 2019. See "Democracy Index 2019: A year of democratic setbacks and popular protest," *The Economist Intelligence Unit*, 2020, http://www.eiu.com/Handlers/WhitepaperHandler.ashx?fi=Democracy-Index-2019.pdf&mode=wp&campaignid=democracyindex2019.

Iraq has importantly invested in e-governance initiatives which is a step forward, but a more holistic approach is needed.[75]

4.1.2 Economic causes and factors

(i) Economic overview

Economic growth is a crucial factor in Iraq's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The government has made efforts to explicitly integrate the inclusive economic growth SDGs into Iraq's National Development Plan (NDP), including those on the green economy, economic development, and poverty reduction. There are three areas that focus on inclusive economic growth and are key to meeting the SDGs:

- Development finance, inclusive of public financial management, so that Iraq has enough resources to finance reconstruction and curb corruption and economic mismanagement.
- Economic diversification, to mobilize greater resources for reconstruction by stimulating the private sector and contributing overall to greater economic growth by relying less on oil.
- Poverty reduction and social inclusion, to improve the welfare of Iraqi citizens regarding employment and access to basic and social protection services.

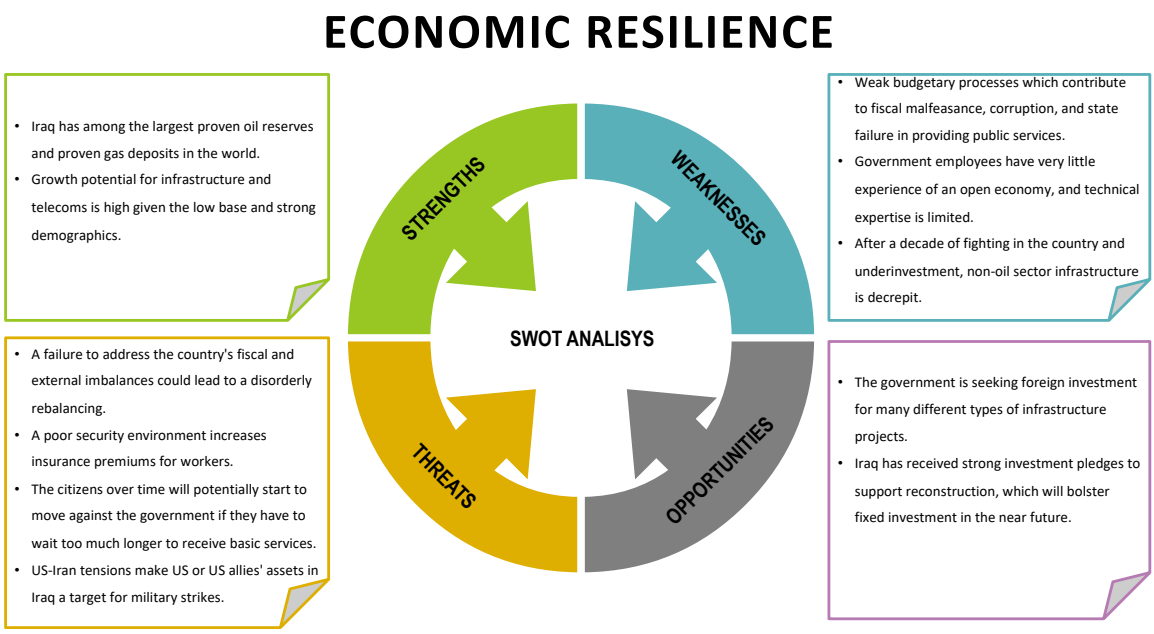


Figure 4 - An economic SWOT analysis of Iraq. Source: UNAMI 2020

[75] For assessments of e-governance in Iraq see Hayder Sabah Abdulwahid et al., "Identify and assessing the e-readiness of public organizations (case study in Iraq), *AIP Conference Proceedings 2144*, Aug. 23, 2019; Thabit H. Thabit and Yaser A. Jasim, "The Challenges of Adopting E-Governance in Iraq," *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 2:1 (2019): 31-38. For lessons from Estonia on how to successfully implement e-governance see, Nick Heath, "How Estonia became an e-government powerhouse," *Tech Republic*, Feb. 19, 2019, https://www.techrepublic.com/article/how-estonia-became-an-e-government-powerhouse/.

(ii) Employment

Iraq's population is estimated at 38 million, with that number forecasted to rise by 40 percent by 2030. Iraq has the fastest growing population in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) region, with an annual growth rate of 2.55 percent, indicating that the population is projected to double by 2050.

In addition to growth, Iraq also lays claim to one of the youngest populations in the world; nearly 60 percent of Iraqis are under the age of 25. The working-age population is projected to increase by 54 percent, that is, from 20 million in 2015 to 32 million by 2030.[76]

The 2014 oil and security crises triggered a decrease in employment by more than 800,000 people.[77] In federal Iraq, labour force participation is estimated at 49 percent[78] with 40 percent for the Kurdistan region.

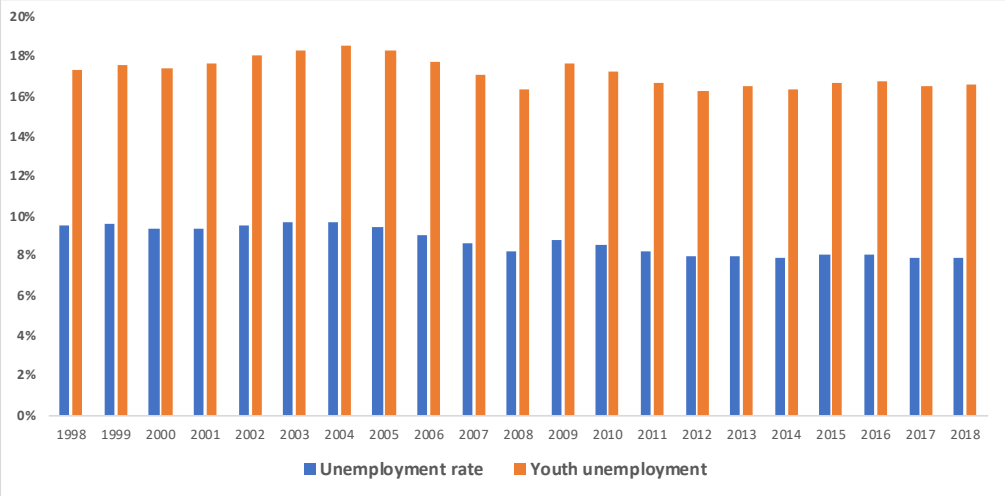
In addition to reduced employment prospects for the wider population, women, youth, persons with disabilities and IDPs have some of the highest unemployment rates. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that while female labour force participation in Iraq is low - estimated at 20 percent - Iraqi women that participate in the labour market are more likely to be under-employed or employed only part-time.[79] Young women struggle to find employment: In 2016, 65 percent of young women were unemployed compared to 32 percent of young men.[80] The same year, the unemployment rates in the KR-I for women aged 15 to 24 reached 69 percent.[81]

According to the World Bank, approximately 27 percent of IDPs are unemployed, and within that group, the most vulnerable are women and children, 49 percent of whom are less than 18 years old.

Oil is not a labour-intensive industry, and Iraq's hydrocarbons sector employs as little as 3 percent of the workforce in a country where chronic youth unemployment is a constant threat to political stability and state-society relations. Figure 5 shows the unemployment rate in Iraq from 1998 to 2018. In 2018, the official unemployment rate in Iraq was almost 8 percent.

[76] World Bank, 2018.
[77] Ergon Associates, 2018. *Decent Work Country Diagnostic: Iraq*. International Labor Organization (ILO).
[78] International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2017. "Obstacles to return in retaken areas of Iraq. [pdf] IOM. <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/specialreports/obstaclestoreturn06211701.pdf>
[79] International Labor Organization 2019
[80] *Ibid* no. 69
[81] *Ibid*

Figure 5
Iraq: Unemployment rate from 1998 – 2018. Source: World Bank



Key challenges and issues

Despite the abundance of human capital, it has been difficult for Iraq to create enough job opportunities. Job pressures are more than economics; future peace and social cohesion rely on re-establishing a social contract where Iraqis can sustain themselves through gainful employment. Prospects for employment creation are a litmus test for progress on this social contract.

The job market in Iraq has not been able to absorb the influx of the labour force into productive economic activities. Key challenges that impede labour force participation include:

- Nepotism,
- Corruption,
- Lack of accountability,
- The inability of GoI and private sector to capitalise on the demographic surplus
- A public sector that is not able to cope with increasing demand from youth for adequate jobs,
- Limited private sector development,
- Low levels of enterprise creation, and
- Gender inequalities affecting young women's entry into the labour market[82]

To ensure sustainable and scalable solutions to the current twin issues of youth apathy and disengagement (including unemployment) together with active protests and demands for action, more scaling up of solutions that work is needed, as well as a shared responsibility among policymakers, private sector actors and young people.

Also, addressing the vulnerabilities and critical challenges faced by a forcibly displaced population as well as vulnerable host communities within national social protection

[82] 'Gender Inequality and Economic Development in The Mena Region'

http://www.usc.es/economet/reviews/aeid1916.pdf

frameworks provides a unique opportunity to achieve multiple objectives across the humanitarian-development nexus.

(iii) Oil rentierism[83]

Iraq's economy is heavily dependent on oil, which accounts for over 65 percent of GDP and 92 percent of government revenue.[84] Since the 2003 war began, the country's production of crude oil has tripled.[85] Despite its enormous role for the state, oil extraction and production accounts for approx. one percent of total employment with few links to non-oil activities.[86] As a result, Iraq has not yet reaped the benefits in the local economy to develop ancillary industries. Additionally, the lack of a transparent trade policy limits international competition to invest in Iraq and contributes to a growing trade imbalance, as the country relies heavily on oil exports -99 percent of all exports against a range of imported goods.[87] Furthermore, according to World Bank data, the growth in the oil sector does not directly lead to job creation;[88] for instance, a one percent increase in oil output generated only 0.2 percent reduction in employment in the industry.[89]

Since the mid-20th century, Iraq's oil abundance has seen the neglect of other sectors of the economy. The need to diversify is particularly crucial considering the task to rebuild and reconstruct vast areas of the country destroyed by ISIL. The ease of receiving cash due to the oil economy has resulted in a bloated public sector with three million people employed, accounting for more than 42 percent of all jobs.[90] Although oil revenues enabled the rapid expansion of the public sector, revenues did not create enough jobs to absorb new entrants into the labour market nor did it address the high rate of unemployment, which currently stands at 16 percent.[91] Iraq expects that non-oil economic growth will benefit from increased investment for reconstruction, but higher non-oil growth will be short-lived in the absence of structural reforms.[92]

---

[83] Rentierism or 'Rentier' states are characterized by the relative absence of revenue from domestic taxation, as their naturally occurring wealth precludes the need to extract income from their citizenry. See https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254097722_International_Rentierism_in_the_Middle_East_Africa_1971-2008; and https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13530194.2020.1714267?needAccess=true

[84] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion*, <http://documents.worldbank.org/ curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18- web.pdf>.

[85] *Ibid*.

[86] *Ibid*.

[87] The Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, 2018. *National Development Plan 2018 - 2022*[pdf] Baghdad, Republic of Iraq: <http://www.iraq-jccme.jp/pdf/archives/ nationaldevelopmentplan2018_2022.pdf>.

[88] World Bank Group, 2015. *Strengthening the Growth-Employment-Welfare Nexus*<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/576031468254041518/ Strengthening-the-growth-employment-welfare-nexus>.

[89] *Ibid*.

[90] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion.* [pdf] World Bank. Retrieved from: <http://documents.worldbank.org/ curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18- web.pdf>

[91] World Bank Group, 2018. *Jobs in Iraq: a primer on job creation in the short-term*. Retrieved from: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/255111529495871846/pdf/Jobs- in-Iraq-a-primer-on-job-creation-in-the-short-term.pdf>.

[92] *Ibid*.

Iraq's oil dependence makes it especially vulnerable. The lack of meaningful economic diversification threatens Iraq with further political instability, external shocks, oil price fluctuations and disruptions to domestic and global oil sector supply chains. Also, Iraq's massive oil wealth has financed a system that sees enormous revenues converted to salaries in unproductive sectors. The preliminary budget for 2020 (not yet passed) indicates a continuing focus on expenditure instead of long-term investment, with pensions and civil service salaries accounting for roughly 50 percent of the IQD126 billion budget.

Iraq's vulnerability to external shocks such as those tied to prices of oil on the global market and security is primarily due to the insignificant role of the non-oil economy. While rising oil prices create more significant fiscal space for Iraq to finance reconstruction, it comes at the risk of decreasing immediate incentives to diversify.[93] While post-conflict recovery is expected to remain the driving force of the non-oil economy in the coming years,[94] there are several impediments to the diversification of the economy to mobilize funds for reconstruction.

The lack of investment in non-oil infrastructure deeply concerns, given the destruction to the country's infrastructure and productive capacity following over 35 years of conflict.[135] Additionally, it is essential that education and training initiatives aimed at creating skilled workers in other sectors recognise that currently, there is a disparity within the labour market, creating more significant challenges. Promotion of the private sector, even at the micro or small enterprise level, must come with capacity building in areas of business and management skills, as well as access to credit and productive assets.

(iv) Stimulation of the private sector

Iraq's private sector remains underdeveloped, yet it is a crucial means for diversifying the economy, contributing towards financing reconstruction, and stimulating job growth, particularly for youth, as recognized by the state in the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Private Sector Development Strategy (2014 – 2030). Inhibiting factors for investment and hiring in the private sector include public payroll patronage and the dominance of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) as large employers because of a weak investment climate.[95] Additionally, the growing private sector continues to risk crowding out from lower-cost imports and SOEs producing in competition.[96] A law on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) has long been in development – initially drafted in 2011, it includes the establishment of an SME agency, and it could pass to the legislature with the next government.[97]

---

[93] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/ curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18- web.pdf>

[94] Ergon Associates, 2018. *Decent Work Country Diagnostic: Iraq*. International Labor Organization.

[95] World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic* <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL- cleared-02132017.pdf>

[96] *Ibid* no. 82.

[97] *Ibid*.

Compared to the public sector, employment in the private sector has lower average wages, reduced job security, and benefits.[98] Currently, the estimated wage gap ratio is 5:1 between the public and private sectors.[99] There are several sectors that would benefit from private sector engagement.

- The construction industry remains the largest private-sector employer and could contribute to reconstruction efforts and absorb unemployment.
- Religious tourism, the largest non-oil export, generated USD 4 billion in export earnings in 2015 and should provide promising opportunities as the security situation improves.[100]
- The agricultural sector also benefits the local economy, although Unexploded Ordinance (UXOs) and other remnants of war, make some areas inaccessible. The industry currently provides 20 percent of all employment and can better absorb unskilled and skilled workers, enhance the development of local industries, and help mitigate rising food insecurity.
- The industrial and service sectors can also enhance local goods and commodities like leather, construction equipment and raw materials.

Investment and support in these sectors should be coupled with backing to SMEs and vocational skills development to increase the human capital potential in these industries.

In 2014, Iraq experienced multiple shocks. The oil and security shocks led to a decline in oil prices and high costs to finance the war against ISIL. These shocks impacted private sector consumption and investments, limited government spending, particularly on investment projects, and subsequently halted economic expansion.[101]

Inadequate water supplies have also affected the private sector. The 2012 Investment Climate Survey noted that the average manufacturing firm in Iraq reported experiencing 17 water outages per month.[102]

Additionally, high public sector wages and guaranteed job security provide little incentive to work in the private sector. Pay and benefits, including pension entitlements, in the public sector have historically been superior. Iraq does not provide incentives for private-sector

---

[98] *Ibid*.

[99] World Bank Group, 2014. *Republic of Iraq Public Expenditure Review: Toward More Efficient Spending for Better Service Delivery.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/ curated/en/611781468253505876/pdf/899160PUB0978100Box385216B00PUBLIC0.pdf>

[100] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/ curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18- web.pdf>

[101] Tabaqchali, A., 2018. *Iraq's Investment Spending Deficit*. Institute for Regional and International Studies<http://www.auis.edu.krd/iris/sites/default/files/ Investment_Spending_Deficit_Final_for_Publication.pdf>.

[102] World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL- cleared-02132017.pdf>.

employment or outside investment.[103] Factors that impede firms from entering Iraq[104] include:

- A weak business climate that is not conducive to private sector growth
- Rampant corruption
- Low available credit
- Inadequate infrastructure and energy supplies
- A costly visa process
- A lack of productive public-private sector dialogues
- The need for reformed and/or improved human resource management systems and oversight in the relevant ministries[105]
- Targeted legislative reform to improve the investment climate, privatize state companies and boost employment in the private sector

Iraq's current oil-fuelled budget-to-salaries model is unsustainable given the price of oil, the size of Iraq's population, and the rate of youth unemployment (17 percent according to ILO estimates). Only 24 percent of youth participate in Iraq's labour force, a considerably lower percentage compared to the rest of the population. This long-term stress has been unaddressed for far too long with the perhaps inevitable result of escalating protests that today threaten to paralyse the country. The historical solution of appeasing protestors through higher spending is not a sustainable solution, considering the population and income trends.

The following four areas of cross-cutting reforms are necessary to de-risk the private sector and increase private sector participation:

1. Stability of the macro framework, the infrastructure gap and a need for fiscal consolidation to ensure more spending on human capital, while providing a suitable environment for private investment flows.
2. Financial sector reforms, including reducing the role of the state and deepening banking and non-banking sectors to ensure credit to the private sector. Iraq is currently one of the lowest in the region.
3. Business environment reforms reduce the cost and complexity of doing business in Iraq, especially for SMEs.
4. Social safety nets and labour market reforms to ensure equitable access to economic opportunities, particularly for youth.

(v) Agriculture

The agriculture sector in Iraq is one of the most robust private sectors, as most farms are privately owned. Iraq classifies around 16 percent of Iraq - or 7 million hectares - as arable land. Of this, 5.9 million hectares are rain-fed crops or under watered. Most of Iraq's irrigated agriculture is in the central and southern governorates and dependent on the

[103] Ergon Associates, 2018. *Decent Work Country Diagnostic: Iraq*. International Labor Organization.
[104] The World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion*<http://documents.worldbank.org/ curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18- web.pdf>
[105] *Ibid* no. 95.

Tigris and Euphrates rivers for its water. In Iraq, over 64 percent of cultivated land is irrigated.

Because agriculture employs a significant number of people in rural and peri-urban areas, there is a definite necessity to rebuild and reinvest in the sector. More agriculture could allow for the voluntary return of millions of Iraqis displaced to their home of origin, post-ISIL in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninevah and Salah al-Din.

The ISIL conflict nearly destroyed Iraq's agriculture sector. Massive population movements along with the destruction of water systems, irrigation facilities and other infrastructure. The conflict disrupted supply chains, destroyed personal assets, food supplies and crop and livestock production. The World Bank estimates that the conflict resulted in the loss of 2.4 trillion Iraqi dinars (US2.1 billion) to the agriculture sector including 689 billion Iraqi dinars (US590.9 million)[106] for damaged machinery critical for production. The output lost during the conflict depleted farmers' working capital, damaged, greenhouses, livestock assets and irrigation systems.[107]

The landholding system in Iraq is a mixture of owner-operator, lease-holding and sharecropping arrangements. In the rural areas of the poorest governorates, smallholder farmers and livestock producers are the most marginalised households with unemployed young men and women the most vulnerable. Smallholder farmers with a holding size ranging from 2.5 to 7.5 hectares in rainfed areas and less than four hectares in irrigated regions account for 35 percent of the total number of farmers in Iraq.

Farmers practice rainfed agriculture in the northern governorates, with significant wheat and barley production, which account for one-third of Iraq's cereal production. Farmers also produce rice, dates, cotton, vegetables, fruits, legumes and alfalfa.

Livestock production has been an essential pillar of Iraq's agriculture sector, representing one third of the total value of agricultural output. Cattle, goats and sheep are the primary livestock in Iraq, supplying meat, wool, milk and skins. Animal husbandry was a vital source of income and food for female-headed households in the affected governorates.

Animal husbandry is a fundamental source of income and food for female-headed households. In the livestock sub-sector, the government provides massive feed subsidies, but imports remain high for some commodities such as milk and poultry. The sub-sectors dependency on wheat and barley subsidies limits the development of a competitive private agriculture sector, transparent markets and diversified smallholder farming systems.

The recent crisis also greatly affected the livestock sector. In liberated areas, reasons for losses were more diverse across the categories—difficulties vaccinating and treating animals because of insecurity, explosive devices contamination or unavailability of medicines and vaccines. The biggest threat is transboundary animal diseases spreading from Syria across the region because of the collapse of veterinary and quarantine inspection services. Disease outbreaks and upsurges can cause substantial losses to rural families, threatening the livelihoods of vulnerable farmers and the food and nutrition security of millions. Structural challenges exacerbate current agricultural problems. Issues such as limited rural financing, low-level technologies, climate change, weak research and

[106] *Ibid no. 92*
[107] *Ibid.*

extension capacities and the construction of dams in neighbouring countries, relates to reduced water inflows and increased salinity.

Additionally, institutional capacities in the agriculture sector are lacking. Government support and non-governmental and development partners would help establish well-developed farmers' associations and organizations. In turn, a more robust network would provide collective supplies and offer new approaches that would enable smallholder producers to be more commercially competitive.

As a matter of priority, and as an essential food security objective, the government should provide agricultural inputs and services to help restore fragile livelihoods and assist returning or vulnerable families.[108] Plans must continue to rehabilitate the country's destroyed silos, storage and crop processing facilities, especially in crisis-affected areas to absorb the local wheat harvest.[109] Wheat is the backbone of the Public Distribution System (PDS) system, which helps all categories of beneficiaries; thus, rehabilitation assistance is a priority. The current PDS does not address food insecurity and is expensive to implement, because it is not prioritised, and there are inefficiencies and leakages in the supply and delivery mechanisms.[110]

Agriculture is also the largest user of surface water in the country by far, with use at 85 percent. Therefore, water reform and the introduction of new technology and equipment and water management practices are necessary to modernise the sector and adapt it to the reality of water scarcity. The industry needs to carefully evaluate which sub-sectors and specific agricultural value or supply chains it wants to promote and subsidize for this sector to thrive and compete with cheap, subsidised food imports.

Import dependency remains high for most of the country's strategic food commodities. Iraq has been mostly self-sufficient in the production of domestic vegetables, fruit and meat, but has been able to meet cereal requirements mainly through imports.[111] While the value of imports of the main food groups in Iraq has steeply declined, the demand for imported food continues to grow, and local agricultural production fails to keep pace with population growth, which currently stands 2.7 percent annually.[112] To date, Iraq's Ministry of Trade remains the leading importer of strategic commodities, such as wheat, rice, vegetable oil and pulses, the products with the most substantial import value.

A growth strategy for the sector would include diverse elements, including using Iraq's domestic market as an immediate consumer base to expand production of grain (wheat), fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products and meat. Exports offer opportunities for

---

[108] UN Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), 2018. *Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan - Advance Executive Summary UNOCHA.* <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraq-2018-humanitarian-response-plan-advance-executive-summary-enar/>

[109] *UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), 2018. 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview. [pdf] UNOCHA.* <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/irq_2019_hno.pdf>

[110] World Food Programme (WFP), 2018. *Iraq Zero Hunger Strategic Review (ZHSR).* [online] WFP. Available at: <https://www1.wfp.org/zero-hunger-strategic-reviews>

[111] World Food Programme (WFP), 2016. *Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA).* <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/comprehensive-food-security- and-vulnerability-analysis-cfsva-iraq-2016>

[112] Worldometers, 2019. Iraq population <www.worldometers.info/world-population/iraq-population/>.

agribusiness development, spearheaded by dates and other high-value crops (fresh fruits and vegetables), to the region in the short term, and European demand in the medium/long-term. Moreover, the foremost opportunity for creating jobs lie within the value chains further downstream, including the processing of agriculture commodities, as current agribusiness value chains are under-developed with a low ratio of product processing from primary agriculture.[113]

There is a need to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers. Increased access to and control over resources as well as increased participation in agriculture may improve women's social status and empowerment and have a positive impact on their nutrition and that of their children. Studies show that women's income growth must be accompanied by improved education and access to health services to have a real impact on children's nutrition. Traditionally, women in rural areas are sharing with men in agricultural practices from soil preparation for crop cultivation to crop harvesting, livestock and poultry raising and growing vegetable crops at the family farm level. As such, they contribute significantly to society and household income and food security. Women are also involved in the domestic industries such as the dairy industry, crafting leather (e.g. shoes), and the food industry, e.g. pastry and sweets production.

(vi) Economic conclusions

The oil and gas sector will remain the driving force of the Iraqi economy for at least the next five years. Iraq possesses among the world's largest proven oil reserves (145 billion barrels) and the largest proven gas deposits in the world (see Figure 6 below).[114] The past decade saw massive growth in Iraqi oil production with an estimated 300,000 BPD added year-on-year between 2010 and 2015, and approx. 185,000 BPD from 2016-2017. From 2010 to 2016.[115] Iraq was the second-largest source, after the US, of oil supply growth globally.

However, the Iraqi oil industry is entering a new phase of production, one that is more expensive and complex than the upstream development of the past decade. A growing number of fields are entering the secondary recovery stage, which requires the sourcing of more water to sustain reservoir pressure.[116] Iraq currently needs approximately 1.3-1.5 barrels of injected water for every barrel of oil extracted, which places considerable strain on Iraq's ecological resources with knock-on effects on water supplies and agriculture.[117] The broader operational focus is now shifting to more complex reservoirs, which are costlier to exploit.

With costly and complicated stages of production growth ahead, Iraq will need International Oil Company (IOC) investors with scale, capital, and technical expertise. Iraq will also need

[113] The World Bank,2019 *Iraq Economic Monitor: Turning the Corner: Sustaining Growth and Creating Opportunities for Iraq's Youth.*

[114] Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), 2018.

[115] Ahmed Mehdi, "The Soleimani Effect: A Game-Changer for Crude Dynamics?" *The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies*, Oxford Energy Comment, Jan. 2020, https://www.oxfordenergy.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/The-Soleimani-Effect-A-Game-Changer-for-Iraqi-Crude-Dynamics.pdf?v=0f177369a3b7, p. 4.

[116] Secondary recovery requires water to be injected into oil formations to sustain reservoir pressure. Gas injection is a potential alternative but Iraq's difficulties with gas flaring and the demand for gas to meet Iraq's energy requirements make this option difficult.

[117] Mehdi, "The Soleimani Effect," p. 7.

to fix infrastructure issues; its upstream growth outpaced midstream investment, leading to onshore bottlenecks such as problems with storage capacity, water supply, and midstream pipeline networks. Overall, Iraq's oil sector requires a significant infrastructure upgrade and expansion to sustain continued growth.[118]

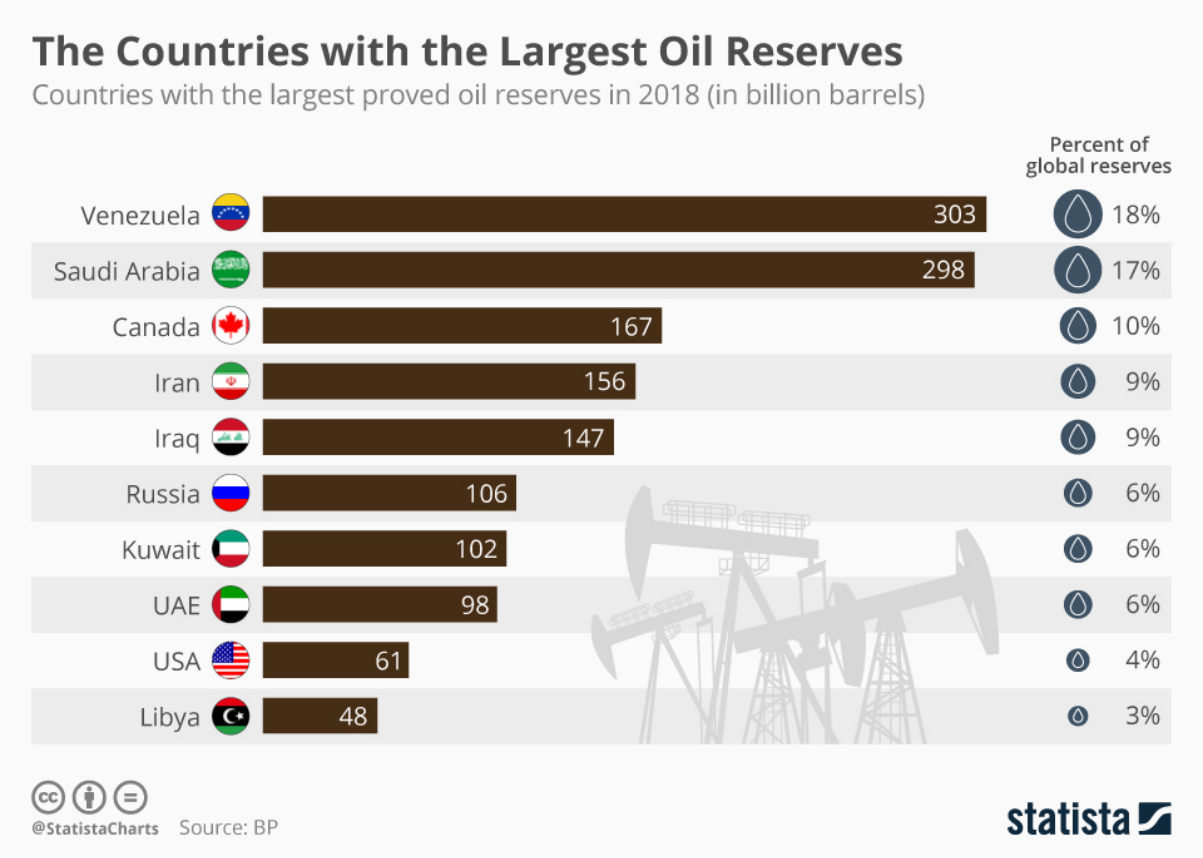


Figure 6 – Comparison of global crude oil reserves. Source Stastista/BP

Domestic and regional security concerns, in addition to delayed government formation and political uncertainty, jeopardize the prospects of such mega-projects and increase the difficulties associated with investing in Iraq. Iraq needs to offer IOC more advantageous remuneration and revenue sharing arrangements.[119] Iraq's uncompetitive fiscal terms combined with strategic paralysis at Iraq's Petroleum and Contract Licensing Division witnessed the exit of oil giant Shell from the Majnoon field in mid-2018.[120]

Iraqi political vulnerability to regional dynamics translates into economic instability as demonstrated in recent escalation in US-Iranian rivalries. The Abqaiq attack and the tanker

[118] *Ibid*., p. 5.
[119] Ahmed Mehdi, "Iraqi Oil: Industry evolution and short and medium-term prospects," *The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies*, OEIS Paper 79, Oct. 2018, https://www.oxfordenergy.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Iraqi-Oil-industry-evolution-and-short-and-medium-term-prospects-WPM-79.pdf, p.4-6.
[120] Aref Mohammed Ahmed Rasheed, "Shell to hand over Iraq's Majnoon oilfield by end June 2018: Iraq officials," *Reuters*, Nov. 8, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-oil-shell/shell-to-hand-over-iraqs-majnoon-oilfield-by-end-june-2018-iraqi-oil-officials-idUSKBN1D817D.

attacks of 2019 showed how regional strife affects oil infrastructure. Less dramatically, Iraq's vulnerability to regional conflict can lead to investment withdrawal.

