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UN’s Kubiš congratulates Iraqis on the liberation of Mosul: ‘A historic victory for Iraq and the World and a resounding defeat for Daesh and terrorism, signaling their end.’

Baghdad, 10 July 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubíš, wholeheartedly congratulated the people and Government of Iraq on the liberation of Mosul from the terrorist Daesh. This victory provides an outstanding opportunity for Iraq to rise again strong and united, he said, stressing that despite the crushing of Daesh in Mosul the fight against terrorism is not over yet and more work lies ahead for Iraq on its road to full recovery and lasting peace.

“This is a historic victory for Iraq and the world and a resounding defeat for Daesh and terrorism, signaling their end. The nightmare that the people of Mosul have endured for three years is over. Mosul is finally free. The terrorist Daesh’s so-called Caliphate, ushering in an unprecedented reign of terror, is in the final convulsions,” Mr. Kubíš said. “Their moral bankruptcy and collapse was best illustrated by their barbaric destruction of the al-Nouri Mosque and its landmark leaning minaret from where they in 2014 declared their false Takfiri project of the so-called Caliphate,” Mr. Kubíš added.

“As we rejoice with the Iraqis, we remember those who have lost their lives or who have suffered tremendously from Daesh’s terrorism. And we salute the continuous efforts of the security forces to rid the liberated areas of terrorist pockets and potential sleeper cells,” he said.

The SRSG added that the battlefield triumph was the culmination of a series of heroic actions, with Iraqis taking the lead in the fight to liberate their country and the world collectively rallying to their support.

“The credit goes first and foremost to the Iraqis themselves. Heroism and martyrdom of the Iraqi Security Forces, the Popular Mobilization Forces, the Peshmerga, and tribal units, with the military backing of the International Coalition, were instrumental in achieving this victory. The price has been very high, but for Iraq the unity of the people and the country has been at stake. By jointly destroying Daesh in Mosul the people of Iraq have sent a resounding message that they see their future together,” Mr. Kubíš said.

The Special Representative commended the Iraqi security forces, and particularly Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, for the extraordinary efforts they have made to save and protect lives of civilians. “Their efforts have been exceptional,” he said.

Although the liberation of Mosul delivers a knockout blow for Daesh, the terrorist group still controls some parts of Iraq, can still mount attacks and threaten stability.

“During their onslaught, the terrorists have spared no one and have stopped at nothing. They have massacred unarmed men, women and children, and have used them as human shields. They have enslaved thousands of women and girls. They have been exacting severe punishment on everyone who disagreed with their extremist views or barbaric inhumane rule, causing untold suffering to the innocent and helpless people. They have waged a war of annihilation against Iraq’s communities and heritage wherever they set foot, destroying equally mosques and churches in total disregard of the sanctity of religious beliefs. All those acts of terror should be treated as war crimes, crimes against humanity,” Mr. Kubíš said.

“Much work lies ahead for Iraq on its road to full recovery. In addition to restoring security and the rule of law to the liberated areas, the immediate priority is for accelerated stabilization efforts to enable the millions of civilians who have fled the fighting across the country to voluntarily and safely return to their homes and restart their lives, to be followed by reconstruction. The massive humanitarian work should run parallel to a robust political process to conduct elections and achieve national and societal reconciliation and rebuild the social fabric in order to ensure justice, dignity and sustainable peace for the future generations. Protection of civilians and enforcement by the state of law and order against criminal and other unlawful armed groups in conflict and in the post-Daesh phase is paramount. Sustainable peace also requires that justice, accountability, tolerance and the respect for human rights should be the guide in all future actions with particular attention to the most vulnerable—women, children and minorities. Perpetrators of atrocities should be brought to justice and violators of the human rights of the people should be held accountable, the SRSG said. It entails eradicating the extremist and militant ideology from the minds of those influenced by this scourge. Also, it entails the right of return to home for all, without demographic manipulations, revenge attacks, retribution or forced evictions.

“The peace the country and the citizens desperately need and truly deserve must be based on solid foundations of unity, cooperation, justice, tolerance and coexistence starting at the societal, community and tribal levels to prevent falling back into the past and risk disastrous consequences,” Mr. Kubíš said. The SRSG called on Iraqis to look forward to the future with unshakable optimism and engage in meaningful dialogue in a spirit of partnership to resolve the differences that are hampering progress, to fight corruption that is draining the treasury, to reform and re-energize the economy to put the country on the track towards more jobs and prosperity. He also urged the Government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil to build on the exemplary military cooperation in the battle against Daesh and to start working now towards resolving the pending issues, notably the issue of the KR-I independence referendum, implementation of Article 140 of the Constitution, as regards to the disputed boundaries and territories and the status of Kirkuk in particular, through dialogue and genuine partnership.

“The United Nations, which stood by Iraq in its darkest hour three years ago when Daesh seized large areas of its territory and was at the gates of Baghdad, will support Iraq in the post-Daesh phase with resolve and vigor, working with the government, central and local authorities, political leaders, the diverse components and communities, tribes and minorities, the civil society organizations as well as youth and women groups, Mr. Kubíš said. “A part of this is to provide assistance to election management bodies – a reconstructed, reformed IHEC and KHEC - in support of the elections, notably the 2018 Council of Representatives elections that must take place in its constitutional term,” Mr. Kubíš added.

“The road ahead will be fraught with challenges, but the time now is to salute the Iraqis and honor their sacrifices. Today is Iraq’s day, and I wholeheartedly congratulate the Iraqi people for steadily taking back and rebuilding their country as a common home for all.”
After Mosul victory, senior UN officials detail Iraq’s political and humanitarian needs

New York, 17 July 2017 – Senior United Nations officials today called for regional and international support to stabilize newly liberated Mosul and to create conditions for peace and development throughout Iraq.

“The historic liberation of Mosul should not conceal the fact that the road ahead is extremely challenging,” the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, told the Security Council.

He praised the Iraqi security forces and international partners for “an exceptional effort” to save and protect civilians during the military drive to liberate the Iraqi city from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known by its Arabic acronym, Daesh, and for showing a readiness to be held accountable for violations.

The effort was “in stark contrast” to ISIL, which showed “absolute disregard for human lives and civilization” by booby-trapping and destroying homes and critical monuments, indiscriminately shelling civilians, and by having civilians “butchered” by females and brainwashed children suicide bombers.

“To turn the gains of the military victory into stability, security, justice and development, the Government will have to do everything possible to give the people back their lives in security and dignity,” said Mr. Kubiš, who also heads the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

De-mining, stabilization and reconstruction efforts to allow the return of displaced people, as well as the elimination of ISIL cells and militias, are among the priorities.

He noted that the Governments of Saudi Arabia, Iran and Kuwait had confirmed their willingness to assist the Government of Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi, and urged all of Iraq’s partners to “stay on course.”

In addition, the Iraqi Government has to work for national settlement and societal reconciliation within the country, as well as to enter into negotiations with the Kurdistan Regional Government, the UN envoy said.

ISIL would ultimately be defeated only “through inclusive solutions, addressing the grievances, needs and aspirations of the Iraqi people,” noted Mr. Kubiš.

He reiterated the UN’s commitment to facilitating the national settlement process and supporting grassroots reconciliation efforts. Also, with ISIL pushed out of Mosul and the people held by the group freed, the UN is “repositioning” its response to supporting survivors of sexual violence and helping to integrate them back into their communities.

The UN is also working to ensure that children arrested for terrorism-related charges are transferred to juvenile institutions.

“Fighting may be over, humanitarian crisis is not”

Some 700,000 civilians have been displaced from Western Mosul, according to UN figures.

Speaking via videolink from Baghdad, UN Deputy Special Representative Lise Grande told journalists in New York that the top priority right now is to reach civilians who might still be in Mosul’s old city.

“We believe perhaps hundreds of people are still there,” said Ms. Grande, who is also the UN’s Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq. She noted that in the last week of fighting some 12,000 people were evacuated. The majority of them are children and the elderly, who without sufficient water or food were too weak to even walk on their own.

Triage stabilization units established right on the front lines by the UN World Health Organization (WHO) received up to 100 patients per hour, spending about 4 minutes to stabilize each patient, before passing him or her on to a field hospital.

“The fighting may be stopping but the humanitarian crisis has not,” noted Ms. Grande.

Of the 54 residential districts in western Mosul, 15 are heavily damaged, “basically flattened,” Ms. Grande said, 23 are moderately damaged and 16 neighbourhoods have light damage.

The UN estimates the costs to stabilizing these areas and making them liveable to be more than $700 million, of which $237 million would be for the moderately and lightly damaged areas and $470 million for the more destroyed neighbourhoods.

“That is double the estimate for stabilization,” Ms. Grande said, due to fighting which was “so fierce and so much worse that what anyone else experienced.”

The UN has requested nearly $1 billion in assistance to aid the people in Mosul, with a focus on re-establishing crucial services so that people can safely return home to western Mosul.

Meanwhile, in eastern Mosul, which has been liberated since January, “schools are open, businesses are thriving, the city is recovering,” said Ms. Grande.

Since the beginning of the fighting last year, about 940,000 civilians fled Mosul. Nearly all have been housed and are receiving direct assistance, an outcome that Ms. Grande called “very positive.”

The UN official attributed the ability of aid workers to stay “one step ahead” due to the UN’s early contingency planning under the Government’s leadership and a flash appeal that was 100 per cent funded; Iraqi forces’ commitment to protecting civilians during the battles; and strong civilian-military liaison communication.

She noted that an additional 100,000 civilians are expected to flee their homes by the end of this year, as Iraqi forces start to reclaim new areas in other parts of Nineawa and Anbar Governorates and in Kirkuk Governorate, where ISIL still holds territory.

By United Nations News Center
In this edition ...

The Billion-Dollar job of raising Mosul from the rubble

Baghdad, 19 July 2017 - To get a sense of the scale of rebuilding needed to bring Mosul back life, The Fiscal Times asked Lise Grande, the Baghdad-based Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, for an assessment via email. Ms. Grande has previously been involved in coordinating UN humanitarian responses in South Sudan and Republic of the Congo, among other postings. ... More on page 17

International Youth Day 2017 commemorated by UN Youth Envoy in Iraq

Baghdad, 12 August 2017 – International Youth Day, commemorated around the world under the 2017 theme “Youth Building Peace” was celebrated today with a special event in Baghdad, Iraq, hosted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in the presence of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake. The event marked the first international mission of the new Envoy and the first International Youth Day since UN Secretary-General António Guterres took office with a commitment to placing young people at the centre of his agenda for conflict prevention and sustaining peace ... More on page 79

Malala highlights education needs of Iraq’s displaced children

Hasansham, Iraq, 12 July 2017 – During her first visit to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai on Tuesday called for world leaders to invest in education for children in conflict-stricken countries... More on page 76

In Mosul and beyond, sustained efforts needed to support millions of displaced Iraqis – Ursula Mueller, ASG for Humanitarian Affairs

Baghdad, 26 July 2017 - Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ursula Mueller, visited Iraq between 24 and 26 July 2017 ... More on page 19

UNHCR Iraq opens new camp for displaced families fleeing Telafar and surrounding areas

Erbil, 27 August 2017 - UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, has opened a new camp in Ninewah Governorate to respond to newly-displaced Iraqis fleeing the military operations in Telafar and surrounding areas. The government-constructed Nimrud camp was handed over to UNHCR to manage. The camp received nearly 350 families on its opening day... More on page 26

Women’s participation in Iraq’s National Reconciliation process paramount

Baghdad, 11 July 2017 - UNAMI and UN-WOMEN jointly organized two consultative meetings with civil society organizations and women leaders engaged in political processes from Kirkuk and Hawijja. Participants represented a cross-spectrum of components. The consultations aimed to identify the current challenges hindering women’s participation and representation in the national reconciliation processes, as well as to enhance their participation... More on page 37

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In the UNAMI Herald articles are sorted according to the topic and in a chronological order.

Resolution 2367 (2017) adopted by the Security Council at its 8033rd meeting, on 14 July 2017:

The Security Council,


Reaffirming the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq,

Emphasizing the importance of the stability and security of Iraq for the people of Iraq, the region, and the international community,

Reiterating its grave concern at the current security situation in Iraq as a result of the continuing presence of and threat by terrorist groups, in particular the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) and associated armed groups, involving violations of international humanitarian law, heavy civilian casualties, including women and children, the cumulative displacement of more than 5.3 million Iraqi civilians, the systematic use of sexual violence and sexual enslavement, persecution of individuals on the basis of their religion, belief or ethnicity, and the threat to the safety of journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel, condemning the attacks perpetrated by these terrorist groups and associated armed groups against the people of Iraq in an attempt to destabilize the country and region, expressing its sympathies to the families of all victims of terror attacks, and further reiterating its commitment to Iraq's security and territorial integrity,

Noting that the presence of ISIL (Da'esh) on Iraq's sovereign territory is a major threat to Iraq's future, underscoring that the only way to address this threat is for all Iraqis to work together by addressing needs in the security as well as the political realm, stressing the long-term solution to the instability will require the political leadership of Iraq to make decisions that will unite the country, and emphasizing the importance of the international community supporting Iraq in this regard,

Calling on all political entities to intensify efforts to overcome divisions and work together in an inclusive and timely political process aimed at reaching consensus on a single vision for reconciliation and strengthening Iraq's national unity, sovereignty and independence and for Iraq's leaders to engage in dialogue that would contribute to finding a viable and sustainable solution to the country's current challenges, welcoming the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in this regard, and reaffirming its belief that through its democratic institutions, in cooperation with Iraqi society, the Government of Iraq can work to address the challenges facing the country for the benefit of all Iraqis,

Underscoring the need for all segments of the Iraqi population to participate in the political process, in inclusive political dialogue, including through the equal participation of women, and in the economic and social life of Iraq, to refrain from statements and actions which could aggravate tensions, to reach a comprehensive solution on the fair distribution of resources, to promote stability, to develop a just and fair solution for the nation’s disputed internal boundaries, and to work to strengthen national unity, including through cooperation between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government in the spirit of genuine partnership, and stressing the importance of a comprehensive and inclusive Iraqi-led political process to support dialogue for all those who renounce violence, have no links to international terrorist organizations, including ISIL (Da'esh), and respect the Constitution,

Encouraging the Government of Iraq to continue strengthening governance, pursuing more substantive reforms, particularly economic and institutional reforms to improve the standard of living for all Iraqis, including by countering corruption, promoting human rights and the rule of law, improving the situation of women and girls, especially those impacted by ISIL (Da'esh), improving security and public order, including through security sector reform, and combating terrorism and sectarian violence, reiterating its support to the people and the Government of Iraq in their efforts to build a secure, stable, federal, united and democratic nation, based on the rule of law and respect for human rights, and strongly emphasizing the need for the Government of Iraq to conduct, in an independent manner, full, prompt, impartial and effective investigations and hold to account those responsible for violations or abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law,

Emphasizing the need to continue efforts to promote international and regional cooperation aimed at supporting Iraq both in its reconciliation and political dialogue and in its fight against ISIL (Da'esh), and to prevent ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings, and entities designated by the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, from using the territories of Iraq and neighbouring States to carry out violence or other illicit acts to destabilize Iraq and the region,

Recognizing that terrorism poses a threat to international peace and security and that countering this threat requires collective efforts on national, regional and international levels on the basis of respect for international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and in this context, welcoming the efforts of the Government of Iraq and its partners to counter ISIL (Da'esh), hold it accountable for its abuses, and return stability throughout the country, and also welcoming the Government of Iraq’s successes in liberating Sinjar, Bayji, Tikrit, Ramadi, Hit, Fallujah, and Mosul, marking major
steps in the continuing international effort to defeat ISIL (Da’esh),
reaffirming that all parties, including armed groups and militias,
must respect human rights and abide by all applicable obligations under in-
ternational humanitarian law, including those to protect the civilian popu-
lation, including civilians displaced from and returning to areas liberated from
ISIL (Da’esh), by which both official Iraqi forces and Member States that
assist them must also abide, and while acknowledging legitimate security
measures to identify members of ISIL (Da’esh), calling on all parties to imme-
diately release any arbitrarily or unlawfully detained persons, emphasizing
that those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and
violations and abuses of human rights, including those involving detainees and
sexual and gender-based violence, must be held accountable, welcoming the
establishment by Prime Minister of
Iraq Haider al Abadi of a committee to investigate reported violations and abuses,
including reports of missing men and boys from Fallujah and other territories liberated from ISIS,
and stressing the need for all such allega-
tions, wherever they occur, to be imme-
diately and comprehensively investigat-
ed and, as appropriate, prosecuted.

Emphasizing that all parties
should take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of affected civilians, in-
cluding children, women and members of religious and ethnic minority groups,
and should create conditions conducive to the voluntary, safe, dignified, and
sustainable return of refugees and inter-
ationally displaced persons or local inte-
gration of internally displaced persons,
particularly in areas newly-liberated
from ISIL (Da’esh), including over 820,000 persons estimated to be cur-
cently displaced from Mosul, stressing respect for the rights of internally dis-
placed persons, without discrimination,
including in the context of resettlement,
returns or local integration, as well as for the freedom of movement,
reiterating its gratitude to the host communities, underscoring that host communities should provide access to
safe areas for internally displaced per-
sons and that those who commit viola-
tions and abuses against them should be
held accountable, welcoming com-
mitments and encouraging continued
efforts of the Government of Iraq for
the relief of internally displaced per-
sons, refugees and returnees, noting the important role of the Office of the
United Nations High Commissioner for
Refugees, based on its mandate, in
providing continued advice and support to the Government of Iraq in coordina-
tion with UNAMI, on these issues, and encouraging the Government of Iraq
and its partners to accelerate such efforts in order to create the conditions for the voluntary, safe, dignified,
and sustainable return of refug-
ees and internally displaced persons,
welcoming efforts of Member States to
continue working with UNAMI and
humanitarian agencies to ensure the
delivery of humanitarian relief to all
those in need,

Emphasizing the importance
of continuing efforts to support stabi-
lization and long-term sustainable develop-
ment, particularly in areas liberated from ISIL (Da’esh), urging the Government
of Iraq and its partners to acceler-
ate such efforts in order to create the
conditions for the voluntary, safe, dignified,
and sustainable return of refug-
ees and internally displaced persons,
welcoming efforts of Member States to
continue to support the Government of Iraq and its partners as they work to stabilize these areas,
encouraging Member States to
continue to support stabilization and development, including through the
United Nations, recognizing the threat of hazardous explosive devices, welcom-
ning efforts by member states to support the Government of Iraq and its part-
ers in addressing the need to provide risk education, appropriate threat as-
sessments, and conduct clearance of areas of such devices, and encouraging
Member States to increase their sup-
port for ongoing stabilization efforts,

Strongly emphasizing the urgency of addressing humanitarian challenges confronting the Iraqi people,

stressing the need to intensify planning and implementation of a coordinated response and to provide adequate re-
sources to address these challenges,
calling for an intensification of these efforts by all parties, urging all Mem-
ber States to continue to fund United Nations and other humanitarian ap-
peals, encouraging Member States to
support the United Nations’ humani-
tarian response in Iraq, working with the Government of Iraq, to assist all
Iraqi individuals affected by the ongo-
ing conflict, and commending the ef-
forts of Member States that have con-
tributed to the humanitarian effort,

Urging all those concerned to
allow full, unimpeded access for hu-
manitarian personnel to all people in
need, to make available, as far as possi-
ble, all necessary facilities for their
operations, to allow the delivery of hu-
manitarian assistance, to promote the
safety, security, and freedom of move-
ment of humanitarian personnel and
United Nations staff, its associated personnel and their assets, and also to
respect and protect medical personnel
and medical transport and facilities,

Urging the Government of Iraq to continue to promote and protect
human rights and also to consider addi-
tional steps to support the Independent
High Commission for Human Rights in
carrying out its mandate, encouraging the Government of Iraq to reinvigorate its efforts to promote and protect
the rights of women and reaffirming its resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008),
1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010),
2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242
(2015) on women, peace, and security
and reiterating the need for the full,
equal, and effective participation of
women, reaffirming the key role women
can play in re-establishing the fabric of society, stressing the need for their full
political participation, including in up-
coming elections and the Independent
High Electoral Commission, stabiliza-
tion planning, political decision mak-
ing, local and national reconciliation
and peace processes, and expressing
concern about the lack of implementa-
tion, including funding, of Iraq's Na-
tional Action Plan of 2014 in accord-
ance with resolution 1325 (2000) as
well as the lack of a national entity
responsible for its implementation,

Expressing strong concern at
continuing violations and abuses com-
mitted against children, including
those involving the recruitment and
use of children, killing and maiming,
rape and other forms of sexual violence,
unlawful detention, abductions, and
attacks against schools and hospitals,
and urging all parties to conflict to take
all necessary measures to end and pre-
vent such violations and abuses, re-
calling in this regard its resolutions
1379 (2001), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009),
1998 (2011) and 2225 (2015), and tak-

ing note of the report of the Secretary-
General on children and armed conflict
in Iraq (S/2015/582) and welcoming parties’ continued implementation of
the conclusions of the Security Council
Working Group on Children and Armed
Conflict in S/AC.51/2016/2,

Expressing grave concern that
the violent extremism and terrorism
perpetrated by ISIL (Da’esh) in Iraq
has systematically targeted women and
children, especially those from minority
communities, and that ISIL (Da’esh)
has committed serious human rights
abuses, and violations of international
humanitarian law against all people,
particularly women and children, in-
cluding those involving murder, kid-
napping, hostage-taking, suicide bomb-
inings, enslavement, sale into or other-
wise forced marriage, human traffick-
Security Council deliberated on Iraq (continued)

ing, rape, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence, recalling in this regard resolution 2373 (2017) and the Joint Communiqué between the United Nations and the Government of Iraq on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2016) and further expressing grave concern at the recruitment and use of children by ISIL (Da’esh) and other armed groups in violation of international law.

Condemning the destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq particularly by ISIL (Da’esh), including targeted destruction of religious sites and objects and noting with concern that ISIL (Da’esh) and other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaeda, are generating income from engaging directly or indirectly in the looting and smuggling of cultural heritage items from archaeological sites, museums, libraries, archives, and other sites in Iraq, which is being used to support their recruitment efforts and strengthen their operational capability to organize and carry out terrorist attacks, and recalling in this regard the measures set out in resolution 2347 (2017),

Expressing its readiness to sanction further individuals, groups, undertakings, and entities who are supporting ISIL (Da’esh), strongly condemning any engagement in direct or indirect trade in oil and refined oil products, modular refineries and related material, other natural resources, and antiquities from Iraq involving these terrorist groups, as well as drug trafficking, consistent with resolution 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015), as well as human trafficking, sale of women and girls, and forced marriage, and emphasizing that such engagement constitutes financial support for such terrorists and may lead to further sanctions listings by the Committee,

Reaffirming that all States shall ensure that any person who participates in the financing, planning, preparation, or perpetration of terrorist acts or in supporting terrorist acts is brought to justice,

Recognizing that the situation that now exists in Iraq is significantly different from that which existed at the time of the adoption of resolution 661 (1990), and further recognizing the importance of Iraq achieving international standing equal to that which it held prior to the adoption of resolution 661 (1990),

Welcoming the political, military and financial assistance to the Government of Iraq from Member States, and encouraging such assistance to continue and expand,

Stressing the importance of the United Nations, in particular UNAMI, in advising, supporting and assisting the Iraqi people, including civil society, and the Government of Iraq to strengthen democratic institutions, advance inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation according to the Constitution, ensure reconciliation efforts are coordinated, facilitate regional dialogue, develop processes acceptable to the Government of Iraq to resolve disputed internal boundaries, aid youth and vulnerable groups, monitor and encourage the protection of civilians, particularly refugees and internally displaced persons, including those in transit, and promote the full participation of women in political and peace processes and institutions, gender equality and the protection of human rights, children and youth, and vulnerable groups, highlighting the need for specific information and practical recommendations related to the gender dimensions of the conflict and on the implementation of women, peace and security agenda in Iraq, and the continued provision of dedicated expertise to facilitate coordinated implementation of monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, and emphasizing the importance of the United Nations, in particular UNAMI, in prioritizing advice, support, and assistance to the Iraqi people, including civil society, and the Government of Iraq to achieve these goals,

Encouraging UNAMI to continue to revise and prioritize its tasks in full consultation with the Government of Iraq and in response to its needs and the evolving situation in the country,

Expressing deep gratitude to all the United Nations staff in Iraq for their courageous and tireless efforts, and commending the leadership and good offices role of the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Iraq, Ján Kubiš,

1. Decides to extend the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) until 31 July 2018;

2. Decides further that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNAMI, at the request of the Government of Iraq, and taking into account the letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq to the Secretary-General (S/2017/518), shall continue to pursue their mandate as stipulated in resolution 2299 (2016); and recalls the provisions of resolution 2107 (2013);

3. Recognizes that security of United Nations personnel is essential for UNAMI to carry out its work for the benefit of the people of Iraq and calls upon the Government of Iraq to continue to provide security and logistical support to the United Nations presence in Iraq;

4. Welcomes the contributions of Member States in providing UNAMI with the financial, logistical, and security resources and support that it needs to fulfil its mission and calls upon Member States to continue to provide UNAMI with sufficient resources and support;

5. Expresses its intention to review the mandate of UNAMI in 12 months or sooner, if requested by the Government of Iraq;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Council every three months on the progress made toward the fulfilment of all UNAMI’s responsibilities;

7. Calls upon the Secretary-General to conduct, by 15 October 2017, an independent, external assessment of the structure and staffing of the Mission, related resources, priorities, and areas in which it has comparative advantages and synergies with other United Nations entities, in order to ensure that the Mission and United Nations Country Team are configured to most appropriately and efficiently fulfill mandated tasks;

8. Decides to remain seized of the matter.
Security Council deliberated on the situation concerning Iraq at its 804th meeting

New York, 17 July 2017 – On its 804th meeting the United Nations Security Council deliberated on the situation concerning Iraq. Following is the statement (AS PREPARED) by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, at this meeting:

Mr. President,

Distinguished Security Council members,

I have the honour to introduce the fourth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 2299 (2016), as well as the fifteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 2017 (2013) on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and property.