Building resilience would require going beyond investing in neglected sectors. The Iraqi government would also have to reduce its footprint on the economy by cutting back on public wages and follow through on other much-needed transformations. A holistic approach would tackle corruption and institute judicial reforms.

For instance, there is a broad agreement on the importance of stimulating the private sector, which currently accounts for about 37 percent of Iraq's GDP.[121] Among the many steps needed to achieve this legislative reform, a rejuvenated private sector would require robust legal infrastructure and the rule of law to protect contracts, secure investments, and provide a stable enabling environment that would foster investment.[122] Likewise, a weakened private sector is a reflection of the size of the informal economy that some estimates account for as much as 75 percent of private economic activity.[123] The formalization of the informal economy is necessary to create a healthy environment for private economic activity and is dependent on significant progress in judicial reform.

[121] *Ibid*., p. 9.
[122] For a discussion on the private sector see Robert Tollast, "Private Sector Job Creation: The Cornerstone of International Development in Iraq," *Iraq Energy Institute,* Feb. 03, 2020.
[123] Hasan, "Beyond Security," p. 9. The same source estimates that 62 percent of private enterprises are not officially registered.

4.2 Social Exclusion

4.2.1 Human rights and vulnerable populations

Iraq's compliance with international legal obligations is crucial to achieving the SDGs, adhering to the principle of leaving no one behind, and rebuilding trust within the population. Although Iraq has ratified several international human rights instruments and conventions,[124] they have not translated into domestic legal or social reforms.

For example, Iraq's High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR), formally established in 2015, has the mandate to promote and protect the rights of all Iraqis.[125] However, the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institution's Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) awarded the IHCHR a "B" grade, which means the Iraq commission is only *partially* compliant with the Paris Principles.[126] While the SCA praised HCHR efforts, it recommended the HCHR promote more broadly nationally to improve engagement with citizens in rural areas, while simultaneously strengthening its legislative base.[127]

Problematically, the IHCHR selects its Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson via the government, excluding civil society, which limits equitable representation. Thus, it is imperative to focus on a formal, transparent and participatory legislation selection and appointment process for the NHRI's decision-making body. Procedures should be merit-based and ensure pluralism. Iraq still needs legal provisions to address domestic conflicts of interest, better outreach to remote populations, funding to deliver on its mandate, and a more robust relationship with local human rights institutions.[128]

Iraqi women face daily violations to their human rights. Although Iraq lacks consistent and reliable data on violence against women, the *KRG 2017 Annual Report of the General Directorate of Combating Violence Against Women* documented 7,010[129] domestic violence complaints, 220 reports of men burning women, 74 suicides, 43 cases of femicide,[130] and 115 incidents of sexual violence. According to the Ministry of Health, domestic violence killed more than 3,000 women between 2010 and 2015 with 548 women murdered in 2017. The

[124] See Annex 8.2 for a table of conventions to which Iraq is a party/signatory.

[125] United Nations Iraq, 2012. *Iraq's First Independent High Commission for Human Rights, Landmark Achievement*. [press release] 9 April 2012 <http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=221:iraq-s-first-independent-high-commission-for-human-rights-landmark-achievement&Itemid=605&lang=en>

[126] The Paris Principles outline international benchmarks for national human rights institutions along six pillars of criteria: mandate and competence; autonomy from the government; independence; pluralism; adequate resources; adequate powers of investigation.

[127] International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, United Nations, 2015. *Report and Recommendations of the Session of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA).* [pdf] Geneva: International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. Retrieved from: <https://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/GANHRIAccreditation/Documents/SCApercent20MARCHpercent202015percent20FINALpercent20REPORTpercent20-percent20ENGLISH.pdf> .

[128] *Ibid*.

[129] An increase of 337 reported cases from 2014.

[130] The World Health Organization describes Feminicide as the intentional killing of females (women or girls) because they are females.

Ministry of the Interior's Family Protection Directorate reported that 54 percent of family violence cases 2014 were husbands physically abusing wives.[131]

Iraq has not enacted the draft Domestic Violence Law launched by the Presidency on 15 September 2019 and later sent to Parliament. Continued delays in approving this law, particularly given the fluid political situation, is hampering gender equality, and women's empowerment.[132] To take action, the GoI launched a *National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women in Iraq*;[133] in 2018 as a critical step to protect women from domestic violence. Farther ahead than the GoI, the KRG has created some legal mechanisms to safeguard female survivors of violence. These include:

- KRG Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women (2012 – 2016)
- Kurdistan Region Amendments to Iraq's Personal Status Law (2008)
- Kurdistan Region Law to Combat Domestic Violence (2011)

Gender-based violence (GBV) is common in Iraq as well as a deeply rooted social stigma towards survivors of GBV, particularly sexual violence. Stigma often leads to "honour" killings/crimes, including the maiming or burning of hundreds of women and girls yearly.[134] In 2017, there were 272 cases of honour crimes, and 3,400 cases of domestic violence reported to the police and referred to the courts.[135] Commonly, these crimes are not reported to the authorities. If survivors do report GBV, the judicial system seldom prosecutes the perpetrator.

Female heads of household, comprising an estimated 13 percent of all IDP and returnee households, are at high risk because as managers of the home they must interact with men outside the family, or in traditionally male domains. IDP women are also at heightened risk of sexual exploitation and abuse and collective punishment if they are perceived to be affiliated with ISIL or other extremist groups.[136]

Iraq ratified the *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW)[137] in 1986, but maintained reservations on the following articles:

- Article 2(f) and (g), which call on states to modify or abolish existing laws and penal codes that discriminate against women.
- Article 9 requires equal rights regarding changes and transfers of nationality.

---

[131] Vilardo, V., Bittar, S., 2018. *Gender Profile: Iraq. A situation analysis on gender equality and women's empowerment in Iraq.* OXFAM<https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/ handle/10546/620602>.

[132] United Nations Iraq. *Government of Iraq and United Nations Launch National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women in Iraq*, 9 December 2018. <http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=10127:government-of-iraq-and- united-nations-launch-national-strategy-to-combat-violence-against-women-in- iraq&Itemid=605&lang=en>

[133] ReliefWeb 'Government of Iraq and United Nations Launch National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women in Iraq' <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/government-iraq-and-united-nations-launch-national-strategy-combat violence-against>

[134] UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (5 June 2018), *Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on her mission to Iraq*, para. 40, UN Doc No. A/HRC/38/44/Add.1

[135] UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI 2018), and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)*Report of Human Rights in Iraq July to December.*

[136] Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2018. *Iraq: 2018 World Report*: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/iraq>.

[137] United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (8 Dec 1979) https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx

- Article 16 concerns the elimination of discrimination in marriage and family relations.
- Article 29, paragraph 1, is the principle of international arbitration on the interpretation or application of the convention.

Iraq has not ratified the Optional Protocol to CEDAW,[138] which recognizes the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups within its jurisdiction.

Broadly, the ongoing impunity around sexual and gender-based crimes leads to continued violence with few mechanisms for gender justice. Policy and legal reforms must accompany new strategies to make a significant impact. It is essential to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment at the institutional and local, regional and national levels. Accompanying such efforts, and in the absence of a formal Ministry of Women's Affairs, Iraq needs to strengthen capacity in decision-making fora like ministries and governorate offices[139]

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) remains underreported for fear of reprisals and associated stigma. There is an inherent lack of trust and confidence in Iraq's justice system and limited to no services to mitigate CRSV. Women and girls in displacement camps are increasing vulnerability to violence. Are. Because of real or perceived affiliation with extremist groups. Unmet needs in camps for IDPs have also exacerbated sexual exploitation in some cases involving security forces. More importantly, CRSV remains underreported for fear of reprisals and associated stigma. There is an inherent lack of trust and confidence in Iraq's justice system and limited to no services to mitigate CRSV. Women and girls in displacement camps are increasingly vulnerable to violence because of real or perceived affiliation with extremist groups. Unmet needs in camps for IDPs have also exacerbated sexual exploitation in some cases involving security forces.

In September 2016, the United Nations and the Government of Iraq signed a Joint Communiqué on the Prevention of and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. In March 2018, the Government launched an implementation plan for the Joint Communique. This Communique supports legislative and policy reforms to:

- Strengthen protection from and response to crimes of sexual violence.
- Facilitate documentation for and the return and reintegration of internally displaced persons.
- Ensure accountability.
- Provide services, livelihood support and reparations for survivors and children born of rape; and
- Engage tribal and religious leaders in the prevention of sexual violence and in facilitating the return and reintegration of survivors.

In November 2019, the General Directorate of Yazidi Affairs of the KRG released missing person statistics from the Yazidi community. Of the estimated 6,417 Yazidis abducted, 3,524 were rescued. Approx. 1,197 women, 339 men, 1,038 girls, and 950 boys escaped and 2,893 remain missing. This figure does not include other affected groups, like the Turkmen Shi'a. In

[138] United Nations, *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Wome*n Optional Protocol https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/OP_CEDAW_en.pdf

April 2019, the President of Iraq submitted a Draft Law on Yazidi Female Survivors[140], calling for crimes against Yazidis to be classified as genocide and to hold perpetrators accountable. It also establishes a national day of remembrance and outlines reparations for the Yezidi community. The draft law was submitted to the Iraqi Parliament and is pending review, including the addition of additional minority groups and children born of rape.

Children are also at high risk. While Iraq ratified the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*[141] in 1994, it was with reservations in respect to Article 14, para 1, concerning children's freedom of religion, arguing that such an article contradicts Islamic Shariah Law.[142] In 2008, Iraq acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. This protocol prohibits the recruitment of children in armed forces and forbids the enlisting of a person under the age of 18 in war. Iraq also acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. In 2015, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed some of the measures taken by the Iraqi Government to fulfil the requirements of the CRC and the optional protocols, such as the enactment of the Combating Trafficking in Persons Act No. 28 (2012), the creation of an Aftercare and Family Integration Program, and the establishment of two child helplines and other victim support units.

However, the same Committee also noted that existing policies and programs were insufficient to address the root causes of the sale of children, including child prostitution, discrimination of minority children, IDPs, and those living in the streets.[143] The committee expressed concern at the lack of a comprehensive policy/strategy to stop child recruitment for use in armed conflicts. It urgently recommended that Iraq adopt a plan as a matter of urgency and allocate funds to prevent the use of children by armed groups.[144]

It is important to note that Iraq has not ratified the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) on a communications procedure. Therefore, individuals and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are not able to submit complaints to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.[145]

As reflected in the 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview,[146] children also suffer from the collective punishment of families with perceived or actual affiliations to ISIL and extremist groups. They often have limited access to education, experience repeated discrimination, psychological distress, domestic violence, child labour, and child marriage. Further, most do not have access to essential services because they have no civil documentation.[147]

---

[140] The draft Law applies to Yazidi women who were kidnapped and enslaved by ISIS, and later escaped or were rescued from captivity. It aims to award financial and ethical compensation to these female survivors, https://presidency.iq/EN/Details.aspx?id=1343

[141] https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx

[142] Vilardo, V., Bittar, S., 2018. *Gender Profile: Iraq. A situation analysis on gender equality and women's empowerment in Iraq*. Oxfam International>

[143] *Ibid*.

[144] *Ibid*.

[145] UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Status of ratifications Interactive Dashboard* <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>

[146] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA Iraq: 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/iraq/document/2019-iraq-humanitarian-needs-overview>

[147] *Ibid*.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), victims of human trafficking include children. Iraq has a central committee charged with drafting and implementing national strategies and policies on combatting Trafficking in Persons (TIP), in charge of drafting and implementing federal programmes and procedures. The Iraqi government has endorsed a national Plan of Action. Further, the Ministry of Interior has created a department specialising on anti-trafficking issues. This department is responsible for overseeing and implementing the Plan of Action, although it is unclear how much progress has been made to date.

The Iraqi government also funded an anti-trafficking hotline to facilitate the identification of TIP victims, but no mechanism for referrals. The government established a few state-run shelters in Baghdad, which house up to 60 people. However, shelters use these spaces for all vulnerable people, not just TIP cases. Furthermore, Iraqi NGOs are not permitted to operate shelters for survivors without official registration. If they do so without approval, they could face legal action or pay a fine. The Iraqi government also has no special services for child victims of trafficking, including child soldiers.

There are no reliable figures that quantify the scale of Trafficking in Persons in Iraq. Thus, there is also a dire need to strengthen victim identification procedures and enhance agencies' capacity to collect and analyse data.

In the legal sphere, Iraq enacted a law on Trafficking in Persons. While the legislation is consistent with the UN, there are significant differences. In the Iraqi Law, there is no provision requiring the *means* element of a trafficking crime which corroborates the victim is a child.

Displaced persons are at considerable risk of human rights violations. The collective punishment of displaced families in the conflict with ISIL has led to forced, premature and obstructed returns; subjection to discriminatory denial of assistance and services; restrictions on movements; de-facto detention in specific camps; widespread social discrimination, including sexual exploitation and abuse; targeted destruction concerning housing, land and property;[148] and a lack of civil documentation. Forced displacement of suspected ISIL families has occurred mostly in Anbar, Babil, Diyala, Salahadin, and Ninewa governorates.

Women and girls, comprising approximately 50 percent of IDPs in camp and out-of-camp settings, continue to be especially vulnerable. IDP women and girls face ongoing sexual and gender-based violence with limited or no protection in the form of policing services from the Government of Iraq. Extreme poverty has forced many women to engage in survival sex and child marriages as survival mechanisms living in camps.

4.2.2 Minority groups

Iraq consists of several ethnic, religious and linguistic minority groups, including but not limited to Christians, the Baha'i, Iraqis of African Descent (also known as people of dark skin), Roma, Faili Kurd, Kakai, Sabean Mandaean, Shabak, Turkmen, Zoroastrian, Jews and Yazidi. Despite having several constitutional provisions that protect minorities against discrimination, enshrine equality, and guarantee the right to access health, housing,

[148] Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2018. *Iraq: 2018 World Report.* [pdf] HRW. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/iraq>

employment and education, Iraq's minority communities suffer serious direct and indirect discrimination when it comes to access to those services.

Displaced minority communities face acute challenges caused by their minority status and therefore being targeted by ISIL and by other armed extremist groups. As a result, a significant portion of some minority groups has fled the country since 2003. The Christian, Yazidi and Shabak communities in particular faced intimate violence and trauma, which hinders their desire to return home,[149] as such minority communities have little confidence in the government's ability to set up security at the local level or put in place reconciliation initiatives.[150]

Multiple rounds of extremist violence have resulted in the deaths and migration of minority communities (i.e. Christian, Yazidi, and Shabak, etc.) to other places in and outside of Iraq. Anecdotally, many have indicated that they want Iraqi and/or international assurances for protection in case another round of violence ensues.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (or Queer) and Intersex (LGBTQI) community are at heightened risk of mistreatment. Homosexuality is illegal under Iraqi law[151] and remains a sensitive issue as it relates to public morality. Iraq has not supported LGBTQI rights declarations put forth in the General Assembly or the Human Rights Council. Instead, Iraq backed Arab League and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation statements against the rights of LGBTQI persons.[152]

LGBTQI populations face internal threats from family members and neighbours. In particular, LGBTQI individuals were targeted by armed extremist groups like ISIL and Shi'a militias.[153] Non-discrimination protections are non-existent in federal Iraq and in the KR-I.[154] There has been little to no LGBTQI programming due to other post- conflict issues. Iraq needs to address this service gap to provide mental health/psychosocial support, medical care and emergency protection to LGBTQI communities.

---

[149] Mansour, R, 2018. *Rebuilding the Iraqi State: Stabilisation, Governance, and Reconciliation.* [pdf] European Parliament Director-General for External Policies <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603859/EXPO_STU(2017)603859_EN.pdf>

[150] *Ibid*.

[151] "Sodomy" was removed from the criminal code in 2003. Early drafts of the 2005 Iraqi Constitution contained a provision that asserted that none of the rights or liberties protected in the Constitution would apply to "deviants", but later revisions of the Constitution removed that clause. However, several clauses throughout the document assert that Islam will be the foundation of the law and that civil liberties shall be limited by "public morality".

[152] MacFarquhar, N., 2008. In a First, Gay Rights Are Pressed at the U.N. *New York Times, [online] 18* Decembert: <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/19/world/19nations.html>]; United Nations, 2008. *General Assembly Archives 2008 - 70th and 71st plenary meeting, morning session, 02:32:00*<https://www.un.org/webcast/ga2008.html>

[153] Organisations that provide shelter to LGBTQI individuals also face a risk of closure by government as is the case with Organisation for Women Freedom in Iraq which was sued by the Council of Ministers Secretariat early this year for advocating for homosexual rights.

[154] According to the United States' Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012, *"[Iraq] law prohibits discrimination based on race, disability, or social status, but it does not address the problem of sexual orientation or gender identity. Societal discrimination in employment, occupation, and housing based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and unconventional appearance was common."* <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/204572.pdf>
See United States Department of State, 2012. *Iraq 2012 Human Rights Report*. : <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/204572.pdf>.

Peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives with these communities are essential to stop the emigration of minorities to other countries; if Iraq loses its minorities, it also will lose its rich cultural, ethnic and religious diversity and heritage. Peacebuilding initiatives are also essential to integrate these groups in a broader, more tolerant and pluralistic Iraq rather than turning inwards and isolating themselves within their communities.

It is important to note the different understandings of justice and reparations by various ethnic and religious groups as well as the different components within those groups like women, youth, elderly, victims of sexual violence, and others. Reconciliation is a sensitive topic for religious groups persecuted by ISIL. There remains the issue of the real or perceived collaboration of neighbours working with these groups. To achieve durable peace and local reconciliation, economic compensation, the rehabilitation and reconstruction of destroyed villages and religious sites, recognition of suffering, and the provision of collective symbolic reparations must take place.

Efforts continue to rescue members of the Yazidi community still missing or in captivity, and the number of those still unaccounted for remains high. Some captive Yazidis continue to be found or liberated. Out of the 6,417 Yazidi abductees, more than half (1199 women, 1041 girls, 951 boys, and 339 men) have been rescued or escaped since 2014 as at 16 February 2020. The number of missing or still in captivity stands at 2887 made up of 1308 females and 1579 males.

Additionally, ISIL cells remain in the country. Therefore, there is a need for risk assessments, considering the potential for flare-ups and localised hotspots that could significantly impact the recovery process, at least in the areas of ongoing insecurity. As such, it will be essential to maintain a regular monitoring mechanism that consistently assesses any created or deepened vulnerability that emerges as a result of such incidences.

4.2.3 Gender in Iraqi society

The underemployment of women is high in both federal Iraq and the Kurdistan region. In federal Iraq, the labour force participation rate for women is 19 percent, compared to 74 percent among men.[155] The participation rate of women in the labour force in KR-I is also one of the lowest in the world, at 14 percent.[156] Women who do work are employed in part-time jobs, concentrated either in the private sector, the agricultural industry, or in the informal economy. Those with low levels of education and skills are often self-employed and focused on private sector activities. These are usually informal, low-paying jobs with almost no access to benefits such as health insurance, maternity leave, or pensions, and without sufficient legal protections as they are generally excluded from many provisions in Iraq's labour law.[157]

[155] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion.* [pdf] World Bank. Retrieved from: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18-web.pdf>

[156] World Bank Group, 2018. "Iraq Economic Outlook - Spring 2018. [pdf] World Bank Group. Retrieved from: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/684821523635346426/Iraq-Economic-Outlook- Spring-2018> International Labor Organization (ILO), 2017. *IRQ - ILO - ILO Estimates and Projections – ILO modelled estimates, July 2017 (percent)*. ILO.

[157] Ergon Associates, 2018. *Decent Work Country Diagnostic: Iraq*. International Labor Organization.

Women who are widowed often incur more significant difficulties by the double burden imposed on them as both widow and breadwinner for the family.

The agricultural sector remains the top employer for women in Iraq. Female participation in the sector increased from 30 to 50 percent between 1980 and 2010.[158] Composition of farm employment for women also changed, with the share of women in total farm employment increasing from 36 percent in the early 1990s to 52 percent in 2012.[159] Women employed in this sector, however, often perform unpaid work in family or small enterprises.[160] However, the sector's low productivity and growth rates are attributable to a variety of factors, including the government's past policy of maintaining artificially low food prices through price and production controls and marketing restrictions.

Additionally, ISIL's "scorched earth" tactics, including the destruction of irrigation wells and other infrastructure, have had devastating effects on those employed in agricultural work, including women.[161] Outside of the farming context, women are primarily engaged in low-paid and low-skilled jobs in the service sector in urban areas.[162] Moreover, as Iraq moves towards reconstruction, planned interventions in this area tend to focus on male-dominated industries such as construction, leaving women with stagnant, limited access to job opportunities.

The underemployment of women is attributed to a variety of factors. Social and cultural norms in the family and current laws impose barriers and constraints on women's ability to work, such as restrictions on women's employment, including night work or jobs considered harmful to the health of women, which limit their agency.[163] For example, while the labour law requires employers to provide childcare services when they employ women, no decrees have been issued to date to enforce this provision of the labour code.[164] This problem is further compounded by the lack of enforcement of labour codes in the country. Low women labour participation rates are tied to levels of education when compared to men as well as a bloated public sector and stunted private sector. There are linkages between educational attainment and lack of employment opportunities in the country. Women are more likely to participate in the labour market if they have higher education. Still, most women are not

---

[158] World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic.* [pdf] World Bank Group. Retrieved from: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL- cleared-02132017.pdf>

[159] *Ibid*.

[160] UN Women, 2016. *Country Gender and Economic Profiles.* <http://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/all/country-gender-and- economic-profiles>

[161] Amnesty International, 2018. *Iraq: Islamic State's destructive legacy decimates Yezidi farming.* [online] Amnesty International. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/12/iraq- islamic-states-destructive-legacy-decimates-yezidi-farming/>

[162] UN Women, 2016. *Country Gender and Economic Profiles.* <http://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/all/country-gender-and- economic-profiles> UN CEDAW, 2014. *Concluding observations on the combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Iraq. [United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAWpercent2fCpercent2fI RQpercent2fCOpercent2f4-6&Lang=en>

[163] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion*World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18-web.pdf>.

[164] *Ibid.*

educated, and workers with higher education in Iraq are more likely to be unemployed while looking for jobs in the public sector or another formal sector.[165] Women's labour force participation rates, employment rates and pay, only approach parity with men only after they earn a university or college diploma.[166]

Conflict has strongly impacted women's participation in the labour market. In situations of conflict, fear of violence and harassment can also serve as strong deterrents to female participation in the labour market.[167] Limited employment opportunities, exacerbated by increased responsibility to support families, can lead to harmful coping mechanisms, such as "survival sex", as well as increased risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Women's participation in the labour market in Iraq is remarkably low; 2018 figures show that only 12.3 percent of women of the working-age were employed or searching for a job.[168]

Women affected by the conflict face numerous challenges to find employment. Some factors include limited economic opportunities, social barriers, legal restrictions, and vulnerability, in particular for displaced and women-headed households.[169]

It seems that the conflict also took its toll on girls' and women's enrolment in education. According to the Beijing +25 Iraq report (which is not printed yet), 70 percent of girls of the intermediate level of education go to school, compared to 97 percent for boys, while at the university level, this percentage drops to 20.2.

Early marriage is another challenge facing Iraqi women and girls. Nearly 24.8 percent of Iraqi marriages involve girls under the age of 18 years. The Iraqi Personal Status Law sets marriage age to 18 but allows girls above 15 years of age permission to marry. Also, 33.9percent of marriages in Iraq take place outside courts, with 22 percent of these marriages involving girls under the age of 14 years. Forced marriages are also still reported in various parts of Iraq, in addition to a type of marriage that is called Al Fasliyah, in which women from a specific tribe are given to another as a marriage gift to settle tribal disputes.

---

[165] Ergon Associates, 2018. *Decent Work Country Diagnostic: Iraq*. International Labor Organization.

[166] *Ibid*.; World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL-cleared-02132017.pdf>.

[167] UN Women, 2018. *The Business Case for Women's Economic Empowerment in the Arab States Region.* [online] UN Women. Available at: <http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/ fieldpercent20office percent20arabpercent20states/attachments/2016/businesspercent20casepercent20reportpercent20enpercent202016.pdf?la=en&vs=215>

[168] International Labour Organisation, "World Employment and Social Outlook,", https://www.ilo.org/wesodata/

[169] An estimated 10 percent of the total number of Iraqi households are women. See UN Women, "Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economics, Realizing Rights." (2015) http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW_progressreport.pdf ; Jayasinghe, D, "Choices, changes, and safety in crisis: A model for women's economic empowerment," January 2019, International Rescue Committee, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/choiceschancesandsafetyincrisis2019final.pdf>

4.2.4 Adolescents and youth

Adolescents and youth[170] provide promise and positive energy for Iraq's future; however, continued domestic unrest and long-standing economic inequalities are becoming more widespread leading to higher levels of exclusion among disadvantaged young girls and boys, including IDPs, refugees, returnees, adolescent girls, LGBTQ, persons with disabilities and the poor. All vulnerable persons face tremendous challenges in reaching their full potential.[171]

The changes in the population age structure in Iraq present a historic window of opportunity to invest in the human capital and rights of young people and ensure a demographic dividend. However, young people in Iraq, girls and boys, face significant barriers in their transition to adulthood. Children currently represent 48 percent of the population and youth aged 15-24 20 percent. Around, 43 percent (8 million) are adolescents below the age of 15 years, and 31 percent are young people between the ages of 10-24 years.[172] Iraq's adolescent and youth population are expected to reach 16.4 million by 2030 - 31 percent of the population and 23 million by 2050.[173] The country needs to promote equitable development and participation of children in their second decade to enable them to develop to their full potential and responsibly transition to adulthood.

Rates of youth participation in the labour force are considerably lower than the rest of the population, standing at 24.06 percent overall and with a gender gap of over 38 percent with 52.8 percent of young men participating in the labour market versus 14.3 percent for young women.[174] According to ILO estimates, in 2019, the estimated youth unemployment rate in Iraq was at 16.5 percent.[175] The underemployment of youth, defined as those individuals working less than 35 hours per week, is estimated at 28 percent in 2018.[176]

The main challenges impeding labour force participation, youth employment and equal opportunities include high labour force growth, (i.e. the youth bulge), the inability of the government and private sector to capitalize on the demographic dividend, nepotism, corruption and lack of accountability, a public sector unable to cope with the increasing demands from youth for decent jobs, limited private sector development, low enterprise creation; and gender inequalities affecting young Iraqi's entry into the labour market.[177] The

---

[170] The United Nations (UN) defines youth between the ages of 15 and 24 (UNGA, 1981). The UN follows the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of adolescents, 'persons from 10 through 19 years of age'. The term young people encompass the age cohort of girls and boys between 10-24 years.

[171] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2020. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iraq_hno_2020.pdf

[172] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision (UN WPP), United Nations, New York, 2017. Retrieved from: https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/

[173] MENA Generation 2030 , UNICEF, 2019 https://www.menayouthhub.org/sites/menayouthhub.org/files/eman/Mappercent20Factpercent20Sheets/template_IRQ_rev.pdf

[174] World Bank Data, 2017. *Iraq.* <https://data.worldbank.org/country/iraq>.

[175] https://www.statista.com/statistics/812116/youth-unemployment-rate-in-iraq/

[176] Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, 2018. *National Development Plan 2018 - 2022. [pdf]* Baghdad: Republic of Iraq : <http://www.iraq- jccme.jp/pdf/archives/nationaldevelopmentplan2018_2022.pdf> [.

[177] World Bank, 2017. E*conomic Outlook of Iraq.* [online] World Bank. Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/publication/economic-outlook-april-2017>; United Nations Children's Fund Middle East and North Africa Office (UNICEF MENARO), 2018. *Youth Unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa, Background paper*. <https://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/MENARO_ROAR_2017.pdf.

outsized public sector and poorly targeted social transfers, declining quality of health and education services, and patronage networks favouring older workers impact youth labour participation constrain them from productive activities.[178] The private sector is a potential opportunity to increase the productive engagement of young Iraqis in the economy. This opportunity can only be grasped if the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) providers in Iraq can link the requirements of the private sector employers to the skills they developed in Young people attending their various institutions. A fundamental restructuring of the TVET in Iraq's Educational system is essential.

Child poverty limits the potential of so many of Iraq's youth. Educational attainment, skills acquisition, poor health outcomes, have prevented Iraqi youth from fulfilling their fundamental human rights[179]. Girls and older adolescents (15-19) are more vulnerable to poverty. Girls have been particularly affected by restrictions on movement which impact access to education, healthcare, and jobs.[180] Girls, particularly in IDP or refugee communities or whose mobility outside the household is constrained, face massive disengagement and isolation, impacting their mental well-being.

A grave concern affecting Iraq's youth is limited access to secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational education. If young women are deprived of basic education, they are more likely to enter into child marriage and early childbearing. Marriage is commonly a replacement for education, especially in displaced communities.[181] Adolescent girls (10-14) remain most vulnerable.[182]

Data from the Multiple Indicator cluster Survey (MICS)[183] show that only 49 percent of surveyed girls and women aged 15 to 49 years old feel safe to walk alone in their neighbourhood after dark. Similarly, 12 percent report having experienced various forms of discrimination or harassment in the past 12 months. The average percentage of women aged 20 to 49 years old who were first married or in union before age 18 stands at 24.8 percent nationwide. The rate of married women under 15 is 7.2 percent and 28 percent for women aged 20-24 years old. These ratios are almost identical between urban and rural areas.

Adolescents and youth have a limited voice, which has led to disillusionment and disengagement, as demonstrated in low levels of civic engagement.[184] Fifty-five percent of youth feel that life in the Middle East and North Africa region has deteriorated over the last decade and only half of young Arabs have confidence in their government in dealing with

[178] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion.* [pdf] World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18-web.pdf>].

[179] UNICEF, Ministry of Planning (MoP), *Child Poverty in Iraq: An Analysis of Child Poverty Trends and Policy Recommendations for the National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2017-2021*.

[180] The World Bank Iraq*Iraq-Economic-Monitor* (-2018).

[181] UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Women and Children, 2018.

[182] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2020. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iraq_hno_2020.pdf

[183] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2018. *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6) Briefing*. Iraq: UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/iraq/reports/2018-multiple-indicator- cluster-survey-mics6-briefing>.

[184] Iraq Country Report: Evidence Generation: Participatory Action Research (PAR) with Young People in the Middle East and North Africa**,** UNICEF MENA Regional Office**,** 2020.

unemployment, with that number decreasing to 24 percent in Iraq.[185] When young people are empowered to play meaningful roles within their communities and are given a sense of purpose; evidence shows that they make positive/healthy choices and transcend violence and discrimination.

4.2.5 People with disabilities

Persons with disabilities have limited opportunities for meaningful employment. In Iraq, persons with disabilities suffer from high rates of economic inactivity and unemployment.186 The rate of economic inactivity among women with disabilities in Iraq is 95.4 percent, versus 55.8 percent for men.[187] Women with disabilities have a compounded disadvantage, as employment and labour force participation rates are lower for women than for men in the Middle East, including in Iraq. Taken together with access to meaningful employment opportunities, discriminatory laws and familial pressure, disabled women are at an economic disadvantage, compared to their disabled male peers.

Such challenges in the labour market translate directly into social protection challenges as persons out of the formal labour market are also not covered by social insurance, including pension. It is also an open question whether the poverty-targeted social assistance schemes are sufficiently accessible for persons with disabilities. This is a grave concern as the population over 65 years are more likely to develop a disability.[188]

In the public sector, MOLSA is supposed to allocate six percent of jobs to people with disabilities, but it has not enforced the allocations.[189] Persons with disabilities appear to work informally, and there are limited jobs in the private sector. However, persons with disabilities also find it challenging to get loans from banks to start their businesses.[190] Persons with disabilities in the workforce are often working in low-skilled, low-paid jobs, a direct consequence from on average lower educational attainment. Together, these challenges are making it hard for persons with disabilities to be fully productive citizens.[191]

4.2.6 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Two years after the end of combat operations against ISIL, Iraq still faces significant challenges with caring for and repatriating IDPs and INDP Returnees. As of 29 February 2019,

---

[185] United Nations Children's Fund Middle East and North Africa Office (UNICEF MENARO), 2017. *The Situation for Adolescents and Youth in the Middle East and North Africa: What We Know for Sure, Evidence Brief*. UNICEF MENARO.

[186] Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 2018. *Disability in the Arab Region 2018.* [pdf] ESCWA. Retrieved from: <https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/disability-arab-region-2018-english_1.pdf>.

[187] *Ibid*.

[188] ESCWA 2017, https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/page_attachments/strengthening-social-protection-persons-with-disabilities-advance-copy-en.pdf

[189] United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 2014. Values of Access to Justice and Persons with Disabilities in Iraq. [pdf] USAID. Retrieved from: <https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00K2Z6.pdf> .

[190] *Ibid*.

[191] *Ibid*.

the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) identified 1,399,170 IDPs (233,195 households), dispersed across 18 governorates, 104 districts and 3,004 locations in Iraq.[192] The long time spent away from home (70percent fled before October 2016) coupled with unresolved intergroup dynamics and new sources of instability s like concerns over ISIL's resurgence impact their ability – or desire - to return. IN some cases, the stressor triggers secondary displacement. At the end of 2018, at least 120,000 individuals were secondarily displaced in new locations of displacement or after a failed attempt to return to their location of origin.[193]

During the latest round of data collection, IOM's DTM identified 4,660,404 returnees (776,734 households), dispersed across eight governorates, 38 districts and 1,956 locations in Iraq.[194] Since the second half of 2018 the pace of return – the percentage change in the number of returns – has greatly slowed, dropping from 133 percent, recorded between May 2017 and May 2018, to 10 percent observed between May 2018 and June 2019. In the three governorates of Anbar, Diyala and Erbil return increased by only five percent or less between May 2018 and June 2019. At district level, the return process is nearly stalled in both Al-Ba'aj and Ramadi – respectively the fourth and fifth districts of origin for IDPs.[195]

Long-term intentions suggest an upward trend towards permanent relocation, which now stands at 25 percent. Short-term intentions to remain in displacement have also risen from 68 percent to 75 percent – pointing in the direction of deferring returns. *(Source: IOM, Integrated Location Assessment IV, December 2019)*

When examining obstacles to return, trends indicate that security and safety concerns have decreased in severity from 81 percent in 2016 to 36 percent in 2019, due to the general improvement in security conditions. The three key push factors hindering returns appear to be the lack of job opportunities (73 percent), services (68 percent) and shelter (62 percent) at the location of origin.[196]

It would also appear that the lack of means to remain in displacement (reported by 42 percent in 2016 and 47 percent in 2017) and the issue of 'pushed' returns (26 percent in 2017) triggered many returns at early stages. Incentives/support by government authorities/humanitarian actors (22 percent) and encouragement by community/religious leaders (28 percent), were also relatively strong pull factors in 2017. These returns may have been premature, as evidenced by the high number of returnees still living in high severity conditions as per Return Index data from December 2019 (522,090 individuals across 293 locations).[197]

Access to employment/livelihood opportunities continues to be the main concern of IDPs: 70 percent live in locations where access was reported among the top three needs. Housing remains a pressing issue for the displaced population; 42 percent of IDPs live in locations where housing was mentioned among the top three needs, with no change compared to May 2018. Only 8 percent of households remain settled in critical shelter arrangements – it was

[192] International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2019. Displacement Tracking Matrix: DTM Round
[193] IOM, Integrated Location Assessment IV, December 2019]
[194] International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2019. Displacement Tracking Matrix: DTM Round
[195] IOM, Integrated Location Assessment IV, December 2019
[196] *Ibid.*
[197] See Return Index (RI) 5. The RI is a tool designed to measure the severity of conditions in locations of return. It is based on 16 indicators that represent a set of minimum or critical living conditions that are necessary to make a place conducive to returns. The RI score explains the likelihood of a population group returns and helps define living conditions in locations of return <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex.aspx>

16 percent in 2016 – while the share of the population settled in camps is comparatively increasing each year (from 12 percent in 2016 to 32percent in 2019).[198]

The 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) highlights that a large portion of IDPs still lacks some form of proper documentation. Access to legal assistance and civil documentation remain a major challenge for thousands of vulnerable displaced individuals, especially children, in Iraq. It is estimated that more than 500,000 households were missing important documentation. Living standards are severely affected by missing documentation as individuals cannot exercise their basic rights fully, cannot access basic services or housing, social protection and safety nets, land and property rights, and children without documentation are denied access to education in parts of the country. Populations without documentation are subjected to movement restrictions.

Levels of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Iraq are alarming. A significant number of IDPs and returnees have suffered one or more types of SGBV, including rape, domestic violence, physical abuse, and survival sex. Child protection remains a serious concern; and children and young people among the vulnerable population (IDPs, refugees, asylum seekers) are susceptible to various forms of child abuse, violence and exploitation, including the worst forms of child labour.

Additionally, many children and young people suffer from trauma due to conflict and displacement and require age and gender-responsive specialized PSS and in some cases mental health support, often unavailable in areas of displacement and return. Importantly, birth certificate and documentation are one of the critical challenges for children and young people to access services.

Patriarchal social structures and practices also present challenges to effectively address issues, such as child marriage. Child marriage, usually a precursor to early childbearing with subsequent health effects, remains high in Iraq. Anecdotal evidence suggests this has increased in displacement settings due to the humanitarian crisis, with some families viewing it as a protective strategy to enhance the security of young girls and to expand their survival resources.

4.2.7 Refugees

Iraq has a history of providing asylum to different populations across the region. By the end of 2019, there were 286,949 refugees (87,447 families) registered in Iraq, of which 245,810 are Syrian, 20,678 Turkish, 11,092 Iranian, 7,967 Palestinian, 780 Sudanese and 622 are of other nationalities. In addition to refugees and IDPs, UNHCR's population of concern in Iraq includes an estimated 47,000 stateless persons.[199]

Of the total Syrian caseload, 99 percent of the refugees live in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), with the remaining one percent live in the centre and southern parts of the country. The majority of Syrian refugees are of Kurdish ethnicity and fled Syria in 2012 and 2013.

The KR-I registered a new influx (over 17,000) of Syrian refugees in the last quarter of 2019, with the escalation of military operations in northeast Syria. Approximately 41 percent of

[198] IOM, Integrated Location Assessment IV, December 2019

[199] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2019. *UNHCR Iraq Fact Sheet December 2019*. [online] UNHCR*https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/unhcr-iraq-factsheet-december-2019*.

Syrian refugees live in one of the ten refugee camps across KR-I, and the remaining 59 percent live in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas. Women and children represent up to 71 percent of the total Syrian caseload. According to the Fifth Return Intention Survey, only 2.1 percent of Syrian refugee respondents in Iraq expressed their intention to return to Syria within the next twelve months.

Despite the challenging political and economic climate in Iraq, the protection environment in KR-I remains, because of the accommodating nature of the government. Host communities towards the refugee population. It is important to note that currently, the protection of refugees in Iraq is governed by the 1971 Political Refugee Act, whereby granting refugee status is the responsibility of the Permanent Committee of the Ministry of Interior (PC-MOI). Article 13 of the Act defines a refugee as "Every person who seeks asylum in Iraq for political or military reasons".

Following advocacy from UNHCR, the Iraqi Ministry of Interior (MoI) decided to register Syrian refugees under the 1971 Political Refugee Act at the federal level, which resulted in the provision of PC-MoI cards to a significant number of Syrian refugees, increasing their access to services from the Government of Iraq (GoI) and providing them with increased protection from possible prosecution for illegal entry. Nevertheless, the absence of a practical legal framework at the federal level for the protection of all refugees continues to preclude longer-term residency rights and other legal benefits for many refugees in Iraq.

In the centre and south of the country, freedom of movement of asylum-seekers and refugees are severely impaired mainly due to the security situation, and non-recognition of residency documents issued by the KRG. While refugees' freedom of movement within KR-I is less restricted, concerns remain about inconsistencies in policy and practice between the different governorates with respect to security clearance and issuance of residency permits. The protection environment for refugees of other nationalities remains less favourable than for Syrians, particularly concerning the fees for residency in the KR-I and access to public services. Some nationalities, in particular Palestinians, continue to suffer from discrimination and restrictions on their freedom of movement, especially in Baghdad.

A legal asylum framework in Iraq in line with international standards for refugee protection remains to be developed, although Iraq is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Beyond their legal status in Iraq, refugees have vast needs across Iraq. Ongoing political instability, a rough economic climate, poor public services have affected livelihood opportunities for many refugees and have stretched existing public services and hosting capacities to the brink. Refugees report a lack of access to sustainable employment as their biggest challenge and vulnerability. This also remains the root cause of protection challenges, such as child labour and child marriage.

The findings of the latest Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) demonstrate that economic vulnerability is at the core of many sectoral needs of non-camp refugee households. Refugees report having access to income; however, employment is often temporary or seasonal and does not fully cover the monthly financial needs of the home. The majority of households assessed reported being in debt, accrued to cover daily expenses. Lack of possibilities to include basic needs results in an inability to cover additional costs, like medical care, shelter upgrades and food. Young people often forgo education to start income-generating activities. In 2020, a new MSNA will be conducted to record changes to the operational and protection environment.

Currently, resettlement opportunities remain extremely limited, available only for a small number of acutely vulnerable refugees. The low resettlement quotas allocated to Iraq operation and increasing regulations and restrictions set by resettlement countries have resulted in many refugees being unable to access resettlement in the last years despite their vulnerability and the lack of other foreseeable durable solutions. In 2019, Iraq operation identified 26,000 refugees and asylum-seekers as needing relocation, however, against the resettlement quota and maximum submissions available to the Iraq operation, less than 2 percent were able to be resettled.

Given regional dynamics and obstacles to return, combined with the low resettlement quotas, Iraq's refugee population is expected to remain stable. To address needs, UNHCR will continue to focus on a gradual transition from an emergency humanitarian response to a longer-term solutions-oriented approach. The progressive change complements philanthropic activities with programs strengthen the resilience of the refugee community, host community and host authorities through capacity development and national empowerment in service delivery and coordination, enhanced income-generating programming, and more robust engagement with development actors.

4.2.8 Stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness

Government data has estimated, but not confirmed that there were 47,000 stateless persons at the end of 2018. Categories of stateless persons or groups at risk of statelessness in Iraq include Faili Kurds, Dom, Bidoons, and children of alleged extremists (either child born of rape or those born from forced marriage) who have been denied birth certificates or were issued with birth certificates by ISIL, which are not recognised by Iraqi authorities. Lack of documentation and nationality effectively restricts their access to fundamental rights, including status before the law, further increasing their already heightened vulnerability.

Iraq is not a signatory to the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The Constitution recognizes the right to nationality for every Iraqi (Article 18), including anyone who is born to an Iraqi father and mother. The 2006 Nationality Law places men and women on (near) equal standing in terms of their eligibility to transfer nationality to their children. The Law also allows for the restoration of citizenship to Iraqis deprived of their nationality by decision No. 666 of 1980 (this includes the Faili Kurds - Article 17).

Similarly, except those of Jewish descent who lost their nationality based on Law No. 1 of 1950 and Law No. 12 of 1952, any Iraqi de-naturalised on political, religious, racial or sectarian grounds has the right to restore her/his Iraqi nationality (Article 18). Practical implementation of the legislation is challenged by the lack of implementing regulations defining the procedures as well as stigma and administrative obstacles.

4.3 Environment

Environmental vulnerabilities threaten Iraq and exacerbate other sources of stress, which creates an urgent need for long-term planning and international cooperation on ecological challenges that impact livelihoods. Although Iraq faces some critical environmental problems, there are some translational (shared waterways and sand and dust storms, for example) and cannot be addressed by any one country alone.

Iraq's environment has been subject to several pressures stemming from uncontrolled population growth which has contributed to economic stress and political challenges, as well as pressure on the country's ecological and natural resources. Rising demand for water coupled with poor hydro-management, climate change, protracted conflict, severe environmental degradation brought on by a lack of institutional frameworks and policies as well as natural and humanmade factors is pushing Iraq close to absolute water scarcity where 18percent of the people are living in water-scarce areas.[200] Also, the impact of three conflicts has led Iraq to become the country with the highest contamination of explosive remnants of war in the world, with significant environmental consequences on land access and management.[201]

Recent analysis shows that Iraq will suffer from increased temperatures, intense heat waves, variable annual rainfall with increased intensity, decreased runoff and sea-level rise in the Gulf.[202] While Iraq ranks 130 out of 181 countries in the ND-Gain Index that measures climate vulnerability (with a ranking of 1 being the least vulnerable), Iraq ranks as the 16th least ready country.[203] This is principally due to a weak institutional context for disaster risk management[204] which is limited to the foundational regulatory framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.[205] Moreover, in the last 30 years, Iraq has shifted from being a water-secure to a water-stressed country due to a combination of factors:[206]

- Neighbouring countries' development projects upstream from the Tigris-Euphrates affecting quality and quantity of the water flow.
- Centralized and complicated governance of water, together with inadequate regulatory framework and enforcement.
- Reduced water use efficiency, with a staggering 75 percent used in irrigation.
- Seventy-five percent of central and southern Iraq under irrigation affected by salinity due to poor farming practices; and

[200] Water Scarcity Clock, https://worldwater.io/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=WaterscarcityData&campaignid=6444167483&adgroupid=77198318295&adid=376808482554&gclid=CjwKCAjwgbLzBRBsEiwAXVIygMsNa_96jBe7oUaxRWue4Rduxb7QsZRPlTCP1oBDbuuI5yomfWZhrxoCANkQAvD_BwE

[201] Mine Action Review, 2017 "Clearing the Mines 2018 Report" http://www.mineactionreview.org/country/iraq/anti-personnel-mines>.

[202] By mid-century, projected rainfall is variable with decreases up to 11 percent during the October-March season (RCP8.5), 2-degree temperature rise, and decreased local runoff up to 5 percent annually (RICCAR, 2017)

[203] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands "Climate Change Profile, Iraq", April 2018.

[204] Jàmbá, "Disaster Risk Reduction in Iraq" Journal of Disaster Risk Studies, vol 11, n1, 2019. Available at <https://jamba.org.za/index.php/jamba/article/view/656/1046

[205] National Disaster Law, 2012

[206] Radhwan K Abdulhaleem, "Water Research Consultancy in southern Iraq" Final Report to IOM-FAO Project, May 2019.

- Water contamination due mainly to untreated wastewater discharge.

As expected, environmental stress has contributed directly to political instability. Water shortages and increases in water salinity were the immediate triggers for the mass protests of 2018 in Basra. In the North of the country, the devastation of water scarcity on Iraq's agricultural sector facilitated terror recruitment amongst destitute farmers searching for alternate sources of income.[207] The deterioration of Iraq's agricultural sector not only affects employment, but it also affects internal (and unsustainable) rural to urban migration, it endangers food security and further entrenches Iraq's dependence on oil.

The effects of climate change, water shortage and land and water contamination are having a devastating impact on Iraq's ecosystems, economy and population, triggering loss of biodiversity, livelihoods, reduced hydropower generation, further population displacement from rural to urban areas, health crises, and heightened social unrest. These impacts will also degrade Iraq's Mesopotamian Marshlands (the Ahwar), a World Heritage site with an exceptional diversity of species, many of which are already threatened, endangered, or vulnerable.

As Iraq moves forward, it will need to address the management of its natural resources, the protection of the environment and devise disaster risk management strategies that are key to economic revitalization, social wellbeing, and cohesion for the future of Iraq as a whole. Iraq has most recently submitted its 6th National Report on Biodiversity addresses the challenges facing biodiversity in Iraq including climate change, drought, environmental pollution and others. The Report information will be used to develop subsequent biodiversity conservation activities.

The urgency of Iraq's environmental vulnerabilities can scarcely be exaggerated. Some areas for immediate pushback could include reducing hydrocarbon spillage, waste management, water pollution (no Iraqi city has a fully operating sewage collection and treatment system),[208] fighting desertification through better hydro-management (decreasing soil moisture is one of the key factors driving the frequency of dust storms), increasing the water use awareness level, especially for farmers to shift from flood irrigation to more water-efficient irrigation methods, and investment in solar and other sustainable sources of energy.

Iraq's environmental vulnerabilities cannot be considered in isolation of broader socio-political and economic factors. Environmental stress can trigger economic, political and social shocks that Iraq remains ill-prepared to deal with, making environment resilience an especially urgent area of focus. The country's environment has been subject to converging pressures stemming from population growth, climate change, poor land planning and water and soil management, and encroachment on fragile ecosystems world,[209] and environmental impacts of protracted conflict.

[207] Peter Schwartzstein, "Climate Change and Water Woes Drove ISIS Recruiting in Iraq," National Geographic, Nov. 14, 2017<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2017/11/climate-change-drought-drove-isis-terrorist-recruiting-iraq/>

[208] Bodetti, "Iraq: Beyond Oil and ISIS."

[209] Mine Action Review, 2017 "Clearing the Mines 2018 Report". [online]. Available at: http://www.mineactionreview.org/country/iraq/anti-personnel-mines.

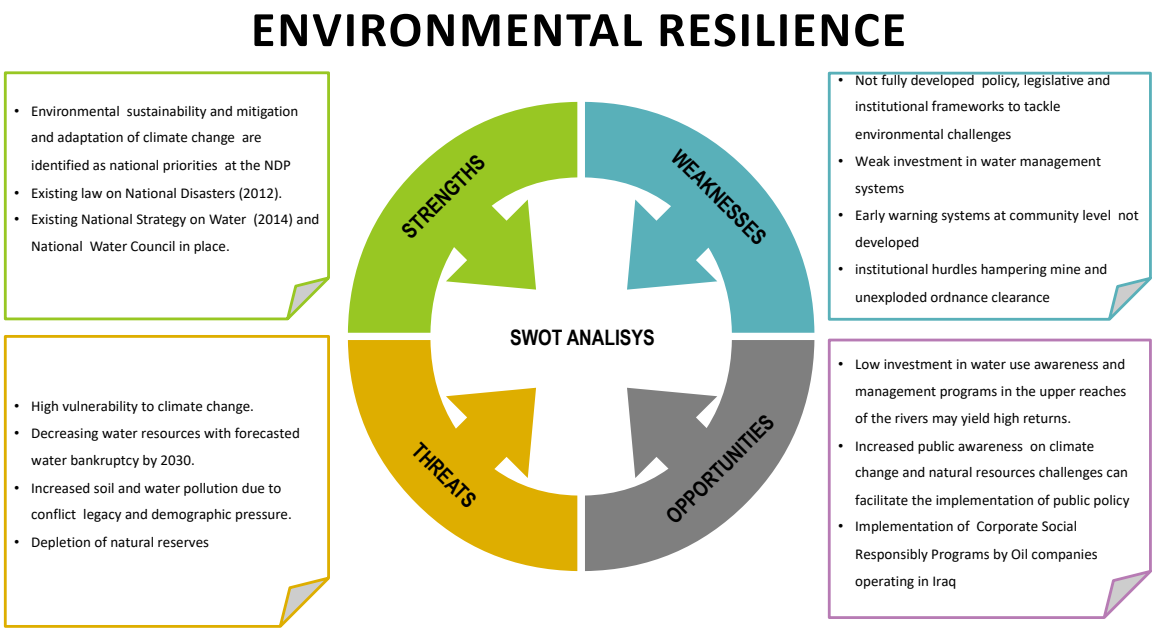


Figure 7 - An environmental SWOT analysis of Iraq. Source: UNAMI 2020

4.3.1 Environmental governance and restoration

Iraq faces severe environmental problems including poor water quality and quantity, air pollution, poor and unregulated solid waste management, conflict-related pollution, and a damaged agricultural sector stemming from decades of conflict and poor governance. The recent conflict with ISIL left significant damage to the environment, with Iraq in need of IQD 6.5 trillion, or USD5.5 million, to repair the damage.[210] However, before ISIL institutions had overlapping mandates and limited capacity, poor governance, pollution impacting the health and lives of vulnerable communities downstream. In the KR-I deforestation in the mountains, and transboundary movement of hazardous waste remain problematic.

Addressing all environmental concerns in Iraq, including those related to climate change, is critical to protect livelihoods, sustain growth, and support diversification in the country. Targeted environmental restoration could (a) improve water resource management (in catchment areas and wetlands); (b) reduce erosion and landslide hazards (through vegetation on slopes); (c) combat sea level rise and storm surges (coast vegetation); (d) fight the expanding problem of soil salinity that reduces land availability for irrigation; and (e) improve urban heat and flooding (through urban greening).

Iraq faces daunting environmental and climate challenges that will affect the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development agenda. As such, the GoI identifies (as a priority), ecological sustainability and the mitigation and adaptation of climate change in the NDP.[211] The government has created a specialized technical committee to support the NCSD on issues

[210] World Bank, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction & Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates.* : <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf>.

[211] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2018. *Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGS: Project Annual Report*. Baghdad.

on environmental sustainability and the green economy. The Iraqi government also identified SDGs 6, 13, and 15 as priority areas and SDG 11 and 14 as a second priority.[212] The Government of Iraq also started adaptation planning.

The government accepts that all of the SDGs are interdependent, especially those about climate change and the environment. Thus, any changes to SDG 1 (poverty reduction), SDG 2 (food security), SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 16 (peace and security) would immediately impact all SDGs.

4.3.2 Climate change

It is important to stress the point that Iraq, being the downstream riparian country in the Tigris-Euphrates river basin, will be the worst hit by climate change. Upper riparian countries have intensified their efforts to construct large dams over the past decade, which will have significant adverse impacts downstream. Some insight into its status vis-à-vis its neighbours can be seen in the table below.

Future expectations suggest that Iraq will suffer from increased temperatures, intense heat waves, decreased mean annual rainfall with increased intensity, reduced runoff and sea-level rise in the Gulf.[213] Between 1970 and 2004, Iraq's annual mean temperature increased by one to two degrees Celsius.[214] It is projected that the yearly mean temperature will increase by two degrees Celsius by mid-century and be accompanied by more frequent heatwaves.[215]

Drought has become more intense and persistent in the central and southwestern parts of Iraq. Prolonged drought has also taken a toll on rain-fed crops in northern of Iraq[216] Variable precipitation, particularly during the wet season (October-May) whereby mean annual average rainfall is expected to decrease by up to 11 percent by mid-century coupled with increased rainfall intensity can compound adverse impacts upon agriculture. Localized runoff to recharge aquifers may decrease up to five percent annually, resulting in more prolonged and severe droughts,[217] which may further result in climate-induced displacement.

[212] *Ibid.*
[213] United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) et al. 2017. Arab Climate Change Assessment Report – Main Report. Beirut, E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/RICCAR/Report.
[214] K4D Helpdesk, 2018. Environmental Risks in Iraq. [pdf] UK Department for International Development. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b3b63a3e5274a6ff466faa5/Environmental_risks_in_Iraq.pdf>.
[215] United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) et al. 2017. Arab Climate Change Assessment Report – Main Report. Beirut, E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/RICCAR/Report.
[216] K4D Helpdesk, 2018. *Environmental Risks in Iraq*. [pdf] UK Department for International Development. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b3b63a3e5274a6ff466faa5/Environmental_risks_in_Iraq.pdf>.
[217] United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) et al. 2017. Arab Climate Change Assessment Report – Main Report. Beirut, E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/RICCAR/Report.

Table 3: 2019 INFORM Risk Index: Iraq and its neighbours[218]

Name of Country	0 = lower risk 10 = highest risk	INFORM Risk	INFORM Rank out of 191
Iraq **DRR Score: 8.4**	INFORM Risk	7.2	17
	Hazards and Exposures	8.6	5
	Vulnerability	6.1	27
	Lack of Coping Capacity	7.0	21
Syria **DRR Score: 4.6**	INFORM Risk	7.1	9
	Hazards and Exposures	8.6	6
	Vulnerability	7.4	7
	Lack of Coping Capacity	5.7	55
Iran **DRR Score: 4.4**	INFORM Risk	4.9	51
	Hazards and Exposures	6.3	28
	Vulnerability	4.2	75
	Lack of Coping Capacity	4.5	96
Jordan **DRR Score: 6.1**	INFORM Risk	4.1	80
	Hazards and Exposures	2.6	120
	Vulnerability	6.3	22
	Lack of Coping Capacity	4.2	109
Saudi Arabia Score: 0	INFORM Risk	2.3	143
	Hazards and Exposures	3.3	97
	Vulnerability	1.0	184
	Lack of Coping Capacity	3.5	134
Kuwait **DRR Score: 0**	INFORM Risk	2.0	157
	Hazards and Exposures	1.3	165
	Vulnerability	1.6	161
	Lack of Coping Capacity	3.9	122

[218] Inform Index for Risk Management (INFORM), 2019. *Inform Country Risk Profile* - Iraq. <http://www.inform-index.org/countries/country-profiles>

4.3.3 Gender and environmental management

Globally, women are adversely impacted by climate change and environmental stresses. Women in rural areas are dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood to secure water, food and energy for cooking and heating.[219] The effects of climate change, including drought, uncertain rainfall, and deforestation, make it harder to secure these resources. In comparison with men, women face historical disadvantages, which include limited access to decision-making and economic assets that compound the challenges of and increase their vulnerabilities to climate change.[220]

Due to their roles, unequal access to resources and limited mobility, women in many contexts are also disproportionately affected by natural disasters, such as floods, fires, and mudslides.[221] However, women are not only victims of climate change, but also active agents of change regarding both climate change mitigation and adaptation.[222] Women's responsibilities in households and communities as stewards of natural resources should be utilised to inform climate action, as they have a substantial body of knowledge and expertise that can be used in climate change mitigation, disaster reduction and adaptation strategies.[223] It is therefore vital to strengthen women's participation in national environment protection, disaster preparedness and risk response to climate action.