Mr. President,

On 10 July, Prime Minister Abadi announced the completion of the operation to liberate Mosul, more than nine months after its launch. This is a historic victory on many levels. Speaking from inside the city, Prime Minister Abadi declared the end of Da’esh’s so-called Caliphate, attributing this victory to the Iraqi forces’ planning and execution as the only fighting force present on the ground. The Prime Minister specifically thanked Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani for his support to the fighters, who have made heroic sacrifices. The Prime Minister thereby affirmed al-Sistani’s critical role, foremost through his fatwa in 2014, which prompted tens of thousands of individuals to take up arms in defence of their country, and resulted in the creation of the Popular Mobilisation Forces. The Prime Minister noted that this “saved Iraq and paved the road to victory”. He further praised al-Sistani’s call for societal peaceful coexistence, as a check against future sectarian conflict. The Prime Minister also expressed gratitude to all the countries that supported Iraq in the war on terrorism, providing training, advisors, logistics and air support.

Our prayers and thoughts go today to all the wounded security forces and civilians, and specially to those who made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives or those of their beloved ones. It is crucial now that the families of the martyrs and the wounded receive all the support they need.

And, as the war against terror continues worldwide, the battle for Mosul bears testimony to Iraq’s commitment not only to its own future, but also to the future of the region and international peace and stability. Ultimately, it is evidence of what the Iraqi people can achieve when they reach across sectarian and other divides, and join forces for their country and future.

Per Prime Minister Abadi’s explicit directives, the liberation operation was marked by an exceptional effort by the liberation forces and their international partners to save and protect the civilian population. By adopting an humanitarian concept of operation, they were able to reduce civilian losses and suffering. They also held themselves and others accountable for violations.

In stark contrast, Da’esh showed absolute disregard for human life. Shamelessly, the terrorists indiscriminately targeted civilians, shelling them in the liberated areas, using them as human shields, locking them in their homes, and using rooftop snipers to shoot those — women, children and men — attempting to flee to safety. They killed civilians using suicide bombers who included females and children who had been brainwashed. Between 1 and 3 June, Da’esh’ snipers shot and killed more than 200 civilians, including women and children, who were fleeing the al-Shifa neighbourhood, in western Mosul, just north of the Old City. There are many other tragic examples — including a female terrorist who blew herself up in a refugee camp, and numerous cases of brainwashed children sent on similar suicidal missions.

The blowing up of the Great al-Nouri Mosque of Mosul and its iconic al-Hadba Minaret, on the verge of its defeat in Mosul, adds to Da’esh’s crimes against the Islamic, Iraqi and human civilization. The destruction of the very mosque — where Da’esh’s leader once declared its so-called Caliphate — is further proof of both Da’esh’s barbarism and desperation at the time of its collapse. The destruction of these two historic monuments of Iraq, symbols of identity and belonging, tragically also reminds us all that the protection of cultural heritage cannot be delinked from the protection of human lives.

Mr. President,

The fighting in Mosul has also claimed the lives of numerous local and international journalists, those who are there “to report the truth to the outside world”. Two Iraqi TV journalists, were killed while covering clashes between Iraqi security forces and Da’esh on 7 July while three other journalists – one Iraqi and two foreign – were killed in a bomb explosion while covering the fighting in June, and another foreign journalist was injured. In February, a prominent Iraqi female journalist from Kurdistan was killed in an explosion that also injured her cameraman while chasing a lead on an alleged Da’esh mass grave. These and other brave professionals faced dangers on the frontlines in the pursuit of their work — providing vital information to the public — to shed light on the plight of civilians, and to portray the realities they saw in the fight against terrorism. The sacrifices of these journalists have, however, not been vain; a free and impartial media is essential to safeguard the public interest, to protect democracy, to ensure the necessary degree of transparency and accountability. Here, I also want to acknowledge the access that the Iraqi authorities, including those of the Kurdistan region have provided, for both national and international media during the Mosul campaign.

Mr. President,

The historic liberation of Mosul should
Security Council deliberated on Iraq (continued)

not conceal the fact that the road ahead is extremely challenging. Reclaiming the remaining territories still under Da'esh’s control in other parts of Ninawa and Anbar Governorates, in Hawija in Kirkuk Governorate, in pockets of other Governorates will not be easy. Moreover, Da'esh’s supporters continue their vicious terrorist activities against civilians in Iraq and beyond. Since last month, ongoing military operations, often led by Popular Mobilisation Forces, have also focused on securing the Iraq-Syria border. Progress has been achieved, notably through the liberation of the strategic al-Walid border crossing, at the Iraqi-Syrian-Jordanian tri-point. In that regard, I note Prime Minister Abadi’s repeated stance that Iraqi forces would not take part in fighting across the Syrian border.

Mr. President,
Based on their effective cooperation during the liberation of Mosul, I urge the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to extend their cooperation and coordination mechanisms between the Iraqi Security Forces and the Peshmerga. Such a measure will help address the urgent need to put in place inclusive and effective security arrangements in the liberated areas. I note with concern reports that indicate a possible proliferation of armed groups including from the local population in liberated areas, without proper government oversight.

Further, I call on the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, to develop an overall political and security strategy that facilitates the safe, voluntary and dignified return of displaced populations to their homes, prevents conflict over longstanding disputes, promotes justice and inter-communal understanding through inclusive dialogue, and promotes rule of law, security and good governance. Such a strategy should also correctly sequence the transfer of responsibility for security to local governance and security structures, including the police.

Mr. President,
Hand in hand with the liberation comes de-mining, stabilization and reconstruction to enable return of IDPs as well as elimination of the Da'esh cells, criminal gangs and militias operating outside of the control of the Government. The enforcement of law and order, rule of law, justice and accountability as well as reforms, good governance and development, including in the southern provinces, will be needed. To turn the gains of the military victory into stability, security, justice and development the Government will have to continue proving to its citizens that it cares, and do everything possible to give the people back their lives in security and dignity. To achieve this, Iraq will continue to need substantial regional and international support. The job is not yet done; the victory cannot be complete by supporting the military campaign alone. As Prime Minister Abadi said in his speech in Mosul, “The next stage is stabilization and reconstruction, return of IDPs, elimination of the Da'esh cells and stability which will require immense effort”. Indeed, more than ever, Iraq will need continuous and substantial support from its partners, both international and regional.

I am encouraged by the statements of solidarity and commitment for support expressed by a number of Iraq’s neighbouring countries. As evidenced during Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi regional tour between 19 and 22 June, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kuwait have confirmed their resolve to build on the existing cooperation and increase support, including for the much needed reconstruction of Iraq’s liberated areas.

I also pay tribute to Iraq’s partners including those from the international anti-Da'esh coalition and urge them to stay on course, to stay with Iraq and its people, to continue providing support in the fight against terrorism, and in addressing Iraq’s humanitarian, stabilization, and demining needs in post-conflict reconciliation and rehabilitation.

Mr. President,
Da'esh’s ultimate defeat can only be secured through inclusive solutions, addressing the grievances, needs and aspirations of the Iraqi people. National settlement and societal reconciliation are the indispensable paths of a broader comprehensive effort towards achieving long-term unity, stability and prosperity.

I applaud the position and guidance of the Marja’iya who in their victory statements and sermons stressed that Iraqis need to learn from what happened in the years before Da'esh and remedy the longstanding problems. Further, they stated that using violence, oppression, and sectarianism as a means to an end only causes destruction and leaves the country vulnerable to interference by regional and international actors, where there is no winner and Iraq first among the losers; that all those in positions of power and government have to work according to a principle that sees all citizens as equal in their rights and duties regardless of religion, sect, ethnicity, or nationality.

Were this approach implemented strictly, it would restore the people’s trust in government and its institutions. The Marja’iya’s statements also mentioned the need to combat financial and administrative corruption, and sect and party-linked quotas, and to ensure the standards of competence and professionalism in the appointment of government officials.

I praise the continued commitment of the Iraqi National Alliance to achieve a national settlement agreement. Further, I am encouraged by the ongoing efforts by different Sunni leaders and representatives, and other components, communities and groups, as well as common citizens, that show their commitment to the ideal of overcoming their mutual grievances and differences for the sake of the truly national and non-sectarian project of their shared future.

The UN is committed to further facilitate processes of national settlement...
and grassroots societal reconciliation, in full coordination with the Government of Iraq and in cooperation with all Iraqi stakeholders, including women and youth, to address the concerns of all components, communities, groups and citizens in a just and fair manner. I encourage all national, regional and international partners to engage in supporting this process. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq will now enter a new phase focused on providing its good offices for national settlement and reconciliation through consultations with the Iraqi stakeholders on the way forward. This will be based on a comprehensive mapping and analysis of the different proposals and visions received by the UN, which will be used to identify common ground leading towards a common vision of national settlement and societal reconciliation.

UNAMI also commenced consultations with Iraqi female Members of the Parliament and Provincial councils as well as civil society, to gauge their perspectives on their vision on reconciliation. On 9 July UNAMI, jointly with UN-WOMEN, organised two forums with civil society organisations and women leaders from Kirkuk and Hawija, engaged in political processes. The consultations aimed to identify the current challenges hindering women’s participation and representation in national reconciliation processes as well as to enhance their participation. The discussions also focused on women political representation in the upcoming elections and decision-making, as well as on ways to strengthen the capacity of women to advance peace and security for the stability of Iraq. At the end of forum, participants adopted a set of recommendations that will be taken into account in pursuing national settlement and reconciliation. Further meetings will be organised in different governorates including the liberated areas on strengthening the role of women in national reconciliation through the women, peace and security agenda.

Mr. President,

At a meeting on 7 June 2017, the leaders of political parties in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), which was chaired by the Kurdistan Regional Government’s President Massoud Barzani, a decision was made to hold a referendum on 25 September 2017 with the question: “Do you want the Kurdistan region and the Kurdistan areas (disputed areas) outside the administration of Kurdistan region to become an independent state?” On 11 July, President Barzani reiterated, during his address to the European Parliament in Brussels, the KR-I’s determination to hold the referendum as planned, while maintaining that no country had clearly opposed it. It is important to note that the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Change Movement (Gorran) have demanded that the regional parliament of Kurdistan should be reactivated before the referendum.

Such an important issue ought not to be pursued without understanding between the federal government and that of the Kurdistan Regional Government. I, therefore, urge both parties to enter into negotiations without further delay, in the spirit of genuine partnership and based on the Constitution, to urgently find common ground and a roadmap to address this and other critical topics, notably implementation of Article 140 of the Constitution on disputed territories, including the status of Kirkuk, budgetary issues, oil and revenue sharing, and other areas and principles that determine the relations between the federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government. The absence of meaningful political dialogue could turn a conflict of interests into a different kind of conflict. Prime Minister Abadi’s and President’s Barzani call for dialogue, should be followed by meetings of negotiation teams as a matter of urgency.

In regards to internal politics in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, I further urge as a matter of priority, the reactivation of a functional democratic administration, notably the regional parliament as the primary democratic institution to ensure unity and the functioning of democracy in the region. The reopening of the regional parliament, which has been inactive since October 2015, should be based on the principles of democracy and inclusiveness, without preconditions.

Mr. President,

Complex electoral processes loom in Iraq, including in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, this and next year. On 21 June, the Independent High Electoral Commission submitted an official letter to the three presidencies of Iraq; the President, Prime Minister and Council of Representatives’ Speaker, stating that the Commission will not be able to conduct the Governorate Councils Elections as scheduled on 16 September 2017. The letter cited legal, technical and security reasons, including the failure of the Council of Representatives to pass amendments to the electoral legal framework in a timely manner, lack of political parties’ interest to nominate candidates, and the unstable security situation in the governorates of Ninawa, Anbar and Kirkuk. This is the second time that Governorate Councils Elections are being postponed. Per the legal requirements, the elections were supposed to be held in April 2017, but were postponed to 16 September the same year. Unfortunately, the latter date is no longer tenable. It is of primary importance that all necessary measures be taken, as a matter of priority, to ensure first, that the Council of Representatives elections be held latest in May 2018 as required by the constitution and second, that the Governorate Councils Elections be rescheduled. Respect for constitutional timelines in holding elections is essential to Iraq’s democratic progress, particularly at this crucial juncture. Similarly, I urge the Council of Representatives to accelerate the passing of the relevant legislations to facilitate the timely conduct of the elections in 2018. In that regard, I welcome Prime Minister Abadi’s and Speaker Jubouri’s statements respectively on 30 May and 20 June, confirming the Council of Representatives’ elections will be held in 2018 per the Constitution.

The selection process of a new Inde-
Security Council deliberated on Iraq (continued)

The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) Board of Commissioners is ongoing and expected to be complete prior to the expiration of the term of the current Board of Commissioners, in September 2017. The Council of Representatives committee tasked with the selection process sent 109 candidates, including 7 women, to various ministries and commissions for vetting, and commenced interviews on 8 July 2017. I call on the Committee to ensure that the process is completed on time, is inclusive, and guarantees the selection of women as prescribed in the 2007 IHEC law.

I welcome the ongoing cooperation and coordination between the Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission and the Kurdistan Region’s Independent High Electoral Commission, in line with the memorandum of cooperation signed between the two institutions, and facilitated by UNAMI. I encourage this spirit of cooperation between the two institutions.

UNAMI will continue to provide technical advisory support to Independent High Electoral Commission, the Council of Representatives’ expert committee and other Iraqi institutions involved in the elections.

Mr. President,

The initial planning assumptions that Mosul would become one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world in 2017 have materialized. The cumulative number of people displaced since military operations began in October now approximates 1 million individuals, although the rate at which people are fleeing the fighting has slowed in recent weeks. Furthermore, Da’esh still holds territory in Tal Afar, Hawija and western Anbar, where hundreds of thousands of civilians are trapped. The estimated displacement as a result of military campaigns to retake these areas, is lower than Mosul in terms of absolute numbers, but is nevertheless considerable as a percentage of the population of these areas. Under the cover of seasonal sandstorms, 22,000 people have fled western Anbar for camps and informal displacement sites by mid-June. In a worst-case scenario, up to 50,000 more could flee. The challenges faced by humanitarian partners, especially with regard to humanitarian access, are, and will remain, tremendous. Additionally, return movements across Iraq have slowed, as displaced people increasingly fear collective punishment and retribution in their areas of origin. The humanitarian needs are thus expected to continue until families can re-establish their livelihoods and consolidate their households. In many sectors, humanitarian needs will remain high well into 2018.

Mr. President,

While the magnitude of the crisis has put partners to the test, I want to assure you that every effort is being made to provide the most effective support for the Government-led response. Under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Funding Facility for Stabilization by July 2017, more than 1,050 projects were under way or had been completed in 23 liberated towns and districts in Anbar, Nineawa, Salah al-Din, Diyala and Kirkuk Governorates. This includes more than 230 projects approved or underway in eastern Mosul, including the rehabilitation of water systems and the electricity grid. More than 4,000 civilians of eastern Mosul are participating in cash-for-work projects, helping clean the city and earning incomes to support their families. In western Mosul, over 50 projects are in preparation to clean debris, repair water treatment plants, and support the health sector, including the critically important West Mosul General Hospital. An electric line was connected from eastern Mosul across the Tigris River to provide power to the key New Water Treatment Plant in western Mosul. Now that Mosul has been fully liberated, the scope of projects is expected to increase exponentially in the coming weeks.

The stabilization response in Mosul and other locations in Iraq is complicated by the presence of explosive hazards. UNMAS continues to support the coordination of a civilian response in Mosul to complement that of the Iraqi Security Forces. UNMAS is also working with the Government of Iraq to increase the number of civilian operators and maintain dialogue regarding access challenges. In light of Mosul’s liberation and the upcoming military operations countrywide, it will be critical that more financial and expert resources be made available to support operators, and I advocate before the Council, for the increased availability of qualified operators to appropriately respond to the probability of dense contamination.

Mr. President,

Of particular great concern is the rising popular sentiment in favour of collective punishment of families perceived to be associated with Da’esh. Country-wide, Iraqis perceived to have links with Da’esh are being increasingly subjected to evictions, confiscation of homes and other retribution and revenge measures. In May and June 2017, leaflets demanding that such families vacate their homes or suffer the consequences, including death, were distributed in areas of Anbar, Diyala, Ninawa, and Salah al-Din Governorates, leading to reports of the evictions or the eviction of hundreds of families from Heet, Ramadi, Fallujah and Mosul cities. Even without such “declared” intent in many places that were liberated earlier, inhabitants and returnees are often subject to violence and extra judicial arrests by armed groups, such as in Jurf al-Sakhr in Babil Governorate or in other locations in Diyala, Salah al-Din or Anbar Governorates.

Unlawful acts like forced evictions, without any evidence that the individuals subjected to eviction orders committed any crime or wrongdoing, are in clear contravention of the Constitution of Iraq and Iraq’s obligations under international law. UNAMI has recommended that the Prime Minister take urgent steps, within his prerogative to maintain the rule of law and order, to halt evictions and vindictive acts.

The return of displaced persons holds the key to rebuilding Iraq’s societal fabric and it is part of the national settlement and societal reconciliation processes. It must also be a top priority for the Government of Iraq and supported
Security Council deliberated on Iraq (continued)

by the regional and international community. The rehabilitation of infrastructure, provision of basic services and employment opportunities throughout Iraq, including the southern Governorates, is equally important to restore confidence in the Government of Iraq and local authorities.

Mr. President,

UNAMI has prioritized accountability to provide justice to individuals affected by human rights violations and abuses committed in the ongoing armed conflict, in particular serious crimes that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly genocide. Given the large-scale of serious crimes, UNAMI is pursuing a strategy at the national level with a view to allowing domestic courts to have jurisdiction over international crimes. This would include legal reforms to introduce definitions of international crimes and penalties into legislation, as well as the establishment of a specialized court with a national jurisdiction to try perpetrators in conformity with international criminal law principles. Such legal reform would complement the criminal legal framework and provide for the establishment of the specialized courts with international principles. This initiative would also complement international initiatives to gather evidence on the most serious crimes committed by ISIL.

Similarly, it is fundamental to ensure that crimes and human rights violations and abuses are properly documented to support possible prosecutions where perpetrators can be identified and apprehended. Preserving the evidence of crimes committed by Da’esh is important to ensure that justice will be done.

UNAMI remains concerned by the need to increase the capacity of the federal Government and the Government of the Kurdistan region to protect and systematically investigate crime sites, including mass graves. In the whole of Iraq, since June 2014, at least 70 mass graves have been discovered. Systematic preservation and excavation of these sites remains critical, given that they may contain evidence of the perpetrators of these crimes, but also important evidence of the identities of the victims.

Mr. President,

I would also like to mention the announcement by the Iraqi High Judicial Council, on 12 June, of the formation of a judicial committee, based in al-Shamal sub-district, Sinjar, to collect evidence with a view to fighting impunity for crimes committed against Yazidis. While the committee does not have a mandate to conduct prosecutions, the information gathered by the committee will play an important role in prosecutions by relevant Iraqi authorities.

Mr. President,

UNAMI continues to advocate for and provide technical support to legislative reform on minority rights issues in Iraq. On 26 April 2017, UNAMI supported the Iraqi Council of Representatives’ Human Rights Committee in conducting a public hearing on potential amendments to the draft Law on the Protection of Diversity and the Prevention of Discrimination [the Anti-Discrimination Bill]. UNAMI continues to engage with relevant Iraqi civil society groups and the Government on the final text of the bill to ensure that it is consistent with international standards. UNAMI also continues to address information received on allegations of ill-treatment of minorities and violations of minorities’ rights.

UNAMI also continues with developing capacity of law enforcement personnel on the respect and protection of human rights and the rule of law. This aims at reforming law enforcement institutions in Iraq, including those in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, by providing specialized training courses for security forces to articulate and communicate a culture of human rights values as well as providing the necessary technical skills that are needed to uphold human rights while countering terrorism.

Mr. President,

On 19 June, on the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, I issued a statement urging the Government of Iraq to pursue accountability for the perpetrators of sexual violence and to deliver justice to victims. I emphasized the importance for the survivors of sexual violence to get an opportunity to tell their stories, observe the sentencing of offenders, and benefit from the solidarity and support of their communities.

I further commended the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, for taking positive steps to initiate the implementation the Joint Communiqué on Prevention and Response by appointing high-level focal points to serve as points of contacts with the United Nations and the international community. I am glad to report that discussions on the establishment of a mechanism to coordinate implementation of the Joint Communiqué have begun.

As the fight to eliminate Da’esh from Iraq comes to a close, the United Nations is repositioning its responses to sexual violence and prevention work within the framework of the Joint Communiqué in partnership with the Government and other key stakeholders including religious leaders and civil society, with a focus on supporting survivors of sexual violence reintegrate back to their communities.

I welcome the renewed commitment of the Government of Iraq towards ensuring the implementation of the Joint Communiqué, as affirmed by Prime Minister Abadi in his statement to mark the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual violence. He further confirmed the Government’s determination to move forward with the implementation of the National Action Plan, pursuant to the Iraqi Constitution, the Government’s Programme and human rights principles, and in accordance with international instruments and covenants.

Mr. President,

The UN, at the highest levels, has engaged with senior Iraqi officials on the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial
Committee on Grave Child Rights Violations. This Committee is expected to provide a forum to coordinate a response by the Iraqi authorities in regards to issues pertaining to children in armed conflict including occasional reports of recruitment and use of children, including by pro-government forces, and to discuss improved protection modalities with the UN. Furthermore, we urge the Government of Iraq to ensure that children arrested by security forces, including for terrorism-related charges, are transferred to juvenile institutions. The UN also intends to strengthen the engagement with religious leaders to seek their commitment in ending recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.

Mr. President,

Advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda remains one of our priorities. The Mission continues to work with the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government towards the implementation of the Iraqi National Action Plan on UN Council Resolution 1325. On 12 June, the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security convened its third meeting on Iraq to assess the progress and challenges in implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The Expert Group has stressed the imperative, in the post-Da'esh phase, to strengthen women’s representation in decision-making both in the liberated areas and at the national level, and ensure their participation in stabilization and recovery efforts, peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives and including prevention of violent extremism. The Expert Group has also recommended political, legal and financial support to women’s civil society organizations in order to bolster their work.

As noted by the Expert Group, funding limitations have impeded the implementation of the Iraqi National Action Plan on Security Council Resolution 1325. I call on international partners to pledge support to specialized programmes for women and female-headed households as well as earmark allocations for the integration of a gender perspective in all relevant UN coordinated programmes. I would like to advocate before the Council for the increased financial and technical support to the government, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

Mr. President,

Allow me to now turn to the fifteenth report of the Secretary-General on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the National Archives. Close and friendly relations between Iraq and Kuwait were evident throughout the visit of Iraqi Prime Minister Abadi to Kuwait on 21 June, as part of his regional tour. In a meeting with the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the parties discussed means to settle all outstanding issues stemming from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Following the visit, Prime Minister Abadi underlined close cooperation, excellent relations, and progress that has been made between the two countries, further reaffirming his Government’s commitment to finalize all pending files with Kuwait. I would like to commend both Governments for fostering mutual respect, good will and collaboration over the years.