4.3.4 Air pollution

Iraq also suffers from air pollution caused by a variety of factors, including the use of low-quality fuel in transport, power generation, and the industrial sectors; a significant increase in the number of personal cars in the last decade or so; the absence of an adequate public transport system; emissions from industrial facilities; open burning of waste due to a lack of sufficient waste management facilities and services; and an increase in illegal logging and tree-cutting for fuel use.[224]

Continual flaring of associated and natural gas in oil fields leads to high levels of emissions and is contributing to a deterioration of air quality. Currently, Iraq is flaring around 70 percent of natural gas that it produces, releasing approximately 20 million tons of carbon dioxide per year to the atmosphere.[225]

---

[219] UN Women Watch, 2009. *Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change.* [<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/downloads/Women_and_Climate_Change_Factsheet.pdf>.

[220] 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2008. *Gender perspectives on climate change.* <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw52/issuespapers/Genderpercent20andpercent20climatepercent20chang epercent20paperpercent20final.pdf>.

[221] *Ibid*.

[222] *Ibid*.

[223] *Ibid*.

[224] World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic*: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL- cleared-02132017.pdf>

[225] *Ibid*.

4.3.5 Sand and dust storms

Iraq is one of the most affected countries in the Middle East in regard to the occurrences of sand and dust storms. The frequency of the phenomenon has increased drastically in the last decade and its increasing continuously. The events of sand and dust storms are either regional or local. One of the main reasons behind the development of sand and dust storms is the climatic changes within the region, especially the drastic decrease in the annual rate of rainfall, besides environmental changes, such as the drying of the marshes, land degradation, and desertification.[226]

4.3.6 Water resources

It is crucial to have a clear understanding of how Iraq uses its water resources (i.e. agriculture, industry, households, service institutions such as hospitals and schools, etc.), the impact of internal displacement, the impact of recent water crises, especially in the south of Iraq, and the impact of the availability of and access to water resources on social cohesion, public health services, and overall quality of life.

Water demand is steadily increasing due to population growth, environmental considerations, and economic development.[227] The deteriorating quantity and quality of water have resulted in almost 40 percent of historically irrigated agricultural areas out of production. In comparison, 70 percent of cropland is affected by high soil salinity, which significantly limits crop yields.[228] Agriculture is the largest water user, with 85 percent of surface water for irrigation purposes.

According to FAO, water management in agriculture, as well as the introduction of water-efficient modern irrigation technology and equipment, is needed. Inadequate water supply also has a direct economic impact on the private sector, whereby the average manufacturing firm in Iraq reported experiencing 17 water outages per month. Irrigation is also suffering from water shortages. Severe problems ranging from widespread deterioration of irrigation infrastructure to the reduced operation and maintenance of the systems, inefficient water use, soil salinity, weak institutional support, and the lack of a regulatory framework for the efficient use and pricing of irrigation water has affected irrigation in the country.

The water damage caused by ISIL has severely impacted the water sector. Damages are estimated at 134 billion Iraqi dinars, or USD115 million, with the most damaged assets being barrages, pumping stations, water bridges, dams, dykes and levees.[229]

Any negative impact on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, whether natural or due to human action, will determine water availability in most of Iraq. The southern governorates are the

---

[226] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276048930_Sand_and_dust_storm_events_in_Iraq)

[227] Danboos, A, Jaafar, O & El-Shafie, A 2017, 'Water scarcity analysis, assessment and alleviation: New approach for arid environment' *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research*, vol. 12, no. 18, pp. 7536-7545.

[228] World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic*<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL-cleared-02132017.pdf>

[229] World Bank, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction & Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates* <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf>

most affected – there is already a significant notable decline in surface water and groundwater resources, and a decline in water quality.[230] This point was raised by SRSG Plasschaert, who has issued statements on the water crisis and environment, including in her security council briefings.

Threats of water shortages are due to a variety of internal and external challenges.[231] Externally, climate change and water resource policies of neighbouring countries contribute to such risks. Iraq is very dependent on the on the water resources of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, which supply more than half of Iraq's freshwater resources, and much of this surface water crosses in from neighbouring countries, making Iraq vulnerable to water policies outside its control.[232] Almost all of Iraq's water from the Euphrates River originates in Turkey and Syria, and approximately 50-60 percent of Tigris River water originates from Turkey and Iran.[233] The lack of an international agreement on the Euphrates and Tigris river basin that extends beyond Iraq to Turkey, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan affects riparian rights between the countries.

Additionally, more significant shortages of water resources in Iraq are expected as Turkey and Syria continue to expand the development of their irrigation projects along the Euphrates, and likewise by Turkey and Iran in the Tigris basin.[234]

Internally, water resource management, the high cost of water and low quality of services, pose significant challenges to the availability of water. Iraq's water sector has suffered from decades of conflict and sanctions that left its institutions weakened and resulted in the under-investment and chronic deterioration of its infrastructure assets.[235] Public spending on the water sector increased rapidly between 2007 and 2012,[236] and the average annual public expenditure on the water as a proportion of total federal spending in 2012 was almost four percent, the equivalent of 1.8 percent of GDP.[237]

Inadequate domestic water usage regulations and enforcement, leaky pipes, weak regulation around the dumping of toxins, and insufficient and derelict water and sewage treatment facilities are also contributing factors. The high costs and issues in management have led the private sector to fill in the gap on water and sanitation activities amidst challenges to growth

---

[230] The Economist (May 2018). Climate change is making the Arab World more miserable <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and- africa/2018/06/02/climate-change-is-making-the-arab-world-more-miserable>

[231] Al-Muqdadi, SW, Omer, MF, Abo, R, and Naghshineh, A, 2016. Dispute over Water Resource Management—Iraq and Turkey. *Journal of Environmental Protection*, No. 17(2016), p.1097 - 1099.

[232] K4D Helpdesk, 2018. *Environmental Risks in Iraq*. UK Department for International Development. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b3b63a3e5274a6ff466faa5/Environmental_risks_in_Iraq.pdf>

[233] *Ibid*.

[234] *Ibid*.

[235] World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL- cleared-02132017.pdf>.

[236] World Bank Group, 2014. *Republic of Iraq Public Expenditure Review: Toward More Efficient Spending for Better Service Delivery.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/611781468253505876/pdf/899160PUB0978100Box385216B00PUBLIC0.pdf>

[237] World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic*<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL-cleared-02132017.pdf>.

in the sector. Lastly, the capacity of institutions like the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Water Resources to provide services to the sector has declined over the past two decades.[238] The National Water Council (sometimes referred to as the Supreme Water Committee), created in 2014 is tasked with developing with partners a coordinated government response on water issues. The Prime Minister himself chaired the Committee in June 2018, highlighting the seriousness of the issue for the government.[239]

4.3.7 Chemicals and waste

Exponential growth in waste generation with increasing diversity in its composition results in the new complex and other hazardous waste streams leading to severe environmental and public health impacts. For example, e-waste is an emerging waste stream, which is expected to increase due to increased consumption and reduced length of the life cycle of electrical and electronic products.

Improper waste management practices will not only pollute land, air and water but also impede the provision of necessities for public health such as clean water, clean air and safe food, and disproportionally affects more impoverished communities like waste pickers and other vulnerable groups such as recent migrants, unemployed, disabled, or elderly persons, women and children. At the national level, a municipal solid waste generation had increased from 11.4 million tons in 2010 to 14.9 million tons in 2016. Only 64 percent of this waste is collected. Besides, the country is also generating more than 9,000 tons of industrial waste every year.

During the last three decades, Iraq has suffered from wars and post-conflict crises that led to weak institutions and international isolation. The National Environment Strategy and Action Plan (NESAP) puts sound management of chemicals and integrated waste management as two of the strategic objectives and top priorities to ensure the protection of human health. Since the establishment of the Ministry of Environment (now called the Ministry of Health and Environment), the Government of Iraq exerted considerable efforts to mitigate impacts of hazardous waste and harmful substances including chemicals and to join international conventions. Iraq is now a Party to the Basel, Stockholm, and Rotterdam Conventions. It is also in the process of ratifying the Minamata Convention. The Ministry of Health and Environment has constituted a Department that deals with chemicals, established the Chemicals Synergies Committee and initiated many directives and regulations throughout the lifecycle of chemicals. Implementation of these MEAs and operationalization of a holistic approach for waste management are vital challenges for environmental management in Iraq.

4.3.8 Environmental impacts of conflict

(i) Conflict pollution

A legacy of environmental pollution due to conflicts has undermined the GoI's ability to monitor and manage the resulting contaminated sites effectively. The country has suffered widespread destruction of infrastructure from systematic and extensive sabotage by ISIL

[238] *Ibid*.
[239] Rudaw News (2018) 'Southern Iraq water scarcity to increase, resulting in possible displacement. <http://www.rudaw.net/english/world/08082018>.

and military operations to recapture those areas.[240] The hazardous waste and land contamination that the continuous conflicts within the country have created are strongly linked to the surroundings and in particular to the vulnerability of the local natural environment and population.[241]

Military operations and sabotage and looting of oil and mining facilities, military-industrial sites, chemical and pharmaceutical facilities, power plants nuclear research facilities are a signal feature of conflict since 2003. Oil well fires stockpiles and munitions disposal sites, depleted uranium (DU) and other toxic remnants of war (TRW), military scrap metal (containing PCBs, heavy metals, asbestos, DU, mineral oils) have all created a toxic environment at the local level in many conflict-affected areas. This has led to the direct exposure of civilians to poisonous and sometimes radioactive materials and contaminated soil and groundwater, and will likely have a long term environmental and public health impact.[242] Although there is anecdotal evidence by doctors in Iraq regarding increased congenital disabilities and rates of cancer have been widely reported,[243] a lack of thorough epidemiological research into this has stifled any attempts to link conflict contamination to them

Conflict pollution has played a significant role in the deterioration of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity.[244] Water infrastructure has also been weaponized for tactical reasons during the ISIL conflict.

(ii) Debris management

A major environmental problem created by the ISIL conflict is the generation of massive quantities of debris including in major urban centres such as Mosul and Ramadi, but also secondary towns and villages in Ninewa, Anbar, Salah El-Deen, and Diyala governorates. For example, in Mosul city alone, it is estimated that the conflict created around 8-10 million tonnes of debris. The International Organization of Migration cites destroyed houses as the most critical obstacle for the return for the estimated 1.5 million displaced persons in the country.

A rudimentary approach comprising debris clearance and unplanned dumping has so far been pursued, which often means transferring the problem from one location to another with significant adverse environmental impacts. This includes dumping of debris in sensitive

---

[240] United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2017. *Technical Note – Environmental issues in areas retaken from ISIL: Mosul, Iraq* <https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/Iraq/Iraqpercent20Technicalpercent20Note_September2017.pdf>

[241] United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2007. *UNEP in Iraq: Post-Conflict Assessment, Clean-up and Reconstruction.* [pdf] UNEP. Retrieved from: <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/17462/UNEP_Iraq.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

[242] Toxic Remnants of War Project, 2014. *Pollution Politics: Power, Accountability and Toxic Remnants of War.* [pdf] Toxic Remnants of War Project. Retrieved from: <http://www.toxicremnantsofwar.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/TRW_Pollution_Politics_Report.pdf>

[243] Fernandez, B, 2018. *Iraq, 15 years on: A toxic US legacy.* [online] *Middle East Eye 16* March. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/iraq-15-years-toxic-us-legacy-1536228276>

[244] World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL- cleared-02132017.pdf>

areas including wadi channels and along riverbanks. Furthermore, the lack of coordinated debris management plans has severe implications for carbon emissions from debris transport, land take and loss of limited disposal capacity, and environmental damage from quarrying for substitute materials.

4.3.9 Land degradation and loss of biodiversity

Land degradation and loss of biodiversity pose significant threats to Iraq's socio-economic and environmental wellbeing. World Bank data from 2018 estimates an approximate 26 percent degradation of land. The causes of environmental degradation are attributed to increasing population growth of one third in the previous decade,[245] which contributed to growing needs for resources like food, energy, housing and water. There is also intensified pressure on the environment due to higher levels of disposed of solid and liquid wastes.

Practices such as unsustainable agriculture and illegal hunting of wild animals and birds threaten the continuation of life in ecosystems and have led to land degradation and desertification. Other factors such as poor environmental awareness, weak, inadequate environmental monitoring systems, and lack of institutional capacity in environmental protection also contributed to land degradation and biodiversity loss. The cost of environmental degradation in Iraq accounts for 4.9 – 8.0 percent of the GDP, with an average of 6.4 percent or 5.5 billion USD a year.[246]

Land in Iraq faces deterioration, desertification and degradation, particularly in the form of the movement of sand dunes and a frequent occurrence of dust and sandstorms in the central and southern regions of the country. The area of land facing desertification, excluding the Kurdistan region, is 66,946 km^2 which accounts for over 15 percent of the country's overall territory. According to the Ministry of Agriculture in 2016, dunes constituted 1,000 km^2 throughout the central and southern regions and around 137,500 km^2 across the entire country. If the government does not take action to combat the effects of desertification, more than 53 percent of the total area of Iraq, equivalent to 93,000km^2, could be affected by desertification.[247]

While land degradation poses a critical threat to biodiversity by removing habitats for wild species, other human activities such as unsustainable agriculture, commercial development and hunting pose additional threats to ecosystems and biodiversity. Among the 682 species currently identified as being at risk of extinction in Iraq, it is estimated that

- 449 are at risk due to biological resource use.
- 248 are at risk as a result of residential and commercial development.
- 242 are at risk due to climate change and severe weather.
- 199 are at risk because of human intrusions and disturbance.
- 198 are at risk as a result of agriculture and aquaculture; and

[245] The World Bank Data, 2018
[246] Sixth National Report of Iraq to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2018
[247] Sixth National Report of Iraq to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2018

- 143 are at risk owing to natural system modifications.[248]

Therefore, in addition to sustainable land management practices, additional measures against unsustainable human activities that threaten the biodiversity should be established to preserve the environment.

Iraq's biodiversity has deteriorated in type and density over time due to conflict and the fragmentation of agricultural lands in industrial and urban activities.[249] The Mesopotamian marshes, situated in the most fertile part of the country, are a particular site of concern. The wetlands are highly fragmented, affecting the survival of many species, the health of the marshes and the people whose livelihoods depend on the environmental services provided by them.[250]

Wetland areas are essential for water resources, filtration, and drought and flood management. The drainage and diversion of water supplies for agriculture, oil exploration and its use for production and military purposes since the 1980s are the most severe threat to the marshes.[251] Restoration efforts after the 2003 war have been patchy because of noncompliance with environmental flow allocations high soil and water salinities and periodic drought.[252] Pollution from oil activities in the Iraqi ports has caused significant damage to regional waters, which has harmed biodiversity and negatively affected fisheries and marine waters.[253]

The severe degradation of biodiversity is attributable to a variety of factors including unregulated hunting and harvesting of threatened species; trade in endangered species; high salinity and ecological pollution from wastewater; air pollution and thermal pollution from power plants; uncontrolled development; and a lack of protection in many of Iraq's most critical biodiverse sites.[254]

[248] The IUCN Red List of threatened species. Please note that some species are associated with more than one threat.
[249] *Ibid*.
[250] K4D Helpdesk, 2018. *Environmental Risks in Iraq*. . <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b3b63a3e5274a6ff466faa5/Environmental_risks_in_Iraq.pdf>
[251] Fawzi, MN, and Mahdi, AB, 2014. Iraq's inland water quality and their impact on the Northwestern Arabian Gulf. *Marsh Bulletin*, 9 (1), 1–22.
[252] *Ibid*.
[253] World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic.* : <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL- cleared-02132017.pdf> .
[254] K4D Helpdesk, 2018. *Environmental Risks in Iraq*. [pdf] UK Department for International Development. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b3b63a3e5274a6ff466faa5/Environmental_risks_in_Iraq.pdf>

4.4 Governance and Institutions

Governance has a direct impact on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The most relevant SDG for governance is SDG 16 aiming to: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."[255] SDG 16 is not only important in its own right, but is also an important enabling goal for the entire sustainable development agenda. As such, SDG 16 is often an enabler for SDGs 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 17.[256] When it comes to "Good governance", the NDP sets forth seven governance-related priorities, namely: decentralization, private sector engagement and development, public participation, public services, e-governance, anti-corruption, rule of law, human rights, and access to justice.[257]

Compared with other countries in the region, Iraq ranks low in many indicators related to good governance.[258] In fact, the 2018 Fragile States Index qualified Iraq as a 'high alert state', indicating that it lacks the administrative and basic state capacities required for an effective governance.[259] Weak and ineffective governance capacities coupled with a lack of a unified vision for the future, slow down the process of state-building and the very much needed peace-building process after the defeat of ISIL, generating large obstacles in achieving the SDGs. In 2017, the World Bank Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD)[260] identified Iraq's weak and malfunctioning governance structures as the main obstacle towards sustainable development in the country.

The Prime Minister selects the heads of Ministries and presents it to the CoR to be voted upon. The *Muhassasa* (sectarian quota) system has experienced a new development on the ground, in terms of civic movements increasingly growing and impacting the reshaping of the political scene, resulting in reducing or deflecting the influence of ethno-sectarian blocs to some extent and providing hope for an improved governance in the political processes.

4.4.1 Iraq's governance structures

The government is comprised of four levels: central (federal) government, governorate, district, and sub-district. The federal government is composed of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The executive branch comprises the President, the Prime Minister, and the Council of Ministers.

---

[255] United Nations (UN), 2018. *Sustainable Development Report 2018*. [<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>

[256] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2018. *Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGS: Project Annual Report*. Baghdad: UNDP.

[257] *Ibid*.

[258] Idris, I., 2018. *Inclusive and sustained growth in Iraq*. [pdf] *K4D Helpdesk.* <https://assets.*publishing*.service.gov.uk/media/5b6d747440f0b640b095e76f/Inclusive_and_sustained_growth_in_Iraq.pdf>

[259] Fund for Peace, 2018. *Fragile States Index*: <http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/951181805-Fragile-States-Index-Annual- Report-2018.pdf.

[260] World Bank, 2017. Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/Iraq-Systematic- Country-Diagnostic>

The legislative branch consists of an elected Council of Representatives (CoR) numbering 329 MPs, presided over by the Speaker. The Three Presidencies refers to the President, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of Parliament. The federal judiciary is composed of the Supreme Judicial Council, the Federal Supreme Court, the Court of Cassation, the Public Prosecution Department, the Judiciary Oversight Commission, and other federal courts.

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) comprises three governorates – Erbil, Dohuk, and Sulaymaniyah. Like the federal structure, the government of KRI is composed of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The executive branch comprises the President, the Prime Minister and a total of 19 ministries. The legislative comprises the Parliament consisting of 111 MPs.

Iraq is a federal state divided into 18 governorates, including three in the KRI, each with an elected Governor who heads the affairs of the governorates and the respective departments linked to the federal or KRI ministries. At the legislative level, each governorate comprises a Provincial Council (PC) made up of elected PC members.

In a hierarchical chain, the Governor and departments at the governorate level oversee the Mayor and local offices at the district level while district Mayors oversee heads of sub-districts. The same applies at the legislative level whereby PC members oversee the work of local councils at the district level.

Currently, with the dissolution of the Provincial and local Councils in November 2019 (excluding in the KRI), the affairs of the governorates are managed by the Governor's offices, with oversight duties assigned to respective CoR MPs. The Governors maintain administrative and financial authority while MPs hold legislative authority in place of the PCs. This system will remain in place until the next provincial and local elections.

Following protracted deliberations and negotiations between political blocs, the new law on elections was approved by the parliament on 24 December 2019. The law is expected to provide for a new electoral system which would reduce the number of PC members and impact on constituencies within the governorates. However, the final text of the law has not been issued to date (March 2020).

(i) Legitimacy and acceptability of the state

The legitimacy and acceptability of the state is a fundamental aspect in society-state relations, and essential in the social contract. The factors and perceptions impacting the population's trust are many, and include security, the provision of social services, respect for the rule of law, the equitable distribution of national wealth, and the provision of equal opportunity for all citizens to fulfil their potential. These factors constitute some of the key responsibilities of the state that contribute to improving its acceptability and legitimacy.

Surveys on public perceptions indicate that Iraqi citizens see their political leaders and government officials as corrupt and driven by individual or partisan interests, as well as lacking commitment towards national interests and citizens' rights. The National Democracy Institute's 2019 poll[261] found that 75 percent of Iraqis stated that they did not

[261] National Democratic Institute (NDI), 2019. *NDI Poll: Improved Social Cohesion, but Iraqis Remain Dissatisfied with Government*
<https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Poll%20-%20July%202019%20%28English%29.pdf> [.

believe the country was headed in the right direction. Unemployment, corruption, security, education and access to basic services were deemed the top priorities the government needed to address.[262]

Despite a comparative decrease in violent incidents during the 2018 elections, the turnout of voters hit an all-time low, with only 44.5 percent general turnout across the country.[263] In some governorates, the turnout was even lower, such as Baghdad, where only 32 percent of its citizens cast votes,[264] demonstrating a lack of public trust in Iraq's electoral and political systems established after 2003.

Against this backdrop, in October 2019, large-scale popular protests erupted across Iraq initially over poor social services, a lack of economic opportunity and widespread corruption. Demands then evolved to a complete overhaul of the political and electoral system and the protests eventually led to the resignation of the Prime Minister at the end of November 2019. As in its past responses to popular protests, the government addressed the latest uprising not as a governance failure and the legitimate expression of its people's grievances, but as a security issue, prioritising its own survival at the expense of Iraqi citizens. This chasm has exacerbated the divide between the government and its people, opening potential space for non-state actors to thrive.

Substantial international efforts have gone into public sector reform and decentralisation over the years, without Iraqi ownership. Progress can only be achieved through the state moving from a securitised to a citizen-based approach in fulfilling its responsibilities. Unfortunately, the state has avoided addressing the structural issues underlying weak governance and has focused instead on maintaining its patronage networks. In doing so, it has strengthened sectarian identities, including through institutions outside the state control, engendering the continuation of the demonstrations. Widespread corruption, the still-incomplete decentralisation process and the inflated public sector administration are the long-standing challenges contributing to the situation as well.

(ii) Elections

Iraq has initiated a range of electoral reforms to address heightened public demand for an independent and impartial electoral management and for changes to the electoral system.

The CoR recently passed the new Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) Law which significantly overhauls the IHEC, affecting no less than 40 percent of its staffing capacity, particularly with changes to the Board of Commissioner's composition and at senior level positions. The new law provided for the appointment of (9) new commissioners, all of whom first class judges, chosen by lottery based on nomination by the High Judicial Council (5 members), State Shura Council (2 members) and the Kurdistan High Judicial Council (2 members). It also mandates the appointment of new officials for senior and mid-level positions in the restructured IHEC.

---

[262] *Ibid*.

[263] "Iraq: Election results within two days, turnout at record low", *Al Jazeera English,* May 13, 2018, < https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/iraq-election-results-days-turnout- record-180513061807758.html>.

[264] *Ibid*.

On December 24th, 2019, the CoR also voted on the draft electoral law following protracted deliberation and negotiation among parliamentary political blocs, primarily concerning the provisions on the electoral system. The draft law mentions smaller constituencies based on existing Iraqi administrative districts, candidates representing political parties or candidates and seats to be allocated to candidates who receive the highest number of votes. However, the provisions and annexes pertaining to the size and demarcation of the electoral constituencies remain pending. As such, the electoral law is yet to be enacted and has thus not yet been published in the official gazette.

Amidst ongoing overhaul of its structure, pending electoral law reforms and calls for holding early elections, the IHEC needs to quickly rebuild its capacities to attain the level of readiness required for organizing the elections. It also needs to focus on rebuilding public trust in order to encourage increased participation in the elections.

To face these tasks and challenges, there is increased expectation from the IHEC and the Iraqi public of more robust UN support and presence. As per its mandate, the UN is uniquely positioned to provide advice and technical support to the IHEC to organize the upcoming elections within set timelines and in order to meet public expectations. The UN can draw upon available electoral expertise, that can be deployed to support the Commission, at its HQ and field offices, in preparation for the elections.

(iii) Decentralisation

In recent decades, decentralization has been promoted by policy experts and academics around the world as a solution to inefficient governance, poor service delivery and lack of accountability which characterise several centralised states. Also, decentralization is highlighted by the Iraqi NDP as one of seven core priorities for "good governance".

The benefits of decentralization in post-conflict contexts are contingent on other dynamics that need to be considered for the specific scenario in question. This is reflected in the changes made in 2013 and 2018 to Law 21 on 'Governorates not Organized into a Region' regarding governorates' control over public services and appointment of officials.

Since 2013, responsibility for public services was transferred to governorates, although not always with the necessary resources and differentiation of functions across government tiers reflected primarily in the legal amendments of 2018. Government decentralization aims to increase the participation of the public in the decision-making process, building more democratic governance that responds better to the needs and concerns of the population. Sub-national actors (at a governorate, district and local level) have a better understanding of the needs of their constituents and have a greater interest in serving them since their re-election depends on them.

There is consensus that decentralization can help with the stabilization prospects by providing a mechanism for citizens' participation in local governance and improving service delivery, jointly contributing to improving the trust citizens have in the state and strengthening its legitimacy.[265] Article 116 of the Constitution established that the Republic of Iraq is a decentralized, federal state.. Still, the issue of decentralisation continues to be

[265] Brinkerhoff, D.W., and Johnson, R.W., 2009. Decentralized local governance in fragile states: Learning from Iraq. *International Review of Administrative Sciences,* 75(4), p.585-607.

ambiguous, requiring a unified vision from political leaders. This is complicated by the fact that Iraq has four levels of formal government.[266]

The Constitution also recognizes the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) as an autonomous federal region with its parliament and government.[267] Subsequently, article 119 allows the creation of new areas upon the agreement of one or more governorates, which must request a referendum to the central government. The request must be submitted by one-third of the council members of each governorate intending to form a region, or by one-tenth of the voters in each of the governorates planning to create a region.

The reluctance by some political actors to strengthen the decentralization process stems from a socio-cultural perception of decentralization as a loss of power by the central government and federalism as the first step to secession.[268] Also, decentralization contrasts with the highly centralized and authoritarian vision of the previous Ba'athist regime, which had inevitably influenced the political and institutional culture of the country, and which is compounded by Iraq's single-commodity economy.

Decentralisation is also perceived as a threat to national unity and identity. Additionally, despite Article 115, there is a lack of legal definition regarding the powers linked to each level of government and/or providing dispute resolution mechanisms. Despite article 116 describing the regions and governorates as "decentralized", article 122 defines this decentralization as "administrative", limiting their capabilities and scope of action.

Humanitarian and development actors may need multiple sets of permissions from differing authorities, causing long delays in their service provision. For this reason, the Iraqi state is sometimes referred to as a "deconcentrated administration", meaning the central government is merely transferring power to an administrative unit of the central government at the local level, instead of actually "devolving" the power to the sub-national entities, thereby allowing the central government to control the administration and service delivery at the governorate and district level.[269]

Nevertheless, it is essential to mention that while many donor governments have prioritised decentralisation in their future strategies in Iraq, decentralization is not a top priority in the electoral list. According to a 2017 poll conducted by the Bayan Centre, less than three percent of respondents considered that resolving issues between the centre and the periphery should be a key priority for candidates running in the 2018 elections.[270] Similarly,

---

[266] The Iraq government is comprised of four levels: central/federal government, governorate, district and sub-district. The central government consists of thirty-six ministries, Constitutional bodies, independent bodies, central government agencies and several commissions.

[267] Art. 117 of the Iraq Constitution.

[268] Abbas, A.M., and Jassam, R.S., 2016. Dangers of Forming New Federal Regions in Iraq on Ethnic- Sectarian Bases. *Open Journal of Political Science,* 6(3) p.316. <https://www.scirp.org/ journal/PaperInformation.aspx?paperID=68878>.

[269] Al-Mawlawi, A., 2018. Functioning Federalism' in Iraq: A Critical Perspective. *LSE Middle East Centre Blog [blog] 11* March. Available at: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/03/11/functioning-federalism-in- iraq-a-critical-perspective/> ; Siegle, J. and O'Mahony, P., 2005. *Assessing the merits of decentralization as a conflict mitigation strategy*. Washington, DC.: Development Alternatives Inc. Retrieved from<https://africacenter.org/wp- content/uploads/2016/02/Assessing-the-Merits-of-Decentralization-as-a-Conflict-Mitigation- Strategy.pdf>.