On 22 and 24 May, Iraq, for the first time in fourteen years, successfully hosted in Baghdad the ninety-ninth session of the Technical Sub-Committee of the tripartite mechanism, and the forty-fourth session of the Tripartite Commission, marking another positive step towards a steady and continuous strengthening of the bilateral relations with Kuwait. During the meeting the Iraqi delegation reiterated a full commitment of Iraq’s highest authorities to this international and humanitarian obligation and expressed its intent to continue working on the file until it reaches positive results.

Over the past year, the Iraqi Ministry of Defence has proven to be a dependable and reliable partner in this important humanitarian process. Unfortunately, lack of positive outcomes in finding the remains of missing persons remains a source of disappointment and frustration to both countries, and particularly to the families of the missing. I therefore encourage the Government of Iraq to continue working with the same resolve and determination to bring closure to the families who have lost loved ones. I further echo the statement issued by this Security Council on 14 June 2017, calling on Iraq and Kuwait to continue their cooperation through the tripartite mechanism and to depend on steadfast commitment, action and adoption of new and innovative ways to push this file forward.

The same also applies to the missing property file, on which the Government of Iraq should utilize positive dynamics of its relationship with Kuwait, while redoubling its efforts to find missing Kuwaiti patrimony.

Being mindful of considerable challenges facing the Government of Iraq in its quest to achieve peace and stability, I would like to commend its resolve to work on the missing file, while welcoming support shown by the State of Kuwait and the international community throughout the years.

Thank you for your attention.
Mosul’s war widows face new challenges in displacement

Hammam Al-Alil, 4 July 2017 – As she fled her neighbourhood in western Mosul, Asmaa Mahmood, 25, and her husband and their two young daughters came under heavy fire from militant extremists. They were captured and the men and women were separated.

“They took my husband and we had to just keep going,” she says. “We escaped and we hid in abandoned houses until we made it to the camp.”

Two weeks after reaching the safety of Hammam Al-Alil camp, she learned from other displaced Mosul residents that her husband had been killed. They had found his body and buried him.

“I was shocked and I suffered from psychological trauma and grief,” she says. Widows like Asmaa are among more than 900,000 people who have fled since the military operation to retake Iraq’s battle-ravaged second city from militants began nine months ago.

They number in their thousands. Many of their husbands were murdered by armed extremists who maintained a brutal grip on the city. Others were killed in air strikes, or were shot or blasted by artillery as they fled across the front lines.

Their husbands were often the families’ sole breadwinner. Without an income and often with children to support, Mosul’s war widows are among the most vulnerable to have been displaced during months of fighting for the once thriving city, parts of which have been flattened.

In Hammam Al-Alil 2 camp, which is run by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and its partners, female headed households make up more than a quarter of the total – 1,250 out of 4,463 families or 21,462 people.

Since reaching the camp in April/May, Asmaa has received mattresses, a tent and items including kitchen utensils from UNHCR as part of the distribution given to new arrivals. Other help includes legal aid and reissuing of missing documents, including government ID, which is vital to receive benefits and move freely.

“I am so exhausted worrying about the future of my children. Now I have no one to rely on,” she says. “All I want is to provide a good living for my two daughters. I don’t worry about myself. I just don’t want my daughters to feel different from any other girls who have a father.”

At the beginning of March, Sahar Ammar, a 22-year-old widow, heard that her neighbourhood in West Mosul was about to be retaken by Iraqi forces. She gathered up her three children and ran towards the Iraqi troops as militants shot at them. When she arrived in Hammam Al-Alil 2 camp she received a tent and mattress, blankets and kitchen kits from UNHCR.

During the displacement, her national ID card was lost. Her children still need government ID cards and birth certificates because those issued by the armed group are no longer valid. UNHCR is assisting widows, as well as all IDPs who lived under extremist rule, get the correct documentation.

Sahar was unable to buy her children gifts for Eid this year because she was no source of income. “I just want to survive and raise my children,” she said.

By Cathy Otten, UNHCR

UNHCR welcomes latest donation from Germany as Mosul response continues

Baghdad, 6 July 2017 - UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has welcomed the latest contribution of Euro 13m from Germany to provide shelter and protection assistance to over 3 million displaced Iraqis. This generous support will enable UNHCR to continue its interventions in providing humanitarian assistance and protection activities in supporting the internally displaced persons with their basic needs, shelter, protection, self-reliance and camp management, including those displaced from Mosul and surrounding areas.

The latest German contribution comes as UNHCR continues to respond to the latest outflows of people from western Mosul. Euro 9m will be used for activities this year and Euro 4m in 2018. It will allow UNHCR to distribute cash to vulnerable families, build and rehabilitate shelters, provide legal aid and improve camp coordination.

The Chargé d’Affaires of the German Embassy in Baghdad, Dr. Oliver Schnakenberg, emphasized that the German Federal Government continues to stand ready to assist those who urgently need shelter, basic supplies and protection. “We highly appreciate UNHCR’s important work to support and protect displaced Iraqis under the difficult circumstances around Mosul,” he said.

UNHCR’s Representative in Iraq Bruno Geddo said: “The generous funding from Germany comes as UNHCR and partners are moving to provide shelter and protection to those fleeing Mosul. With this latest support, we can continue to help displaced Iraqis rebuild their lives,” he said.

According to the latest government figures, more than 915,000 people in total have been displaced from Mosul and surrounding areas since October, when the military offensive began, including more than 739,000 individuals displaced from western Mosul since mid-February. UNHCR and partners have provided assistance to over 558,000 people displaced from Mosul in and outside camps and members of the host community since last October. An estimated 223,000 people have since returned to their areas of origin.

By Cathy Otten, UNHCR
Mosul General Hospital maternity ward reopens after months of closure

Baghdad, 6 July 2017 – The maternity ward in Mosul General Hospital, supported by the United Nations Population Fund with funding from the Australian Government, has reopened to provide reproductive health services for women and girls, after being forced to close down for several months due to damages during the military operations in West Mosul.

The hospital, which is the only facility that provides maternity and neonatal care in West Mosul, will respond to the needs of more than 200,000 women and girls that were denied access to healthcare for years under ISIS.

“Thanks to the Government of Australia for its generous support, life-saving interventions and reproductive health services will now be accessible again to thousands of women and girls after being cut off for years from accessing these services,” said UNFPA Representative in Iraq, Mr. Ramanathan Balakrishnan.

It is estimated that 1,800 maternal and 600 neonatal deaths could be prevented after re-opening the maternity ward and resuming services.

Through funds provided by the Government of Australia, UNFPA has also been able to support static and mobile clinics, and to provide life-saving reproductive health services inside West and East Mosul. Approximately 6,500 displaced women are accessing the services every month, including in Hamam Aleel camp, one of the main camps hosting displaced persons from West Mosul. In addition, Australian funding has supported procurement of five ambulances that have been deployed to serve women and girls fleeing and residing inside West Mosul.

Guterres pledges UN support to Iraqi Government, people in Mosul; $562M needed in aid

New York, 10 July 2017 – Following Iraqi Government’s declaration that its forces have liberated the northern city of Mosul from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) fighters, Secretary-General António Guterres today paid tribute to the country’s people and Government and vowed United Nations’ support to aid the displaced communities and restore rule of law in the freed areas.

“The recovery of Mosul is a significant step in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism,” the Secretary-General said in a statement attributable to his spokesperson.

Mr. Guterres said the UN would stand by the Government as it creates the “culture of safety” of the people and Government, and added condolences for the loss of lives and wishes for those injured.

Since the military campaign to retake Mosul began on 17 October 2016, some 920,000 civilians fled their homes, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said.

“It’s a relief to know that the military campaign in Mosul is ending. The fighting may be over, but the humanitarian crisis is not,” said the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Lise Grande.

Close to 700,000 people are still displaced, nearly half of whom are living in 19 emergency camps, she explained. They need shelter, food, health care, water, sanitation and emergency kits. “The levels of trauma we are seeing are some of the highest anywhere. What people have experienced is nearly unimaginable,” said Ms. Grande.

She said aid workers “have been working around the clock” and that “enormous efforts” have been made by the Government and partners, but that there is “a lot to do in the weeks and months ahead.”

The UN has called for $985 million to aid humanitarian projects. So far, about 43 per cent has been received, leaving a gap of $562 million.

By United Nations News Center

UNHCR Iraq statement on Mosul

Baghdad, 10 July 2017 - Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced; many have lost relatives, their homes, and have been injured.

It is likely that many thousands of people may have to remain in displacement for months to come. Many have nothing to go back to, due to extensive damage caused during the conflict, while key basic services, such as water, electricity and other key infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, will need to be rebuilt or repaired. Rebuilding is likely to be slow and costly but is essential to achieve stability and end the cycle of conflict.

In addition, it will likely take some time to clear the area of mines and explosive remnants in order to declare it safe for displaced Iraqis to return. Civilians must not be forced to return to unsafe areas. Any returns should be voluntary, non-discriminatory, safe and sustainable.

However, an end to the battle for Mosul does not signal an end to conflict in Iraq. Areas of the country, such as Hawija, in Kirkuk Governorate, and western districts of Anbar, such as Al Qaim are still controlled by extremist groups. People continue to be displaced from areas in which fighting is ongoing. While there may be an end to military conflict in Mosul, there is still no end in sight to the humanitarian crisis. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, will continue to play a key role in assisting displaced Iraqis for as long as it is necessary.
Volume 4, Issue 4

Response to Mosul

Humanitarian funding is urgently required to assist 700,000 civilians displaced from Mosul

Baghdad, 9 July 2017 – Since the military campaign to retake Mosul began on 17 October 2016, 920,000 civilians have fled their homes. Close to 700,000 people are still displaced, nearly half of whom are living in 19 emergency camps.

“It’s a relief to know that the military campaign in Mosul is ending. The fighting may be over, but the humanitarian crisis is not,” said the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Lise Grande.

“Many of the people who have fled have lost everything. They need shelter, food, health care, water, sanitation and emergency kits. The levels of trauma we are seeing are some of the highest anywhere. What people have experienced is nearly unimaginable,” said Ms. Grande.

“We’ve been working around the clock for months. Enormous efforts have been made by the Government and front-line partners to stay one step ahead of the crisis. We’ve done our best to protect and assist the people who need it the most.”

“There’s a lot to do in the weeks and months ahead. Of the 54 residential neighborhoods in western Mosul, 15 are heavily damaged and at least 23 are moderately damaged.”

“The civilians who are trapped in the areas where fighting is likely to occur, including Tel Afar, Hawija and western Anbar, will be at extreme risk. We have to make sure we are ready to help them,” said Ms. Grande.

Only 43 percent of the USD 985 million Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq has been received. Partners urgently require US$562 million to meet the needs of millions of Iraqis who need help.

As battle for Mosul ends, WFP seeks to give hope to thousands

Baghdad, 12 July 2017 - Though the battle for Mosul has ended, extensive damage to homes and essential infrastructure has left thousands of displaced families with nothing to return to and in continued need of emergency food assistance to survive.

“Nine months of violent conflict in Mosul has displaced almost one million people from Mosul city and the surrounding areas and to camps in northern Iraq,” said Sally Haydock, World Food Programme (WFP) Representative and Country Director in Iraq.

“While we have done our best to support those who arrived to camps weak and hungry, our hearts go out to the thousands of people who lost their lives.”

Since the fighting started in October 2016, WFP has been on the ground providing a consistent lifeline of food assistance to affected people, reaching a total of 1.8 million people within 72 hours of their arrival to camps and other areas, including those who received multiple rounds of assistance at screening sites. WFP has also been providing nutrition support for the prevention and treatment of malnutrition among all children under the age of five.

WFP will continue to focus on meeting the immediate needs of people affected by the conflict so they can share the comfort of family meals until they can safely return home and rebuild their lives. This includes providing support to 820,000 vulnerable people displaced to camps as well as others who have been living in camps across Iraq since conflict erupted earlier in 2014.

While the fight for Mosul has ended, WFP stands ready to support people who could be displaced from areas such as Hawija, Tel Afar and western Anbar where violence continues.

UN-Habitat Launches Mosul Portal – Data and Assessments Platform for humanitarian and development actors

Baghdad, 12 July 2017 – The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) has launched its Mosul Portal (unhabitattiraq.net/mosulportal) which will be a key platform to present damage assessments and thematic overviews of Mosul, based on satellite imagery analysis and information gathered from various actors on the ground.

In addition, this platform offers a live GeoPortal which allows humanitarian actors to overlay various layers of analysis to assess urban complexities and plan area-based responses.

While the liberation of Mosul from “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)” marks a significant turning point in the conflict, humanitarian and development actors will increasingly face interconnected challenges for the recovery and reconstruction of the city. The Mosul Portal will play an important role in understanding these urban complexities.

One of the key UN-Habitat products that will be disseminated through the portal is the multi-sectoral damage assessment. The assessments give a comprehensive overview of totally destroyed or severely damaged buildings in Mosul and represent the density of damage in Mosul’s neighbourhoods. They also provide analysis of destroyed sites per sector, such as housing, public administration buildings, religious sites.

The latest damage assessments conducted with satellite imagery as of 8 July 2017 reveals that around 8,476 housing sites in all of Mosul have been severely damaged or completely destroyed.

The road network of Mosul too has sustained significant damage.

Another key UN-Habitat product available on Mosul Portal is thematic assessments of the city of Mosul, which track and map the recovery of various sectors of Mosul such as schools, hospitals, and water facilities. A preliminary environmental assessment can be found on this portal, which had been carried out with the Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) in collaboration with the joint unit of UN Environment and UNOCHA. The assessment gives an overview of destroyed and damaged environmentally hazardous sites, such as industrial buildings and medical facilities with medical nuclear wastes and remnants of radiactive materials. The environmental impact will be increasingly relevant now many inhabitants are returning to the city.

Dr. Erfan Ali, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq Programme, stated that the Mosul Portal can be one of the major key sources and platforms to support the recovery and the reconstruction of the city of Mosul in the post-crisis phase in order to prioritize enabling hundreds of thousands of IDPs throughout the country to return to their homes.
Response to Mosul

Australia supports WFP multi-purpose cash assistance in Mosul

Baghdad, 13 July 2017 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a contribution of AUD$4 million (approximately US$3 million) from the Government of Australia to provide multi-purpose cash assistance for almost 23,000 displaced Iraqis affected by conflict in Mosul.

“Australia is pleased to support WFP’s crucial work in assisting Iraqis who are in urgent need as a result of the conflict,” said Christopher Langman, Ambassador of Australia to Iraq. “This contribution is part of Australia’s AUD$110 million (US$82) grant to support the displaced families in Iraq over the next three years.”

In eastern Mosul, WFP is partnering with other UN agencies and non-governmental organizations to provide unconditional cash transfers, which help families to purchase food and cover other basic needs such as rent, medicine or clothing. Each vulnerable household receives AUD$522 (US$400) through SCOPE, WFP’s electronic platform for humanitarian assistance.

People in Mosul have reported that their lack of cash has limited them from buying food and other items they need, which are readily available in local shops. As multi-purpose cash assistance is given without any preconditions, families can prioritize spending according to their individual circumstances.

“Australia’s generous contribution will benefit families in Mosul as well as local farmers and traders by increasing demand for their goods,” said Sally Haydock, WFP Representative and Country Director in Iraq. “Multi-purpose cash assistance shows how implementing the commitments of last year’s World Humanitarian Summit can have a vital impact on people’s everyday lives.”

The Australian contribution will also fund other WFP activities that aim to build the resilience of displaced Iraqis through programmes that build skills and improve livelihoods.

Since 2014, Australia has supported WFP in Iraq with AUD$33 million (almost US$26 million) in contributions, which have enabled the delivery of food assistance for the most vulnerable Iraqis through monthly family food rations and cash-based transfers.

UN Migration Agency identifies additional displaced population from West Mosul

Iraq, 14 July 2017 - As the battle to retake west Mosul approached its conclusion this week, the IOM Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) reported an estimated 380,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) – or over 63,000 families – newly recorded east of Mosul city.

This week, the IOM Iraq DTM published its Round 74 report. Updated as of 30 June 2017, it covers displacement and return movements across the country. The report recorded a total of 3,351,132 individuals (558,522 families) displaced since January 2014 and dispersed across 104 districts and 3,654 locations in Iraq. For the same period, the DTM identified 1,952,886 returnees (325,478 families).

Country-wide, the total number of identified IDPs increased by approximately 11 per cent (331,098 individuals). The increase is due largely to the completion of the DTM joint data collection exercise carried out in cooperation with local authorities in east Mosul.

This collaboration enabled the identification of approximately 380,000 additional individuals who were displaced from west to east Mosul.

These results included pre-emptive displacements, recorded as early as January 2017 prior to the military operations in west Mosul, in addition to those IDPs who transited through the Hammam Al-Aleel screening site and then moved to out-of-camp settings in east Mosul through the area of Rokjali.

While many sought shelter in camps, a significant number of those displaced opted to stay in recently retaken areas in east Mosul. In response, the DTM expanded its methodology to report flow-monitoring movements at strategic spots such as the Hammam Al-Aleel screening site.

Throughout this same period, the DTM closely collaborated with local authorities to support the establishment of a joint information collection system to gather consistent data on IDPs within the city of Mosul as a consequence of the military operations.

In the last few months, DTM seconded its staff to local authorities to conduct joint field visits and collect direct information – at the neighbourhood level – on IDPs who fled west Mosul and are now in east Mosul. This data collection system established by IOM Iraq’s DTM revealed a number of previously unrecorded anticipatory IDPs as well as locating those who opted to live outside of camps.

The findings of this exercise have now been integrated into the regular DTM Emergency Tracking, following several rounds of triangulation and direct validation on the ground by governmental and non-governmental sources. The sharp increase in IDP figures visible on the Mosul portal is attributed to the integration of these new findings rather than to a specific event.

Based on the DTM new findings a total of 1,048,044 individuals (174,674 families) have been displaced from both east and west Mosul as of 13 July. Of these IDPs displaced by Mosul operations, more than 825,000 individuals (137,000 families) continue to be displaced, 95 per cent of whom have been identified at neighbourhood/village level in Ninewa governorate, while another 5 per cent are distributed across 12 governorates.

Another 222,732 IDPs have now returned. DTM continues to closely collaborate with national authorities to harmonize IDP data findings across the country.

IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Thomas Lothar Weiss said: “These new findings provide a more comprehensive understanding of the enormous crisis before us. IOM Iraq will continue to work with national and local authorities, to verify IDP movements, and provide necessary humanitarian assistance to the full extent of our resources.”

As of DTM Round 74, the returnee population increased by 8 per cent (139,188 individuals) for the same period. The two governorates with the highest increase in returnee population were Anbar (8 per cent or 69,108 individuals) and Ninewa (25 per cent or 67,530 individuals).

Given the available information and the DTM methodology, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) has revised the planning figures for the humanitarian response to 3.4 million internally displaced persons.

http://iraqdtm.iom.int/EmergencyTracking.aspx
The Billion-Dollar job of raising Mosul from the rubble

Excerpts from an article by Ciro Scotti, The Fiscal Times

Baghdad, 19 July 2017 - ... To get a sense of the scale of rebuilding needed to bring Mosul back life, The Fiscal Times asked Lise Grande, the Baghdad-based Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, for an assessment via email. Ms. Grande has previously been involved in coordinating UN humanitarian responses in South Sudan and Republic of the Congo, among other postings.

How soon can the rebuilding of Mosul begin? Do mines and booby traps have to be cleared before work could get started?

Before any project begins, experts [from the UN Mine Action Service] check to ensure the area is free of explosive hazards. Immediate stabilization starts as soon as a district is declared safe by the Iraqi government, followed by expanded stabilization and then reconstruction.

Eastern Mosul is already recovering. Things are not perfect, but there is tangible, very visible progress. Schools and businesses are open, and nearly all the population has returned to their neighborhoods. The United National Development Programme’s Funding Facility for Stabilization, which focuses on immediate and expanded stabilization, has been active for months in eastern Mosul, and 230 projects are under way. Local contractors are repairing the electricity, water and sewage grids and thousands of people are being employed on public schemes, upgrading infrastructure and restoring public facilities.

The situation in Western Mosul is incomparable. Preliminary damage and loss assessments are under way. Of the 54 residential neighborhoods in western Mosul, 15 are heavily damaged, 23 are moderately damaged, and 16 are lightly damaged. UNDP is already active in the lightly damaged districts: 70 projects have started, and hundreds more are being planned.

A Reuters story quoted you as saying that basic repairs will cost more than $1 billion and probably much more than that for long-term reconstruction. What would a reasonable estimate be for Mosul to be a rebuilt and functioning city again?

It is too early to know the full costs of reconstruction; damage assessments will need to be done sector-by-sector to determine losses, and then decisions will have to be taken about how to “build back better.”

Based on the first damage and loss assessments, we estimate that $470 million is needed to help restore the main electricity, water and sewage grids and rehabilitate key public facilities including hospitals, schools and houses in the most heavily damaged neighborhoods in eastern Mosul. A minimum of $237 million is required in the moderately and lightly destroyed districts. This is double the amount we originally estimated for western Mosul and is in addition to approximately $370 million required for the stabilization of eastern Mosul.

Where will that money come from? Have U.S. and coalition members made any financial commitment to rebuild? How much will the Iraqi government contribute?

Twenty-three donors have contributed more than $420 million to UNDP’s Funding Facility for Stabilization since 2015. A significant portion of these funds is being spent on stabilization in Mosul. More than 1,100 stabilization projects are completed or being implemented across 23 locations.

This week in Washington a number of donors pledged to contribute additional funds... including the U.S. [U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)] has pledged $150 million to help stabilize and rebuild areas retaken from ISIS, raising America’s total commitment to stabilization in Iraq to $265.3 million since 2015.

Major efforts are being made by the [Iraqi] Government to accelerate stabilization and reconstruction.

With almost a million Mosul residents displaced from a city that once had almost 2 million citizens, how much has the UN already spent to care for those who fled? And what do you expect it will cost to support those who are in camps and those who remained in the city until some degree of stabilization can be achieved?

In July 2016, humanitarian partners [NGOs] requested $284 million to prepare for Mosul; 100 percent of this appeal was funded. Monies were used to construct emergency sites and preposition life-saving supplies before military operations began.

The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq, which was issued in early January, requested $985 million for the year and included the estimated costs of supporting civilians impacted in Mosul. By early July, only 43 percent of the 2017 appeal, $440 million, had been received.

Partners have done their very best with the funding they have received; more than 1.8 million people living in and near Mosul have received assistance, including the 940,000 who have fled their homes. To continue supporting the people from Mosul who need help, as well as more than 2 million displaced people who rely on humanitarian assistance to survive, partners are urgently seeking $454 million.

In early July, partners calculated the costs of supporting the people who have fled Mosul using three scenarios. If families are unable to return to their homes for three months, the costs of the Mosul humanitarian operation will be $182 million. If families are unable to return home for six months, the cost of the operation will be $312 million; if families stay outside their homes for nine months, $448 million will be required.

In terms of loss of life and physical devastation, how does Mosul compare with other scenes of destruction that you have seen?

In terms of destruction in Mosul, we are really talking about two cities. Eastern Mosul is recovering. There are difficulties and problems, but the trend is positive. Western Mosul is in a different category. It’s going to take a lot longer for things to return to normal—a lot longer. The levels of destruction we are seeing are the worst in Iraq. Western Mosul represents one of the largest and most complex stabilization challenges the UN has ever faced.
Amman, Jordan, 22 July 2017 – Statement attributable to Geert Capellelaere, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa: “The worst of the violence in Mosul may be over but for too many children in Mosul and in the region, extreme suffering continues. “Children in shock continue to be found, some reportedly among the debris or hidden in tunnels in Mosul. Some children have lost their families while fleeing to safety. According to reports, families have been forced to abandon their children or give them away, they are now living in fear, alone. Many children have been forced to fight and some to carry out acts of extreme violence. “These are horrific times for far too many children in Iraq and other conflict-affected countries in the region. Violence and conflicts are putting the lives and futures of nearly 27 million children* at risk. “These horrors are not over even if children escape from immediate danger. They are being detained, abused and stigmatized for perceived affiliations, while tensions are high between and within communities. “Those children who are alone need our support to help them find their families, be reunited and surrounded with care, protection and services, regardless of their family’s origin or affiliation. “As with any other child in the world, they have the right to be safeguarded, including through legal documentation. Children are children! “The time to act is now. How can we build a more stable and prosperous future for all while children are exposed to such horrors and treated this way?”