[270] Saget, K., Moftin, A. & Al - Hamoud, A., 2017. *Voters' attitudes towards the next round of elections in Iraq.* [pdf] Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies. Retrieved from: <http://www.bayancenter.org/en/ wp-content/uploads/2017/11/08976545.pdf>

the 2017 NDI survey showed that only 14 percent of the respondent felt that decentralisation was a useful tool to reduce reliance on the central government. However, 42 percent believed that it was important to end the sectarian quotas for government jobs.[271] Meanwhile, the government and political class took a number of decisions which hinder the decentralisation process, including to delay Provincial Council elections and suspend the work of the Councils.

Progress on decentralisation can only be achieved through a process led by a mature political class and strong institutions. Decentralisation must feature amongst the government's top priorities. It should initially focus on physical devolution, conceding budgetary powers to the subnational level, and on strengthening regional and federal relations. In this regard, the improvement of relations between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Federal Government is key to achieving progress, while reasserting Iraqi sovereignty and authority.

(iv) Participatory governance

Participatory governance in its broadest sense is defined as the ability for a population to participate in decision-making processes. A functioning and fair democracy require access to public officials, reliable media and civil society to act as an accountability mechanism and avenue to exercise freedom of speech and assembly.

Although the Government identifies "public participation in the decision-making process as a key objective for good governance"[272] and the Constitution calls for increasing citizens' participation in the political and social reconciliation processes[273], many obstacles remain to the meaningful involvement. These include the significance attached to ethno-sectarian identities and tribalism, high corruption levels, the low socio-economic status, combined with low levels of literacy and educational status, which act as a barrier to participation particularly for women, minorities, people with low educational attainment and rural communities.[274]

These obstacles also apply to the youth (more than 60 percent of Iraqis are under the age of twenty-five) who have become disillusioned with their access to the political process, as displayed by young Iraqis across central and southern Iraq, where demands include constitutional and electoral reform to change the political system

Drivers of meaningful participatory governance include adopting effective channels for participation both at the national and community level, which includes encouraging the federal government and provincial councils to engage with civil society. In addition to decentralisation, e-governance could help reduce corruption, increase accountability and transparency and allow for citizen engagement and participation.

---

[271] Greenberg Quilan Rosner Research Group. *Improved security provides Opening for Cooperation (March-April 2017): Survey Findings*. <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Iraq%20April%202017%20Survey%20Public%20Final%20%281%29%20%281%29.pdf>.

[272] Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, 2018. *National Development Plan 2018 - 2022.* : <http://www.iraq-jccme.jp/pdf/archives/ nationaldevelopmentplan2018_2022.pdf>

[273] Iraq Constitution, art. 45.

[274] Iraq Constitution, art. 45, section 3.3.1.

(v) Public administration reform

As indicated earlier, Iraq faces challenges regarding its expenditures with the current budget increasing the wage bill (ID43.4 trillion) while under-financing critical spending for human capital, etc. Reforms aimed at improving the public sector, accountability and financial management systems overall are needed.

While the public sector was already oversized during the Ba'ath regime, the post-2003 order and rising oil revenues expanded it even further from 1.2 million federal employees in 2003 to over 3 million in 2015.[275] Despite attempts by the government to reform the public sector, including cutting government spending and the 2016 partial hiring freeze, more system-wide efforts are needed to reduce the public debt and ensure more sustainable governmental expenditures.

Most of the government structure is based on a system of centralisation. All financial and administrative functions are performed by central Ministries which, in theory, delegate power to Directorates based in each Governorate, that are supposed to delegate to offices in Districts and Sub-Districts. The result is overlapping functions between different ministries, administrative units and between the competencies of the central government and those of the decentralized federal units. Contributing to the challenges are:

1. The lack of proper data collection and analysis systems.
2. Inconsistent policy planning.
3. Poor financial management; and
4. Lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

These have rendered the public system costly and inefficient in many ways, as over-employment of public staff will result in inflated public expenses and the slowdown of the bureaucratic procedures. This also leads to low approval ratings of the public system by the citizens and a lack of a coherent strategy for the future.

(vi) Judicial reform

Chapter three of Iraq's 2005 Constitution lays out clear terms for judicial power, including in articles 87 and 88. Despite this, Iraq's judiciary struggles to maintain full independence, with no authority over the magistrates except that of the law. Access to court information is limited and judges encounter pressures inducing political and personal threats. Substantial court backlogs, and poor documentation and archiving systems are concerning issues that the judiciary needs to look at to improve the justice administration seriously. International ratified instruments are not fully integrated into the legislation which in turn is impacting the legal system and institution structure, including the access to pro-bono legal aid for vulnerable groups.

Furthermore, the judiciary's weak institutional and professional capacity has many implications on the quality of the justice system, as well as the trust for foreign and local direct business and investment. Law enforcement is adversely affected due to the current judicial state, a lack of independent judiciary and the integrity commission; as well as the

[275] 67 Al-Mawlawi, A., 2018. Analysing Growth Trends in Public Sector Employment in Iraq. *LSE Middle East Center Blog* 31 July. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/07/31/analysing-growth- trends-in-public-sector-employment-in-iraq/>

impunity to non-state actors including paramilitary groups. Moreover, one of the most important reasons for the rampant corruption is the absence of a proper functioning judiciary that is not fully capable to independently adjudicate high profile corruption cases, and to enforce anti-corruption legislation in order to restore confidence in the overall justice system. There is also a need for greater capacity-development of the judicial sector to better equip it when dealing with ISIL trials.

(vii) Security sector reform

The security environment in Iraq remains complex and challenging. In the absence of inclusive dialogue and mediation, violence and armed conflict are used as the primary agent of change. Reform of Iraq's security sector, therefore, remains crucial for long-term stabilization efforts and peace. Improving state security and justice provision together with reasonable delivery of these services to returnee populations and the rest of Iraq will be a key determiner to the country's transition to long-term stability.

While the security forces have successfully fought and driven ISIL out of their strongholds, the threat of ISIL will continue if not dealt with appropriately. Furthermore, public trust in government's ability to restore accountable administration of justice and human rights compliant also remains at its lowest. This is evidenced by recurring large-scale public demonstrations demanding reasonable access to basic services, gainful employment and an equitable governance system that is free from corruption and nepotism. However, it should be noted in 2020, that Iraq continues to be in transition and the course of these dynamics remains uncertain.

In this context, restoring public trust in state security and justice institutions will remain essential foundations for Iraq's peace, stability and development in the years to come. Iraq's current security sector structure and mechanism is mainly composed of the Iraqi Army (IA), Counter Terrorism Service (CTS), Federal Police together with various federal, regional and local security elements with largely hierarchical and centralized command and control mechanisms. Some entities such as the Local Police Service functions with combined security and justice roles and responsibilities ensure local safely and crime prevention.

Since 2017, the GoI has taken progressive steps for security and justice sector reform including, the National Security Strategy (2016) and the SSR Programme (2017). Implementation efforts are ongoing within the framework of the agreed SSR Programme, including significant international partner support to the following identified priorities:

- National Security Architecture.
- National Security Legislation.
- Democratic/Institutional Oversight and Accountability.
- Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP).
- Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement.
- Intelligence Community.
- defence and Internal Security Strategy; and
- Border Strategy.

There are also several existing gaps specifically in the broader rule of law sphere - i.e. judicial and legal reform, correctional services and improving gender equality in essential public security service such as Local Police. Looking forward, some possibilities for genuine

progress remain as a result of the positive steps taken by the government and international partners. However, there are number of challenges that also demand immediate attention:

- Lack of coordination and limited capacity within and between security and justice institutions, both at national and local levels, including service provision, specifically in the areas of local policing and justice services.
- Continued presence and/or re-emergence of ISIL.
- Inefficient and untimely service delivery, in part compromised by destroyed infrastructure in liberated areas such as police stations, courts and correctional facilities.
- The fight against ISIL has also come at a heavy cost in terms of loss of skilled human resources, as ISIL targeted many police officers and judges who were forced to flee their homes and jobs, and many lost their lives.
- Most provinces lack sufficient capacity development for security and justice officials such as specialized courses for local police, investigative judges and criminal investigators, as well as continued knowledge reinforcement on human rights, appropriate use of police and judicial powers including in arrests, treatment of detainees, unlawful use of force, and due process.[276]
- Limited and under-resourced justice pathways for survivors of SGBV/CRSV, where women and girls continue to bear a huge and disproportionate burden from the effects of the conflict and instability.
- The government's inability to consolidate PMF and militia groups under its command and control; and
- Policy decisions have been slowed due to the limited scope of the current interim government and recurring political instability.

While significant progress has been made in rebuilding liberated areas, these efforts are often undermined by the lack of accountable and transparent security and justice service apparatus. To avert a resurgence of heightened insecurity and instability, the best safeguard of Iraq's future stability is its ability to guarantee the rule of law through reasonable access to security and justice services for all citizens. Security and justice sector reforms and restoring the rule of law, therefore remain a pre-requisite for short and long-term stability and peace.

State and non-State security actors should also be included in reform efforts with a specific focus on holding security actors accountable for their actions as stewards of the rule of law as well as the international laws regulating armed engagement.[277] Security sector reform as a prerequisite for the realization of the rule of law, democratic governance, peace, stability and development will therefore require considerable effort and investment both by the Government and international partners in the coming months and years.

[276] However, it is worth noting the Leadership trainings provided by UN Women to 150 magistrates and general prosecutors from all governorates, in 2019.

[277] Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2017. *Flawed Justice: Accountability for ISIS Crimes in Iraq* <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/12/05/flawed-justice/accountability-isis-crimes- iraq>

4.4.2 Institutions and services

(i) Delivery of services

The delivery of and fair access to sustainable quality basic services are hallmarks of development and stability. Decades of economic sanctions and continuous conflicts have devastated Iraq's institutions and basic services, which continue to impact the daily lives of millions of people. Reduced expenditures for public service delivery, destruction of infrastructure, and loss of human capital have severely affected the quality of health, education, electricity, water and sanitation, and transportation.

Dysfunctional public financing is a key factor that weakens all state services in addition to weak alignment between plans, budget formulation, and public spending. Governance and public financial management (PFM) gaps affect the transparency, accountability, and efficiency of public resources. Also weakening the public financing process is the absence of public participation and limited transparency in budget formulation. According to the Open Budget Survey, Iraq ranks 3rd out of 100 in transparency and 0 out of 100 in public participation. Social spending is also inadequate, whether in comparison to the needs or as benchmarked by international standards or countries in the region.

However, since 2011, Iraq has made notable progress in several health-related areas. There has been a decrease in the under-five mortality rate and an increase in delivery by skilled birth attendants and institutions. However, significant geopolitical disparities continue to impair Iraq's access to basic health services, especially for poorer families. World Bank data shows that children from poorest communities are twice as likely to die by their fifth birthday compared to children from the wealthiest households.[278] Medicine and medical supply shortages have left 50 percent of children between the ages of 12–23 months unvaccinated against preventable diseases. And, while there has been a major reduction in chronic malnutrition nationwide, disparities remain as evidenced by an 18 percent stunting rate among children on the outskirts of Baghdad.[279]

Conflicts with ISIL uprooted people, destroyed infrastructure, and areas littered with explosive hazards impede the ability of displaced families to return home, contributing to poverty, reduced quality and quantity of basic services, and increased vulnerability for individuals, families and communities. Infrastructure damage decreased investment and loss in human capital has affected Iraq's education sector. While preschool enrolment is alarmingly low (10 percent), the government has increased enrolment rates at the primary and intermediate level, but in the students' progression from primary school to lower secondary and upper secondary education, there is a noticeable increase in gender disparity for out of school children, particularly in rural areas and camp settings. [280] Girls in rural areas are more likely to be out of school than those in urban areas.

Economic challenges often convert into more cases of early marriage, particularly among IDPs.[281] In fact, 28 percent of IDP children living in camps and 27 percent not living in camps lack access to formal education. Rates are equally low in areas of return, where 21 percent

[278] World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean <http://www.emro.who.int/irq/programmes/primary-health-care.html>
[279] The rate decreased from 21 percent in 2011 to 10 percent in 2018.
[280] MICS 2018.
[281] The World Bank Iraq *Systematic Country Diagnostic* (2017).

of children lack access to formal education.[282] Despite the absence of reliable data on learning achievement, available data indicates that teaching and learning conditions have declined since 1990 and the overall quality of education continues to be poor, which negatively impacts outcomes.[283]

In former ISIL occupied areas, approx. 138,000 residential buildings were damaged, with 50 percent not repairable. This housing crisis has slowed IDP returns and stagnated economic recovery.[284] Another critical housing issue is the restoration of property occupancy rights of vulnerable or marginalized returnees. This affected not only homeowners and secondarily displaced people, but also those who rent and those who do not have title deeds for their homes.

Housing, land and property compensation/restitution mechanisms and claims pose a challenge for individuals affected by ISIL and female-headed households. Some owners, such as Yezidis, were never issued property documents in Sinjar, making them vulnerable to exploitation. High levels of poverty and social inequality have also impacted agricultural and land rights. In order to recover and rebuild, landmine, and unexploded ordinance (UXO) and other remnants of war is a critical prerequisite.

The delivery of adequate quality water is particularly concerning in Iraq. The cost to operate and maintain the current water infrastructure is a significant fiscal burden for the GoI and there remains an urgent need to reassess the investment process and delivery mechanisms in light of the gap between cost to produce a cubic meter of water and the cost to supply it. Broken pipes cause waste and contamination, which contributes to health hazards and higher costs.

Iraq is emerging from a devastating period of conflict and violence which resulted in the loss of thousands of lives, large scale displacement, and billions of dollars' worth of damage to infrastructure and services. Under ISIL occupation, historical grievances between communities worsened and polarization and mistrust between communities grew. However, poor quality government services and protections predates the most recent conflict and have been in decline for decades, but were aggravated by the crises of 2014.[285] A large vulnerable population, including millions of IDPs and refugees, exacerbates pressure on an already weak system, sharpens disparities of access between regions, and is poorly served by basic services systems and social safety nets.

The end of military operations in December 2017, created improvements in the security of affected governorates and enabled significant returns of displaced people in 2018,[286] but it also revealed the stretched capacity of communities and the government of Iraq to meet

[282] National Education Cluster 2018.
[283] *Ibid*, No. 4.
[284] The World Bank Iraq *Reconstruction and Investment- Damage Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates* (2018)
[285] The World Bank attributes the decline to 'decades of sanctions, conflict, and poor administration, the blunt implementation of de-Ba'athification, and a massive brain drain of skilled Iraqis'. See World Bank Iraq *Reconstruction and Investment Part 2: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates* (Jan 2018). <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf>
[286] International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement tracking matrix: DTM Round 108 <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/Downloads/DTM%202019/February%202019/Round108_Report_English_2019_February_IOM_DTM.pdf> (2019).

basic needs and provide essential services.[287] Many social and economic challenges have been exacerbated or driven by corruption, unemployment, poor basic services, lack of water, lack of electricity and forced migration. Groups, particularly vulnerable ones, are those who endured the impacts of ISIL and the subsequent devastation the group left in its wake. Those wishing to return often face UXO contamination in their communities, including their homes and other community structures, as well as massive rubble and destruction, requiring government engagement and resources.

Achieving reconstruction and restoration goals, improving access to essential services and taking action to support environmental sustainability, as well as mitigating the impacts of climate change are crucial to achieving the SDGs, and is reflected in the country's National Framework for Reconstruction and Development.[288] Iraq's NDP contains priorities on sustainable rural development, spatial development as well as reconstruction, thereby aligning national agendas more closely to the SDGs.[289]

It is important to note the emphasis on climate action, including adoption of climate resilient infrastructure, awareness raising on environmental issues and social responsibility, and reducing the "water footprint" or using water more efficiently.[290] Greater support to the Government is needed to more robustly integrate the SDGs into the NDP, thereby strengthening the overall linkages between the SDGs and the NDP.[291]

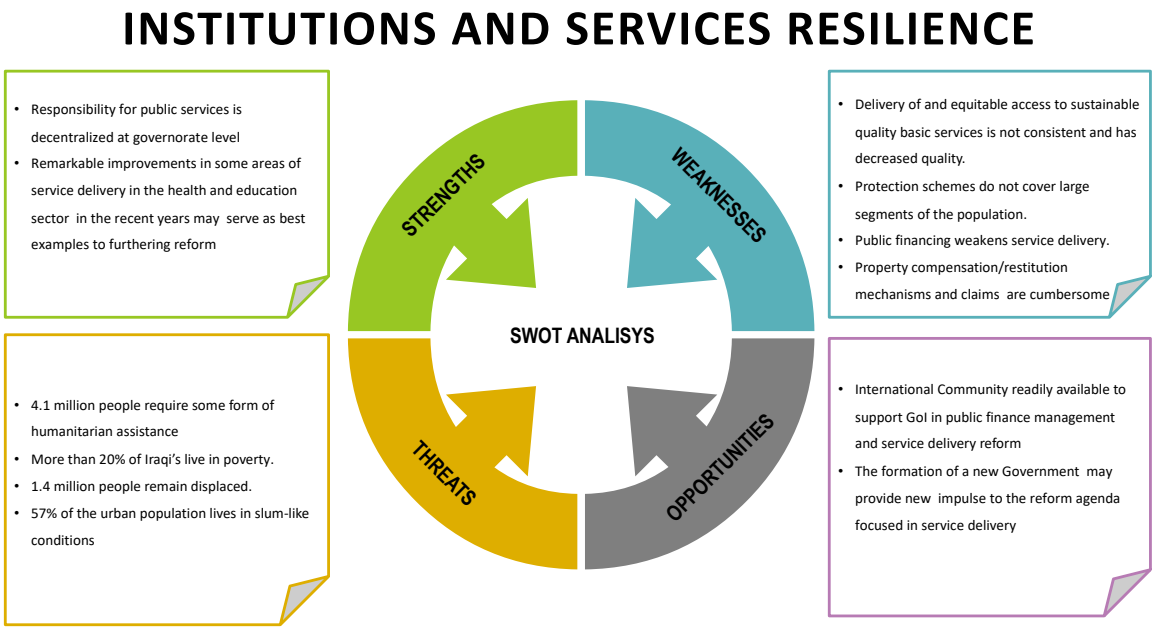


Figure 8 – An institutions and services SWOT analysis of Iraq. Source: UNAMI 2020.

[287] World Bank, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction & Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates.* World Bank <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq- Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf>

[288] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2018. *Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGS: Project Annual Report*. Baghdad: UNDP.

[289] *Ibid*

[290] *Ibid*

[291] *Ibid*

(ii) Infrastructure restoration

At the Kuwait International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq in February 2018, it was estimated that USD88 billion would be required to fulfil Iraq's total recovery needs, including the repair and reconstruction of Iraq's essential infrastructure. The conflict with ISIL resulted in significant infrastructural destruction, particularly in the following sectors:

- Energy/power, oil and gas.
- Information and communications technologies.
- Transport.
- WASH; and Health,
- Electricity, education and municipal services.

Given the scale of the destruction, it is essential to prioritise and determine what is to be restored and what is to be replaced, following a similar method to that adopted by UNDP's funding Facility for Stabilisation in which priorities are sent by the GoI. Immediate reconstruction and restoration, particularly of infrastructure critical to basic services delivery and economic activities, must be addressed, building on the success of UNDP's FFS, which to date has implemented 2,300 stabilization projects across liberated areas, in the electricity, education, health, livelihoods, municipality, transport and sewage and water sectors. The concept of "building back better" should be applied where possible, however, this a long-term objective; focus must remain on fulfilling basic, immediate needs.

Sources of national funding is currently dependent on oil rents, which also suffered during the conflict. Non-oil economic growth rebounded in 2019, given fiscal loosening, improved rainfall and boost in electricity production. For a variety of reasons, very few of the pledges from the Kuwait conference have materialized, making this an unlikely source of support for reconstruction soon. At the same time, budget execution for non-oil spending, including reconstruction, stood at a meagre 18 percent, which is not enough to meet those needs.

However, the popular unrest, coupled with COVID19 spread, will have a negative wide impact across the economy, especially the service sector. The initial reconstruction effort can sustain non-oil growth in the short-term but in the long-term, greater efforts at diversifying the economy and improving the business climate can stimulate greater national resource mobilization.

The challenges to rebuilding and renewing Iraq's infrastructure are not only engineering challenges (hard reconstruction), but also broad systematic changes (soft reconstruction). Governance issues, at and between national and sub national levels, have also played a part, with mismanagement and corruption particularly in the oil and energy sectors, [292] resulting in poor coordination between government ministries and provincial governments. The impact on the delivery of services is an increase in costs, (as much as 50 percent, in some cases), thereby reducing actual services and impact. UNDP's FFS which has a robust and transparent set of measures in place to detect and prevent fraud and corruption should be referenced for best practice in this regard.

[292] Al-Khatteb, L., 2018. Iraq's Post-Government Formation Economic Outlook. Available at: <https://www.sharqforum.org/2018/10/24/iraqs-post-government-formation-economic- outlook/>.

(iii) Shelter and housing system

Whereas cities today house 50 percent of the world's population and contribute to about three-fourths of its global economic output, Iraq's city dwellers are estimated to have already reached 70 percent due to a historic concentration of settlements along its fertile riverbanks versus its vast and arid uninhabited hinterland, bolstered by more recent urbanisation trends. As elsewhere, rural migration is the result of "push and pull" factors: on the one side low remunerating farming activities, livelihoods uncertainty and insecurity have acted as an expelling force pushing people, especially youth of working age, towards cities that offer better opportunities; and on the other, cities are a magnet force that attracts people not only for the jobs prospects, but also for reaping the benefits of the urban concentration of services and a better quality of life.

By 2050, the world's urban population is expected to nearly double, making urbanization one of the twenty-first century's most transformative trends. Population, economic activities, social and cultural interactions, as well as environmental and humanitarian impacts, are increasingly concentrated in cities, and this poses massive sustainability challenges in terms of housing, infrastructure, basic services, food security, health, education, decent jobs, safety and natural resources, among others.[293] Iraq is no exception to experiencing such challenges and its urban population is impacted by:

- Severe overcrowding decades of under-investments in basic infrastructure.
- Large-scale destruction of housing units in areas affected by the conflict with ISIL, deteriorated structural and environmental conditions of old multi-storey residential complexes.
- Poor funding and lending mechanisms, incomplete or ineffective legal and regulatory systems,
- Uncontrolled urban sprawl and the emergence of informal settlements.

The rapid spread of informal settlements across Iraqi cities emerged as a phenomenon after 2003, mostly as a result of the lack of affordable land within municipalities constrained by outdated Master Plans. Informal dwellers increased significantly between 2013 and 2016, surpassing 3.3 million people (nearly 13 percent of the total population of Iraq) in a survey conducted by the Ministry of Planning in 2016.

Prior to the most recent conflict with ISIL, Iraq had already been suffering from chronic housing shortages due to inequitable land management policies, limited access to housing finance and insufficiency of private-public partnerships that precipitated the degradation of housing stock throughout the country, as well as the narrowing of housing options for lower-income households, causing overcrowding[294] and pushing many to build sub-standard housing on state-owned and subserviced land. The shortcomings in the housing production system led to the failure of the public and private sector to meet the growing needs for housing in line with the natural growth of the population.

[293] New Urban Agenda, United Nations, 2017, p. 3

[294] World Bank, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction & Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates.* [<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf>

The Government's *National Housing Policy* of 2010 aimed to increase access to housing for all Iraqis, recommended that the government needs to transition from a direct provider to an enabler for private sector provision of housing. Two new institutions were established to stimulate housing solutions: the Iraq Housing Fund and the National Investment Commission (NIC). However, Iraq's *National Housing Policy* did not account for additional new pressures resulting from the exceptional situation that followed. With the rapid pace of political, security, economic, social and physical changes recently experienced, updating this document in line with these changes became necessary. With the support of UN-Habitat, in 2017 the Ministry of Construction, Housing, Municipalities and Public Works issued a *National Housing Policy Modification*.

The above situation was compounded by the recent conflict with ISIL and subsequent military operations resulting in damage ranging from 'minor' to 'destroyed', based on Shelter Cluster Iraq's categorization of war-damaged houses. The total damage to the housing sector in the seven conflict-affected governorates has been assessed by the World Bank at 18.7 trillion Iraqi dinars or 16.1 billion USD.[295] Over 138,000 residential buildings were impacted, half of these structures destroyed beyond repair. Low-income housing is assessed to have experienced the bulk of the conflict-related damage at 68 percent.[296] Mosul holds the largest share of total housing damage in the seven governorates, with an estimated damage cost between 6-8 trillion Iraqi dinars/5.1-6.9 billion USD.[297]

Increasing poverty rates and number of informal housing units in Iraq (estimated by the Ministry of Planning to surpass 347,000, i.e. 7 percent of the total number of housing units), demonstrate the dire consequences of a lack of effective urban planning and housing strategies to help manage the risks of crisis and conflicts.[298]

To further compound the challenges already mentioned, significant numbers of IDPs have increased immediate demands for sustainable housing and shelter solutions. IDPs, both camp and out-of-camp, are particularly sensitive to shelter challenges. IDPs in camps that have been living in emergency shelter for more than four years with constrained prospects for return will remain heavily dependent on humanitarian efforts. In areas of displacement, especially in the northern governorates that host a large proportion of IDPs, rent prices are increasing,[299] making more likely the risk of additional displacement to critical sub-standard shelters.

Of the IDPs who do not intend to return to areas of origin within the next year, 47 percent state 'damage to property' as a primary reason to remain in displacement.[300] Even if IDPs do choose to return, the pre-crisis housing stock gap is estimated at 760,000,[301] which

---

[295] World Bank, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction & Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates.* [pdf] World Bank<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf>

[296] *Ibid.*

[297] *Ibid.*

[298] Iraq National Development Plan 2018-2022, pg. 19.

[299] *Ibid*.

[300] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), 2018. *2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview.* <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/irq_2019_hno.pdf>

[301] International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2019. Displacement tracking matrix: DTM Round 108. <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/Downloads/DTM%202019/February%202019/Round108_Report_English_2019_February_IOM_DTM.pdf>

means that many, particularly tenants, may not have a house to which they can return. Furthermore, it must be taken into consideration that the houses could be still contaminated with improvised explosive devices and therefore a mine action solution must be considered at the earliest stages of planning and programming.

Out-of-camp IDPs living in substandard shelter are among the most vulnerable, with limited social and economic self-reliance and significant protection and health risks arising from their living conditions. Living in a substandard dwelling is one of the top three conditions associated with socio-economic vulnerabilities, often leading to secondary displacement and negative coping strategies.

Similarly, returnees living in war-damaged shelter are at risk of secondary displacement unless provided with external assistance. Socio-economically vulnerable IDP and returnee families, including female-headed households, with a low income to dependency ratio, having to take care of persons with disabilities, are more prone to substandard living conditions.[302] For those with reduced mobility living in informal settlements and unfinished, abandoned or damaged buildings, accessibility is a top concern.[303]

Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights issues are closely interlinked with forced evictions, land and property conflicts, secondary occupation and tenure discrimination, leading to inequitable assistance and lack of proper documentation. A more holistic and equitable strategy, whether addressing HLP rights issues in a camp, community or city environment, would ensure that recovery and reconstruction efforts are based on need, and related infrastructure repairs and maintenance would ensure improved quality of life.

As indicated earlier, compensation for destroyed and/or damaged housing will be a determining factor for many IDPs, as a necessary condition to return home.[304] Fair and effective implementation of Iraq's 2009 law on Compensating the Victims of Military Operations, Military Mistakes and Terrorist Actions is needed so that all civilians affected by ISIL and/or the military operations against ISIL, or other discriminatory policies and practices, are remunerated to help rebuild their lives.[305]

While some people in Anbar, whose homes were destroyed or damaged since 2014, have received small payments, as of September 2018, no one in Nineveh had received any payment. No claims have been paid for deaths or injuries since 2014 in any of the liberated governorates.[306]

---

[302] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), 2018. *2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview* <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/irq_2019_hno.pdf>

[303] See the International, General Accessibility Guidelines, Iraq 2016, <https://tinyurl.com/yalutham>; Accessibility and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Urban Development, UN-DESA <https://tinyurl.com/y8odulwb>.

[304] Mansour, R, 2018. *Rebuilding the Iraqi State: Stabilisation, Governance, and Reconciliation.* European Parliament Director-General for External Policies. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603859/EXPO_STU(2017)603859_EN.pdf >

[305] Centre for Civilians in Conflict, 2017. '*We Hope, but We Are Hopeless: Civilians' Perceptions of the Compensation Process in Iraq.* <https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2018.MENA_.We-Hope-But-Are-Hopeless.CompReport.Web_.pdf>

[306] *Ibid.*

As per the recommendations formulated by the National Human Settlements Committee in early 2019,[307] addressing the needs of those who have lost their homes ('Level 4 damage') and the limited resources available for this purpose will require the government to integrate the long awaited compensations with a scaled-up Housing Finance scheme, synchronized with the funding of area reconstruction plans, that include the costs of restoring public services and infrastructure.

Iraq faces overwhelming demands for housing and shelter solutions that will affect the achievements of the 2030 Agenda. Two of the strategic goals of Iraq's *National Development Plan 2018-2022* are to: "Lay the foundation for decentralisation to strengthen spatial development" and "Align the general development framework with urban structures based on the foundations of urban planning and spatial comparative advantages".