UN Migration Agency: “With Mosul retaken, donor support now paramount for thousands of IDPs”

Mosul, 25 July 2017 – With the battle for West Mosul all but over last week, evidence of a humanitarian calamity that is now just beginning to unravel paints the picture of a crisis that may go well beyond previous expectations, reports IOM Iraq’s Hala Jaber. In this tale of two cities, all indications show East Mosul to be recovering at a rapid pace, with much of its life returning to normal and a significant portion of services restored; West Mosul’s rise from the ashes is expected to take much longer.

From the hustle and bustle of life in the eastern sector, a team from IOM, the UN Migration Agency, crossed the bridge into the eerie, even deadly quiet of West Mosul, in stark contrast to the atmosphere of its twin on the other side of the Tigris, where life is recovering swiftly.

Here, life appears to have stopped. The battle to retake Mosul from ISIL came at a high cost. Entire neighbourhoods of a city tracing its history back to 401 BC now lie in ruin. The Old City is almost a ghost town.

According to the UN, of the 54 residential districts in West Mosul, 15 are “flattened,” with nearly 32,000 houses destroyed in those areas. A further 23 districts are moderately damaged, with nearly half their buildings destroyed. In the 16 neighbourhoods considered “lightly” damaged, there are a combined 16,000 homes destroyed.

In the Old City alone, over 5,500 buildings have been damaged, according to a satellite imagery assessment undertaken by Habitat. Some 490 homes were destroyed in the final weeks of the offensive.

The UN Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq, issued in February, warned: “The operation in Mosul has the potential to be the single largest humanitarian operation in the world in 2017,” and requested USD 985 million for the year, including the estimated costs of supporting civilians impacted by fighting in Mosul.

By early July, less than half of that amount – USD 440 million – had been received. IOM continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the tens of thousands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in its constructed emergency sites at Qayara Air Strip and Haji Ali, as well as to families that remain in host communities outside the camps.

However, with only 33 per cent of IOM’s USD 28.83 million appeal for the Mosul Crisis received – and 34 per cent of USD 47.46 million 2017 appeal for other areas of Iraq – the funding gap may significantly impact future humanitarian operations.

In response to the Mosul crisis, IOM has provided 287,977 medical consultations and treatments since June 2016, and provided life-saving medical services to health centres serving large numbers of IDPs. Mobile Medical Teams continue to deliver immediate health services in the areas of greatest need.

IOM has also provided psychological services to 49,100 people, and distributed 61,600 non-food item kits to IDPs.

The Organization has distributed a further 38,400 kerosene assistance kits and 9,000 boxes of clothes during the past 13 months as well.

To improve shelter conditions, 17,500 tents and 31 rub halls were installed by IOM and 14,415 emergency shelter kits were distributed.

Nonetheless, tens of thousands of families have been left without homes. Since the beginning of the Mosul operations in October 2016, the cumulative number of IDPs whose locations of displacement and/or return have been identified by IOM’s Emergency Tracking for Mosul Operations (Displacement Tracking Matrix, or DTM) reached 178,695 families, corresponding to 1,072,170 individuals.

Of these IDPs, more than 846,252 individuals (141,042 families) are still displaced. Another 225,918 IDPs have now returned, with an estimated 80 per cent going back to their districts of origin in East Mosul.

IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Thomas Lothar Weiss said, “The scale of destruction in West Mosul is enormous and the challenge of reconstruction is no small feat in ensuring the return of hundreds of thousands of displaced Iraqis to their communities and livelihoods. IOM has been on the ground since the start, providing humanitarian assistance, shelter and livelihood support, and is committed to continue with the help of the necessary funding from its donor partners.”
In Mosul and beyond, sustained efforts needed to support millions of displaced Iraqis – UN official

Baghdad, 26 July 2017 - Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ursula Mueller, visited Iraq between 24 and 26 July, where she met with senior officials and ministers from the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, members of the international and humanitarian communities, Yazidi community representatives, and visited displaced communities.

Ms Mueller travelled to Mosul, where she saw first-hand the complete devastation of districts in the old city in western Mosul. “I saw homes and entire neighbourhoods destroyed; no doubt countless tragedies remain untold among the rubble.”

“I commend the achievements of the humanitarian operation in Iraq and wish to highlight the impressive national response,” said Ms Mueller. “One of the things that impressed me the most was the exceptional level of cooperation between national counterparts, UN agencies and front-line NGOs.”

Almost 1 million people fled Mosul, surpassing humanitarians’ ‘worst-case’ estimates. Despite escalating needs, humanitarians adjusted their response and kept pace. Emergency sites and camps were built in record time. Over 18,000 people were treated at trauma stabilization points near the front lines.

A quarter of a million women, men, girls and boys received psychological first aid and psychosocial support.

Shelter assistance for Mosul families

Mosul, 3 August 2017 - UNHCR Iraq and its partner, Human Appeal - UK, have begun distributing emergency shelter kits to families in Mosul whose houses have been damaged or destroyed as a result of the battle to retake the city.

The kits are distributed to families following household assessments. Some families receive emergency shelter kits where it is hard for them to move into their former homes; others are receiving “sealing-off kits”, which allows them to carry out basic repairs to damaged or unfinished shelters.

Mosul has been suffered extensive damage, especially the western sector, where the UN estimates that out of 54 residential districts, 15 are completely destroyed, 23 are moderately damaged and 16 lightly damaged.

Although more than 244,000 former Mosul residents have returned home, the city is still littered with high levels of explosive hazards, making it difficult for families to resume their lives and livelihoods.

UNHCR is planning to distribute a total of 36,000 shelter packages in Mosul as part of its assistance to families affected by conflict.

UNHCR Iraq through its partner Human Appeal - UK, has distributed emergency relief kits to more than three thousand families who have arrived seeking shelter at the government-built Jed’ah 6 camp, Qayyarah.

The items include mattresses, hygiene and kitchen sets, water jerry cans, gas jerry cans and a stove.

Many families escaped fighting in Tel Afar. Other families arrived after the closure of Bartella camp.

Human Appeal are conducting comprehensive need assessments in the six camps in Jad’ah to identify any gaps and needs.
Personal accounts of West Mosul victims of war from IOM Field Hospital

Mosul, 28 July 2017 – IOM, the United Nations Migration Agency, released data this week from its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) estimating some 839,118 individuals (139,853 families) remain displaced in the aftermath of heavy fighting to retake the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

According to reports and scenes witnessed by IOM staff working in the zone this month, thousands of people remain buried under the rubble, their untold stories interred amongst the broken bricks and stones of what was once a bustling city of over 1.4 million, whose history dates back to at least 401 BC. Three survivors who spoke to IOM this week from their hospital beds gave testimony to the carnage they had witnessed. All three lost family members. (For more, see video link below.)

Amira (10)
“ISIL lobbed a mortar on our house. My father was trying to escape with my sisters and younger brother, while mother and I were still behind…Smoke engulfed the house. I could not see anything. Mama was dead lying on the floor. I thought she was alive…”

“I kept on calling out for my mother, shouting for her to help me, but she never answered me. I too had fallen to the ground, my legs were injured. I could not move.”

“I stayed for three days alone in the house calling for my mother, calling to my father, but no one came. I had no food or water… all three days and nights I was alone shouting to anyone, but no one heard me. Mama… I kept on calling, but no answer… I didn’t know she was dead until they rescued me.”

“Three days alone in the house, day and night hearing the bombs outside falling from the skies … all I wanted was for someone to come and get me… It was three days until the army reached our house.”

Niqaa (45-year-old mother)
“I wish I had died with them,” she said unable to mention family members’ names as her sister, from East Mosul, stood by her side listening in tears. It was 19:15 and Niqaa was in the kitchen preparing dinner for her family with what little ingredients she still had. Her youngest son was standing close by chatting away to her. Telling her how he couldn’t wait for the army to arrive so he would be able to leave and go to East Mosul.

“I will buy you water there, ‘I will buy candies and chocolates for me’,” her son was telling her excitedly. “So I gave him some money to keep him happy.”

At that moment, the house rocked as a bomb hit it.

“The house collapsed above us. They were all killed. My entire family killed in a split second. My husband and six children gone,” she sobbed.

“No one could bury them, there was too much bombing around. Some civilians in the area dragged me outside to a safe place. They tied my bleeding foot and took me to a safer place. It was five days before the military entered our neighbourhood and rescued us.”

At a field hospital in Hammam al-Alil, a surgeon tried desperately to save her foot. It had to be amputated.

Sarah (25)
She lay in the ward, her father standing by her side. Both still were trying to make sense of what they had just gone through, and what they had lost. With her mother, a sister and her two children, and three other families with children, they had been trapped inside a house, with ISIL, which was using them as human shields.

As the women and children huddled indoors, a female ISIL foreign jihadist walked in. She was holding the detonator of the suicide vest she wore.

“You are all infidels waiting for the infidel army to come and save you,” the ISIL fighter shouted at the terrified women and children before detonating her vest amongst them.

The room collapsed, and Sarah suddenly found herself under the rubble. She felt someone pull her towards a crack in the rubble, where she could breathe. For hours Sarah, with grave injuries to both legs, had lay buried.

“At first there were survivors. I could hear the children crying at first, the adults calling out… Then their voices slowly faded one by one as they suffocated and died,” she said.

She was the only one pulled out alive.

The interviews with Amira, Niqaa and Sarah can be found at https://youtu.be/tZjb920pLFY

The United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) supports the IOM field hospital. The hospital continues to provide life-saving assistance to both victims of war and patients. Since opening in April 2017, IOM surgeons have performed 476 trauma operations (vascular, general, orthopaedic procedures) and 22 non-trauma emergency cases. The hospital has also treated more than 6,200 outpatient and post-operation follow-up cases.

IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Thomas Lothar Weiss said, “Harrowing tales from civilians who were caught in West Mosul and the suffering they endured are a reminder that more humanitarian assistance is vital if we are to help them on the route to recovery. Thanks to DFID and our health partners, IOM’s field hospital is able to continue to provide life-saving medical care to the vulnerable.”

Since the beginning of the Mosul operations in October 2016, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) whose locations of displacement and/or return have been identified by the IOM Emergency Tracking for Mosul Operations (Displacement Tracking Matrix, or DTM) reached 178,952 families, corresponding to 1,073,712 individuals. Some 234,594 IDPs (39,099 families) have now returned, with an estimated 80 per cent going back to their districts of origin in East Mosul.

The latest DTM Emergency Tracking figures on displacement from Mosul operations are available at: http://iraqdtm.iom.int /EmergencyTracking.aspx
Challenges continue in Mosul: “The situation is difficult and the needs are great.”

Mosul, 6 August 2017 · Hovig Etymezian has been serving as head of UNHCR’s Sub-Office in Mosul since last November. A native of Lebanon, he previously served in a number of field assignments including Jordan where he managed Zaatari camp, as well as Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Mauritania and DR Congo.

Almost one million people from Mosul have been displaced since October 2016. As of July 27, some 244,978 people have returned to East and West Mosul (including 94 percent of those who had fled the eastern part of the city). An estimated 21,000 people have returned since the government declared an end to the battle for Mosul on July 9. Hovig describes what this new situation means for UNHCR operations.

With large scale returns taking place and people returning to their homes, what is the mood of people on the street?

“People are eager to return to their homes, and life is slowly resuming in both East and West Mosul. Iraqis do not like living in camps. Many long to return to rebuild their homes, start businesses, reunite with their families, and return to some sort of normalcy. Many Iraqis, however, have lost their homes and belongings.

The situation in West Mosul is still unsafe - entire neighbourhoods have been totally destroyed. It will take time to clear areas from mines and unexploded ordnance, to repair infrastructure, and for public institutions to become fully operational."

How has your staff been personally affected by the recent changes in terms of movement, work and families?

“The countless days spent in the field take their toll on staff and their nuclear families. Over the past months our team and partners have built camps for internally displaced, registered new arrivals and hosted them in our camps, ensured life-saving assistance is delivered upon arrival, worked closely with beneficiaries, authorities and partners, to ensure displaced people are sheltered protected and assisted in the camps. We have also assisted over 400,000 internally displaced Iraqis who have passed through our transit centers on their way to the camps. We have also assisted internally displaced and returnees in urban areas.”

With the changed security landscape in Mosul, what is UNHCR doing to assist displaced persons who want to return home? What kinds of assistance are returnees receiving?

“Assessments in the return areas are ongoing, we are looking at structural damage, vulnerabilities of the population as well as legal and protection needs. We have started supporting the reunification of families and working with partners to deliver in-kind and cash assistance. We are distributing emergency shelter sealing-off kits that can help families do basic repairs to their homes. The situation is difficult and the needs are great. UNHCR aims to deliver 36,000 emergency shelter kits by end of the year and cash assistance to 3,000 families by September 2017.”

What are the biggest challenges and most urgent needs to UNHCR’s operations in Mosul?

“Most of the thirteen camps that UNHCR built to respond to the Mosul emergency are full. Expansion of Al Salamiyah camp is underway. We expect that thousands of people will be displaced as a result of military operations in Tal Afar and Hawiga. Given the scale of destruction in West Mosul, and the need to clear areas contaminated by explosive devices, we anticipate that displaced families will continue to shelter in camps. UNHCR is under-funded for its work to meet the critical needs of families displaced from Mosul and surrounding areas, as well as those who are beginning to return to safe areas. UNHCR urgently needs $126 million this year. The most urgent needs include reunification of separated families, civil documentation, psycho-social support to families, services to vulnerable people, and livelihoods support.”

Recovery in Iraq's war-battered Mosul is a 'tale of two cities,' UN country coordinator says

Geneva, 8 August 2017 – Even as schools and markets begin to re-open in war-torn eastern Mosul, whole neighbourhoods of the western part of the Iraqi city have been destroyed and nearly a quarter of a million people have nowhere to return “anytime soon,” a senior United Nations official said today.

Speaking to the press in Geneva, Lise Grande, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, said the contrast between the east and the west of the city could not be clearer. Indeed: “Everyone’s gone home to eastern Mosul except for 20,000 people.”

“Mosul’s really a tale of two cities. Eastern Mosul is a city that’s recovering, people are home, schools are open, businesses are open, markets are open. Conditions aren’t great but it’s a city on the mend,” she said.

Yet, the situation is very different in...
UNHCR Iraq steps up help to families in Mosul

Baghdad, 10 August 2017 — UNHCR, the United Nations’ Refugee Agency, has been stepping up its help in Iraq for families inside Mosul, including thousands who have recently returned to the city after fleeing the fighting.

UNHCR, and its partner, Human Appeal, have already distributed shelter kits to more than 3,200 families in east and west Mosul, including returnees and those who had been unable to move. The help includes emergency shelter kits and sealing-off kits which allow families to be able to carry out basic repairs so they are able to live in partially damaged or unfinished buildings.

The plan is to distribute kits to 36,000 families in total.

Durayy, a man from Ma’moun neighbourhood in west Mosul who received a kit, said “We have no windows in our house any more. All the glass is broken. We have put up some mats on the windows for privacy and to protect us from the strong sunlight until we can afford to fix them”. He has also repaired some doors in his house using the tools.

According to government figures, more than 90% of families who had fled East Mosul due to the conflict have returned to the city. However, the situation is more complex in West Mosul, which was extensively damaged and is littered with high levels of explosive devices. According to the UN, of the 54 residential districts in the western sector, 15 are heavily damaged; 23 are moderately damaged and 16 neighbourhoods are lightly damaged. In addition, there is the risk of explosive hazards.

“The residents are in need of assistance of every kind”, said Hovig Etyemezian, UNHCR’s head of Mosul sub-office, who took part in shelter assessments in several neighbourhoods of western Mosul last week, “however, the shelter situation in particular is very dire.”

In addition to shelter, UNHCR has been providing cash assistance to some of the most vulnerable families. Nearly 700 families have been reached so far; and the target is to provide cash for 3,000 families by September.

Families will receive one-off cash assistance of $400 (486,000 IQD), using a system of mobile money transfer. Working with Zain Cash, families will be provided with free-of-cost SIM cards and have more flexibility in where and how they receive their mobile cash payments.

Mosul Crisis: Population Movement Analysis Report published - IOM

Erbil, 11 August 2017 - The IOM Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) has published its latest in-depth report: Mosul Crisis: Population Movement Analysis, tabulating the chronological population movements – especially displacement and returns – that have occurred in northern Iraq since the beginning of the Mosul military operations to 29 June.

The report, published this week, contextualizes an overview of the displacement history preceding the military operations and then the dislocation and return movements of Iraqis during the Mosul crisis.

Based on the DTM cumulatively, 1,084,134 individuals (180,689 families) have been displaced from both East and West Mosul as of 10 August 2017.

Of these people displaced by Mosul operations, at least 839,490 individuals (139,915 families) continue to be displaced, while some 244,644 by now have returned to their place of origin.

Iraqis in Mosul witnessed extreme violence, lived under unbearable conditions and were forced to flee their homes, leaving their communities behind,” IOM Iraq Chief of Mission, Thomas Lothar Weiss, said this week.

“While military operations have ceased, the Mosul Crisis continues to affect hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, who have not yet been able to return to their areas.”

He added: “We hope that this Mosul population movements analysis will facilitate better understanding of the scope of the crisis, and the scale of humanitarian assistance and infrastructure rehabilitation that is needed to prepare communities for return.”

The analysis in this report is based on data collection exercises conducted by IOM Iraq DTM through its Emergency Tracking methodology (ET), from October 2016 to the end of June 2017.

“In cooperation with our humanitarian partners, the Government of Iraq and donors, IOM Iraq will continue to provide lifesaving humanitarian assistance to civilians displaced from Mosul,” IOM’s Weiss said.

Support for the report: Mosul Crisis: Population Movement Analysis, is provided by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM).

The latest DTM Emergency Tracking figures on displacement from Mosul are available at: http://iraqdtm.iom.int/EmergencyTracking.aspx
UNDP in Iraq: We’ve promised the Kurdish government they can count on us

Erbil, Kurdistan Region, 14 August 2017 — The United Nations’ top humanitarian envoy to Iraq says she has expressed commitment to both the central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in filling any humanitarian gaps that may arise as the focus shifts to return and stabilization for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

“The humanitarian crisis continues,” Lise Grande, the UN Development Programme Resident Representative in Iraq, told Rudaw on Monday. Just under 3.3 million Iraqis remain displaced across the country due in large part to instability and the rise of ensuing war with ISIS.

“We've promised the government in Baghdad, we've promised the KRG that they can count on us, that we will be there, and that we will help with the return process,” she explained.

More than 944,000 people were displaced from Mosul city during the nine-month offensive to retake the city from ISIS militants that concluded in July. Grande called this the “the largest evacuation of civilians in the modern period of history” and a “tremendous achievement.”

However, Iraqis still face everyday problems of electricity, water, sewage, and infrastructure due to the large amount of destruction in the battle for Mosul.

“One of the points that we are stressing now that the fighting in Mosul is over — it’s a relief that that’s the case, but humanitarian crisis is not. Our expectation is that there will be extremely high levels of humanitarian need all the way through the end of this year and into 2018,” she explained.

To the north, lots of work has to be done in the Yezidi city of Shingal, according to Grande.

“Large parts of the city are completely destroyed,” she said. “It will be a major effort to rebuild Sinjar.”

Northern areas of the Shingal region have been rid of ISIS for nearly two years, although many Yezidis still remain in camps in Duhok and elsewhere inside the Kurdistan Region.

“I don’t think families can go back until electricity is fully restored, until water is fully restored. It’s not safe for them to go back until conditions are ready. That’s why reconstruction in Sinjar is something has to be treated as a top priority,” Grande offered, explaining that she recently visited the area.

She believes people do want to return to their homes, but with “dignity, safety, and voluntarily.”

In Shingal, several groups claim to be providing security and some humanitarians have previously told Rudaw English that access is often a problem.

“In the case of Sinjar, the United Nations Development Programme is already helping. We helped to open up one of the health facilities and we're helping to re-establish a mobile electricity grid, but this is just the start.

There is so much to do,” Grande explained.

Since the rise of ISIS, the Kurdistan Region has sheltered 1.8 million IDPs and refugees. Ninety-eight percent of the Syrian refugees in Iraq came to the Kurdish areas.

Grande, who is also Deputy Special Representative of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), believes the hospitality shown by Kurds “inside of the KRG and inside of Kirkuk” is not going unnoticed internationally.

“The role of the KRG, the role of the Kurdish people has been exemplary, it’s been impressive and the whole world has watched this and expressed its support for those efforts,” she said.

By Rudaw.
Cash help for displaced Iraqis in Anbar Governorate

Anbar, 16 August 2017 - UNHCR Iraq recently helped more than 423 vulnerable families from Anbar with cash assistance, provided through mobile cash transfer. Working with Zain Cash - which has an extensive network of agents across Iraq, families receiving help attended a registration event to receive free-of-cost SIM cards and register with Mobile Money Wallet and to learn how the mobile money transfer works. Unlike traditional banking, where families would receive a cheque, families have more flexibility in where and how they receive mobile cash payments. The mobile system does not require them to spend money on transport fees in order to travel to a bank branch that could be located up to 50 kilometers away. In addition, families are able to take out small multiple amounts of cash over a period of time, rather than having to withdraw the money all in one go.

All families received one-off cash assistance of $400 (486,000 IQD) – a payment designed to last a month. Some of the most vulnerable families will get cash help for three months, helping them to pay rent and basic necessities such as food and utilities.

Spain helps WFP to support people affected by Mosul conflict

Madrid, 24 August 2017 - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a contribution of €700,000 (US$790,000) from the Government of Spain that will be used to provide food assistance for some 34,000 people affected by the recent conflict in Mosul, Iraq.

The contribution from Spain will be used to provide one month of cash assistance to families displaced by conflict near Mosul and those living in camps in Dohuk. Each family member will receive €15 (US$17) so they can purchase food and cover other basic needs.

“WFP appreciates the generous contribution from Spain in the aftermath of the battle for Mosul, which has left thousands of families displaced and in urgent need of relief,” said Sally Haydock, WFP Representative in Iraq.

As many displaced and vulnerable families are unable to meet their basic food requirements, the Spanish contribution will allow them to purchase the food they need from local markets. Cash assistance has the advantage of giving families the choice to decide what to purchase. Cash can also have a positive impact on the economy as local shops and producers benefit from increased demand for their products.

“Spain is deeply committed to Iraq, which has been declared as a level 3 emergency, the highest level for humanitarian emergencies. This contribution is aligned with the position of the European Union and the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit,” highlighted Fernando García Casas, Secretary of State of International Cooperation and for Ibero-America and the Caribbean. “From 2014 to 2017, the response of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation in Iraq has been translated into almost €5 million.”

Since 2014, Spain has provided €1.8 million (US$2 million) of these resources to WFP in order to provide food assistance to vulnerable families in Iraq.

Since the fighting in Mosul started in October 2016, WFP has been on the ground providing life-saving food assistance to affected people. WFP has also been providing children with nutritional support as part of a campaign for the prevention and treatment of malnutrition among children under the age of five.
To ensure tenure security of Iraqi Yazidi People, UN-Habitat handed over occupancy certificates to the returnees to the renovated houses in Sinuni/Sinjar, Ninewah Governorate

Sinuni, 25 August 2017 - Following the ISIL/Da'ish offensive on Sinjar district, over 275,000 people from Mount Sinjar area - including a vast majority of Yazidis - were driven out of their homes. Abandoned Yazidi settlements were either systematically demolished or seized by ISIL fighters. Some 3,000 homes are thought to have been destroyed or burned down in the sub-district of Sinuni alone.

As part of the UN-Habitat's Urban Recovery Programme, in partnership with the Nineveh Governorate, 562 damaged houses were rehabilitated in 11 villages across Sinuni Sub-District, 108 of which are in the town of Ashti. The project was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) with generous funding from the Government of Germany.

This ceremony celebrated the completion of the Pilot Housing Rehabilitation project in Sinuni, which facilitated the returns of approximately 3,000 individuals to their restored houses, and the distribution of occupancy certificate to Yazidi families in Ashti. Alongside the technical rehabilitation of damaged houses, the project put a very strong emphasis on the human rights of adequate housing and tenure security as essential pillars of healthy, functional, resilient communities. This is inevitable in the case of the Yazidis, who were subject to protracted discriminating policies in the area where they were prevented from tenure security for decades. Using the Social Tenure Domain Model, a tool developed by UN-Habitat and applied in numerous countries, the UN-Habitat team conducted community consultation meetings to verify the occupancy claims of the returnees, and issued the occupancy certificates that are endorsed by local authorities as well as community members.