These two goals are strongly linked to the New Urban Agenda, unanimously adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in 2016, as well as SDG 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

> *"Displaced people in-camp and out-of-camp settings continue to depend on the provision of humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs, despite significant ongoing efforts to re-open schools, establish health centers, and restore electricity, water and sewage grids. Camp services and infrastructure must be scaled up and improved in order to meet minimum standards and serve the 482,000 displaced people living in 135 camps. At the same time, at least 155,000 IDPs living in critical shelters remain severely underserved and may resort to negative coping strategies to survive."*
> *Source: 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview - Iraq*

The productive and economic benefits of housing cannot be undervalued and should be translated into a central element of macroeconomic policy. Urbanization spurs the construction of more houses with multiplier effects contributing to generate jobs, wealth and growth. In developed and developing countries alike, the housing and building sectors account for significant proportions of the national economy and constitute a key component of development and diversification.

Concurrently, greater consideration of housing in urban development, to the extent that it results in diversity, mixed use and business opportunities, will also contribute to the prosperous growth of cities.[308]

(iv) Healthcare

The Iraqi health system, formerly ranked among the highest in the region in the late 1970s, has deteriorated over time.[309] Life expectancy in Iraq stands at around 69 years, a figure that is below comparative middle income countries regional average of 73 years.[310]

---

[307] National Human Settlements Committee (2019). "*Damaged Housing Reconstruction and Housing Sector Development Strategy in Governorates affected by Terrorism and Military Operations*" - Draft

[308] UN-Habitat (2015). *Housing at the Centre of the New Urban Agenda*; p. 12.

[309] World Bank, 2017. *Iraq – Systematic Country Diagnostic*: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL-cleared-02132017.pdf

[310] World Bank, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction & Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates.* [pdf] World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-

According to the Health Inform Index, access to healthcare in Iraq is ranked poorly at a score of 6.4 out of 10.[311] The decline is attributed to decades of sanctions, conflict, and poor administration, as well as the blunt implementation of de-*Ba'athification* and a massive brain drain of skilled Iraqis.[312] The war against ISIL severely damaged most of the healthcare infrastructure in the areas of open conflict, including health care service delivery stations, causing spikes in conflict-specific morbidity and mortality.

While the general population is impacted by the overall shortage of health services, displaced communities and the disabled are particularly vulnerable. Restrictions on movement impeded access to humanitarian service-delivery and lack of higher-level healthcare services are some of the main issues affecting this population group. The non-employment of disabled men and women in Iraq negatively affects daily life and access to basic services. For example, data from 2012 shows that households in Iraq that included at least one person with a disability faced 59 percent higher health care expenditure than families that did not, in both rural and urban areas.[313]

> "It is estimated that almost one in five Iraqis suffers from mental illness. In a 2016 study of psychological disorders among young Iraqis, 56 percent reported symptoms consistent with PTSD, and more than 60 percent reported symptoms consistent with depression….the rate of depression in the general population is more than double that of Western countries."
>
> *Source: How Does the Human Soul Survive Atrocity?, Jennifer Percy, The New York Times Magazine, 3 November 2019*

The protracted and secondary displacement of people, coupled with a shortage of basic necessities such as potable water and hygienic living conditions, create ideal conditions for outbreaks of communicable diseases and present challenges to their control such as measles, acute flaccid paralysis, meningitis, and recurrent outbreaks of cholera. This, in addition to the sizeable burden of non-communicable diseases that require long-term treatment. The population groups most vulnerable to such illnesses include children (especially those under five years old), individuals with physical, mental and psychological challenges, conflict-related disabled persons, amputees,[314] women-headed households, and pregnant and lactating women. Access to and availability of essential medicines and medicines for chronic and non-communicable diseases remains an urgent need.[315]

Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf> .

[311] Inform Index for Risk Management (INFORM), 2019. *Inform Country Risk Profile* - Iraq.. <http://www.inform-index.org/countries/country-profiles>

[312] World Bank, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction & Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates.* [<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf>.

[313] Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 2018. *Disability in the Arab Region 2018.* [pdf] ESCWA. <https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/disability-arab-region-2018-english_1.pdf>.

[314] A total of 4,493 amputees live in Ninewa alone, of which 668 are victims of the IEDs, land mines and booby traps left behind as a result of major military campaigns and withdrawals of various armed groups.

[315] Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan 2020 : https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/iraq/document/iraq-2020-humanitarian-response-plan-en

Mental health and psychosocial support services are also crucial to a sizeable portion of a population that has undergone years of conflict. According to a 2016 report by UNAMI's OHCHR,[316]

> *The psycho-social health sector in particular is perceived to lack specialized and trained staff and is under-resourced. This is the result of increased poverty, due to the conflict, the international sanctions regime during the 1990s, as well as the targeting of medical and paramedical professionals during 2003-2008, which led to a "brain-drain" of specialized health professionals, including in this particular field.*

According to Ministry of Health data, there are only 138 psychiatrists and 60 social workers in Iraq, which is equivalent to one psychiatrist for every 275,000 people.[317] The ratios in neighboring Turkey and Iran are more than five and six times higher respectively.[318]

In terms of preparedness for medical emergencies, WHO organized a joint external evaluation of Iraq in March 2020, just as the COVID-19 emergency was growing. Their findings[319] found significant gaps and risks in the ability of the country to prepare and respond to such events. These included:

- Multiple coordination mechanisms with unclear terms of reference;
- Human resource gaps in different technical areas and administrative levels;
- Insufficient public health planning for approximately 20 annual mass gathering events involving millions of pilgrims;
- Lack of computerized information and networking at different administrative levels in the country needed for real-time information gathering and efficient decision-making process; and
- The country lacks a financing strategy to optimize preparedness and establish a mechanism to fast-track resource mobilization for emergency response.

(v) Education

In Iraq, education, like other social sectors, has been impacted by the prolonged period of conflict combined with sluggish economic growth. Like the health system, the education system has deteriorated with time. Since the international intervention in 2003, expenditures boosted the earnings of teachers and civil servants, but without accompanying capital expenditure or effects on educational attainment. The recent conflict with ISIL left considerable damages to the education sector that amount to 2.8 billion Iraqi dinars, or USD2.4 million.[320] The extent of damages to education facilities and the limited access to functioning schools with safe learning environments varies across governorates

[316] Report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Iraq, December 2016
[317] Source: Relief Web. "Iraq's Quiet Mental *Health Crisis". https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraqs-quiet-mental-health-crisis*.
[318] WHO, Psychiatrists and nurses working in mental health sector, 2017.
[319] Joint external evaluation of IHR core capacities, Republic of Iraq, Mission report, 12-20 March 2019 .
[320] World Bank, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction & Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates.* [pdf] World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf>.

and cities.[321] Losses in education equipment are immense and range from large-scale items such as school buses to smaller but equally important items, such as student notebooks and chalk.[322]

Across the seven governorates impacted most, it is expected that all school materials have been depleted or destroyed with total loss estimates reaching 123 billion Iraqi dinars, or USD106 million.[323] Conflict areas endured the most considerable losses, given the intentional campaign to spread extremism through education.[324] The groups most affected by the lack of a fully functioning education system are children, youth, displaced communities, the disabled and women. Though the Government facilitated the enrolment of children without official documentations who were affected by the conflict[325], still, children denied birth certificates are considered stateless and not allowed to enrol in school.[326]

Only 2.4 percent of children attend early childhood education (and in case of poorest quintiles, it is as low as 0.2 percent in comparison to 4.6 percent in richest quintiles which implies that a large proportion of children lack the readiness to enter primary school.[327]

The primary school enrolment rates[328] continue to be high at 91.6 percent, access to education in post primary stage highlight significant challenges. There is a drastic reduction in the net enrolment at lower secondary level age (12-14 years) 57.5 percent and even worse at upper secondary level at 33 percent.

Gender disparities are starkly evident and more pronounced in the post primary levels of education with more girls out of school than boys. While the proportion of girls (9.6 percent) out of school[329] at primary level is much lower at primary level in comparison to boys (7.2 percent), the gap widens with 27.7 percent (girls) and 14.7 percent (boys) at lower secondary level and 46.1 percent girls compared to 34.8 percent boys at upper secondary level (MICS, 2018). Dropout rates remain significant and gender gaps are high with girls more likely to experience poor access and remain out of school. Reasons may include:

- The prevalence of early marriage.
- Family concerns.

> Lack of adequate number of schools and long distances impact on children's access and participation in education. This is more pronounced in the rural areas. According to Ministry of Education estimates there is a need for 7000 school buildings to meet the needs of the population of the school-age children and young people in the country. And of the existing ones, more than half need rehabilitation and lack adequate Water and Sanitation facilities. This has resulted in schools functioning in shifts which further deteriorates the quality of learning.

[321] *Ibid.*
[322] *Ibid*.
[323] *Ibid*.
[324] *Ibid*.
[325] Approved Minutes of Meeting (UNICEF, Ministry of Education Representatives in KRG, DGs from liberated governorates, Federal MoE officials), 2018
[326] Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2018. *Iraq: Officials Threatening, Arresting Lawyers.* [online] HRW. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/09/12/iraq-officials-threatening-arresting-lawyers>
[327] UNICEF MICS,2018
[328] Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2018
[329] *Ibid.*

- Parental objections to girls' school attendance.
- Poor school infrastructure.
- Lack of appropriate facilities for girls; and
- The need for girls to assist in chores at home.

In 2019, 1.2 million children were assessed to need at least one type of humanitarian Education-related support. According to the National Education Cluster, 28 percent of (IDP) children in camps and 27 percent of those living out of camp have no access to formal education opportunities. The situation is equally bad in areas of return where 21 percent of children still goes without access to formal education.

Children and young people from poorest quintiles are less likely to access education at all levels as well as lower completion rates. Based on the data available the completion rates for poorest and richest quintiles are 54 percent and 92 percent at primary level and 23 percent and 72.7 percent respectively at secondary school level.

This implies that a large proportion of young boys and girls find themselves out of school and fail to transition to the second decade education thereby depriving them opportunities to acquire critical skills for future adult life including employment. Those services that do exist for adolescent girls and boys such as life skills training and employment skills training, do not consider the increasing numbers nor their unique needs.

Iraqi society has traditionally valued academic achievement and white-collar jobs above technical and vocational pathways and artisan occupations. Young people are strongly encouraged to train for the highest status occupation for which they can meet the entry requirement, irrespective of their interests or the availability of jobs.[330]

A vocational education pathway is available within the general education system for learners in years 10-12. In effect this is the default pathway for learners who do not get good enough grades for the academic pathway. Across the whole country over 400 vocational schools serve around 60,000 learners. Over 30 specialisations are available, but fewer specialisations are offered in KRI.

Generally, there are no institutionalised relationships between training providers and employers. Although both general and higher education systems include 'summer training' for learners to get some work experience, in practice this is often poorly implemented and relatively un-supervised and un-monitored and neither employers nor learners find it useful. There is no systematic follow up of graduates (i.e. tracer studies) at any TVET level to provide information about whether graduates get jobs, and how well their knowledge and skills meet the needs and expectations of employers.

This means that in general training providers deliver training programmes without any actual evidence that what they are teaching leads to, employment. Without any basis for evaluating whether programmes serve their intended purpose (in terms of providing young people with knowledge and skills needed for work) there is no clear need for updating programmes, and indeed many of them have not been updated for decades. There must be stronger links to sustainable livelihoods and entrepreneurial opportunities.

[330] Summary report of the labour market assessment and sector skills analysis https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371369?posInSet=3&queryId=59ad1903-0eae-41f6-9893-307c6eb179e8

People with disabilities, particularly children, suffer from discrimination and face impediments in accessing quality education. Data from 2017 indicates that while 41 percent of Iraqis without disabilities lack education, 70.1 percent of those with disabilities do.[331] Furthermore, 81.8 percent of women with disabilities have no educational attainment.[332] For children with disabilities, attending school is even less common and education is an obstacle at all levels.[333]

Despite the enforcement of mandatory elementary education, government authorities have been accused of "turning a blind eye" to the non-attendance of disabled children.[334] Furthermore, schools are generally unequipped for the needs of children with disabilities. Most schools do not have the necessary equipment, facilities, curriculum or trained teachers to accommodate students with disabilities.[335] Approximately 25 percent of government schools have special needs classes, where children with disabilities are segregated from other children.[336] People with disabilities often complain that schools are inaccessible and that many schools reject them; as a result, there is a high level of illiteracy amongst people with disabilities in Iraq.[337]

Quality of learning is also a major challenge in the country and issues include such as inadequate number of qualified teachers, outdated curriculum, lack of teaching and learning materials and inadequate capacities to manage children emerging from traumatic experiences. In order to catch up with the international standards of education and to empower children of Iraq to build their country, a new national curriculum framework was developed in 2012[338] which was followed by the development of a guideline for syllabus writing for mathematics and sciences in 2013, in addition to a set of syllabus documents for sciences and mathematics for Grade 1-12.

In 2015, student books, teacher's guides and student activity books for science and mathematics for Grade 1-6 were also developed and used by all schools in Iraq except KRI. However, those subjects in humanities are still to be updated. There is not much data available from national level large scale assessments. However, a study[339] conducted by Save the Children on literacy and numeracy on a sample of over 1700 children across the five conflict affected governorates found that less than half (48 percent) of children aged 14 years were able to read at second grade level.

---

[331] Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 2017. *Strengthening Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities in Arab Countries.* <https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/page_attachments/strengthening-social-protection-persons-with-disabilities-advance-copy-en.pdf> .

[332] *Ibid.*

[333] United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 2014. Values of Access to Justice and Persons with Disabilities in Iraq. [pdf] USAID. Retrieved from: <https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00K2Z6.pdf>.

[334] *Ibid*.

[335] *Ibid*.

[336] *Ibid*.

[337] *Ibid*.

[338] Iraqi Curriculum Framework, Ministry of Education 2012

[339] Education Assessment, Save the Children 2017

(vi) Food security

Iraq's multiple crises over the past 15 years[340] have contributed to widespread poverty and food insecurity. According to latest the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO-2020), around 1.77 million people are susceptible to food insecurity, driven by several interrelated challenges. These include poverty, low agricultural productivity levels, widespread government intervention in food systems; gender inequality and inequity; low literacy and a lack of empowerment opportunities that drive high population growth; and high unemployment rates at the national level and among youth.

The severe food insecure people include around 370,000 IDPs living in camp settings, 125,000 out of camp IDPs and 425,000 returnees.[341] Most of the needs are concentrated in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Salahuddin and Ninewa governorates.[342]

With a 39 million population, almost every fifth person in Iraq lives in poverty. Another 30 percent of the population face a high risk of falling into poverty and food insecurity.[343] The availability of adequate food at the national level does not necessarily ensure economic and physical access to food at the household level. An analysis of the macro and socio-economic trends in recent years indicates significant risks to poor households and their food security.[344]

Internal displacement has particularly impacted the overall food security situation and livelihoods in the country. The Living Standard Gap (LSG) of Food Security is estimated to be from severe to extreme among 11 percent in-Camp IDPs, 8 percent out-of-camp IDPs and 7 percent returnees.[345] When combined with lack of basic services and poor social protection and safety nets, stable livelihood is a basic requirement to meet the food needs at household level. For those displaced by the conflict, financial capital including income, savings and assets are compromised, eroded or lost. Around 2.39 million individuals will need livelihood support in 2020.[346] LSG of Emergency Livelihood is estimated to be from severe to extreme among 51 percent IDPs in camp, 36 percent out-of-camp while 33 percent among returnees.[347]

The fragile economy is also hosting 248,162 refugees from Syria,[348] the majority of which are living in KRI. The Regional Refugee Resilience Plan (3RP) 2019-20 emphasize the

---

[340] The US-led invasion, transitioning from dictatorship to a democracy, fight against ISIL, ethnical transition of government, and more recently the protest movement against corruption and Iran-US tensions. This period was preceded by a disastrous war after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait followed by crippling international sanctions.
[341] Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020, November 2019. Available here.
[342] Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020, November 2019. Available here.
[343] Dhehibi, B, 2018. *IRAQ – Zero Hunger Strategic Review Eliminating Hunger in Iraq and Meeting SDG 2 Targets - Preliminary Results.* [online] CGIAR. <http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/handle/20.500.11766/8167>
[344] World Food Programme (WFP), 2016. *Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA).* [online] WFP: <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/comprehensive-food-security- and-vulnerability-analysis-cfsva-iraq-2016>.
[345] Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA) Round VII – Dec 2019< https://www.impact-repository.org/document/reach/bf8af15e/REACH_IRQ_MCNA-VII_Report_December2019-1.pdf>
[346] Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020, November 2019. https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraq-humanitarian-needs-overview-2020-november-2019-enarku
[347] Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA) Round VII – Dec 2019.impact-repository.org/document/reach/bf8af15e/REACH_IRQ_MCNA-VII_Report_December2019-1.pdf
[348] https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/5]

inclusion of 207,458 Iraqi people from the impacted host communities in the overall refugee response planning.[349]

Protracted displacement coupled with limited availability of financial resources have worsened the existing vulnerabilities. Approximately 2.9 million individuals require specialized protection services in 2020.[350] Food assistance will be required for IDPs who cannot leave camps due to their perceived affiliation, tribal conflict or ethnic tension. Vulnerable displaced families living in camps need consistent and predictable food assistance until transfer of responsibility from humanitarian actors to the Public Distribution System (PDS) and other national social safety nets takes place.

It should also be noted that the government intends to gradually merge its two social safety net programmes, namely the PDS and the Social Protection Network (SPN), and institute stronger targeting, move towards cash transfers and vouchers where appropriate, and improve monitoring and evaluation.[351] Surveys in 2016 and 2018 found that while the PDS reached a large majority of families, the SPN showed limited success, reaching only 33 percent of the poorest families.[352]

A cross-cutting approach to food security will be the implementation of agricultural transition activities for out-of-camp IDPs and returnees in areas with high severity of need. A total of 111,396 returnees and 101,004 out-of-camp IDPs will be targeted through a scale-up of livelihoods support, agricultural inputs and income-generating activities to promote self-reliance and meet the minimum needs of out-of-camp populations. In 2020, early recovery activities will be prioritized in these areas in order to revitalize food production and restore sustainable livelihoods of returning families, to help support Iraq's transition from emergency to stabilization.

(vii) Water and sanitation (WASH)

Based on the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2019, over 2.2 million people across Iraq remain in critical need of sustained, equitable access to safe and appropriate WASH services. Of these, more than half, 52 percent, are women, nearly half, 47 percent are children, and 4 percent are elderly. Protracted displacement from homes and places of origin can increase levels of vulnerability found in a population.[353] The protracted conflict in Iraq has resulted in massive damage of water and sanitation infrastructures, which negatively impact the country's public health and dignity of highly vulnerable communities.

The WASH sector has seen significant damage amounting to 1.6 trillion Iraqi dinars or D1.4 billion USD.[354] Although several governmental and international development agencies

[349] Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) Country Chapter for Iraq 2019-20
[350] Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020, November 2019. https://www.impact-repository.org/document/reach/bf8af15e/REACH_IRQ_MCNA-VII_Report_December2019-1.pdf
[351] ICARDA and World Food Programme (WFP), 2018. *National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Iraq*. [online] Reliefweb. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/national-strategic- review-food-security-and-nutrition-iraq>.
[352] WFP Socio Economic Atlas 2019. Available here
[353] Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2019
[354] World Bank, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction & Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates.* [pdf] World Bank

have made rehabilitation efforts, the bulk of the infrastructure is still either partially damaged or fully destroyed. The extensive damage of assets deeply affects their functionality in the cities and governorates, thereby affecting households' daily usage and service of water.[355]

According to the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2018 report, across all governorates, the percentage of households that have access to water is 85.7 percent. However, safely managed water[356] is only 40 percent and around 23 percent for safely managed sanitation.[357] Figure 9 below shows samples of WSM and SSM figures of Iraq.

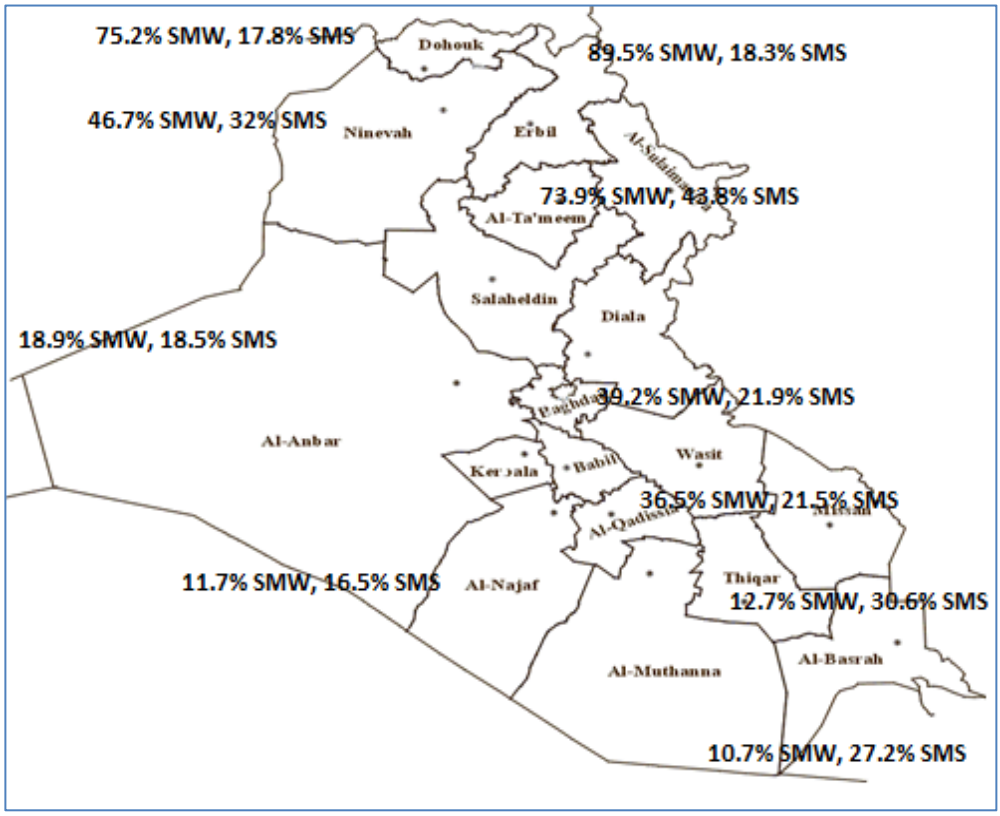


Figure 9: Safely managed water and safely managed sanitation figures extracted from MICS 2018 – UNICEF Iraq-2018- WASH section

However, water availability, access, and sanitation in the region are below international standards. Furthermore, water resources are increasingly under stress due to both climate change and bureaucratic mismanagement. MICS6 results endorsed in November 2018, shows that most water facilities are operating with low chlorine dosage (less than 0.2 mg/l) which is

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf>.

[355] *Ibid*.

[356] Percent distribution of household population with drinking water on premises, available when needed, and free from contamination, for users of improved and unimproved drinking water sources and percentage of household members with an improved drinking water source located on premises, free of *E. coli* and available when needed, Iraq, 2018

[357] Safely managed sanitation: Use of improved facilities that are not shared with other households and where excreta are safely disposed of in situ or transported and treated offsite. SDG 6.2.1a

below WHO minimum guidelines and increases the risk of Cholera and/or other water related diseases outbreak.[358] The main challenges facing the water sector are:

- The weakness and instability of electrical power needed for operating.
- Lack of citizens' awareness on conservation.
- Citizens' trespasses on the network.
- Insufficient technical and administrative staff.
- The old age of the network and its weakness within most governorates.[359]

Iraq's existing water and sewage infrastructure, including treatment plants and pipe networks, is largely in disrepair. Insufficient operating budgets are exacerbated by poorly trained personnel, unreliable electricity, and a tendency to look for quick fixes rather than long-term solutions.[360] The main challenges facing the sanitation sector include:

- Trespasses on the sanitation and rainwater networks.
- Lack of awareness and misuse of sanitation networks for each of all governorates.
- Scarcity and instability of electrical power needed for operating treatment and pumping stations in most governorates.[361]

The sector will require an update of the systems of governance on both national and subnational levels, concomitantly with the reconstruction of assets.

In 2018, an acute concern has been the increasing water scarcity since water levels in both main water sources, namely the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, have been decreasing at an unprecedented rate. This is caused by changes in the country's climatic and meteorological conditions, with increases in average temperatures compounded by lower average rainfall throughout the year, and water damming actions by neighbouring countries. In addition, these environmental and geo-political elements are exacerbated by continuing poor water resource management in Iraq.

Policies and practices of Iraqi authorities since the 1980s, have been the principle cause of the degradation in the rivers' water quality, but there are also other factors that contribute to a decrease in its flow, including damming upriver, irrigation, and climate change. Damming projects in Iran, Syria, and Turkey have impacted waterflow into the Tigris and Euphrates since the 1980s.[362] At the same time, local authorities, individuals and businesses have been dumping significantly more industrial, agricultural and human waste into the rivers.[363]

The low and deteriorating quality of water and sanitation services in Iraq are a consequence of economic sanctions, conflict resulting in damage to water infrastructure, and long-term underinvestment. This gap has been filled in some areas by the private sector, providing drinking water and sanitary facilities, but at a high cost. However, this provides a nexus point, for bringing in the private sector in a planned, regulated manner, and transparency.

[358] MICS6 results endorsed in November 2018
[359] Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, 2010. *Environmental Survey in Iraq 2010: Water, Sanitation, Municipal Services.* Republic of Iraq.
[360] *Ibid*.
[361] *Ibid*.
[362] Basra is Thirsty. Iraq's Failure to Manage the Water Crisis, July 2019
[363] Nadhir Al-Ansari, "Hydro-Politics of the Tigris and Euphrates Basins," *Engineering*, 2016

The over-stretched community WASH systems cannot cope often with the additional burden of displaced populations, particularly if there has been damage to the infrastructure. As such, host and camp communities will continue to require some level of specialized WASH support, essentially for IDPs who are unable to return soon.

(viii) Electricity

Inadequate supply of electricity is one of the top concerns, negatively impacting daily life of people, national development, economic growth, private sector regeneration and job creation. Prior to the emergence of ISIL, Iraq's electricity sector suffered from a series of simultaneous and compounding challenges. Due to years of sanctions and past conflicts, necessary investments in reconstruction, rehabilitation, and expansion of generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure to cope with growing demand were insufficient, leading to a dilapidated national electricity grid and poor supply reliability.

This chronic problem in electrical power supply forced the people to either buy their own household generators or to resort to privately owned-and-operated neighbourhood generators, whose supply implies high costs and produces considerable noise and air pollution. So, privately owned-and-operated generators have become an important source of electricity. However, this imposes high cost burden on the people, as the private generators charge about USD 0.4/kWh[364] to residential consumers. This situation has led to ample public dissatisfaction and recurring massive protests, particularly since 2010. The above was compounded when the electricity sector suffered great damage in the ISIL-controlled territories. This resulted in the sector becoming one of the most affected in terms of damage cost, estimated at IQD 8.2 trillion (about USD7 billion).[365]

In general, reconstruction is more costly in insecure areas due to increased security costs. The instability and violence, or the threat thereof, as well as contamination with unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices, which requires a mine action solution. This severely constrains the restoration of electricity services from non-availability in some areas to an acceptable level of quality and reliability of service. Rehabilitation work on the power sector is ongoing, but public electricity, upon which many other services rely, remains unreliable. In addition to costs resulting from physical damages, the lack of electricity supply has broader economic implications arising from the substantially high cost of alternative options including generators.

In some cities, electricity shortages due to conflict-induced damage has had adverse impacts on the functionality and recovery of key social services such as health, education, water and sanitation, and the telecommunication sector. Moreover, crises-related damage to key infrastructure, dilapidated assets, and chronic fuel shortages, all severely constrain

[364] World Bank, International Bank for reconstruction and Development Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Loan in the Amount of USD200 Million to the Republic of Iraq for an Electricity Services Reconstruction and Enhancement Project on April 19, 2019 http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/504001557108087756/pdf/Iraq-Electricity-Services-Reconstruction-and-Enhancement-Project.pdf.

[365] World Bank, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction & Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates.* [pdf] World Bank. Retrieved from: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf.

the restoration of the electricity services. The violence and insecurity have only exacerbated these issues, restricting the ability of technicians to conduct routine maintenance and ultimately making it difficult to achieve a stable supply of electricity. Poor supply reliability remains due to unplanned power outages with the supply from the national grid available for only a few hours per day. As a result, privately owned generators have become an important source of electricity, but their high costs impose financial burdens.

(ix) Clearance of explosive hazards

ISIL's pattern of extensive production and systematic use of improvised explosive devices, in terms of scope and density, added to unexploded ordnance remaining from the battle against ISIL and "legacy" contamination from earlier conflicts, has led Iraq to become the most contaminated country in the world.[366] An adequate response to the clearance of such hazards can function as an enabling precursor to stabilization efforts, namely:

- The prevention of recurrence of conflict.
- The resumption of basic services.
- The return of displaced people; and
- The prevention of the "harvesting" of components that can be used to produce new improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

The most significant explosive hazard threats are concentrated around those areas liberated from ISIL. These "grey" areas are of concern, where explosive hazards, including IEDs, have been mixed into debris from collapsed buildings, posing significant challenges to those entities tasked with clearing explosive hazards. From August 2016 to the end of September 2018, UN efforts have cleared over 62,700 explosive hazards, including over 1,870 IEDs. More than 82 million square meters have been surveyed and over 3.9 million square meters cleared. These efforts initially focused on damaged or destroyed key infrastructure to enable the rehabilitation and reconstruction of essential services in liberated areas.

Despite these efforts, an estimated 130,000 residential homes in liberated areas are reported as damaged or destroyed[367] and many are likely to contain explosive remnants of war (ERW) or IEDs. In most cases these explosive hazards are a direct consequence of the use of conventional military weapons including unexploded mortars, grenades and rockets. The extensive use of air-dropped weapons accounts for much of the physical damage to buildings, whilst the placement of IEDs by ISIL was a widespread and commonly used tactic to deny subsequent entry to buildings as well as safe movement around them. In many areas, there is evidence that residential properties were also used as factories for the manufacture of explosive items (conventional, non-conventional and improvised). A lack of legal clarity concerning the liability of clearance operators when working on private

[366] Mine Action Review, 2017 "Clearing the Mines 2018 Report". <http://www.mineactionreview.org/country/iraq/anti-personnel-mines>

[367] World Bank, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction & Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates.* [pdf] World Bank <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf>.

residencies has further complicated and delayed the clearance of privately-owned property, most significantly including homes.

Table 4: Mine and "IED" contamination in Federal Iraq (at end 2017)[368]

Device	CHAs	Area (m^2)	SHAs	Area (m^2)	Total area (m^2)
AP mines	163	339,769,206	28	19,337,541	**359,106,747**
AV mines	5	87,593	1	13,319	**100,912**
Mixed AP/AV	1	647,194,904	160	1,979,762	**649,174,666**
IEDs	106	0	1	184,646,643	**184,646,643**
Total	**275**	**987,051,703**	**190**	**205,977,265**	**1,193,028,968**

Additionally, the Monitor reports that while AP mines in KRI[369] were significantly less prevalent, mines from decades of previous conflicts would still rank the KRI on its own among the world's top five most contaminated regions, with more than half of Sulaymaniyah containing those mines.

Similarly, within the disputed internal boundaries (DIBs) areas, and after the takeover of Kirkuk by Iraqi security forces in October 2017, certain areas that were heavily contaminated with explosive hazards, including IEDs, transferred from Kurdish to Iraqi control, such as in Bashiqa and Hamdaniya. The takeover and transfer in authority in these, as well as other areas, has resulted in several issues impacting upon the management of mine action activities. While UNMAS has placed a significant focus on the direct assistance to the Directorate of Mine Action and Iraq Kurdistan Mine Action Authority (the National Authority for de-mining in Iraq/Kurdistan), there are complex interactions and relationships between Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence and DMA relevant to future mine action development initiatives.

Explosive hazard contamination left the most significant impacts on critical infrastructure and the agricultural sector. Sufficient mine clearance is therefore considered to be a precursor to both the rehabilitation of infrastructure and the agricultural sector. Efforts continue to work towards ensuring that gender-responsive prioritization for clearance reflects the particular needs of men and women as part of community development, including socio-economic participation and access to essential services and safe public spaces.

---

[368] Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor: http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2018/iraq/mine-action.aspx.

[369] According to The Monitor, "both figures represented a slight drop from the previous year but did not include areas on the border with Turkey, which have never been surveyed because of insecurity. It is important to differentiate between 'Antipersonnel' mines as conventional military ordnance items and 'Improvised Landmines' as unconventional items defined as 'Improvised Explosive Devices'
Continuing fighting and airstrikes in the area reportedly continue to add mine and ERW contamination. The estimate also did not include extensive areas contaminated by Islamic State-produced mines, which have not been subjected to comprehensive survey. However, most of the Grey Area previously shared between the KRI and Federal Iraq returned to the latter's control after October 2017 and in the process the KRI was left with only a few small areas affected by such mines of an improvised nature." <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2018/iraq/mine-action.aspx>

Empowering women, advancing mine action

"On 21 March 2017, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) hosted a side event during the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women, focusing on how women's involvement in mine action both improved the effectiveness of mine action operations and boosted the economic and social standing of the women themselves."

(Source: "UNMAS: Empowering women, advancing mine action" (press release). https://www.un.int/ news/unmas-empowering-women-advancing-mine-action.

While aspects of the integration of gender mainstreaming into the prioritization of mine action activities in Iraq remains aspirational, real efforts and progress have already been made to integrate females into clearance teams as well as drive research on gender mainstreaming of prioritization of taskings.

The capacity of various mine action actors in the country and the need to further develop coordination mechanisms have impacted the efficiency of explosive hazard clearance. The Iraqi Directorate for Mine Action, as well as the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), the KRG agency mandated to clear explosive hazards, are both in need of continuing support including capacity development, gender mainstreaming, and technical and managerial aspects of mine action efforts across the country. Enhanced coordination and information-sharing among both mine action entities could also contribute towards streamlined and better-targeted clearance efforts.

For civilian entities, both commercial and NGO, there is the lengthy process to obtain accreditation from the GoI. There is also a need for improved communication between Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and civilian entities in rural and remote locations. Mine action is mainly a male domain currently, so attaining gender balance within first responders, community liaison officers and de-mining teams is a challenge and remains an impediment to gender-responsive community development and gender mainstreaming within safety and security efforts. Women have gradually gained space, as High-Risk Search team members, specialist medics, Risk Education Officers and Community Liaison Officers as well as within the Directorate of Mine Action of the Ministry of Health and Environment, but broader areas of inclusion are needed.[370]

Information sharing is a key element for successful mine action. Civilian entities need timely access to up to date information relating to both contaminated and cleared sites before commencing work in order to both guarantee the safety of personnel in those areas as well as support prioritization of resources. Collection, entry, analysis, dissemination and sharing of mine action information between all mine action actors, whether governmental, humanitarian or civilian, is also crucial to efforts to streamline collective mine action efforts. Data must be sex and age disaggregated, and analyses must be gender-sensitive to ensure that responsive gender-needs based mine action is carried out.

[370] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2017. *Engineer Montaha Khudair helps to reduce gender inequality in the field of mine action, inspired by UNDP*. [online] UNDP. <http://www.iq.undp.org/content/iraq/en/home/ourwork/crisispreventionandrecovery/successstories/engineer-montaha-khudair-helps-to-reduce-gender-inequality-in-th.html>.

(x) Cultural heritage restoration

Iraq has six World Heritage Sites extremely important for the history of art, science and culture in global terms including, Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat) (2003), Babylon (2019), Erbil Citadel (2014), Hatra (1985), Samarra Archaeological City (2007), and the Ahwaz of Southern Iraq: Refuge of Biodiversity and the Relict Landscape of the Mesopotamian Cities (2016). There are literally thousands more of local, national and international secular and religious significance that remain at risk from the years of conflict and civil unrest which Iraq has suffered through. These sites are not only objects of scientific study, but in many cases are associated with sites of religious worship and therefore central to the identity of various and multiple communities simultaneously. As such, the archaeological and monumental heritage of Iraq is an important economic driver, considering all the services that accompany pilgrimage, tourism, research and maintenance.

Sites of cultural heritage often served as military targets or flashpoints of political, ethnic or religious conflict in Iraq. ISIL committed significant damage to cultural heritage and tourism at an estimated 2.1 trillion Iraqi dinars, or D1.7 million USD.[371] Regardless of their physical state, cultural heritage sites are instruments for dialogue, social cohesion, innovation and peace. Their protection and restoration, if possible, is a crucial imperative for the GoI if these sites are to play an important role in the Iraqi reconciliation process. Beyond the physical destruction, the remaining improvised explosive devices, and the illegal sale of antiquities negatively impacts the right to take part in cultural life and violates freedom of religion and expression. Sites also hold significant economic power, as museums and other sites provide jobs, so their destruction can negatively impact the right to a standard of living and the right to work.

Several cultural heritage sites in Iraq suffered extensive and often irreversible damage over the years, including systematic destruction and looting. These include, but are not limited to, sites in Mosul, such as the Al Nuri mosque and the central library at the University of Mosul, as well as other historical sites dating back to the Nimrud and Nineveh civilizations; Sinjar, namely Yazidi shrines and places of worship; Anbar; Salahuddin, namely Ashur, the capital of the Assyrian Empire; and Diyala. The entire Old City of Mosul, retaining its historic architectural character and its multicultural society, was destroyed in the liberation efforts and remained at risk of destruction if unfettered reconstruction and development can take place. Other sites in the KRI are of concern due to economic hardship and sustained under-investment, such as the Erbil citadel.[372]

Museums and archaeological sites in Iraq have been systematically looted since 2003, as a result of civil unrest and the breakdown in the rule of law and the emergence of ISIL and their attempts to erase the evidence of the history and archaeology of Iraq. Both secular and religious heritage from all denominations were deliberately targeted and destroyed in

[371] World Bank, 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction & Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates.* [pdf] World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf>.

[372] RASHID International, 2017. *The Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq.* [online] RASHID International. <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/CulturalRights/DestructionHeritage/NGOS/RASHID.pdf>.

the preceding years, leaving key places of worship at risk, especially as the associated communities in different parts of the country and cities were displaced and fled.

Restoration of cultural heritage sites can take many forms. Financial and capacity support to the GoI's Antiquities Directorates has been identified as the single most effective means of preventing further waves of destruction and damage to the cultural heritage of Iraq.[373] Greater coordination is needed between government entities nationwide, the international and national communities, while increases in and enhancements to federal laws and physical protection of sites.

Implementation of standard-setting instruments to which Iraq is State Party in the culture sector is a fundamental starting point to protect monuments and sites, promote cultural diversity and to prevent illicit traffic of cultural property. These include:

- The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, with its two Protocols of 1954 and 1999.
- The 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.
- The 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.
- The 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally exported Cultural Objects.
- The 1999 international fund for the return and restitution of cultural property, launched by UNESCO.
- The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; and
- The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Education and awareness-raising on the value of national and cultural heritage by government, religious and community actors will also contribute toward restoration efforts and strengthening of social cohesion.

Fighting against illicit trafficking of Iraq's cultural properties including items of archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific, and religious importance illegally removed from the National Museum, the National Library, and other locations, require an international response. This includes stronger collaboration between relevant international and national authorities, strengthening national legislation, raising awareness about the ethical and legal standards regarding acquisition, collection and managing of cultural heritage. Museums, private collectors, art market's stakeholders, auction houses, are crucial actors to be actively involved in the fight against illicit traffic.

Mine action is another aspect of reconstruction effort and must be considered at the earliest stages of planning and programming in the restoration process with many sites deliberately "booby-trapped" and others containing the remnants of war strewn and buried within destroyed and dilapidated buildings.

The scope of proposed actions in cultural heritage concerns more than restoration and protection of physical spaces, it involves fostering resilience, cultural identity, social cohesion and inter-community reconciliation through the creation of employment and restoring economic opportunities in the culture sector.

[373] *Ibid*.

(xi) Social protection services

The need for social protection is particularly high in Iraq primarily due to conflict and the subsequent consequences in access to livelihoods. Significant portions of the Iraqi population remain outside the coverage of both permanent and temporary social protection schemes, including many of the most vulnerable.[374] Access to relevant social protection networks remains particularly challenging for both displaced people and returnees. Obstacles include a lack of necessary civil documentation for enrolment in social programs, inadequate assessment capacity of the authorities, complicated registration procedures and responsible transition toward government and international development planning frameworks.

Importantly, addressing the vulnerabilities and key challenges faced by diverse women, girls, men and boys in forcibly displaced communities, as well as vulnerable host communities within national social protection frameworks, provides a unique opportunity to achieve multiple objectives across the humanitarian-development nexus. Iraq made efforts to reform social safety nets (SSN) over the past years, including a move away from universal food subsidies towards more targeted cash transfer programmes. However, food and fuel subsidies continue to account for the majority of social safety net spending.

Moreover, cash transfers are not very practical in reaching those in need, often in remote, rural areas. While the number of those in need of Social Safety Net (SSN) assistance has increased sharply as a result of the crisis, pre-existing challenges in reaching them have also been aggravated. Further, coverage of contributory social security systems is limited, and its current inability to cover IDPs and refugees requires dependence on fluctuating and unsustainable humanitarian assistance.

Additionally, the mechanisms and definitions used to determine eligibility to cash transfers and social assistance under Iraq's safety net programme is inefficient and fails to deliver for those it is intended to target. In this regard, to support the inclusion of forcibly displaced population into national social protection systems. WB and UNHCR, in coordination with partners (UNDP, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), I/NGOs), has been working to develop systems, including aligning the targeting methods, through which the humanitarian-multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) supported beneficiaries. This can be referred to as a government-led social safety net for sustained and long-term support. Accordingly, the technical development of a targeting model for humanitarian MPCA that was aligned with the WB's targeting model for MoLSA's assistance has been completed. This revised MPCA targeting model implemented by cash actors across the humanitarian community creates the possibility of a unified referral system for SSN.

Pension, retirement, and social security systems all have deficiencies in efficiency, equity, and sustainability of funding.[375] The state pension system covers, *among other things*, civil servants and employees in state-owned enterprises, i.e., the public sector, but only provides for pensions in case of old-age, disability and death and do not contain provisions for unemployment insurance benefits.[376] Public pensions reached less than 20 percent of the

[374] Ergon Associates, 2018. *Decent Work Country Diagnostic: Iraq*. International Labour Organization.
[375] *Ibid*.
[376] *Ibid*.

poor in 2017 while achieving an estimated 85 percent of non-poor households, because pensions are not intended as anti-poverty transfers.[377]

An estimated 48 percent of the total Labour force contribute to and are covered by the two systems.[378] Consequently, the deficiencies in the two systems perpetuate inequalities, fragment the Labour market, is administratively costly accounting for 4 percent of GDP,[379] and limits Labour market mobility.[380] A new social security law awaits finalization by the Iraqi parliament for enactment. In the KRI, a draft law on social protection was developed in 2016, but not yet enacted.[381] There is also a need for a comprehensive law to provide for adequate reparations for survivors of sexual violence and children born of rape.

Iraq's Public Distribution System (PDS), was initially launched during the sanctions in the 1990's, and is the "largest, non-contributory social transfer programme in the world".[382] Because of its origins, food is technically planned to be distributed to all under certain income thresholds, thus roughly 95 percent of the population. However, this means that both poor and non-poor persons receive the same benefits, without consideration of needs.

The system requires a significant overhaul, in every part of its processes, including procurement, contracting, and targeting and registration of beneficiaries.[383] Many IDPs lost access to the PDS due to conflict as the system is based on residency; in Anbar and Ninewa, the two governorates most affected by the war, 81 percent and 77 percent of the population respectively accessed food rations from the PDS, compared to a national average of 96.5 percent.[384] The PDS also negatively impacts local grain markets.[385]

Alongside the PDS, cash transfers are another form of the temporary social protection scheme. Approximately 10 percent of the population lives in a household receiving a form

---

[377] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion.* [<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18-web.pdf>

[378] *Ibid*.

[379] International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2017. *IMF Country Report No. 17/251 – Iraq.* <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2017/08/09/Iraq-2017-Article-IV- Consultation-and-Second-Review-under-the-Three-Year-Stand-by-45174> .

[380] International Labour Organization (ILO), 2017. *Report to the Government – Observations on the Iraqi Draft Social Insurance Law of November 2017.*.

[381] Ergon Associates, 2018. *Decent Work Country Diagnostic: Iraq*. International Labour Organization.

[382] Krishnan, N., Olivieri, S., and Ramadan, R., 2018. *Estimating the Welfare Costs of Reforming the Iraq Public Distribution System: A Mixed Demand Approach, Innocenti Working Paper WP -2018-07.* [online] UNICEF Office of Research. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/estimating-welfare-costs- reforming-iraq-public-distribution-system-mixed-demand-approach> [Accessed 23 March 2019].

[383] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18-web.pdf>

[384] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2017. "An Analysis of Child Poverty Trends and Policy Recommendations for the National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2017-2021. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UN064563_Child_poverty_in_Iraq.pdf>

[385] *Ibid*.; World Bank Group, 2017. *Iraq Systematic Country Diagnostic.* from: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD- FINAL-cleared-02132017.pdf>

of temporary social cash transfer.[386] However, like the PDS, targeting is a challenge. While cash transfers do not necessarily reach the poorest, there is a primary concern with under coverage and exclusion errors: an estimated 5.6 million of the poor do not benefit from any form of cash transfer.[387]

The Social Safety Net (SSN) program is the only national cash transfer system in Iraq. Alongside the SSN, the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) pilot program launched by the WB is designed to preserve and enhance human capital by incentivizing a greater use of education and health services.[388] Under the programme, households are expected to meet the co-responsibilities of investing in health, such as maternal and child vaccination, and education, i.e. attendance in school for grades five to seven.[389]

The government has taken some steps to improve social protection systems. The enactment of a new social protection law in 2014, helped streamline access to social protection services. The eligibility criteria to receive cash transfers shifted from a categorical-based system to a system based on poverty level, to increase coverage and reduce errors of inclusion and exclusion.[390] Iraqis as well as foreigners residing in Iraq who live below the poverty line are eligible beneficiaries and the redefinition of target groups can be accomplished if needed without referral to a legislative authority.[391]

However, proper data collection must accompany the enforcement of this law, which is strong on case management but poor on data collection. The GoI also launched a Social Protection Strategic Roadmap in 2014, that proposes a comprehensive social protection system covering social safety nets, social insurance, Labour market policies, and monthly cash assistance.[392] MOLSA and the Social Protection Commission (SPC) in 2016, launched a new poverty targeting program with a budget of 1.9 trillion Iraqi dinars. However, there are concerns that the poverty line established for such targeting under the program—set at a monthly rate of 105,500 Iraqi dinars —requires further adaptation.[393]

While there is a need to reconsider the cost-effectiveness of the current subsidy system (and particularly the PDS), it is important that the alternative cash-based and/or voucher-based social protection mechanisms that are put in place are comprehensive enough in coverage and address both poverty and life-cycle vulnerabilities. Such a program must be implemented in line with a unified registry that properly identifies eligible beneficiaries, something that can be built from the modernization of the PDS database. The functional capacities of MoLSA at the field level must also be developed to deliver social protection

[386] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2017. "An Analysis of Child Poverty Trends and Policy Recommendations for the National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2017-2021. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UN064563_Child_poverty_in_Iraq.pdf>

[387] *Ibid*.

[388] *Ibid*.

[389] *Ibid*.

[390] World Bank Group, 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion.* [pdf] World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/980021539372476570/pdf/130798-WP-P164676-Iraq-EcoMonitor-Fall-2018-10-12-18-web.pdf>

[391] *Ibid*.

[392] *Ibid*.

[393] Ergon Associates, 2018. *Decent Work Country Diagnostic: Iraq*. International Labour Organization.

services. There are numerous negative impacts on the systems, which have accelerated the need for reform and revision, in order to ensure they serve those most in need.

4.4.3 Public and Social Factors

(i) Corruption

With the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, Iraq suffered from disastrous government management, lack of resources, and an unequal distribution of wealth, resulting in widespread corruption. This greatly impacted the functionality of the public system.

Currently, and since October 2019, Iraq is witnessing massive protests and demonstrations against government corruption, Iranian interference, corrupt religious parties and militias, as demonstrators protest against the alleged astronomical financial gains accrued by these parties for many years, at the expense of the people and public institutions. Iraq was ranked 169th out of 180 on the corruption index, according to Transparency International Organization, that also describes the prevalence of political, economic and administrative corruption within its various institutions.

Indeed, Iraq has been deeply affected by elevated levels of corruption, particularly during the years of political instability of war followed by civil unrest between 2003 and 2014. The situation led to a heavy imprint on the country, at all levels of society and governance, including the public administrative system, that got exacerbated with the emergence of ISIL in 2014.

Transparency reports confirm also that the volume of money looted in the period after 2003 amounted to USD300 billion, and unconfirmed sources add that about USD350 billion were wasted and stolen during the years 2003-2014, with fake projects and financial and administrative corruption. Moreover, five thousand projects were not implemented because of poor planning, at a time when the country was going through an internal and external debt crisis that exhausted the economy despite all its material and human wealth.

The WB indicated that Iraq is ranked the second most corrupt country in the world and one with the weakest business and investment environments, due to the challenging legislation and the security situations.

Iraq has the largest oil reserves in the world after Saudi Arabia, with oil reserves representing about 10.7 percent of the total global reserve. However, the size of the growing corruption created successive living and economic crises for citizens. Iraqis are suffering from high unemployment, poor public services, and extreme poverty, with the official poverty rate rates in 2019 at 22.5 percent, while WB statistics indicate that poverty reached 41.2 percent in the areas liberated from ISIL, and 30 percent in Southern governorates (50 percent for children), 23 percent in the centre, and 12.5 percent in the KRI.

Fighting corruption and ensuring a fair distribution of wealth was set out as one of the pillars in the reform programme launched in September 2014, by the GoI, alongside the consolidation of the rule of law and the efforts to achieve national reconciliation and political inclusiveness. However, the implementation of the reform programme has been

slow in the past years, because resources were focused on the fight against ISIL and due to the pervasive challenges of corruption and nepotism.

Corruption, being a social phenomenon that affects the administration along with society, comes as a result of weak governance and the absence of government monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The rule of law is undeniable in leading towards transparency and accountability of the public sector as well as other stakeholders. Nevertheless, some laws either contradict this effort or are not enacted properly.

In March 2008, Iraq acceded to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).[394] It was reviewed during the first cycle of the Implementation of the Review Mechanism (IRM)[395] of the UNCAC provisions regarding Chapters III and IV on criminalization and law enforcement and international cooperation respectively. The next review will be done in the fourth year (2020) of the second cycle on Chapters II and V on preventive measures and asset recovery.

The first UNCAC review report encouraged the anti-corruption authorities to enact laws pertaining to the mandatory provisions of the Convention, including laws on active bribery of foreign public officials, obstruction of justice (with regards to witnesses and false testimony), and the seizure and forfeiture of converted and intermingled property. The report also urged the country to consider enacting laws related to the UNCAC provisions on trading in influence, bribery in the private sector, abuse of functions, embezzlement of property in the private sector, participation and attempt (in terms of preparation to commit an offence), as well as the protection of witnesses and reporting persons, and the cooperation with law enforcement authorities and the Commission of Integrity (CoI).

The CoI is the main anti-corruption body in Iraq, tasked to detect, investigate and prosecute cases of corruption, including those forwarded by the Board of Supreme Audit (BSA) and the Inspectors-General for further criminal investigation. The CoI is also mandated to work on the prevention of corruption and to ensure that adequate preventive measures are applied in the public sector. In 2016, the CoI drafted a National Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2016-2020, which was submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for revision and adoption. The Cabinet established a committee to analyse to which extent the new draft strategy is feasible, taking into consideration the difficulties encountered in implementing the first national strategy (2010-2014). Currently, the strategy is being reviewed by the CoI and it is planned to be launched for five years.

The CoI is also in the process of developing a National Integrity Index, in cooperation with the Board of Supreme Audit. The Index is planned to be implemented by the Inspector-General in each ministry (almost 30 Inspectors-General across Iraq). It will be conducted annually to measure the integrity in the public service delivery and the progress in implementing the national strategy. However, in October 2019, the Parliament approved a Government decision to dissolve all Inspector General offices in all ministries.

[394] This convention is the first and only legally-binding international anti-corruption instrument with a mandatory character of many of its provisions and covers five main areas: corruption preventive measures; criminalization and law enforcement; international cooperation; asset recovery; and technical assistance and information exchange.

395 The Implementation Review Mechanism is a peer review process that assists States parties to effectively implement the Convention.

Article 10 of the CoI law provided for the establishment of a committee mandated to recover stolen assets.[396] However, up to date, not much has been achieved in this area due to a lack of specialised technical capacity. Iraq has a robust domestic framework to enable asset restraint and confiscation; including provisions to freeze and confiscate assets in absentia. The framework to facilitate international cooperation to recover the proceeds of corruption that appears less well developed.

Senior public officials in Iraq are obligated by law to submit an annual asset declaration form to the CoI; however, the submission rates are very low, which has prompted the Commission to start an initiative to increase the awareness of public officials on the importance of submitting declaration forms and how it contributes to enhancing the culture of integrity and trust in the public sector. Also, the Commission is considering broadening the range of officials to be included in the reporting and to update the procedures of reporting and administration of forms.

Furthermore, the Commission currently focuses on combating corruption in the private sector. In 2018, it became a member of the Private Sector Development Committee (chaired by the Ministry of Planning), which is implementing the Private Sector Development Strategy 2015-2030. The CoI will assist the Committee in ensuring that integrity measures are introduced in the private sector, and that relevant anti-corruption laws and regulations are in place and effectively implemented.

Like corruption, money laundering is problematic in Iraq. The Iraqi economy is primarily cash-based; hence many financial transactions do not enter the banking system, which provides opportunities to make illegal money, including criminal activities that go undetected. The use of paper-based traditional financial analysis techniques and insufficient capacities of financial and non-financial reporting, further complicate the detection and tracing of money laundering, including terrorism financing cases.

Recently, considerable efforts have been exerted to enhance the legal and regulatory framework for anti-money laundering (AML), which has already led to some positive results. For instance, Iraq is no longer subject to the Financial Action Task Force's ongoing global AML/CFT compliance process[397], which indicates that Iraq has improved its AML/CFT regime. However, the recently amended legal framework is not strong enough to effectively counter money laundering; further improvements are needed.

The primary entity tasked with combating money laundering is the *Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Finance of Terrorism Office* in the Central Bank of Iraq. The *Office* receives and investigates reports or information from the financial institutions on transactions suspected to involve proceeds of an original crime, money laundering or terrorism financing. The *Office* reports annually to the AML/CFT Council, chaired by the Governor of the Central Bank, on the number of suspicious transaction reports (STRs), ML/FT trends and techniques.

[396] Commission of Integrity Law: http://ar.parliament.iq/2011/09/24/%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%A9/

[397] Improving Global AML/CFT Compliance: On-going Process 29 June 2018: http://www.fatf-gafi.org/publications/high-riskandnon-cooperativejurisdictions/documents/fatf-compliance-june-2018.html#Iraq

The *AML/CFT Office* still processes the STRs manually, which leads to extending the time and efforts exerted by the financial analysts in the analysis process. Therefore, it needs to shift towards a robust intelligent analysis system and an integrated database that allows the direct receipt of STRs made by the reporting entities and using advanced electronic features.

(ii) The rule of law and access to justice

Peace, stability, accountable governance, and respect for the rule of law are essential prerequisites for sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reaffirms that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security. Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda focuses on fostering peaceful and inclusive societies, the provision of access to justice, and building effective and accountable institutions for all. Improving the rule of law and access to justice, along with reasonable delivery of these services not only to returnee populations and the liberated areas, but also to the rest of Iraq, will be a key determinant to the country's transition to recovery and stability.

While rebuilding ISIL-destroyed infrastructure and economic recovery are immediate priorities, restoring the rule of law, justice delivery and equal access to services for local populations is a necessary pre-condition to sustain safe returns and attaining long-term stability. With the end of the military action against ISIL, this work has just begun. Furthermore, the weak rule of law and lack of reasonable access to justice services also has the potential to undermine ongoing efforts to restore stability and recovery. Structural stabilization, security sector reform and socio-economic development by both the government and international partners are vital. According to the WB Rule of Law Index 2017, Iraq ranked 185 out of 193 nations, with a score of -1.64 (-2.5 weak; 2.5 strong).[398]

The poor quality of legal education, years of domination of the justice sector by the executive branch, the country's fragile security situation, and the politicization of law enforcement have all contributed to this low ranking.[399] Iraq's judiciary still struggles to maintain its independence, inadequate security limits public access to court files and information, and judges routinely face political pressure and personal threats.[400] Furthermore, outdated legislation, lack of timely information sharing, poor documentation and archiving of records related to judicial proceedings, within and among relevant institutions, continue to cause significant impediments to the administration of justice and due process.

Going forward, regaining public trust in the rule of law and justice institutions will remain essential foundations for Iraq's peace, stability and development not least in fulfilling government's commitments to SDGs 5 and 10 (gender equality and reduce inequality in people). Women, girls and children continue to bear a significant and disproportionate burden from the effects of the conflict and the many challenges mentioned above.

There was widespread conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), and thousands of women and girls were subject to unspeakable brutality at the hands of their ISIL captors. The current

[398] World Bank Rule of Law Index, 2017. *Rule of Law - Country Rankings*. <https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/wb_ruleoflaw/#Iraq>
[399] *Ibid*.
[400] *Ibid*.

victim/survivor compensation process does not give due consideration to individual circumstances, causing further constraints for women, persons with limited mobility or financial insecurity. This makes them unable to meet the costs associated with filing applications due to frequent travel involved. The reclamation of property by female-headed households also affects women as most properties are registered in males' names. Allowing accessible justice pathways for women and girls, including free legal aid services, must therefore be central to Iraq's recovery, stability and reconstruction efforts.