The project promotes sustainable and resilient towns for returnees — beneficiaries and rightful occupants — through the rehabilitation of housing and infrastructure, along with the recognition of their right to property and occupancy. The project adopted a community-based approach involving local private contractors, direct engagement of the local community in the rehabilitation work, and an effective partnership with the local authorities. The community-led approach builds self-reliance of local communities and authorities; secure recovery investments that remain with the community, and ensures security and protection, while re-establishing bounds and cultivating a spirit of peace-building and social cohesion among community members. Ultimately, the project promotes the right to adequate housing for vulnerable families who have been denied access to land and property rights for decades and have seen their houses destroyed during ISIL’s invasion of Sinjar. It also complements the reconciliation efforts made by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) and UNDP.

His Excellency Dr. Cyrill Nunn, Ambassador of the German Federal Republic, called in remembrance the violence and atrocities against the Yazidi community by ISIS. “These acts against human rights and religious freedom should never be forgotten”, he stressed. The German Ambassador emphasized, that the housing project, funded by Germany, is an important step to allow many Yazidis returning home. Beside this physical support, another important step will be to address the psychological needs of those Yazidis, who have suffered so much under the control of ISIS. Germany stands ready to continue its support also in this area.

Dr. Erfan Ali, the Head of UN-Habitat Iraq underlined the strategic importance of this intervention to facilitate return, not only by the physical rehabilitation of damaged houses and infrastructure but also by addressing tenure rights of the returning families, stressing that “Recognizing the housing occupancy rights for the Iraqi Yazidis since decades in this area is a ground-breaking achievement, and is a necessary tool for prompting more returns to the area.”

On his part, the Vice Governor of Ninewah Mr. Abdelqader Sinjari thanked the Federal Republic of Germany for its contribution to the rehabilitation of the area, and underlined the need for more interventions and rehabilitation efforts in the district. He also underlined the importance of the occupancy deeds that were distributed by UN-Habitat. On behalf of the people of Sinuni, the Mayor/Qa’immagam, Mr. Nayef Saydoo Qasem thanked the tangible results delivered under the project. He emphasized the level of destruction to the area, and stressed that additional support is needed to facilitate recovery and reconstruction.
UNHCR Iraq opens new camp for displaced families fleeing Telafar and surrounding areas

Erbil, 27 August 2017 - UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, has opened a new camp in Nineveh Governorate to respond to newly-displaced Iraqis fleeing the military operations in Telafar and surrounding areas.

The government-constructed Nimrud camp, around 55 kilometres from Telafar, was handed over to UNHCR to manage. The camp received nearly 350 families (around 2,000 individuals) on its opening day on Saturday. Senior government officials, including the Deputy Minister of Migration and Displacement, Mr. Jassim Attia, were present at the camp opening. More than 1,500 more families (around 9,000 individuals) who have been sheltering at UNHCR's transit site in Hammam Al-Alil are expected to arrive within the coming days.

The camp still requires some construction work to complete the water sanitation and hygiene services. The government has said electricity will also be installed shortly.

The total capacity of the camp will be 3600 families (around 22,000 individuals).

One of the first arrivals at the camp was Khodeira, a mother of six young children. Her husband was taken by extremist groups and she does not know his whereabouts. "This is a castle compared to how we were living the past three years, especially in the past two weeks", she said, after receiving a tent and emergency items. "We are happy to be settled now. I hope our ordeal will soon be over."

In addition to receiving a tent, new arrivals at the camp are provided food and non-food items provided by several agencies. UNHCR provides an emergency package consisting of quilts, mattresses, kitchen sets, jerry cans, and a solar lantern.

Nimrud camp, constructed by the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) in Nineveh Governorate, was handed over to UNHCR and its partners for upgrading work and to ensure that it would be ready to receive displaced families from Telafar as quickly as possible. The new camp will be managed by UNHCR’s partner, Iraqi Salvation Humanitarian Organisation (ISHO) which also manages Hammam Al-Alil and Al Salamiyah displacement camps.

“Our partners and our team are identifying the most vulnerable, providing everyone with the basic relief items that they need in order to lead a dignified life in this camp,” said Hovig Eyemezian, Head of UNHCR’s Mosul Office.

According to the latest government figures, more than 40,000 people have been displaced from Telafar since April 2017. Just before the military operations began on 20 August, a surge of families fled from surrounding areas of Telafar.

“We are grateful to the Iraqi authorities for developing Nimrud camp with significant housing capacity”, said Bruno Geddo, UNHCR Representative in Iraq. “The handover of the camp to UNHCR is an excellent example of the level of trust and cooperation we have established in supporting the government response to the displacement crisis in Iraq.”

UNHCR has built 13 other camps in order to respond to the large-scale displacement from Mosul and surrounding areas, and is currently preparing Al Salamiyah 3 camp with 1,000 plots for families displaced from Telafar, which is due to open in early September. UNHCR urgently needs USD 126 million to meet the critical needs of vulnerable families fleeing from conflict areas, as well as those returning to areas of Mosul that are now safe, until the end of the year.
Security Council welcomes the announcement by the Iraqi authorities of the liberation of Mosul

New York, 13 July 2017 - The members of the Security Council welcomed the announcement by the Iraqi authorities of the liberation of Mosul, which marks an important milestone in the global effort to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) and a significant step in the battle to rid Iraq from ISIL, and commended Prime Minister al-Abadi, the Iraqi security forces, and the Iraqi people for the successful effort. The members of the Security Council expressed their deep sympathy and condolences to all those who have suffered, and to the families of those who have perished in this fight against ISIL’s barbarity, and urged justice for ISIL’s victims and survivors of its crimes, in Iraq and across the region. As the Iraqi Security Forces liberate the remaining pockets of ISIL-controlled territory, the members of the Security Council reiterated that all parties must comply with their obligations under international law, including, as applicable, human rights and international humanitarian law, particularly with respect to the protection of the civilian population.

IHEC presented updates on the status of the Elections in the country, and demonstrated the functions of IHEC’s new electronic ballot box and vote counting

Baghdad, 7 August 2017 - The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) of Iraq, in collaboration and coordination with the UNAMI Integrated Electoral Assistance office, today organized a high-level meeting with representatives of the diplomatic community in Baghdad.

At the meeting, IHEC Chairman, Mr. Sarbast Mustafa Rasheed, and IHEC Chief of Electoral Office, Mr. Wael al Waeli, presented updates on the status of the Elections in the country, and demonstrated the functions of IHEC’s new electronic ballot box and vote counting device which will be deployed in the forthcoming elections.

In his remarks, Mr. Sarbast said that “IHEC is committed to enhance the efficiency and transparency in the electoral process in Iraq”, adding that “We recognise that of all the factors affecting the success of these elections, the public perception and credibility of IHEC is of utmost importance”.

UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance calls on the Expert Committee of the Council of Representatives to ensure adequate women representation in the next IHEC Board of Commissioners

Baghdad, 9 August 2017 – The Office of Electoral Assistance at the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) urged the Expert Committee of the Council of Representatives that is handling the selection process for the next Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to ensure adequate representation of women in the next IHEC Board of Commissioners.

“We have been following up the proceedings of the expert committee and are taking note of efforts by committee members towards the selection of more women in the next IHEC Board of Commissioners,” stated Mr. Aamir Arain, UNAMI’s Principal Electoral Adviser and Head of the Office of Electoral Assistance. “We welcome a proposal to further specify legal provisions, including Article 3.2 of the Law of the Independent High Electoral Commission mandating that the selection process takes into consideration women representation. This is in line with relevant constitutional provisions and is consistent with the country’s international obligations, including on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325”, Mr. Arain further added.

Recently, a number of civil society organizations and women activists have also approached UNAMI asking for support in advocating increased and more meaningful participation of women in elected bodies and in the IHEC. They state that further increasing women’s participation in the governance and overall decision-making process will enable them to make valuable contribution to the development of Iraq.

As per the IHEC Law, the Council of Representatives is in the process of selecting the next IHEC Board of Commissioners to replace the current commissioners whose term expires in September 2017. UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance provides advise and attends the meetings of the Committee, upon the latter’s invitation.
UNAMI Statement on the selection of the IHEC Board of Commissioners

Baghdad, 21 August 2017 - Due to the imminent expiration of the term of the current Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), Board of Commissioners in September 2017, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) would like to urge the Council of Representatives to expedite and complete the selection of a new Board to ensure a seamless transition and the continuation of the democratic process in Iraq.

Recalling some of the essential provisions in the Law of the Independent High Electoral Commission (Law No. 11 of 2007), such as Article 3 that requires that the Board of Commissioners “must have expertise and experience in elections and must be known for their competence, integrity and independence taking into consideration women representation” or Article 9 that further requires that “representation of the components of the Iraqi society shall be put into consideration in the formation of the Independent High Electoral Commission”, UNAMI would, inter alia, like to encourage the Council of Representatives to ensure the representation of women and minorities in the new IHEC Board of Commissioners. The representation of women and minorities is in line with relevant constitutional and electoral provisions and is consistent with Iraq’s international obligations. Furthermore, UNAMI believes that such inclusive IHEC Board of Commissioners will not only be responding to the aspirations of millions of Iraqis, but will also be an important step towards holding transparent and acceptable upcoming elections.

In accordance with its mandate, UNAMI stands ready to continue providing technical advice and support based on comparative global experiences on these important issues.

Statement by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)

Baghdad, 17 August 2017 - In reference to a misrepresentation by IRNA of the responses of Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq, Mr. Jan Kubis, as regards the referendum declared by the authorities of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq that was reproduced by a number of Iraqi media, UNAMI hereby provides almost verbatim the responses of the SRSG as recorded by UNAMI to the questions of a representative of IRNA during a brief interview on 16 August 2017.

SRSG Kubis:
“First of all, the message from the Security Council and the leadership of the Secretariat is to both Baghdad central government and the government of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to talk, to negotiate, and to find a solution or solutions that would address all the issues that they have of the agenda through negotiations, including how to deal with the issue of the referendum”. “We always say, because that is the way how we operate on any questions, that the point of departure must be to respect fully the Constitution of the country and the laws of country”.

SRSG Kubis welcomes Baghdad-Erbil negotiations

Baghdad, 17 August 2017 – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq, Mr. Jan Kubis, met on 16 August with the Kurdistan political delegation. He welcomes the dialogue between Baghdad and Erbil that is ongoing and urges the two sides to agree on a roadmap with timelines how to resolve all outstanding issues and implement the agreed conclusions in a positive spirit of genuine partnership. If and as requested by the two sides, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) would be ready to provide its good offices, advice, assistance and support.

“We are encouraged by the visit of a political delegation from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to Baghdad as agreed with their counterparts in Baghdad, and strongly support this effort. We have urged these talks as a matter of urgency. It is the politically correct way to address all pending issues between the two sides” Mr. Kubis said.

On the referendum on independence called for 25 September by the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the SRSG recalls his briefing to the UN Security Council on 17 July 2017 where he stated that such an important issue ought not to be pursued without understanding between the federal government and that of the Kurdistan Regional Government. Mr. Kubis urged both sides to enter into constructive and serious negotiations without further delay, in the spirit of genuine partnership and based on the Constitution, to urgently find common ground and a roadmap to address this and other critical topics, notably implementation of Article 140 of the Constitution on disputed territories, including the status of Kirkuk, budgetary issues, oil and revenue sharing, and other areas and principles that determine the relations, cooperation and partnership between the federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Reiterating the UN commitment to assist the people of Iraq in their efforts to build a secure, stable, federal, united and democratic nation, Mr. Kubis reminds that the fight against the terrorist Daesh continues, with Iraqi forces preparing to launch military operations to liberate Talafar and other remaining areas from the terrorists. The SRSG urges that just as all Iraqis united to crush Daesh in Mosul including through exemplary cooperation between the ISF and Peshmergas, joint efforts should continue to complete the fight to defeat the terrorists and to find sustainable solutions of burning issues of political, economic and social reforms, development, jobs, good governance, anti corruption, delivery of services, law and order, justice and equality of all citizens, while taking all necessary steps to support return of IDPs to their homes and to assist families of martyrs and mobilized fighters.
UNAMI expresses concern at Provincial Council decision on returnees in Babil

Baghdad, 25 August 2017 - The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) expresses its concern at the recent decision by a majority of the members of the Babil Provincial Council that it would bring legal proceedings against any politicians or political party that called for the return of thousands of displaced persons to their homes in the area of Jarf al-Sakhr. This decision, should it not be repealed, represents an attempt to intimidate Iraqi politicians from carrying out their duty to work for the betterment of the citizens of the country, thousands of whom have been living in harsh conditions for many months away from their homes, their livelihoods and in many cases their families.

"The ability to return to one’s own home is a fundamental right that must be respected. I call upon the Provincial Council to reconsider this decision, and to assist those politicians, political parties and other citizens working on the goal of returning people to their homes, and Government of Iraq in its efforts in reconstructing Iraq, so that they can restart their lives and work towards rebuilding the country together", said the Deputy-Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Gyorgy Busztin.

DSRSG Busztin in Mosul: “I urge and encourage all parties to continue in their efforts to reconcile the various components of Ninewa”

Mosul, 30 August 2017 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (DSRSG), Gyorgy Busztin, visited Mosul on 29 August 2017 where he met with the Governor Nawfal al-Sultan, Ninawa Provincial Council chairman Basshar al-Kiki, and a number of Provincial Council members. Separately, he conducted meetings with the head of the KDP branch in Mosul, Esmat Rajab, and Abdullah al-Nujaifi in his capacity of political advisor to the United for Reform. Mr. Busztin congratulated his interlocutors on the recent military victory in Telafar against Daesh, as well on the noticeable progress in the rehabilitation of East Mosul. Political and security developments in the Governorate were also discussed.

"I urge and encourage all parties to continue in their efforts to reconcile the various components of Ninewa and to actively contribute to Iraq’s better future," said DSRSG Busztin and added that “UNAMI is ready to provide all its support in this regard”.

In addition, Mr. Busztin advised the stakeholders to strive towards holding the elections on their designated date and to treat the electoral process as a priority action for public engagement, accountability and reconciliation and emphasized the need to improve security for all citizens of Ninewa.

SRSG Kubiš: "Liberation of Tal Afar one more nail in Daesh's coffin"

Baghdad, 31 August 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, congratulated the people and Government of Iraq on the liberation of Tal Afar from the terrorist Daesh.

"Coming weeks after the liberation of Mosul, this great victory in Tal Afar represents another major defeat for Daesh and terrorism and one more nail in the coffin of the terrorist group," Mr. Kubiš said.

"As we join the Iraqis in celebrating that the Iraqi flag is once again proudly flying high in the heart of the liberated Tal Afar we also remember all those who have lost their lives or who have suffered tremendously from Daesh’s terrorism. Without their sacrifices and without the unity of the people, in particular the Turkmen component in Tal Afar, behind their security forces this latest victory would not have been swift and decisive."

The Special Representative commended the Iraqi security forces for the extraordinary efforts they have made to save and protect lives of civilians, urged that security and services be swiftly restored.

"As with other areas liberated from Daesh, the immediate priority is for accelerated stabilization efforts to enable the civilians who have fled the fighting to voluntarily and safely return to their homes and restart their lives, to be followed by reconstruction," he said.

In parallel, national and social reconciliation form the tools to achieve sustainable peace for the future generations.

Mr. Kubiš said the United Nations will continue to support Iraq in its drive to liberate remaining territory under Daesh control and in a political process to achieve reconciliation.
The leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and UN Country Team continue with numerous political consultations with the leading stakeholders in Iraq and the region.

**Erbil, 10 July 2017** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met today with the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani. The current political situation in the country and in the region was discussed as well as the announced Kurdistan referendum.

Photo courtesy of KRG.

**Baghdad, 10 July 2017** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met today with the Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, Salem Al-Jubouri. They discussed the current political situation in the country including the topics of the announced Sunni conference and the KR-I independence referendum, and the reconstruction and reconciliation in the post Mosul liberation period.

Photo courtesy of the Council of Representatives of Iraq.

**Baghdad, 11 July 2017** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met today with the Iraqi Vice President, Nouri al-Maliki. They discussed the political situation in the country after the liberation of Mosul, and need for national dialogue and reconciliation.

Photo: UNAMI Archives.

**Washington, D.C., 13 July 2017** – The Small Group session of the Global Coalition to defeat ISIS was held today in the United States capital. United Nations in Iraq was represented by Lise Grande, Resident Humanitarian Coordinator and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq.

Photo courtesy of the U.S. State Department.

**Baghdad, 18 July 2017** – Representatives of UNAMI attended today the 7th joint Turkmen coordination committee meeting. At the meeting Turkoman rights in Kirkuk, national reconciliation, Kurdish referendum, internal displacement and broader political situation in Iraq were discussed.
Baghdad, 19 July 2017 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. György Busztin, met today with the Head of the Ahrar bloc in the Council of Representatives, Dhia al-Asadi. They discussed actual political situation, including the issue of national reconciliation.

Photo: Courtesy of Al-Ahrar Bloc

Baghdad, 19 July 2017 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. György Busztin, met today with the Chairman of the Iraqi National Alliance, Ammar al-Hakim. They discussed the actual political situation in the country, with special emphasis on the national reconciliation.

Photo: Courtesy of Al-Mejilis

Baghdad, 19 July 2017 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. György Busztin, met with the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, H.E. Salim al-Jubouri. Actual political situation was discussed with special emphasis on the issue of national reconciliation.

Photo: Courtesy of CoR

Kirkuk, 23 July 2017 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (DSRSG), György Busztin, met with Dr. Najmaldin Kareem, Governor of Kirkuk. They discussed the overall political and security situation in Kirkuk as well as the operations of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in the province, in particular, regarding humanitarian challenges in Hawija. DSRSG Busztin appreciated the support UNAMI has received from the Kirkuk administration and the governor personally.

Baghdad, 26 July 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met with Ammar al-Hakim, the Chairman of the Iraqi National Alliance, leader of National Wisdom Party. Current political and humanitarian situation in the country were discussed.

Photo: Courtesy of the National Wisdom Party.

Baghdad, 27 July 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met with Mr. Hadi al-Ameri, a leading member of the Popular Mobilization Commission. They discussed the liberation operations, political developments, as well as KR-I independence referendum.

Photo: Archive
Baghdad, 27 July 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. The national reconciliation, KR-I independence referendum and other political development were discussed as well as Iraq’s preparations for the forthcoming UN General Assembly.

Photo: UNAMI Archive.

Erbil, 28 July 2017 - UNAMI JAU director met today with the Tal Afar Sunni component and tribal leaders in Erbil. They discussed urgent conflict resolution needs, liberation of Tal Afar and post-liberation political makeup, rule of law and return of Sunni Turkmen and other components to Tal Afar.

Photos by UNAMI JAU.

Baghdad, 30 July 2017 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met today with the Faili Kurds delegation. The Faili Kurds delegation presented a document advocating for their just rights and representations within Iraqi institutions and international organizations. They also discussed the political developments in Iraq.

Baghdad, 31 July 2017 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met with the Ambassador of The Holy See to Iraq, H.E. Archbishop Alberto Ortega Martín.

Baghdad, 31 July 2017 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met with Sheikh Qais Khazaili, the leader of Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH). They discussed anti-Daesh liberation operations as well as political developments in Iraq.

Baghdad, 1 August 2017 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met with the Minister of Interior, Qasim al-Araji. They discussed cooperation between the United Nations in Iraq and the Ministry of Interior in diverse areas, including in rehabilitation and reconstruction in the post-ISIS phase.
Baghdad, 1 August 2017 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met with the Deputy Chairman of the Popular Mobilisation Commission, Jamal Jaafar al-Ghanimi (Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis). They discussed liberation operations as well as some political developments in Iraq.

Sulaymaniyah, 03 August 2017 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met with Kosrat Rasul Ali, first deputy secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Current political and security situation in the region were discussed, including the announced Kurdistan referendum.

Photo courtesy of PUK.

Baghdad, 03 August 2017 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident UNDP and Humanitarian Coordinator, Lise Grande, met today with the Deputy Chief of Staff to the Iraqi Prime Minister's Office, Naufel al-Hassan. They discussed reconstruction plans and economic reforms in Iraq.

Photo: Courtesy of the PM Office.

Tehran, 05 August 2017 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, attended in Tehran as a Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres the inauguration of the new Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. President Rouhani was re-elected at the election held on 20 May 2017.

Sulaymaniyah, 3 August 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met with Omer Sayid Ali, the general Coordinator of the Change Movement (Gorran). They discussed the political situation in the Kurdistan region and Iraq in general as well as the announced Kurdistan referendum.

Photo: Courtesy of the Change Movement.

Baghdad, 03 August 2017 – At the request of the Turkmen Higher Coordination Council, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Ján Kubiš, received today the delegation of the Council. The political developments in the country, including the implications of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq referendum notably in disputed territories and challenges that Turkmen are facing were discussed. SRSG assured them of UNAMI's support to advocate for the rights of all Iraqi components.
Baghdad, 8 August 2017 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Ján Kubiš, met with the Deputy Speaker and newly elected chairman of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), Sheikh Humam Hamoudi. They discussed political developments, Council of Representatives (CoR) work including the electoral legislation, as well as national reconciliation process. SRSG Kubiš pledged UN support in these matters and Chairman Hamoudi assured of ISCI's continued cooperation with UNAMI.

Photo: Courtesy of Office of Sheikh Humam Hamoudi

Baghdad, 8 August 2017 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Ján Kubiš, met today with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Ibrahim al-Ja'afari. They discussed political developments in Iraq. Also, SRSG informed the Minister of the 1 year extension of UNAMI mandate.

Geneva, 09 August 2017 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Lise Grande met today with the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations in Geneva, Ambassador Moayd Salih. They discussed the role of United Nations in the facilitation of the reconstruction of the newly liberated areas and return of the displaced people to Mosul.

Photo courtesy of the Permanent Mission of Iraq.

Baghdad, 13 August 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Ján Kubiš, met with the Minister of Defence of Iraq, Mr. Irfan Hayali. They discussed the Iraqi Security Forces successes in the fight against Daesh. The SRSG reiterated the UN’s readiness to support Iraq in its efforts to liberate the remaining areas from the Daesh occupation as well as assist in the process for the safe and voluntary return of IDPs and praised the effective work of the Ministry of Defence on the file of Kuwaiti Missing Persons and Property.

Photo: Courtesy of Ministry of Defence

Baghdad, 14 August 2017 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Ján Kubiš, met today with the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, H.E. Salim Al-Jubouri. They discussed the current political situation in the country, particularly the Baghdad-Erbil relations and the announced Kurdistan referendum as well as the preparations for the Parliamentary and Provincial Elections in 2018.
Baghdad, 16 August 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met in Baghdad with the delegation of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq led by former Deputy Prime Minister and KDP Politburo member Rowsch Shaways. They discussed the current political situation in Iraq, Baghdad-Erbil relations and the announced Kurdistan Referendum.

Baghdad, 16 August 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, met with Mr. Mahdi Al-Alaq, the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers. They discussed the current political situation in Iraq and the region, as well as the announced referendum in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Baghdad, 20 August 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ján Kubiš, received today a delegation of Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) members headed by the Deputy Head of Bloc, Mr. Shakhawan Abdulla. The current political situation, Baghdad-Erbil relations and the announced Kurdistan referendum are some of the topics discussed. Photo: Courtesy of KDP

Baghdad, 21 August 2017 – The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Lise Grande met today with the Minister of Displacement and Migration of Iraq, Dr. Jassem Mohammed Al-Jaaf. They discussed the humanitarian situation in the country including the preparations of the Ministry and of the United Nations for the reception and relief of the displaced persons from Tal Afar, as well as the return of displaced persons to the Nineveh plain and western Mosul. Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Displacement and Migration.

Kirkuk, 20 August 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, visited Kirkuk today where he met with the Kirkuk Governor, Mr. Najim al-Din Karim. They discussed the current political situation in the country and in the Governorate, including the announced Kurdistan referendum.

Kirkuk, 20 August 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Iraq, Ján Kubiš, visited Kirkuk today where he met with the Kirkuk Governor, Mr. Najim al-Din Karim. They discussed the current political situation in Iraq and the region, as well as the announced referendum in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Photo: Courtesy of Embassy of Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Baghdad, 24 August 2017  - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met with Ammar al-Hakim, Chairman of the Iraqi National Alliance and leader of the National Wisdom Party. Current political situation in the country, elections, national settlement and the KR-I referendum were among the topics discussed.

Baghdad, 24 August 2017  - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, met with the Prime Minister of Iraq, H.E. Dr. Haider Al-Abadi. During the meeting they discussed the latest political and security developments in the country, national settlement, as well as the Kurdistan Region of Iraq referendum.

Baghdad, 22 August 2017  – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. György Busztin attended a commemoration of the 8th anniversary of the 2009 bombing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). In his speech DSRSG Busztin expressed the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq’s condolences and reminded that the terror attack that took the lives of scores of Iraq’s MoFA personnel came six years after the attack on the United Nations offices in Baghdad, claiming the lives of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Mr. Sérgio Vieira de Mello and 21 UN colleagues - a bond between Iraq and the UN sealed with the ultimate sacrifice.

Photos courtesy of MoFA.
UNAMI and UN-WOMEN organize consultative meetings on women participation in national reconciliation

Baghdad, 11 July 2017 - UNAMI and UN-WOMEN jointly organized two consultative meetings with civil society organizations and women leaders engaged in political processes from Kirkuk and Hawija on Sunday, 09 July 2017.

Participants represented a cross-spectrum of components. The consultations aimed to identify the current challenges hindering women's participation and representation in the national reconciliation processes, as well as to enhance their participation. The discussions also focused on women political representation in decision-making and the upcoming elections, as well as ways to strengthen the capacity of women to advance peace and security for the stability of Iraq.

In her opening remarks, UNAMI Gender Advisor Mmabatharo Nono Dihemo, underscored the significance of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2299 of 2016, which mandates UNAMI to advise, support and assist the government of Iraq, in advancing an inclusive, political dialogue and national reconciliation.

“The resolution underscores the need for all Iraqis to participate in the political process and in inclusive political dialogues, including the equal participation of women,” she highlighted.

Ms. Dihemo noted that women have a fundamental role to play in fostering peace and re-establishing the social fabric post-ISIL in Iraq. “The role of women is vital in rebuilding trust among communities,” she added. She also noted that women are best placed to bridge differences and create building blocks of reconciliation, and this should be promoted through inclusive leadership. He assured participants that their views should be central to the decision-making processes.

In his opening remarks, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (DSRSG), Mr. György Busztin, underscored that Mosul’s liberation is a landmark achievement for Iraq and the wider region. He noted that “The liberation of Mosul is a rare moment to strengthen national unity and restore the social fabric as well as an opportunity to facilitate the return of the displaced people, stabilization and forge national reconciliation”.

DSRSG Busztin emphasized that “ISIL’s ultimate defeat and eradication of its toxic ideology can only be secured through a long-term reconciliation process that improves governance, provides better services, restores security and installs appropriate security structures that ensure justice and accountability”. He assured participants that the UNAMI leadership was actively engaged with Iraqi senior political leaders and is continuously advocating for participation and representation of women in reconciliation and dialogue efforts to ensure that the voices of women are heard and taken into account.

Taking into consideration that women and girls continue to bear a terrible and disproportionate burden from the effects of conflict with ISIL, UNAMI, in collaboration with UN Women – our partners nationally and globally in leading the Women, Peace and Security agenda – has commenced a series of consultations with Iraqi women leaders. “Their views should be central to all peace-building, justice-seeking, stabilization, reconstruction and reconciliation efforts”, said DSRSG Busztin.

Women’s participation in Iraq’s National Reconciliation process paramount

Baghdad, 21 July 2017 – The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), in collaboration with UN Women and the Government of Iraq National Reconciliation Committee, Office of the Prime Minister’s Women and Gender Affairs Department, jointly organized a consultative meeting with senior women leaders, former ministers, former members of parliament and former advisors to discuss the participation of women in Iraq’s National Reconciliation process.

The consultative forum, held in Baghdad on 18 July 2017, aimed to identify the current challenges that hinder women’s participation and representation in national reconciliation and decision making processes, as well as explored possible solutions to address these challenges.
Women’s participation in Iraq’s National Reconciliation process paramount (continued)

In her opening remarks, UN Women Representative in Iraq, Ms. Dina Zorba, highlighted the importance of an inclusive process for a sustainable peace where evidence from around the globe proves that women’s substantive involvement in peace processes lead to a long lasting one. “It is a priority to ensure that Iraqi women participate in all decision-making processes at all levels”, she said.

Participants at the meeting highlighted the importance of engaging with senior political leaders to ensure that women were represented fairly in all reconciliation and decision-making processes. Mr. Ali Abass, representative of the Head of the National Reconciliation Committee, Office of the Prime Minister, noted that the leadership in the Committee is very keen to engage women in national reconciliation process at all levels.

Mr. Abass further added that the representation of women at executive and legislative levels, in the social and political sphere is also important noting that “the National Reconciliation Committee, with the support of UNAMI, is working together to ensure inclusive participation and representation of all Iraqi components including women, youth and civil society organizations in reconciliation and the National Settlement Initiative”. He also informed that the National Reconciliation Committee is part of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 cross sectoral taskforce, with the mandate to implement the Iraqi National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325. He also advised that the Prime Minister has directed the Committee to receive the survivors who have escaped from ISIL during the military operations in Mosul. The Committee coordinated with international NGOs and civil society organizations to ensure the provision of services to these survivors.

During discussions at the meeting, participants called for smooth transition justice post-ISIL period and accountability against those who have committed crimes against women including sexual violence in conflict. They also noted that amending the Political Parties law to ensure representation of women in parties’ leadership was one of the main recommendations. “It is important to support and empower independent women in the political process to be represented in decision-making positions”, stressed participants.

UNAMI and UN Women, in collaboration with the National Reconciliation Committee, will continue engaging with civil society organizations, women activists and women leaders in all Governorates, as well as in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, on women participation and representation in national reconciliation and national dialogue. Other meetings will be organized in different governorates including the liberated areas.

Promoting a culture of tolerance and coexistence is supreme

Erbil, 01 August 2017 - An Academic Course on Reconciliation and Peace Skills was inaugurated today in Erbil for deans and representatives of the Universities of Baghdad, Duhok, Karbala, Kufa, Mosul, and Tikrit. Supported by UNDP’s Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) with generous funding from the Government of Germany, the project will enhance the skills of more than 25 academics in peace education, reconciliation and conflict resolution as well as promote a Peace Education Consortium amongst Iraqi Universities. The course includes sharing experiences and best practices with representatives from international universities, such as New York University, Utrecht University and Eastern Mennonite-Centre for Justice and Peacebuilding.

"After liberation from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), recon-
Baghdad, 04 August 2017 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Implementation and Follow Up National Reconciliation Committee (IFNRC) of the Office of Iraq’s Prime Minister signed, in Baghdad, a flagship partnership agreement to promote civic and community-based reconciliation in Iraq.

Through the partnership, UNDP will promote and support local peace committees and will help communities to collect information on atrocities and violations committed against citizens during the conflict.

President of IFNRC, Dr. Mohammed Salman Al-Saadi, said: “After the defeat of Daesh, national reconciliation has shifted to the top of the government agenda, particularly the community reconciliation. This partnership with UNDP will make a real difference where it matters most: in the lives of Iraqi citizens across the length and breadth of this country.”

UNDP Resident Representative for Iraq, Ms. Lise Grande, said: “Reconciliation is one of the highest priorities in the country. UNDP promises to do its very best to support the Government and Iraqi people as they work together to rebuild their communities after the terrible experience of the conflict.”

Ms. Grande added: “UNDP is already helping to physically rebuild liberated cities and districts. The aim of this new partnership is to focus on reconciliation to ensure that peace lasts.”

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and UNDP sign a US$2.8 million funding agreement to promote reconciliation at the community level

Baghdad, 15 August 2017 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the German Embassy in Baghdad signed a cooperation agreement to support civic and community-based reconciliation across Iraq.

Under the leadership of the Implementation and Follow Up National Reconciliation Committee (IFNRC) of the Office of Iraq’s Prime Minister, UNDP has recently launched a major project to support local peace committees and help communities collect information on atrocities and violations committed against citizens during the conflict.

The Ambassador of Germany to Iraq, Dr. Cyrill Nunn, said: “Reconciliation on a community level is key to a peaceful future of Iraq. As part of Germany’s commitment to the work of UNDP in Iraq, we are very pleased to support this project which will hopefully contribute to building trust between Iraqi citizens and to a more peaceful and resilient Iraq.”

UNDP Resident Representative for Iraq, Ms. Lise Grande, said: “Reconciliation is the highest priority in the country. Nothing is more important now right after the liberation of Mosul than helping communities find ways to live together in peace after the terrible years of conflict. Germany’s generous contribution to reconciliation comes at just the right time.”

DSRSG Busztin: “Engaging with the young generation of Iraqis across sectarian, ethnic, and other divides is crucial to achieve national reconciliation”

Baghdad, 27 August 2017 – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Gyorgy Busztin, presented today the final recommendations of the “Iraq: Youth and Coexistence” Youth Forums on national reconciliation, which were held earlier this year all around Iraq, to the Prime Minister’s Advisor Mohammed Salman. Representatives of the youth who participated at the forums were also present at the meeting.

DSRSG Busztin emphasized the importance of implementing the recommendations, which represent the voice of civil society, especially Iraqi youth and the aspirations of different layers of Iraqi society for the post-Daesh phase. He also stressed that engaging with the young generation of Iraqis across sectarian, ethnic, and other divides is crucial to achieve national reconciliation and their voices need to be heard and taken into consideration in political deliberations on the future of the country.

The UNAMI Youth forums, organized in cooperation with Iraqi al-Amal Association and the National Reconciliation Commission, were concluded with a national conference held in Baghdad in May 2017 where all the recommendations presented during the seven forums were consolidated.

DSRSG Busztin expressed the readiness of UNAMI to continue its engagement with youth to encourage them to actively contribute to Iraq’s better future.
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Security

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The United Nations condemns the attack at Kilo 60 in Anbar

Baghdad, 3 July 2017 – The United Nations condemns unequivocally the attack yesterday by a suicide bomber at the Kilo 60 transit site, west of Ramadi, where 14 people were reportedly killed and 33 injured most of whom were women and children.

“This is terrible,” said Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Lise Grande. “The people who were attacked had fled to Kilo 60 for their safety. Many have travelled huge distances seeking help. We express our deep condolences to the families of the victims.” In recent weeks, the number of civilians fleeing ISIL-controlled areas in western Anbar has increased significantly. As many as 900 people arrived at the Al-Nadhira checkpoint between 25 and 28 June. The emergency site at Kilo 60 has reached nearly full capacity.

“We know that fighting is likely to intensify in these areas in the weeks ahead and we worry deeply that civilians will be at extreme risk,” said Ms. Grande. “The battle for Mosul may be nearing its end, but fighting in other locations continues. Everywhere there is fighting, civilians are in danger. Everything must be done by the parties to the conflict to ensure that people are safe—everything.”
The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq is 42 per cent funded, well below what is required to support people fleeing conflict and violence, many of whom are women and children.

Security Council Press statement on terrorist attack against the Embassy of Iraq in Kabul

New York, 31 July 2017 - The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attack against the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Kabul, Afghanistan, on 31 July, 2017, which resulted in the death of two Afghan civilian employees inside the Embassy and the injury of a police officer, for which local affiliates of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da’esh) have claimed responsibility.

The members of the Security Council expressed their deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government of Iraq and the Government of Afghanistan. They wished a speedy recovery to those injured (not including police) and expressed their deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government of Iraq and the Government of Afghanistan. They wished a speedy recovery to those injured (not including police) and urged all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with the relevant Governments and authorities in this regard.

The members of the Security Council reaffirmed that terrorism in all forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifyable, regardless of their motivation, whoever, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

UN casualty figures for Iraq for the month of July 2017

Baghdad, 01 August 2017 – A total of 241 Iraqi civilians were killed and another 277 injured in acts of terrorism, violence and armed conflict in Iraq in July 2017*, according to casualty figures recorded by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The number of civilians killed in July (not including police) was 239, while the number of injured (not including police) was 273.

Of those figures, Ninewa was the worst affected Governorate, with 233 civilian casualties (121 killed, 112 injured). Baghdad Governorate followed with 38 killed and 95 injured, and Anbar had 33 killed and 49 injured.

According to information obtained by UNAMI from the Health Directorate in Anbar, the Governorate suffered a total of 82 civilian casualties (33 killed and 49 injured). Figures are updated until 31 July, inclusive.

The United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, condemned the terrorist Daesh’s actions which caused enormous suffering to civilians by using them as human shields up to the final moments before the group was crushed in Mosul and victory declared by the Government of Iraq on 10 July.

Mr. Kubiš renewed the call for protection of civilians in conflict as Iraqi forces prepare their campaign to liberate the remaining parts of the country from the scourge of Daesh.

“As we commend the Iraqi forces’ humanitarian concept of operations that has put civilian protection and assistance to IDPs at the center of the battle plan for Mosul, it is imperative that the protection of civilians continues to be the top priority in the conduct of military operations going forward.”

*CAVEATS: In general, UNAMI has noted the ongoing efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to fully investigate this terrorist attack and underlined the need to bring the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors to justice, and urged all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with the relevant Governments and authorities in this regard.

UNAMI data, however, is subject to inherent limitations. For example, UNAMI has been hindered in effectively verifying casualties in conflict areas. Figures for casualties from Anbar Governorate are provided by the Health Directorate and are noted in the July casualty report. Casualty figures obtained from the Anbar Health Directorate might not fully reflect the real number of casualties in those areas due to the increased volatility of the situation on the ground and the disruption of services. In some cases, UNAMI could only partially verify certain incidents. UNAMI has also received, without being able to verify, reports of large numbers of casualties along with unknown numbers of persons who have died from secondary effects of violence after having fled their homes due to exposure to the elements, lack of water, food, medicines and health care. Since the start of the military operations to retake Mosul and other areas in Ninewa, UNAMI has received several reports of incidents involving civilian casualties, which at times it has been unable to verify. For these reasons, the figures reported have to be considered as the absolute minimum.
Casualty figures for the month of August 2017

Baghdad, 01 September 2017 – A total of 125 Iraqi civilians were killed and another 188 injured in acts of terrorism, violence and armed conflict in Iraq in August 2017, according to casualty figures recorded by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The number of civilians killed in August (not including police) was 116, while the number of injured (not including police) was 181. Of those figures, Baghdad was the worst affected Governorate, with 180 civilian casualties (45 killed, 135 injured). Ninewa Governorate followed with 36 killed and 18 injured, and Salahadin had 4 killed and 24 injured. UNAMI has not been able to obtain the civilian casualty figures from the Health Directorate in Anbar.

The United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, condemned the targeting of civilians by the Daesh terrorists. “Daesh terrorists have shown absolute disregard for human life. Shamelessly, the terrorists have indiscriminately targeted civilians, most recently in Baghdad earlier this week, to avenge their losses on the battlefield as they lost control of Tal Afar. However, the patience and resilience of the Iraqi people have defeated the terrorists’ aim in breaking their unity.”

*CAVEATS: In general, UNAMI has been hindered in effectively verifying casualties in conflict areas; in some cases, UNAMI could only partially verify certain incidents. UNAMI has also received, without being able to verify, reports of large numbers of casualties along with unknown numbers of persons who have died from secondary effects of violence after having fled their homes due to exposure to the elements, lack of water, food, medicines and health care. Since the start of the military operations to retake Mosul and other areas in Ninewa, UNAMI has received several reports of incidents involving civilian casualties, which at times it has been unable to verify. For these reasons, the figures reported have to be considered as the absolute minimum. UNAMI has not been able to obtain the civilian casualty figures from the Anbar Health Department for this month.

Gender

UN Women meets with women leaders and civil society organizations in Baghdad

Baghdad, 2 August 2017 - UN Women Office in Iraq held a consultation meeting with women leaders and civil society organizations on August 2, 2017. The meeting was chaired by UN Women Regional Director for Arab States, Mr. Mohammad Naciri, who is currently visiting Iraq. The consultation meeting was an opportunity to discuss the current challenges facing women and girls in Iraq to better inform the development of the ‘UN Women Iraq Strategic Plan’. The UN Women Representative in Iraq, Ms. Dina Zorba, reiterated the important role of civil society organizations in voicing the challenges facing women, particularly the most vulnerable groups.

“UN Women is committed to supporting women's rights in Iraq and will continue to work on the ground for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; empowerment of women; and achievement of gender equality,” said Naciri in his opening statement, highlighting the importance of partnering with civil society organizations to accomplish these goals.

Representatives of 14 organizations took part in the consultation and shared their vision of priorities to be addressed for enhancing gender equality and support the fulfillment of women’s rights.

During the meeting participants highlighted the important role UN Women has played in empowering women through capacity building and strategic support to women's organizations to enhance women's political participation and leadership, support women economic empowerment, address all forms of violence against women and promote women's rights and sustainable peace in Iraq. UN Women, on the other hand, reassured participants that the support to civil society will continue to remain at the core of the work the organization undertakes.
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Human rights

Iraq: UN warns against ‘collective punishment’ of population with alleged ISIL ties

Geneva, 30 June 2017 – The United Nations human rights office has expressed concern over forced evictions of people alleged to have ties with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da‘esh) terrorist group, noting that such actions may amount to collective punishment that is in clear contradiction of the Iraqi Constitution as well as human rights and humanitarian law.

“As Mosul is increasingly liberated from ISIL, we are seeing an alarming rise in threats, specifically of forced evictions, against those suspected of being ISIL members or whose relatives are alleged to be involved with ISIL – threats that have also been made in other areas,” said Rupert Colville, spokesperson for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), at today’s press briefing in Geneva.

“Fighting in Mosul is becoming ever more intense and concentrated as Iraqi national security forces, supported by the international coalition, push to retake the whole of the city from ISIL. “We are extremely concerned at the situation of civilians in Mosul,” Mr. Colville said, reminding all parties to the conflict of their obligation to distinguish between civilians and combatants in armed conflict.

He said that OHCHR received reports of “night letters” left at families’ houses or distributed in neighbourhoods, including in Sharqat in Salahadin Governorate, Al Heet City in Al Anbar and Al-Qayyarah in Nineawa, as well as in Mosul City.

These letters typically warn people to leave at a particular date or face forced expulsion. Many of these threats are the result of tribal agreements that explicitly demand that families of ISIL-affiliated members be excluded from the area.

“People are at real risk of forced eviction from their homes and losing access to basic necessities, including adequate housing, food, access to health services and education,” Mr. Colville said, urging the Iraqi Government to take action to halt such imminent evictions or any type of collective punishment.

“Illegal forced evictions are acts of vengeance that are detrimental to national reconciliation and social cohesion,” he added.

On Thursday, Peter Hawkins, the representative of the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in Iraq, called for the protection of children trapped in the Old City neighbourhood of western Mosul.

“Children are facing multiple threats to their lives. Those stranded in the fighting are hiding in their basements, fearful of the next onslaught. Those who try to flee, risk being shot or wounded,” he said in a statement.

“The plight of these children and their survival must remain a top priority now and in the weeks and months to come,” he added.

By United Nations News Center

Accountability and reconciliation key to heal Iraq’s ISIL wounds - Zeid

Geneva, 11 July 2017 – The retaking of Mosul from ISIL by Iraqi Government forces, supported by their International Coalition partners, marks a significant turning point in the conflict, but Iraq faces a series of human rights challenges which, if left unaddressed, are likely to spark further violence and civilian suffering, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra‘ad Al Hussein has warned.

“The women, children and men of Mosul have lived through hell on earth, enduring a level of depravity and cruelty that is almost beyond words,” said Zeid. “ISIL forced tens of thousands of people from their homes in and around the city and used them as human shields, a war crime under international humanitarian law and a violation of the most basic standards of human dignity and morality,” he said.

“ISIL’s cruel grip on Mosul has been broken, and we should recognise the sacrifices by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) as they battled to reclaim the city and surrounding areas, suffering losses among serving and former members,” the High Commissioner said. “But ISIL’s fighters can still terrorize and kill through bombings and abductions, and people are still being subjected to daily horrors and suffering in remaining ISIL strongholds, such as Tal Afar and Hawijah.”

With Mosul now reclaimed, the extent of ISIL’s violations and abuses has become even more evident. Information gathered by the UN Human Rights Office strongly suggests that international crimes may have been perpetrated by ISIL during the three years that the group was in control not only of Mosul but of large areas of Iraq.

“ISIL’s serious and systematic violations of international humanitarian law and gross abuses and violations of human rights, including the sexual slavery of women and girls, committed over these past three years have left deep scars on Iraqi society,” Zeid said. This includes the abduction of 1,636 women and girls, and 1,733 men and boys from the Yazidi community who remain unaccounted for.

Zeid noted that there have also been allegations of human rights violations and abuses by the ISF and associated forces, as well as by individuals taking revenge against captured ISIL fighters or people accused of supporting them.

“Horrible though the crimes of ISIL are, there is no place for vengeance. It is therefore disturbing to hear reports that threats of collective punishment, including illegal forced evictions, have been made against families whose relatives are suspected of being affiliated to ISIL. Such punishments are an act of vengeance that works against national reconciliation and social cohesion,” Zeid said.

As soon as practicable after re-taking of areas from ISIL, the Iraqi Government should ensure that responsibility for law and order is restored to civilian control and that the human rights and basic humanitarian needs of civilians in those areas are met.

“The most fitting response, after the horrors inflicted on countless individuals and communities across northern Iraq by ISIL, the enormous loss of civilian life, and the destruction of livelihoods, homes and infrastructure - not least the many irreplaceable cultural and religious monuments or places of cultural significance - is to step up ef-
Accountability and reconciliation key to heal Iraq’s ISIL wounds - Zeid (continued)

forts to create an Iraq grounded in equality and the rule of law," Zeid said. The High Commissioner welcomed the fact that the judicial authorities have launched investigations into allegations of serious human rights violations committed by pro-government forces, and he called on the Government to make the findings public and ensure that perpetrators are brought before courts. Given the large-scale nature of serious crimes, Iraq should also seek legal reforms to allow domestic courts to have jurisdiction over international crimes. To this end, the UN Human Rights Office and the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) are supporting efforts to initiate a legal framework to establish a specialised court competent to try alleged perpetrators for international crimes.

“I urge the Iraqi Government to prioritise advancing accountability and also repeat my call for the Government of Iraq to become a party to the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC),” Zeid said. The High Commissioner also called for allegations of human rights violations by the Iraqi Security Forces to be fully investigated and those responsible held accountable.

“After the offensive to retake Mosul from ISIL began in October 2016, I called repeatedly on the ISF and its Coalition partners to ensure that military operations complied fully with international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, so as to avoid or, at the very least, minimize civilian casualties,” he said.

Airstrikes were a significant factor in causing civilian casualties and in the final weeks of the campaign to retake Mosul, there were reports of increased civilian deaths. These included 84 people reportedly killed when an airstrike on 31 May hit several houses in Zanjilly neighbourhood, at the time under ISIL control.

As part of efforts to break the cycle of violence, the reconstruction of communities needs to start to enable internally displaced people to return to their places of origin in dignity and security, and in full compliance with humanitarian principles. Programmes must be put in place to support victims and survivors of crimes to help them reintegrate into their families and communities; to support them in their communities needs to start to enable internally displaced people to return to their places of origin in dignity and security, and in full compliance with humanitarian principles. Programmes must be put in place to support victims and survivors of crimes to help them reintegrate into their families and communities; to support them in

SRSG Pramila Patten urges the protection of survivors of sexual violence following the liberation of Mosul from Da’esh

New York, 11 July 2017 - The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SVC) Pramila Patten today joined the international community in congratulating Iraq on the victory attained in liberating Mosul from Da’esh following a long and difficult battle.

“I urge all relevant stakeholders to ensure the return of women and girls from Da’esh captivity in safety and dignity; to welcome them back into their communities; to support them in healing and reintegrating back into the community and to address all their human rights protection needs, in particular those of children born to survivors of rape,” she added. SRSG Patten commended the efforts of religious leaders in issuing public statement including fatwas on the protection of survivors of sexual violence and urged them to facilitate targeted community dialogue to help address the specific grievances suffered by mothers and their children born of rape and to promote acceptance of these children. SRSG Patten further urged Iraqis from all walks of life to shun stigmatization.

She reiterated calls for immediate actions to hold perpetrators accountable and pledged the support of the United Nations in this regard.

SRSG Patten added that her office will follow-up on supporting the Government of Iraq including the Kurdistan Regional government to implement the Joint Communiqué on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence signed in September 2016 including through capacity-building and working closely with the designated high-level focal points on conflict-related sexual violence in Baghdad and Erbil. She hailed the commitment of the Government towards ensuring its full implementation.
Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict held in Erbil

Erbil, 20 June 2017 - Under the global theme of “Preventing Sexual Violence Crimes through Justice and Deterrence”, the Kurdistan Regional Government’s Council of Women Affairs, in collaboration with UNFPA, organized a one-day conference on 19 June, to discuss the issues before and after the conflict caused by Daesh and come up with possible recommendations. Celia Thompson (UNAMI PIO) has more in the following report.