Similarly, the government must make efforts to ensure its rule of law and justice institutions can hold perpetrators of violence to account. Citizens largely distrust the court system and often rely on informal conflict resolution mechanisms, such as tribal authorities. The ambiguous use of anti-terrorism laws and the penal code, as well as collective punishment in ISIL trials, could also violate principles of due process.[401] For example, both the Iraqi and KRG judicial systems are prosecuting thousands of ISIL suspects under counter-terrorism legislation[402] for a range of alleged offences in the absence of victim or witness participation in trials, and suspects are often tried for alleged multiple criminal acts.[403]

Due to these many challenges, recurrence of human rights violations has become the norm in the delivery of justice in Iraq - i.e. lack of respect for citizen's legal rights, misuse of police and judicial powers including in arrests, treatment of detainees and unlawful use of force. Systematic due process violations have occurred, whereby guarantees in Iraqi law for detainees to see a judge within 24 hours, to have access to a lawyer throughout interrogations, and to have families notified of their detention and to able to communicate with them are not being followed.[404] Legal shortcomings have also occurred at the screening, detention, and investigation stages of ISIL suspects in Iraq, as well the practice of denying access to legal representation and see family.[405] Iraq has an amnesty law in contrast to the KRG, which has pardoned hundreds of suspects, but it is unclear whether the law is equitably applied.[406]

Women also face lack of equal access to compensation for atrocities committed by ISIL; the compensation process does not take into account the situation of those seeking justice, particularly for women and persons facing mobility or financial challenges, due to the costs

[401] Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2018. *Iraq: 2018 World Report.* <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/iraq>.
Mansour, R, 2018. *Rebuilding the Iraqi State: Stabilisation, Governance, and Reconciliation*,European Parliament Director-General for External Policies.
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603859/EXPO_STU(2017)603859_EN.pdf
>
[402] The KRG is trying ISIL suspects under an expired counterterrorism law, the Law on the Combat of Terrorism in the Kurdistan Region No. 3 of 2006.
[403] Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2018. *Iraq: 2018 World Report.* [pdf] HRW. Retrieved from:
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/iraq>
[404] *Ibid*.; Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2018. *Iraq: 2018 World Report.*
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/iraq>
[405] Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2017. *Flawed Justice: Accountability for ISIS Crimes in Iraq*
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/12/05/flawed-justice/accountability-isis-crimes- Iraq> .
[406] Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2018. *Iraq: 2018 World Report.*
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/iraq> .

to file applications and frequent travel involved. The reclamation of property mainly affects women as most property is registered in males' names.[407]

Other discriminatory elements remain in Iraq's Tax Code, Personal Status Code, and Penal Code, including assumptions that reinforce women's traditional roles and prevent their full exercise of choice or economic independence, which often leads to pay inequality between men and women and restrictions on women to work in specific sectors.[408] Lastly, the promotion of family-led reconciliation as a first recourse and alternative to justice for women often leads to lower accountability for the defender and thus a lack of proper criminalization.[409]

Iraq faces a particular challenge in providing compensation to victims of the war against ISIL, as Law 20 of 2009 was not designed for such cases, and therefore does not recognize victims of conflict-related sexual violence as an eligible category of victim.[410] Victims of sexual violence and those suffering from psychological trauma have no recourse under Law 20. Hence, women as well as men who survived sexual abuse cannot apply for compensation according to the Law.[411]

Similarly, there is no scope for a collective approach regarding reparations for those who have been victimized based on their ethnic and/or religious affiliation.[412] Finally, there are no laws supporting children forcibly recruited into military services. Overall, there is a need for legal review and potential reform – apart from the issue of compensation, the state lacks programs and legislation providing other forms of reparations to survivors of CRSV violence, such as psychosocial support, health care, economic empowerment, livelihood, etc.[413]

---

[407] *Ibid* 305

[408] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2012. *Women's Economic Empowerment: Integrating Women into the Iraqi Economy.* [online] UNDP. <http://www.iq.undp.org/content/iraq/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/publication_1.html> [

[409] Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2017. *Iraq: Strengthen Domestic Violence Bill*. [online] HRW. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/19/iraq-strengthen-domestic-violence-bill> .

[410] Law No. 20 of 2009 on Compensating Victims of Military Operations, Military Mistakes and Terrorist Actions (amended in 2015), provides redress to victims who have suffered violations since 2003.

[411] Sandoval, C., and Puttick, M., 2017. *Reparations for the Victims of Conflict in Iraq: Lessons learned from comparative practice.* [pdf] Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights and Minority Rights Group International. <https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Reparations-in- Iraq-Ceasefire-November-2017.pdf> .

[412] *Ibid*.

[413] *Ibid*.; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), 2017. Promotion and Protection of Rights of Victims of Sexual Violence Captured by ISIL/or in Areas Controlled by ISIL in Iraq. [pdf] OHCHR and UNAMI. <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMIReport22Aug2017_EN.pdf> ; FIDH and KINYAT Organization for Documentation, 2018. *Sexual and gender-based crimes against the Yazidi Community: the role of ISIL foreign fighters*. [pdf] FIDH and KINYAT Organization for Documentation <https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/irak723angweb.pdf> [; United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 2016. *UNSC Resolution 2331 (2016) on Trafficking and Sexual Violence children* <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2331> .; United Nations, 2014. *Guidance Note of the Secretary-General: Reparations for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence.* <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/ sections/docs/2014/unsg-guidance-note-reparations-for-conflictrelated-sexual-violence-2014- en.pdf?la=en&vs=1356> .

(iii) Women

The transition of Iraq from a centralized state to a functioning democracy has been distorted and remains incomplete. This is manifested in large areas being outside government control over prolonged periods; pervasive insecurity and violence – not least sexual-and gender-based violence, which has resulted in the deaths of over 14,000 women since 2003[414] – loss of momentum in the adoption and implementation of vital reforms; poor accessibility, as well as a limited coverage and substandard quality of essential services (social, economic and the rule of law); massive population displacement; and a severe lack of public trust and confidence in the state.

Although the Constitution guarantees the inclusion of women in the legislative and executive branches, with a minimum of 25 percent of the members of the CoR being women;[415] few women have been appointed into executive roles in the history of modern Iraq. It is worth noting that the KRG increased the minimum quota of women parliamentarians to 30 percent. After the 2018 elections, Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi nominated two women in his cabinet but the CoR did not confirm them.[416] Nonetheless, it is positive to see some women taking prominent roles at the district and local levels.

Based on Order Nº. 312, the government decided to shut down the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 2015, along with three other ministries, as part of a reform package aimed to reduce state expenditures.[417] Ministry of State for Women's Affairs had submitted the National Strategy for the Advancement of Iraqi Women (2014-2018) and the National Strategy on violence against women (2013-2017), both of which were not implemented,[418] while there were also no budget allocations and no political will to advance the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda.

While the Constitutional quota ensures women's representation in CoR, it does not guarantee Parliament's enhanced attention to gender-related issues. It is essential to promote women's political participation, including through ensuring that political parties allocate sufficient funds to help improve women's political leadership and provide support to women candidates running for elections.[419]

Moreover, women Members of Parliament (MPs) have generally involved themselves in family-related issues, such as child-rearing. They tend to be included mostly in certain specialized committees, such as those related to education, health services, the situation of women and children, and human rights. So far, no woman has ever been part of the Security and Defence Committee, the National Reconciliations and Impunity Committee or the

---

[414] *No Place to Turn: Violence against women in the Iraq conflict*, Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights and Minority Rights Group International, February 2015; http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ceasefire-report-no-place-to-turn.pdf

[415] Iraqi Constitution, Art. 49.

[416] Sowell, K., 2018. *A Fractured Iraqi Cabinet*. [online] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from: <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/77674

[417] Vilardo, V., Bittar, S., 2018. *Gender Profile: Iraq. A situation analysis on gender equality and women's empowerment in Iraq*. < https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/ handle/10546/620602>
Al-Qaher, S., 2019. Merger of parliamentary committees' further side-lines Iraqi women. *Al-Monitor [online]* <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/01/iraq-women-feminism- gender-quality.html>

[418] Assessment of National Women's Machineries in Iraq: Achievements, Challenges & Scenarios for the Future. UN Women. Oct 2017–March 2018.

[419] As also recommended by the CEDAW Committee, CEDAW/C/IRQ/4-6, para. 35 (b).

Labour and Social Affairs Committee. Efforts to increase women's representation in many entities that were exclusively operated by men in the past have been successful, such as security forces (MoI), HJC (Judges and at DG level), and others. Still, despite some progress, there is still a need for greater representation.

(iv) Civil society organizations

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have existed in Iraq since it was formed as a nation-state in 1921, although they were tightly controlled and affiliated with political parties. However, under the CPA period, there was a resurgence of NGOs/CSOs, as the CPA promoted and supported those that could be vehicles for the international community's support as the country dealt with significant political and social upheaval and reform. Although it is difficult to calculate the number of CSOs in Iraq, estimates range as high as 10,000 CSOs, although formally registered groups are much fewer than this.[420]

According to IRFAD, in 2008 there were an estimated 6,350 registered and 6-12,000 unregistered CSOs/NGOs, many working through networks such as NCCI, and others working in niche environments, either geographically or thematically. While such growth is to be applauded, it is also important that there is coordination and understanding of the international standards of care, particularly as it applies to the humanitarian response. The successes of the Cluster System include the promotion of IASC standards and enhanced coordination. With the transition, it is not yet clear how that coordination will also transition, with new partners and areas for coordination. Still, the foundation exists for using the Cluster System to promote the humanitarian-development-peace nexus among humanitarian and development actors in Iraq.

Some CSOs in the KRI maintained their independence, though a continued reliance on funding by the government and fear of the government-controlled forces, including security forces, resulted in many continued CSO affiliations with political parties. This is a pivotal contributor to communities' mistrust in CSOs. Overall, it is widely felt that while civil society has made gains and provides essential partners for international and national actors to deliver assistance, many are aligned to political parties and political ideologies.

The allure of funding from donors either directly or through pass-through arrangements as implementing partners of larger organisations such as the UN has led to a large number of small unsustainable organisations, living from grant to grant and not always able to deliver with full capacity, either technical or organisational. Without standards for newer issues such as psychosocial counselling, there is a risk that harm is being done, despite the good intentions of those delivering the services. Similarly, with the constant changing of partners, or conversely the heavy reliance on just a few known entities, there is a dearth of sustained and sustainable capacity countrywide.

Finally, most NGOs are relegated to service delivery activities, with localised work in advocacy and policy. Research conducted by NDI[421] showed that CSOs face barriers in

[420] Iraqi Research Foundation for Analysis and Development (IRFAD), 2014. *Iraq Civil Society.* [online] <http://www.irfad.org/iraq-civil-society/>.

[421] Research conducted by NDI showed that CSOs face barriers in influencing policy due to *'a dismissive, and occasionally hostile, political class; lack of internal focus and structure; and organizational connections to political parties, damaging the sector's desired reputation for independence.'* In addition, CSOs often view

influencing policy due to: "A dismissive, and occasionally hostile, political class; lack of internal focus and structure; and organizational connections to political parties, damaging the sector's desired reputation for independence". Also, CSOs often view themselves as trainers and educators more than as advocates. This is particularly an issue for those working in social change arenas, such as women's rights and empowerment, youth, and more broadly in promoting gender equality, human rights, and inclusive governance.

Recognizing and supporting CSOs working at a grassroots level, can contribute to social cohesion, targeted programming that more accurately identifies the most vulnerable and potentially left behind members of the community and a more sustainable solution to community issues. However, this also requires a different approach to the financing and support of grassroots civil society entities, whether CSOs or other mechanisms within the social, religious or cultural structures.

The number of CSOs representing the interests of women in the political sphere has dramatically reduced over the years. The majority were dismantled by the Ba'athist regime in 1958, to be replaced in 1970 by the regime-controlled General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW) in 1970. When the regime fell in 2003, the GFIW became dormant, leaving a gap in female representation. Fortunately, some women associations have arisen in recent times, increasing advocacy efforts on women issues. For instance, Iraqi CSOs recently played an important role in reviewing and advocating for the law on domestic violence. Some successful examples are the Women's Peace League, set up in 2014 to bring together female political representatives in the KRI to discuss the advancement of women's issues in the political sphere; and the Baghdad Women Association, which exerts significant efforts in federal Iraq on the same matter. The Women's Peace League has had a substantial impact by creating a bipartisan group that solely focuses on promoting women's rights and policies within the KRG.

(v) Media outlets

An influential independent media acts is a crucial mechanism to hold the state to account. Freedom of the press and expression is guaranteed in the Constitution, but other legal instruments contain vague and unclear terminology, which is open to abuse. Some older legislations are still enforced, such as the Publications Law from 1968 that prohibits insults to the government. It allows for up to seven years in prison for those found guilty of the offence, but its implementation is arbitrary as it doesn't define what constitutes an insult.[422] Authorities also use the Penal Code enacted in 1969, that allows journalists to be prosecuted for libel and defamation.[423] While the Constitution explicitly prohibits the establishment of special courts, the Supreme Judicial Council created one to prosecute journalists in 2010.[424]

---

themselves as trainers and educators as opposed to advocates. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), 2011. *The Voice of Civil Society in Iraq.* [pdf] NDI. <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Civil_Society_Assessment_Iraq.pdf>

[422] Freedom House, 2017. *Freedom of the Press 2017 - Iraq.* [pdf] Freedom House, retrieved from: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/59fc67e0a.html> .

[423] Freedom House, 2012. *Freedom of the Press 2012 - Iraq*. [*:* <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2012/iraq>.

[424] Freedom House, 2012. *Freedom of the Press 2012 - Iraq*

In 2011, a law aimed at protecting journalists entered into force but had been deemed by many to be ineffective. An article within the legislation that outlaws "an incitement to violence" has been frequently misused by authorities to arrest journalists.[425] According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 186 journalists have been killed since 1992. It is believed that 112 of those killed were targeted murders and 111 of those were committed with impunity.[426] In 2018, Iraq ranked third on the CPJ Impunity Index[427] and has featured in the Index since its inception.

In addition to legal and security issues, the politicization of the media significantly impedes its ability to serve as an effective accountability mechanism. While Iraq has a high number of media organizations, the majority are linked to or funded by different political parties. Trust in the media is low; 75 percent of the population state they trust television as a source of information, while only 5 percent trust radio as a source and only 2 percent trust newspapers and magazines.[428] Despite civil society support such as the Iraqi Women Journalists Forum (IWJF) formed in 2014, women in media are often restricted to writing on "women's issues". They are rarely in management or decision-making positions. They also face discrimination, harassment and violence in the workplace and outside.

Access to information is also an essential mechanism for the press to monitor government activities. While it has been on the political agenda for several years, a draft bill on this issue has yet to be put to the legislature. The draft bill has been amended three times (2010, 2013, and 2014) by the parliament,[429] but CSOs and international actors rejected all three drafts. Currently, the CoR is trying to schedule a second reading and a vote. The draft law and all following amendments still include a clause that would punish a person who uses any information gained in a way which 'adversely affects the country'.[430] The interpretation of such a vague and undefined clause is open to abuse of power and is the core reason for the resistance to the draft as it stands.

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2012/iraq>[.

[425] *Ibid*.

[426] Committee to Protect Journalists, 2019. *Journalists killed in Iraq since 1992.* [online] CPJ. Available at <https://cpj.org/mideast/iraq/> .

[427] Witchel, E., 2018. *Getting Away with Murder*. [online] Committee to Protect Journalists. Available at: <https://cpj.org/reports/2018/10/impunity-index-getting-away-with-murder-killed-justice.php>

[428] National Democracy Institute, 2011. *The Voice of Civil Society in Iraq*. [pdf] NDI. <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Civil_Society_Assessment_Iraq.pdf>

[429] Article 19, 2010. *Memorandum on the Access to Information Draft Law of Iraq.* <https://www.article19.org/data/files/pdfs/analysis/iraq-analysis-of-draft-access-to- information-law.pdf>

[430] ICSSI, 2017. Freedom of Expression and Access to Information: The Iraqi Women Journalists Forum Works to Promote Essential Rights. *Iraq Civil Society Solidarity Initiative,* <https://www.iraqicivilsociety.org/archives/7493>

5. Identification of Challenges, Critical Gaps and Potential Partnerships to Support Implementation of Commitments

5.1 Key CCA Findings

As noted in the Foreword, the findings of this CCA must be viewed through the context in which Iraq currently finds itself. Several new potentially catastrophic crises have emerged before the old crisis (destruction of infrastructure, torn social fabric, and governance systems ill-suited to tackle Iraq's challenges) was resolved. Hence, it is difficult to expect the government or its development partners to prioritize longer-term sustainable development.

Nevertheless, when Iraq returns to some level of normalcy, there will still be a determination to build resilient families, communities, and nation. To achieve resilience, the government and its national and international partners must address specific key issues. They are integrated in nature, and need equal consideration, with a focus on identifying where they can achieve the most impact towards sustainable development.

The government needs to address a broad spectrum of needs, requiring both humanitarian and development approaches to create durable solutions that promote resilience, stability, shared prosperity, and peace. The government must prioritise issues of governance, basic service delivery, reconstruction of productive infrastructure, and diversification of the economy to address unemployment and the risks associated with dependence on oil revenues. This includes promotion of the rule of law and accountability systems, exposing corruption, investing in reconstruction and service delivery, and strengthening institutions for efficient and effective governance at all levels. These actions must also involve marginalised segments of the population in decision-making processes that impact their lives regarding peace, economic empowerment, and full and equal participation in their families, communities, and the country.

Key Finding #1

Poor governance has undermined trust, quality of service delivery, and marginalised the recipients of the services – the citizens. The current weak social contract between the state and the people needs to be re-established. The Government needs to implement transparent, responsive, and inclusive structural reforms of state and civil institutions.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence of this challenge is the state of basic service delivery nationwide. Impacted by conflicts over the years, compounded by underinvestment in development, and legislation no longer relevant or supportive in the current environment, the Iraqi state now must rebuild its relationship with the people.

A starting point should be essential services – ensuring that all people in the country receive continued access to quality services regardless of their background or socioeconomic status. Improving essential services will require developing new and enhancing current mechanisms which benefit the end-user and address rampant corruption in the delivery system. Additionally, the government needs to resolve civil documentation challenges that many Iraqis, particularly those impacted by the conflict, face daily.

Similarly, focusing on existing state obligations such as international conventions and national strategies will show political commitment to the welfare of the people, especially if the new government can work with civil society to achieve those obligations.

Finally, any trust-building process must emphasise the rule of law, address corruption, and recognise the positive aspects of cultural diversity as part of promoting national heritage and identity for peaceful societies. Creating a rights-based and gender equality culture, with respect for its different components as equal contributors to the success of all, will be essential to the sustained success of these processes.

Key Finding #2

Overreliance on oil sector revenue makes Iraq highly vulnerable to shocks. A diversified national economy, preceded by reforms to encourage private sector investment, will make Iraq and its people more resilient to such shocks and boost employment in highly productive sectors.

Significant infrastructure damage impacting economic production and livelihoods opportunities must be addressed for families and communities to recover financially. This will take significant investment through the national budget and external contributions, but it will also require a reshaping of the economy to allow for diversification of revenue streams. Partnering with the private sector, particularly in reconstruction activities but also in employment creation, will be necessary. It also needs to be complemented by a reform of the public sector, which garners a significant portion of the national budget without delivering efficient or transparent services to the people.

Growing non-oil sectors, such as agriculture, tourism and import/export businesses, while also promoting regional and international partnerships essential to the growth of such sectors, should be further explored and supported.

At the same time, recognising that there is a significant unemployment issue that could create flashpoints for discontent and unrest, particularly in underserved areas of the country, it is essential that a more concerted effort is made to link education to employment and link investments to the opportunities and constraints felt by increasingly scarce natural resources. This can be at the formal education level, with curricula that reflect the technical needs of the non-oil economy, as well as technical and vocational training for out of school youth, women and those seeking new opportunities. Promoting and supporting entrepreneurship is key to an accelerated recovery process in many parts of the country.

Key finding #3

As a prerequisite to a stable developing society, Iraq needs to build human capital while also providing social protection, promoting inclusion and strengthening social cohesion.

At the upstream level, there is a need for reform of the social safety net/social protection platforms to reflect the real needs of vulnerable populations in Iraq. Targeting based on need rather than a universal approach will ensure the best use of resources.

Another element of this process is the need to create space for youth, women and other marginalised segments of the population whose voices are not heard in the decision making that impacts their lives. This includes peacebuilding, economic empowerment and opportunities, and access to basic services essential for their safety, dignity and quality of life. From a protection standpoint, it also includes services to those who have suffered trauma during the conflict, and protection against violence because one's gender, ethnicity, religion or age.

Building human capital requires a people-centred approach that recognises and embraces diversity and the unique contributions, capacities and potentials everyone brings to the successful development of the family, community and country. Reforms of relevant legislation, policies and mechanisms to ensure inclusive governance can be achieved through enhanced partnership between the state and civil society, improved adherence to international obligations such as CEDAW, CAAC and other frameworks to which Iraq is signatory, and responsive national budgeting that ensures support for programmes targeting those previously left behind.

Key Finding #4

Iraq is very vulnerable to climate change, and the country needs to urgently address several climate change issues regarding climate resilience, the management of its natural resources and the protection of the environment, including risk and disaster management.

Iraq is both rich in natural resources, particularly oil, and vulnerable to environmental hazards such as pollution, flooding, drought, and conflict-related contamination. The impact of Climate Change is already widely felt in Iraq, with higher temperatures leading to greatly increased levels of evaporation and loss of water use by farmers and general consumers. While some require preparedness and mitigation measures, others require management, political intervention, and proactive planning. Issues such as pollution, for example, impact health, economic production, and the ability to live in safety. Air and water pollution can result from industry, conflict, as well as poor infrastructure, leading to improper waste and water management.

Natural resource-related conflict must also be understood and mitigated. Clearance of unexploded ordinance and other conflict-related contamination can revive productive land for agriculture as well as allow for safe returns to liberated areas. Similarly, trans-boundary cooperation with Iraq's neighbours regarding shared resources such as water will be essential for the long-term health and welfare of the country. Engagement of the private sector to promote greener technologies can also play a significant role.

Addressing the management and protection of natural resources, biodiversity and productive lands not only ensures sustainable use of those resources but also contributes to better disaster risk preparedness, response and management. Planning of expanding human settlements that are risk-resistant while also managing the environment in a sustainable manner is essential for the future of Iraq. Environmental degradation created by unplanned settlements can be the catalyst for floods, deforestation, soil salinity, and other negative impacts. Community education and awareness combined with legislative and policy

frameworks, can provide a sustainable approach that meets the needs of the population without unduly damaging the environment and natural resources necessary for the quality of life.

5.2 UN Capacity and Comparative Advantage Assessments

The United Nations has had a presence in Iraq since 1955. However, in its current form, the United Nations System (UNS) has been present in Iraq since 2003. The intervening years have been marked by conflict and political and social change. The UNS, represented by the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the UN Country Team (UNCT)[431] and including the Bretton Woods Institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) has provided support through humanitarian and political crises, as well as promoting the development agenda with national stakeholders.

As such, the UNS has a significant advantage in terms of its access to national and sub-national machinery as well as civil society, and it provides both normative and service delivery support that sustains the people through crises while also building institutional and human capacity. Based on the results of the SWOT exercises held with stakeholders as part of the CCA process, it was generally felt that the strengths of the UN in Iraq are related to support to governmental institutions and their mandates, such as service delivery, statistics, donor relations, and providing networking support. The UN's ability to tap into global human resources and good practice, as well as to serve as an "honest broker", and a neutral actor allowed for progress in the state's transition from the previous regime to a more inclusive form of governance.

The same consultations identified weaknesses that require significant attention in the UNSDCF to avoid a weakening of impact and undermining of progress made. In particular, shortcomings in internal coordination were raised, both within the humanitarian and development context and their linkage, as there are overlaps and gaps in programmatic support. There is a sense that critical human rights and gender equality issues are politicised, leading to a muted response.

The UN has limited capacity to engage with the private sector, and its recent focus on humanitarian response will require a significant capacity shift and funding realignment towards development; a change that may take longer than circumstances require. The length of time for the UN to implement its procedures is a source of great frustration for partners, particularly civil society partners, as well as the lack of long-term funding. Donors and government alike have urged the UN to do more joint programming to provide coherent and integrated programming that avoids overlap and duplication. Finally, the information that the UN collects needs to be better shared, and investments in statistics promoted to empower evidence-based decision-making at all levels.

Such weaknesses also provide opportunities for the UNS' work in Iraq. Expanding partnerships beyond the known few will strengthen civil society and promote inclusion for sustainable development. At the same time, focusing on youth and strengthening human and social capital will support social cohesion and economic development. If the UN invests more in statistical data and data collection with the government, then the allocation of resources and targeting needs-based programming will help Iraq achieve the SDGs. Similarly, the data collected in humanitarian contexts can also be used as baselines for development decision

[431] The current UNCT includes 17 resident and 5 non-resident agencies. Resident agencies are: OCHA, FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNMAS, UNODC, OHCHR, UNOPS, UN Women, WFP, and WHO. Non-Resident agencies are: UNEP, UNIDO, ESCWA, UNCTAD, and ITC. It also includes the World Bank.

making. Private sector engagement will assist in the diversification of the economy as well as create employment opportunities.

It cannot be ignored that there remain threats to the success of the UN in Iraq, as the drivers of conflict have not been eradicated. With another change of government in Iraq, there will be new counterparts and new partnerships to be formed. Political engagement on key development issues is essential for the success of the country's National Development Plan towards achieving the SDGs, as well as the fulfilment of its obligations to the people of Iraq. While the promotion of civil society–government partnerships is a critical role of the UN, the oversaturation of NGOs in the country may threaten the valuation of those partnerships as civil society engagement becomes more commercialized and private-sector like in its role.

Unaddressed weaknesses related to coordination and integrated UN programming threaten the "preferred partner" status of the UN. Similarly, security, regional factors, and corruption can potentially undermine the ability of the UN to exercise mandates and provide capacities in support of the country.

Overall, however, there is a strong and positive relationship between the UNS in Iraq and its partners in government, civil society, and the international community at large. Those partnerships will transform the country transitions from a humanitarian to a longer-term development agenda and trajectory. This presents a significant opportunity for the UN to bring its programming principles into the change, to ensure that no one is left behind, and that the profile of the UN reflects the needs of the country. Therefore, the capacities that exist in 2019 will need to shift in tandem with the programmatic shift from humanitarian into more extended-term development. If this shift does not take place in a timely and coordinated fashion, the UN risks losing its relevance and jeopardises its impact.

6. ANNEX

6.1 Iraq´s international Conventions and Treaties

6.1.1 Signed, ratified, or acceded to by Iraq

- Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (Geneva, 1925, acceded 1931)
- Procès-verbal relating to the Rules of Submarine Warfare set forth in Part IV of the Treaty of London of 22 April 1930 (London, 1936)
- Constitution of the World Health Organization (New York, 1946, accepted 1947); Amendments to articles 24 and 25 (accepted 1970); Amendment to article 74 of the Constitution of the World Health Organisation (accepted 1984)
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UN General Assembly, 1948) (acceded 1959)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN General Assembly, 1948)
- Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (UN General Assembly 1961, superseding the previous "Lake Success Protocol" of 1946, which superseded previous Protocols on Narcotic Drugs dated 1912, 1925, 1931 and 1936 (signed 1946 and accepted 1950)
- Slavery Convention (Geneva, 1926 and amended by Protocol, 1955) (accepted 1955)
- Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (UN General Assembly, 1949) (acceded 1955)
- United Nations 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (Geneva,1956, ratified 1963)
- Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 (State Party, 14 February 1956)
- Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague,1954, ratified 1967) and First Protocol (1954, ratified 1967); Second protocol (1999) not ratified
- Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (Vienna, 1961, ratified 1963)
- Optional Protocol to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations concerning Acquisition of Nationality (Vienna, 1961, ratified 1963)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN General Assembly, 1969, ratified 1971)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN General Assembly,1969, ratified 1971; Iraq did not sign the First and Second Protocols)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (UN General Assembly,1969, ratified 1970)
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (Paris, 1970, accepted 1973)

- Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 1972, accepted 1974)
- Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (London, Moscow, Washington,1972, ratified 1991)
- Convention on Psychotropic Substances (Vienna, 1971, acceded 1976)
- Protocol to the Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials (Nairobi, 1976, acceded 1978)
- International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (UN General Assembly 1973, acceded 1976)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN General Assembly, 1981, acceded 1986)
- International Convention against Apartheid in Sports (UN General Assembly,1985, acceded 1989)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, acceded 1994); Amendment to article 43(2) (1985, accepted 2001)
- Food Aid Convention (London,1999)
- Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Paris and New York, 1993, acceded 2009)
- Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Oslo, 1997)
- UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Vienna, 1998, acceded 1998)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000, acceded 2008)
- Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq (Beirut, 2001; signed 2002, ratified 2008)
- International Health Regulations (2005)
- UN Convention against Corruption (UN General Assembly, 2003, acceded 2008)
- Core Conventions of the ILO: C29 (Forced Labour) (ratified 1962), C98 (Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining) (ratified 1962), C100 (Equal Remuneration) (ratified 1963), C111 (Discrimination, Employment and Occupation) (ratified 1959), C138 (Minimum Age Convention) (ratified 1985), C182 (Elimination of the Worst forms of Child Labour) (ratified 2001)
- WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (Geneva, 2003, acceded 2008)
- Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (Vienna, 1995, acceded 2008)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (acceded 2008)

- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (Rio de Janeiro, 1992, acceded 2009) and Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (2009)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro, 1992, acceded 2009)
- Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo, 2000, acceded 2009)
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, plus Supplement (Palermo, 2000, acceded 2009)

6.1.2 Not ratified or acceded to

- Protocol amending the International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, signed at Paris on 18 May 1904, amended by the Protocol signed at Lake Success, New York, 4 May 1949, signed 1949, and the International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, signed at Paris on 4 May 1910. Definitive signature 1949.
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
- Optional Protocol to CEDAW
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Optional Protocol to the CRC on a communications procedure
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol
- Final Act of the Intergovernmental Conference on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague,1954)
- Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (1977)
- Final Act of the Diplomatic Conference of Geneva of 1974-1977 (1977)
- Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (1990)
- International Conference on Population and Development – Programme of Action (1994)
- Convention on Cluster Munitions (2008)
- Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (2008)

6.1.3 Iraq has not ratified any of the following Protocols that allow for individual complaints to be made before the Covenants or Treaty monitoring committees

- Individual complaints procedure under the Convention against Torture
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Individual complaints procedure under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Individual complaints procedure under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Individual complaints procedure under the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.