Providing physio-social and economic support for survivors of sexual violence, and taking action to bring the perpetrators of such acts before the law, while advocating for the prevention of such abuses, was the central discussion in the one-day conference organized under the umbrella of the Kurdistan High Council of Women Affairs. In a panel comprising UNAMI, the UK Consulate, the head of board of evidence collection and investigation and a women right activist, participants examined the existing structures instituted to fight against the existential problems of gender-based violence, with emphasis on dealing with sexual violence crimes committed by Daesh since 2014.

Mrs. Pakhsan Zangana, Secretary General of the Kurdistan High Council of Women Affairs explained why the council had to revise its ten years strategy, launched in 2012: “In the content of the strategy it is clearly mentioned that the strategy can be extended, it can be revised, whenever it is required. That’s why we revised it once again and added two main components: the first one, how to deal with the sexual survivors after 2014 Daesh issue and the second one, how to empower the economic situation of the women in the Kurdistan region.”

On the issue of dealing with children born out of sexual violence cases, the task was assigned to the Ministries of Labour and Social Welfare and that of Martyrs, due to the sensitivity related to the issues.

Mrs. Zangana also spoke about the challenges that have hampered the councils work: “I can give you an example about this strategy, when we started in 2012, the happened was unexpected; Daesh (emerged), the economic situation, the IDPs, the survivors, the refugees. Yes, it did not directly affect it but it indirectly very much affected the strategy, it made it delayed and delayed until we reached here. That’s why I am telling you that I cannot tell you what will happen after a year but I can assure you that we will continue and we will have better outcomes from all the activities that we accomplish in the Kurdistan High Council”.

Following the alarming atrocities committed by Daesh, particularly on Shan- gal and Nineveh Plains, where women and girls faced grave violence and were used as a tool in the war, a commission was set up in 2014, mandated to investigate crimes committed and bring perpetrators to book. Judge Aeman Mustafa, head of board of evidence collection and investigation, explained how the commission has been going about its work: “We contact or reach the victims everywhere. They have the choice to come and visit the Commission premises themselves and begin the investigation process with them following the national law and International guarantees and standards to be met. And also, the victims have the choice to report online to our staff in order for the staff to be allocated to where they are residing to follow the investigations process in their house or in camps. We have very restricted regulations and also laws for the staff to protect the personal identities, personal affirmations of the victims and the reports, the minutes of the investigations are protected. The identity is protected and even through the process of archiving the case files, we are following a very restricted regulations for the evidences not to be shared with a third party. But of course, the next step is trial. In order to complete the justice procedures you have to have a court to try the perpetrators and provide justice to the victims. But we in Iraq we are facing or encountering a couple of challenges, which can be identified as the legal gaps within our legal systems, because we don’t have any provisions in our legal system in order to incriminate these international crimes against humanity, genocide or war crimes. So the first step for the judicial agencies or institutes or even a task for the parliament is to reform the law”.

In 2016, a joint communiqué was signed between the Government of the Republic of Iraq and the United Nations, on how to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence.

In line with that commitment, Ms. Roueida El- Hage, reading a speech on behalf of the UN, reiterated the organization’s commitments: “UNAMI has prioritized accountability to provide justice to individuals affected by human rights violations and abuses. In particular, serious crimes that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and possible, genocide. To that end, UNAMI is pursuing a strategy at the national level with a view to allowing domestic courts to have jurisdiction over international crime. This will include legal reforms to introduce definitions of international crimes and penalties into legislations and establishment of specialized court with the jurisdiction to try perpetrators on the domestic level in conformity with international criminal law principles. UN as well will like to seek assistance by international communities, all UN entities, the government to support this process through enforcing judiciary capacities by pursuing formal and restorative justice or non-formal justice mechanisms. We commend the positive steps taken by the Kurdistan regional government in designating a focal point in conflict related sexual violence, to serve as a point of contact with the UN and the international community in furthering the implementation of the joint communiqué on prevention and response to conflict related violence, signed in September 2016.”
Crimes committed by ISIL constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and may possibly amount to genocide

Baghdad, 3 August 2017 - Statement by Mr. György Busztin, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the Commemoration of attacks against Yezidi held in Baghdad on 3 August 2017.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

three years ago, on 3 August 2014, the Takfiri terrorist group ISIL swept into Sinjar, directly targeting civilians, killing and enslaving them, and triggering a massive displacement of civilians. From 4 to 8 August 2014, nearly 200,000 people fled to safe areas. Tens of thousands of others took refuge on Sinjar Mountain where they were besieged by ISIL in dire situation of critical shortage of water, food, shelter, and health services. Information at the time indicated that casualties included many children who may have died on the Mountain as a result of exposure and lack of medical treatment. Testimonies told by survivors depict a graphic picture that clearly demonstrates the widespread and systematic manner in which the Takfiri terrorist group ISIL has committed atrocities against the Yezidi and other ethnic and religious communities of Iraq.

The United Nations established through its constant monitoring that crimes committed by ISIL constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and may possibly amount to genocide. This remains to be subject to the determination of an independent and competent court.

On behalf of the United Nations Assistance Mission of Iraq, I would like to express my profound sympathy to the families of the victims, missing persons and the survivors of the tragic violence and atrocities that followed ISIL onslaught. On the humanitarian level, challenges faced are tremendous, and needs will remain high.

When remembering the horrible events three years ago, and the mass exodus they unleashed, I would like to express deep gratitude to the Kurdistan Government and the host communities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for generously hosting throughout the three-year conflict - and continuing to host, massive numbers of displaced persons, alleviating their plights and creating a safe and conducive environment for survivors and victims. This noble sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Yezidis were particularly targeted and ISIL demonstrated its intent to destroy them, in whole or in part. Sources estimated that between 2,000 and 5,500 persons from the Yezidi community have been killed by ISIL since 3 August 2014. Between 3 August 2014 and 2 July 2017, approximately 6,417 persons from the Yezidi community were abducted by ISIL. Some 3,369 individuals remain in ISIL captivity, including 1,636 women and girls and 1733 men and boys.

Women and girls under the control of ISIL, in particular women from the Yezidi and other minority communities, have been especially vulnerable to violations and abuses of international human rights law and violation of international humanitarian law.

QUOTE - I recall a Yezidi survivor’s words with much agony [I lived with my four kids in hell for a year and eight months, I was kept by ‘monsters’ underground in sewage water in Mosul for five months with no direct light, very limited food and no drinkable water. They took away my 12 years old daughter. I remember her screaming when they separated us, I remember her eyes, I wish I could see her again. They raped me constantly in front of my children, all between four and six years old. I need to believe that this will not happen again].

This survivor is the voice of every victim who lived ISIL captivity.

The United Nations remains deeply concerned about Yezidis, their situation, the fate of their missing beloved ones and the safety of thousands of those who remain in ISIL’s captivity and continue to suffer untold atrocities at the hands of the terrorist group every day.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Recovering Mosul, Iraq’s second largest city from terrorist control is an event of huge significance for Iraq and the region as it signals the irreversible defeat of ISIL terrorism. This rare moment of national unity should be secured through a long-term process that improves governance, provides better services, restores security and installs appropriate security arrangements for all communities, ensures justice and accountability, and promotes reconciliation. As part of efforts to break the cycle of violence, all IDPs should be allowed to return to their places of origin voluntarily and in dignity. No effort must be spared to provide assistance and much-needed services to the survivors of ISIL’s violence, their families and their communities.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, Iraq is facing a very challenging period ahead. Violence does not end when territories have been re-taken.

The Government of Iraq must restore the civilian administration of justice and support law enforcement and judicial authorities to properly investigate, document and -where possible- prosecute perpetrators of crimes and human rights violations and abuse according to...
Crimes committed by ISIL constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and may possibly amount to genocide (continued)

law. As part of this vital process, evidence, including some 70 mass graves discovered to date, must be preserved along with appropriate care and measures to excavate such sites and exhume and identify the mortal remains. The Government of Iraq must also ensure that its courts have the requisite jurisdiction to try individuals for international crimes that have been committed on its territory and against its people. UNAMI is currently advising on a draft law that would complement the Iraqi criminal legal framework with a view to establishing a specialized court that would try perpetrators of most serious crimes on the domestic level, but under international criminal standards. While this is pursued, we also urge the Government of Iraq to become a party to the Statute of the International Criminal Court or to refer the current situation in Iraq to the ICC by accepting the jurisdiction of the Court under article 12(3) of its Statute.

ISIL's 'genocide' against Yazidis is ongoing, UN rights panel says, calling for international action

New York, 3 August 2017 – Marking three years since the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) attacked the Yazidis in Syria, a United Nations-mandated inquiry has called for justice and rescue plans. “The Commission of Inquiry calls on the international community to recognize the crime of genocide being committed by ISIL against the Yazidis and to undertake steps to refer the situation to justice,” said the expert panel in a statement marking the third anniversary of ISIL's attack on the Yazidis. According to the Commission, in the early hours of 3 August 2014, ISIL fighters launched an attack on the Yazidis of Sinjar – a distinct religious community whose practice spans thousands of years. Over the following days, the terrorist group executed hundreds of men and took captive thousands of women and children, publicly reviling them as ‘infidels.’ In its June 2016 report, entitled They Came to Destroy: ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis the Commission found that many of the women and girls were taken to Syria where they were sold as chattel and sexually enslaved by ISIL fighters. Boys were indoctrinated, trained and used in hostilities. “ISIL committed the crime of genocide by seeking to destroy the Yazidis through killings, sexual slavery, enslavement, torture, forcible displacement, the transfer of children and measures intended to prohibit the birth of Yazidi children,” the report concluded. The genocide is on-going and remains largely unaddressed, despite the obligation of States Party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 to prevent and to punish the crime, the Commission said. The international community must also recognize ISIL is committing the crime of genocide against the Yazidis “Thousands of Yazidi men and boys remain missing and the terrorist group continues to subject some 3,000 women and girls in Syria to horrific violence including brutal daily rapes and beatings,” the expert body noted. Pointing out that some women and girls are being held in Raqqa city, the Commission revealed that as the Syrian Democratic Forces and international coalition offensive on Raqqa intensifies, reports have emerged of ISIL fighters trying to sell enslaved Yazidi women and girls before attempting to flee Syria.” The Commission recommended that all parties fighting ISIL consider plans to rescue Yazidi captives and use all possible to ensure their freedom during ongoing military operations. “The international community must also recognize ISIL is committing the crime of genocide against the Yazidis,” the statement concluded, urging action to refer the situation to justice, “including to the International Criminal Court or an ad hoc tribunal with relevant geographic and temporal jurisdiction as well as to dedicate resources to bringing cases before national courts, whether under the framework of universal jurisdiction or otherwise.” The Independent International Commission – comprised of the Chair, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Karen Koning AbuZayd and Carla Del Ponte – has been mandated by the UN Human Rights Council to investigate and record all violations of international law since March 2011 in Syria.

By United Nations News Center
Baghdad/Erbil, 03 August 2017 – As part of strengthening the capacity of Iraqi state institutions to address the issue of sexual violence in conflict, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), in collaboration with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict and with the support of UN Agencies, concluded trainings on sexual violence in conflict for government officials in Baghdad and Erbil.

In both trainings in Baghdad and Erbil, officials of the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government respectively, including the high-level focal points on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, deliberated on how to strengthen services response to address the needs of survivors of sexual violence and discussed how justice to victims could be delivered. Participants also identified solutions to address the issue of stigma towards survivors and children born of rape. Further, participants stressed the need to ensure harmonization between the elements on sexual violence within the National Action Plan on Security Council resolution 1325 and the Joint Communiqué on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence.

The capacity-building effort is part of continuing UN efforts to strengthen Iraqi institutions, encouraged in particular during the visit of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict to Iraq last February.

In his remarks at the opening of the workshops, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. György Busztin, underscored the importance of the Joint Communiqué on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence as a framework for collectively working together to identify solutions to address the challenges of sexual violence. He added that meeting these challenges would require legislative actions and engagement with religious and community leaders to encourage the acceptance of survivors and their children.

“The Iraqi government is committed to implementing the Joint Communiqué on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, particularly in the post-ISIL period”, Dr. Ibtisam Aziz, Director for the Directorate for Empowering Iraqi Women, stated during the workshop held 24–25 July in Baghdad.

Pakhshan Zangana, the Secretary-General of the High Council for Women Affairs, Kurdistan Regional Government, welcomed the support provided by UNAMI. “This training initiative is important for government and civil society to enable them acquire the necessary skills to know how to appropriately respond to sexual violence. We need to be ready to tackle the challenges ahead and support the rehabilitation of survivors”, she added. The training in Erbil took place on 30-31 July.

In addition, on 01-02 August in Erbil, UNAMI and relevant UN Agencies held a workshop whose outcome led to the establishment of the first Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements (MARA) Technical Working Group on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Iraq and the MENA Region. The Working Group has been established in accordance with Security Council resolution 1960 (2010) on Women, Peace and Security and will strengthen monitoring, reporting and analysis on sexual violence incidences countrywide. The Group will also consult with key stakeholders in assessing the prevalence of sexual violence and providing programmatic advice, training and advocacy to better tackle sexual violence.
Three years after ISIL’s attacks on Sinjar, Iraq, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, demands justice and support for the victims

New York, 3 August 2017 - Three years ago today, on 3 August 2014, fighters from the terrorist group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)/Da’esh attacked and overran the Sinjar region of Northern Iraq. The ensuing atrocities included a widespread and systematic campaign of sexual violence waged against Yazidi women and girls, as well as those belonging to other minority groups, such as the Turkmen Shia, Shabak, and Christian communities. Sunni women and girls have also been sexually assaulted and forced into marriage. The use of sexual violence as a tactic of war and terror has compelled countless civilians to flee their homes and homelands, leaving many as internally displaced persons and refugees.

“Last month, I met with a number of Yazidi refugee women and girls who have been resettled in Germany. These survivors shared harrowing accounts of sexual violence, including being sold and traded as the slaves and chattels of Da’esh”, Special Representative Patten stated. “Thousands of women and girls have been raped and abused continuously in the hands of their captors. Tragically, many Yazidi civilians remain unaccounted for to this day, with an estimated 1,500 women and girls still enslaved by Da’esh”. Special Representative Patten added that: “Those who have been released continue to suffer acute physical and psychological trauma as a result of prolonged enslavement and abuse. They require urgent medical, psychosocial and economic support.”

While the battle for Mosul may be over, the process of bringing Da’esh fighters to justice has only just begun. Three years on, not a single victim of sexual violence has had their day in court or the chance to testify against their abuser. “It is critical to break the cycle of violence and impunity by ensuring that the crimes committed by Da’esh do not go unpunished. We need a safe, credible, and survivor-centered judicial process that enjoys the full confidence of the people of Iraq and the international community, and that reaffirms the rights and dignity of the victims”, stated Patten. “In recent weeks, I have sent a team to Iraq to work with the national and regional authorities, the United Nations country presence, and frontline service-providers to advance implementation of the Joint Communiqué signed last year between the Government and my Office, including by strengthening capacity to monitor and investigate these crimes”.

Special Representative Patten further emphasized that: “Today, on the third anniversary of the Sinjar attacks, we must renew our commitment to the women and girls who have suffered some of the worst atrocities of our time. It is a solemn occasion to stand in solidarity with the survivors and to remember those we have lost. Systematic sexual violence, employed as a tool of war, terrorism, torture and genocide, is a crime against the victims and a crime against humanity. The international community is united in the goal of pursuing each and every perpetrator and holding them to account.”

UNESCO Director-General condemns the killing of Iraqi TV reporters Harb Hazaa al-Dulaimi and Soudad al-Douri

Paris, 7 August 2017 - The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, today condemned the killing of two Iraqi journalists, reporter Harb Hazaa al-Dulaimi and cameraman Soudad al-Douri, whose bodies were found in the village of Imam Gharbi south of Mosul on 30 July.

“I condemn the killing of Harb Hazaa al-Dulaimi and Soudad al-Douri,” said the Director-General. “Their death is a terrible reminder of the unacceptable toll paid by courageous media workers dedicated to keeping us informed. Targeting of journalists in conflict situations is an intolerable war crime, recognized as such by the Geneva Conventions.”

Both men were reportedly killed on 7 July while covering fighting for Iraqi TV channel Hona Salaheddin. The Director-General of UNESCO issues statements on the killing of media workers in line with Resolution 29 adopted by UNESCO Member States at the Organization’s General Conference of 1997, entitled “Condemnation of Violence against Journalists.” These statements are posted on a dedicated webpage, UNESCO condemns the killing of journalists - http://bit.ly/2uhFvCI
Universal Periodic Reports training for Iraqi and Kurdistan Region Ministerial Committees on implementation of HR action plans

Erbil, 14 August 2017 – A five-day training session for Iraqi and Kurdistan Region’s Ministerial Committees on following up the implementation of the Universal Periodic Reports (UPR) action plans was launched in Erbil. The training session is part of the program of technical support provided by the Human Rights Office (HRO) of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the Norwegian People Aid (NPA) and Public Aid Organization (PAO) to the Iraqi and Kurdistan Region institutions.

The 13-17 August training sessions, entitled “United Nations Conventional and Non-Conventional Mechanisms of protection–UPR as an example”, focus on the implementation of the national and regional UPR action plans pursuant to recommendations that Iraq endorsed in the second cycle of UPR in November 2014. Participants, including experts of relevant ministerial institutions, will explore best practices on following on the implementation of the UPR action plans at the federal and regional levels, preparation of national reports on the progress achieved, and engagement of stakeholders in the process, ahead of the third cycle of UPR for Iraq expected in 2019.

The 29 participants – 21 men and eight women - included 17 from the Iraqi Ministerial Committee, six from the Kurdistan Region’s High Committee to Follow-up and Respond to International Reports, two from the Independent Board of Human Rights in Kurdistan Region and four representatives of non-governmental organizations from different parts of Iraq.

At the opening session, Mr. Hussein Al-Zuheri, Deputy Minister of Justice in the Federal Government of Iraq, stressed the importance of the training and the cooperation between the federal and regional entities working on the follow-up to the implementation of UPR recommendations. Mr. Dindar Zebari, Head of the High Committee to Follow-up and Respond to International Reports, stressed the importance of coordination with all relevant partners to achieve better results.

Mr. Zito Siany, of the UNAMI HRO, focused on the importance of strengthening the relationships among the United Nations, National Human Rights Institutions, the Government and Civil Society Organizations in engaging in the process of UPR, and outlined the types of technical support HRO has been providing to the relevant Iraqi institutions by organizing specialized training courses, facilitating discussions on best practices at the federal and regional levels.

Training for representatives of civil society organizations, human rights activists and journalists on human rights topics

Baghdad, 17 August 2017 - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance for Iraq (UNAMI) organized a two-day training on 16-17 August 2017 for representatives of civil society organizations, human rights activists and journalists where eight sessions on human rights topics were presented and discussed. Participants found the training interesting and informative as it widened their knowledge on methods of interactions with national and international human rights mechanisms and strengthened their skills on monitoring and reporting on human rights violations and abuses.
**Justice essential to help Iraqi victims of ISIL’s sexual violence rebuild lives – UN report**

**Geneva, 22 August 2017** - The Iraqi Government needs to ensure that the thousands of women and girls who survived rape and other forms of sexual violence by ISIL fighters receive care, protection and justice, and that children born as a result of such violence do not face a life of discrimination and abuse, a UN report published today says.

“Women and girls under the control of ISIL, in particular women from the Yezidi and other minority communities, have been especially vulnerable to abuses of human rights and violation of international humanitarian law,” the report by the UN Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI) and the UN Human Rights Office says. Victims have been subjected to rape and sexual assault, forced displacement, abduction, deprivation of liberty, slavery, forced religious conversion, and cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment.

“The physical, mental, and emotional injuries inflicted by ISIL are almost beyond comprehension. If victims are to rebuild their lives, and indeed those of their children, they need justice and they need redress,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein.

The Iraqi Government has the obligation, under domestic law and international human rights law, to ensure all victims have access to justice and reparations. This obligation includes ensuring accountability of the alleged perpetrators through trials before independent and impartial tribunals, conducted in a gender-sensitive manner so as not to perpetuate victims’ suffering.

The report notes that the Iraqi Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government have taken some positive steps to promote women and children’s rights and to address the needs of those who have suffered abuses at the hands of ISIL. However, the criminal justice system largely fails to ensure the appropriate protection of victims. Significant legislative and institutional changes are needed, the report says, to facilitate access to justice and to ensure the care and protection of victims in such proceedings.

“Steps must also be taken to ensure the active participation and engagement of women and girls in ending conflict, in building peace for the future, and supporting and facilitating their full and equal participation in the public, political and economic life in a post-ISIL Iraq,” said the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq Ján Kubis.

Despite government efforts to alleviate the suffering of victims and provide services, huge challenges remain. The report stresses the need for women and girls to have access to appropriate medical, psychosocial, financial, livelihood and other means of support.

The report also voices serious concern with regard to tribal agreements reached by representatives of tribes in a number of governorates, which include provisions allowing for forced evictions of families connected to ISIL and their property transferred to victims as reparation.

The situation of hundreds of children born to women in ISIL-controlled areas without birth certificates or whose ISIL-issued documents are not accepted by the Government of Iraq or the Kurdistan Regional Government is also deeply troubling. Birth registration requires the parents to present proof of marital status and two witnesses must confirm the circumstances of the child’s birth – exceedingly difficult in the case of children whose parents may be dead or missing; where the father’s identity is not known; where a child has been abandoned due to stigma or for those who live in IDP camps where no civil status offices or courts operate.

“Children who were born in ISIL-controlled areas have the same legal rights as any other Iraqi citizen and the Government must ensure they are protected from marginalisation and abuse, neither exposed to discrimination through references on their birth certificate that they were born out of wedlock or have a father linked to ISIL, nor left unregistered and at risk of statelessness, exploitation and trafficking,” the High Commissioner stressed.

The report makes a number of recommendations, including regarding access to justice; provision of support and care for victims; information and counselling services to reunite separated families, and the importance of birth registration.

**Discussions on a draft law to provide jurisdiction for Iraqi courts over international crimes committed in Iraq held in Erbil**

**Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 24 August 2017** - The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) led a meeting today of the Task Force on Justice and Accountability in Iraq. The legal experts of the Task Force held detailed discussions on a draft law to provide jurisdiction for Iraqi courts over international crimes committed in Iraq, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.
IDPs camps management capacity building organized by UNHCR

Erbil, 17 July 2017 - In Iraq there are more than 90 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps. As it is very important to be able to gather the same information from all the camps on a regular period, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) cluster has developed a common approach to collect the information, through the Information Management Unit of the cluster.

UNHCR developed a tool with the camp managers and with all the clusters and partners to be able to collect the main information needed.

The role of camp managers is to know the situation in their respective camps. They have the responsibilities to record who is coming and who is leaving, as well as how many shelters could be used by new families. But also to be able to know who is in charge of sectoral responses, such as providing water, sanitation campaigns, health care, etc. They have the responsibility to involve the community by empowering them in decision process. With this management mechanism, they should better understand the situation in the camp, and support decision to improve living conditions for displaced population. On UNHCR side, the development of this tool is to ensure that all camps have the same minimum approach, and to encourage them to provide information. This Formal Site Monitoring tool (FSMT) is aiming to be a global tool for all the countries having CCCM Cluster.

In term of capacity building, UNHCR is currently providing a technical training to explain roles and responsibility of each member of camp management team, but also benefit for the manager of using this tool to be able to take decision based on fact. From it, the cluster is supporting the camp managers by providing them with analysis on gaps, needs, and partners presence, and also providing them with camp profiles for internal use or for communication. By being more involved in the data collection process, they are more aware of some issues, and with analysis, they are more concrete fact to find the right solution. This tool is using the latest technology; however, it is user friendly and they can report using smartphone and/or computers. The training is also there to show to all camp managers that they are part of a large group in the country and that they are not alone. The cluster is there to support them, as they are part of a camp network.

France supports WFP Cash assistance programme for displaced Iraqis

Baghdad, 17 July 2017 – The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a contribution of €3.2 million (US$3.5) from the Government of France today for its cash assistance programme supporting families affected by conflict in Iraq.

“This new French contribution is in response to the urgent need for food assistance among Iraqi families who have recently been displaced by ongoing conflict,” said Bruno Aubert, Ambassador of France to Iraq. “The Government of France is keen to support people in need who are living in harsh conditions.”

WFP will use this contribution to support more than 200,000 displaced Iraqis through SCOPE, WFP’s electronic platform for humanitarian assistance. Each family member will receive around €15 per month (US$17) to buy the food of their choice and other basic supplies from local shops.

“This generous contribution from France will help put food on the tables of thousands of Iraqi families whose lives have been turned upside down due to violent conflict,” said Sally Haydock, WFP’s Representative in Iraq. “Cash-based assistance empowers people and stimulates economic activity. Wherever possible, WFP aims to support people in need while boosting the Iraqi economy.”

Since 2014, France has supported WFP in Iraq with €12 million (US$13.7), contributing to a significant increase in food assistance for the most vulnerable Iraqis.
50,000 Syrians and Iraqis visited UN Migration Agency, Germany's Family Assistance Programme offices in last 12 months

Iraq, 19 July 2017 - Since July 2016, IOM, the UN Migration Agency, has assisted in person over 50,000 vulnerable migrants with family reunifications in Germany through its Family Assistance Programme (FAP).

The aim of FAP, which was initiated and funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, is to support family reunification applicants in Iraq, Turkey and Lebanon during the visa application process for Germany. At their offices, IOM helps them to correctly complete the forms and prepare their documents in order to reunite with close family members already granted asylum in Germany.

The FAP project also works to dissuade refugee families from seeking unsafe, irregular migration channels; to support German consular staff; and to help refugees integrate into German society successfully.

Over half a million Syrians and Iraqis have registered for asylum in Germany since 2015 and approximately 355,000 have been granted refugee status, according to the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Most of them have arrived taking a perilous boat journey and left behind their family members. As per German laws, those granted refugee status qualify for family reunification.

Eighteen-year-old Abdulrahman and his younger siblings were five of those supported through FAP. In 2015, Abdulrahman’s father, Nasser, was one of the million migrants and refugees who crossed into Europe in search of a safe life for his family.

Knowing the risks of the journey, Nasser made the difficult decision to travel ahead of his children. Alone in Turkey, young Abdulrahman acted as a father-figure to his younger siblings, living in a one bedroom apartment off money sent back by their father. After Nasser was granted refugee status in Germany, IOM’s FAP programme expedited the process to reunite the children with their parent.

“There are no words to express what this means to have my family in a safe country, surrounded by such generous people,” said Nasser. “My children have lived through tragedy. They lost their good memories. Now, kind German people are helping us to build new, happy memories.”

The family reunification process starts with an online appointment to a FAP centre, where IOM staff ensures the completeness of their documents while assisting them in preparing their application. In Lebanon and Turkey, IOM also supports the Consulates by collecting visa applications on their behalf.

For children waiting with their parents, a playroom with toys, books and colouring pencil sets is available. Children are also taught basic German language skills to prepare them for their new lives before travel.

In addition to the 50,000 cases processed by IOM’s FAP offices in Lebanon, Turkey and Erbil, these offices have provided remote assistance to an estimated 162,000 Syrian and Iraqis at an average of 1,400 requests per month.

The Family Assistance Programme is part of IOM’s facilitated migration portfolio through which IOM provides tailored operational assistance to states through efficient, cost-effective and non-profit international migration services.

Already in Germany, Mehdi Khalil and his cousin Lazem, are both four months away from their 18th birthday. To ensure reunification with their family members IOM has fast tracked their applications to allow them to get a visa before that date.

The fathers of the young boys – Abbas, 37, and his brother Azdaeen, 43 – together with the nine other children across their two families, cannot wait to join their sons – and to start a new life. Both men paid for their eldest boys Mehdi and Lazem, 16 at the time, to be smuggled into Germany. It cost them a total of USD 10,000, a combination of money they said they borrowed from extended family members and their life’s savings.

The brothers and their children were lucky enough to escape to the Sinjar Mountains, where they spent a week with very little food and water before being rescued. Since then they have been internally displaced and living in Bajet Kundela camp in Kurdistan’s Dohuk Governorate.

“We can’t wait to get there and be reunited with our boys,” Abbas said. “Here we have nothing left, whereas in Germany we have the prospect of a new life and a fresh start for our children,” he added.

“We had a comfortable life here, then Daesh came and destroyed our homes, all three of them, as well as our farms. We lost everything… and our community was dispersed… They even stripped us of our memories,” Abbas continued, reminiscing on the past.

Mehdi’s mother, Khanso, cries at the mention of her son.

“I miss him very much. He liked to stand in front of the mirror to style his hair after a shower,” she recalled. “Remembering that hurts,” she recalled.

“I miss his hugs and kisses and just want to see him again, to take him in my arms and kiss his eyes,” Khanso said sobbing slowly.

But both the boys’ mothers say, their eventual reunification will also come with some pain because of those they will have to leave behind – elder married daughters and grandchildren.

The reunification process for minors initially only allows for them to be joined by their parents, unless there are exceptional circumstances that mean the extended family should also go in the first phase. Once the parents themselves have been granted refugee status, which provides them with a residency permit, they are able to apply to be reunited with the other children.

“Our joy will be bittersweet,” said Ghazala, Lazem’s mother who will leave behind two married daughters and sons, her two grandchildren as well as some of her younger children.
UNHCR’s South Korean Goodwill Ambassador tours Kurdistan Region camps

By A. C. Robinson, RUDAW

Erbil, 19 July 2017 - South Korean actor and director who is now UNHCR’s Goodwill Ambassador Woo-sung Jung , was in the Kurdistan Region last month where he visited camps for Iraqi IDPs and Syrian refugees. Jung told Rudaw in an interview that he heard many horrific stories inside the camps of refugees having seen their loved ones killed in front of them. For reasons like that, he believes, those who have escaped from Mosul need psychological therapy as much as they may need food, water and shelter.

Jung who has been on similar trips to other parts of the world such as South Sudan, says that the people of South Korea “could resonate deeply with displaced persons around the world as we also have a history of war and displacement, and also as our country technically remains at war for more than six decades.”

He urges the international community to help the UNHCR and the Iraqi government in order to be able to assist the refugees and IDPs who may have to stay in the camps while their areas are being liberated and secure enough for a safe return.

As UN Goodwill Ambassador since 2015, you have completed missions in war-torn regions with high refugee numbers such as South Sudan, Nepal and Lebanon. How did you find the IDP/refugee situation at the camps located here in the Kurdistan Region compared to other areas you have traveled to?

I could see that the Qushtapa refugee camp was comparatively more organized as the Syrian refugees there had stayed for many years, and also sadly because it was anticipated that they would have to stay for some more time as the conflicts in Syria prolong.

One story I remember was told by Salma, a thirty-something mother of nine children.

And despite the rapid increase of IDPs fleeing Mosul, I was impressed by how fast the IDP camps in Hasansham were being set up and being organized efficiently to assist the families.

But at the same time, I always find it saddening to see that no matter how efficiently the camps are set up, no camp is quite like home for these displaced persons. I really hope everyone will be able to return soon.

Have you or the Korean government provided any type of support to the refugees and IDPs living in the camps in the Kurdistan Region?

I believe my government has been making contributions for the humanitarian assistance of refugees and IDPs in Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region, particularly since the 2014 rule of ISIL. If I remember correctly, last year the South Korean government made a contribution of some 7 million USD for the humanitarian assistance in Iraq (including KR-I). I also know that UNHCR Korea has been working to collect funds from the private sector (individuals and corporates) under ‘Mosul Emergency’ since the launch of the offensive in October last year. I myself make small donations to UNHCR each year, usually marking World Refugee Day, but do not specify where the funds go to – they are used where the most urgent needs are.

Did you have any personal interaction with people who have fled ISIS controlled areas of Iraq or Syria?

I was told of many horrific stories. One story I remember was told by Salma, a thirty-something mother of nine children who saw her husband die in front of her eyes in Syria. A bullet flew into the house and shot her husband dead, but Salma could not leave the house and had to stay with the corpse for four days as there was so much shelling and bombing going on outside. On the fifth day, she could not bear to have her children stay in the house with the dead body of their father anymore and she fled to KR-I where she has stayed for three years.

In Hasansham, there were many families who had just recently lost their sons, fathers and other family members. It was particularly heart-breaking to see children who had just experienced the war.

Were there any specific requests you heard consistently from the IDPs or refugees living in the camps? Did the residents of the camp have any hope to return home in the future?

It seemed the heat was unbearable for many families, particularly those with young children or elderly family members. Like refugees and IDPs in other countries, they were also very much worried about education for their children as many had stopped going to school either because there was no facility or because the children had to work. Many Syrian children, in particular, had to choose work over education as it was becoming more and more difficult for their parents to find work. I also met fathers who were concerned about medical care for their children. Still, we are talking about people with unbelievable resilience and courage. They never fail to talk of hope of returning to a peace-restored home and rebuilding their lives. This is another reason why they believe education for their children is so important. Because these children are the future for their countries and hometowns, and they must not become a lost generation.

Do you have any plans to raise awareness about the IDPs and refugees living across the Kurdistan Region?

I have already given several interviews to the Korean media including major TV stations and newspapers here, and a recent refugee film festival in Korea was also a chance for me to share with the audience what it is like to be displaced and why Korea should also care.

I feel privileged to be able to use my voice in engaging the Korean public about the plight of refugees and the works of UNHCR. I believe Koreans could resonate deeply with displaced persons around the world as we also have a history of war and displacement, and also as our country technically remains at war for more than six decades.
UNHCR helps displaced Iraqis acquire vital documentation

Hasansham U2 Camp, Iraq, 19 July 2017 – Jassem, 21, and Najlaa, 22, smile shyly at each other. The young couple got married three years ago but never had a legal certificate because they lived under the rule of extremists in a town near Mosul.

After fleeing the battle to retake the city, they are now sheltering in Hasansham U2 camp, built by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. As well as a marriage certificate, they need birth certificates for their two young children, Ibtihal, two, and one-year-old Abdulsalam.

Lacking the papers has meant that the young couple has not been able to access vital social services or travel, and their two young children risk becoming stateless – although they are getting help to address this.

Every week, a mobile court visits five main camps east of Mosul for displaced Iraqis. On one recent visit, Jassem and Najlaa went to the court, presided over by a visiting judge and hosted by UNHCR’s protection partner, Qandil, in a cabin at the camp, they finally received their marriage certificate.

“It’s like I’m getting married for the first time today. We couldn’t get a taxi inside Mosul because we didn’t have a marriage certificate,” said Najlaa, referring to the strict morality rules imposed by armed groups controlling the city that prevented unmarried couples from being seen together in public.

The Iraqi government declared victory in Mosul on July 9. In the nine months since the operation to retake Iraq’s second largest city began, more than 900,000 people have fled the city, according to Iraqi government figures.

Thousands remain displaced and are sheltering in camps around Mosul. Others have returned to the city, are renting elsewhere, staying with friends or families or living in war-damaged buildings.

The mobile court was set up in December, and issues about 20-25 birth and marriage certificates every week. The court also assists families in need of birth and death certificates, as well as personal ID documents, and has so far issued 2,500 legal documents. Some of these documents were lost or stolen during the war, never existed, or were issued by armed groups so are no longer valid.

Restriction of movement for displaced Iraqis living in the camps means that they are unable to access the Civil Affairs Offices or local courts in order to replace or apply for new documents.

UNHCR is also working with legal teams from Harikar NGO, CDO (Civil Development Organization) and INTERSOS to help those in need of documents.

“People have been in a legal limbo. While there is still a lot of work to do, we have managed to help thousands of people to obtain legal documents and the mobile court facilities have been an important part of this success,” said Bruno Geddo, UNHCR’s representative in Iraq.

“In the camps, displaced families receive food, nappies, milk and other basic aid for everyday use. But if the parents don’t have a marriage certificate, they can’t receive any of these benefits … without official documents, the displaced person has no legal status,” said lawyer Aram Mahmoud, who works with Qandil, a UNHCR partner. There are still around 40,000 missing documents that need replacing, he added.

When it was time, Najlaa and Jassem stood inside the small cabin and gave their fingerprints and dates of birth to the judge, who then issued their marriage certificate.

Afterwards, back in their tent with their children, Jassem said: “I feel like I’ve just become like any other normal citizen. She is now officially my wife, and the children are registered under my name. It is their basic civil right, and I can use these documents to eventually enroll my children in school.

“I want them to go to school because I don’t want them to end up like me. I don’t have a school certificate so I can only do [construction]. I want them to be doctors and policemen. It will guarantee them a good future,” he said.

By Cathy Otten and Rima Cherri, UNHCR

UNHCR Iraq and partners distribute relief items to displaced Iraqi families in Salah al-Din province

Baghdad, 25 July 2017 - UNHCR Iraq via its partner Muslim Aid distributed core relief items to newly-arrived vulnerable Iraqi displaced families in Salah al-Din province of Iraq.

The families arrived to the camp around sunset and received the items during nighttime after finishing registration procedures.

The kits include basic household essentials, including mats, mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets, jerry cans for water, cooking stoves, hygiene kits.

Some 1,145 core relief item kits were distributed to families in Salah al-Din province since the start of the year.

UNHCR continues to assist vulnerable families who have fled in Iraq, in addition to the current emergency response to the mass displacement from Mosul and surrounding areas.
Web coding training for Syrian female refugees

Erbil, 30 July 2017 - UNHCR Iraq in partnership with HackYourFuture team and Coding_for_Girls conducted a pilot training project for 10 Syrian female refugee in web coding basics to help them develop skills that could provide them with more livelihood opportunities.

The training follows another the successful pilot held with young Syrian women, aged from 18-25 in Domiz-1 Camp earlier this year. The aim of the training is to improve the employability, self-reliance and resilience of refugee women by helping them to gain technical marketable skills in Information, Technology and Communication, coding and Social entrepreneurship.

Refugees access to relevant and responsive education, skills training and sustainable job opportunities is essential in order to foster stability, protection and most importantly, a future for a whole generation,” said the #HackYourFuture team.

The five-day training was held at UNHCR Iraq's Duhok Sub-Office. Students learned the fundamentals of front-end programming, such as understanding the browser from a programmer perspective, the visual browser languages HTML and CSS, which are essential for creating visual content on websites, and simple web-animation using JavaScript.

“Before, I did not know what programming was or how to create web-pages, but through this exciting training I learnt many things and I am able now to create a simple website. I am very much motivated and inspired to add this to my skills which will help me in the future”, said Payman, a young Syrian refugee from Domiz-1 Camp.

Mobile technology in Iraq helps to transfer cash to conflict-affected rural families

Erbil, 2 August 2017 – Many vulnerable rural families in Iraq can now benefit from a safer, more secure means of receiving income thanks to mobile money transfer technology adopted for the first time by FAO as part of a cash-for-work programme aimed at rehabilitating agricultural infrastructure and land.

The programme, which is funded by the Belgium Government, will support 12,000 conflict-affected people in 30 villages in Kirkuk, Anbar, Salah al-Din and Nineawa governorates. It will benefit local farmers, by enabling them to restart or expand farming activities with rehabilitated infrastructure, and provides agricultural livelihoods opportunities for displaced people returning home.

Participants, who are from households with no other income source, include women who often the sole breadwinners for their families, and people with a disability. The workers and their families are people who either remained in their villages during conflict or returned home after being displaced by the fighting.

“The use of mobile technology will streamline the safe delivery of cash transfers to participants, who are some of the most vulnerable people in the country,” said Fadel El-Zubi, FAO Representative in Iraq. “Providing income opportunities is critical in rural areas affected by conflict, where competition for employment is high, jobs are scarce and people are struggling to support their families.”

International partnership

To facilitate the payments, FAO has partnered with Zain a mobile and data services operator with a commercial footprint in eight Middle Eastern and African countries. Participant names and identity numbers are pre-registered with the company, and they receive a free SIM card. Once each person completes a certain number of days of work, they receive a text message containing a personalised security code. They can then collect their wages from any certified money mobile transfer agent, provided their code and identity number match those registered.

“As well as providing much-needed income for participants, the programme will improve agricultural production in the surrounding communities, through activities including rehabilitating canals for irrigation to grow crops and preparing farmland for planting,” said El-Zubi. “This, in turn, will encourage community members still displaced by conflict to return home and begin farming again. FAO’s aim is to support people to get back on their feet as quickly as possible, and reduce their reliance on food assistance.”

Around 12 million Iraqis reside in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Years of conflict has destroyed or damaged harvests, equipment, infrastructure, livestock, seeds, crops and stored food; and left 3.2 million Iraqis food insecure. As of 15 July 2017, more than 3.3 million people remained displaced within Iraq, while about 2 million had returned home.

More support is need to scale up efforts

As the Government of Iraq retakes control of more areas, a major effort is needed to rehabilitate critical infrastructure so that agricultural production can resume and livelihoods can be restored. FAO is seeking urgent funding of $74.5 million to assist 1.39 million people in 2017, through rehabilitating damaged agricultural infrastructure, supporting farmers to vaccinate and feed their livestock, and expanding cash-for-work and other income-generating opportunities. FAO’s work, in coordination with the Iraqi government, supports families returning to retaken areas, internally displaced families, host communities and refugees from Syria.
UN Migration Agency’s Emergency Unit assists newly displaced from Tal Afar, Iraq

Erbil, 04 August 2017 – This past week IOM, the UN Migration Agency, sent emergency teams from its Erbil, Iraq, mission to provide front-line non-food item (NFI) assistance to an informal settlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The settlers are principally nomadic herders fleeing ISIL’s last remaining major stronghold in Iraq: Tal Afar.

Following the fall of Mosul, 255 families – mostly shepherds with their livestock – fled from villages on the outskirts of Tal Afar to establish an informal camp in Badoush, about 40 kilometres from Tal Afar city, in Iraq’s Ninewa governorate.

They escaped about six weeks ago. Iraqi forces are preparing to launch a military offensive on Tal Afar – a city originally of 290,000 people in Iraq’s northern Nineveh province, before ISIL took control of it in mid-2014. Although the militant group has lost nearly two-thirds of the territory it once controlled, it remains active in some of the country’s northern and western areas.

Tal Afar city, with the largest Turkmen population in the country (a mix of Sunni Turkmen and Shia Arabs), is located about 60 kilometres west of Mosul.

According to reports from Tal Afar, where an estimated 10,000 to 40,000 people remain in the city, ISIL is preventing people from escaping, as it did in West Mosul, by shooting at families attempting to flee.

Those managing to flee the city, mostly women, children and the elderly, must take a meandering route to avoid being spotted by ISIL, mostly arriving in the late hours of the night.

In the early months of the east Mosul operations, IOM was the largest out-of-camp NFI responder, delivering rapid assistance to newly retaken villages, both independently and as part of inter-agency first-line response.

Five trucks and a group of 12 IOM staff, from the Rapid Assessment Response Team (RART), visited the Badoush settlement to distribute much-needed NFI assistance to the displaced population, which IOM estimates is about 1,530 individuals. IOM is the first NFI partner to assist here.

The five items in the mobile kits included mattresses, cool boxes, mats, jerry cans and summer sheets for the pastoralists who opted not to go into camps.

“Their situation is dire,” said one member of the IOM team who visited the area. “They have very little and have only received small amounts of assistance.”

“Most are stuck there because they want to remain with their livestock and cannot go back to their farms. But if their situation does not improve, many say they will have to sell their herds and go to the camps and emergency sites.”

The Mosul response demonstrated that even though a high proportion of IDPs opt for out-of-camp shelter, IOM’s response can be delayed unless the areas are easily accessible.

Although displacements are ongoing from Tal Afar district, a mass exodus akin to that in West Mosul is not expected. Currently, IDPs are being picked up by the military and moved directly to camp locations.

Instead, IOM hopes to give priority to these informal sites south of Tal Afar, where limited assistance is available due to the hard-to-reach nature of the location.

IOM is also looking to prioritize out-of-camp response in hard-to-reach areas for the upcoming Tal Afar operations.

Given the prevalence of pastoralism in the Tal Afar area, there is an increasing trend of families refusing to enter campsites, simply because they want to stay with their livestock. Taking this into consideration, IOM’s Emergency Unit has coordinated with humanitarian partners and requested to be called upon for first line response for out-of-camp populations whose movements are generally more restricted, with no markets available in their locations.

IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Thomas Lothar Weiss added: “Out-of-camp populations in Iraq are amongst the most vulnerable. It is imperative that civilians fleeing from the conflict are able to receive humanitarian assistance and that agencies are provided with access to hard-to-reach areas such as the outskirts of Tal Afar.”

Since the start of the operations to retake Mosul in October 2016, IOM’s emergency units and rapid assessment teams have distributed 51,237 NFI kits in Ninewa, 23,808 fuel vouchers, 3,220 sealing-off kits to improve shelter conditions and 6,362 clothing vouchers. IOM also provided 1,765 emergency shelter kits and 500 bread ovens.

Since June 2016, the organization’s Emergency Unit, responding to the Mosul Corridor in Iraq, has also distributed 62,678 NFI kits, 38,438 kerosene vouchers and fuel assistance kits, 14,415 sealing off-kits and 5,988 emergency shelter kits.

According to IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), an estimated 837,900 individuals (139,650 families) remain displaced while 239,544 IDPs have now returned, with an estimated 80 per cent going back to their districts of origin in East Mosul.

Of all the IDPs currently displaced by the Mosul operations, over 351,978 (or 42 per cent) live in camps and emergency sites around Mosul. IOM’s emergency sites host nearly 22 per cent of these individuals.

IOM’s DTM actively monitors displacement across Iraq. DTM products and information about DTM methodology can be found on the DTM portal at: http://iraqdtm.iom.int/EmergencyTracking.aspx
Thousands of displaced Iraqis living with psychological toll of conflict

Mosul, 15 August 2017 - Weeks after the retaking of Mosul city, many internally displaced persons (IDPs) are exhibiting signs of stress and anxiety. As the psychological toll of what many had endured over the last three years kicks in, children in particular have been scarred by the violence of life under ISIL. They will need long-term psychological support.

IOM, the UN Migration Agency, has been offering support to IDPs since November 2016 – virtually since the start of the Mosul crisis – by providing integrated psychosocial services to 24,399 internally displaced Iraqis. IOM’s outreach ranges from individual counselling to structured play. Emotional support comes in the form of sporting activities, as well as from guided group discussions and specialized consultations.

With support from the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the Government of Canada, IOM’s Mental Health and Psychosocial Support programme (MHPSS) now has seven centres catering to IDPs from Mosul and its surrounding areas, between the Qayarah Airstrip and Haj Ali emergency sites, and the Hasansham U3, Nergizlya 1 and Chamakor camps. IOM’s MHPSS began operating in Iraq in October 2014, when the Organization first established its Psychosocial and Recreational Centre in Erbil. This was followed by the addition of five centers in IDP camps in Dohuk, and the deployment of four mobile teams in the Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, and Babylon Governorates. Those teams provide services to IDPs camps and host communities.

During nearly three years of operations, IOM MHPSS in Iraq has reached over 50,000 beneficiaries and provided roughly 150,000 different psychosocial support activities. IOM staff at MHPSS centres note that many of the IDPs seeking help display symptoms of acute stress such as hyper vigilance, anxiety, depression, anger, memory loss, psychosomatic symptoms and a lack of appetite. IOM concentrates on containment and preventative measures to help the IDPs establish a sense of safety and normalcy. The goal is to empower individuals to see themselves as survivors rather than victims, facilitating acceptance of the new conditions, and to activate resilient strategies to cope with past, present and future challenges.

IOM Iraq Chief of Mission, Thomas Lothar Weiss, said: “Psychosocial services are an essential aspect of assistance to displaced Iraqis, who have experienced unimaginable horrors and pain. Now that Mosul has been retaken, and many IDPs have reached safety, part of the healing process involves assisting individuals to process their grief and loss, and empowering them to take steps to recovery.”

Weiss added, “IOM MHPSS services have assisted thousands of Iraqis affected by the current conflict in the healing process. Hence, IOM will continue to provide these vital services in the immediate stabilization efforts in Mosul, as we consider mental health wellbeing a critical component of the peace building process.”

IOM Iraq has been leading the Mosul MHPSS sub-cluster working group since its inception in November 2016, ensuring coordination among the various humanitarian organizations and institutional counterparts in Ninewa Governorate.

Solving issues and raising awareness through theatre

Baghdad, 15 August 2017 - UNHCR Iraq, through its partner International Relief and Development has been holding a series of unique initiatives using interactive theatre shows aimed at addressing a number of daily issues that face displaced people through their conflict resolution and resilience building programme.

Teams from IRD carried out group discussions with displaced Iraqis in al-Salam and al-Jame’ea camps of Baghdad, hearing some of the problems and issues they face that have been creating tensions between host community and camp residents as well as among the residents themselves.

These issues were then woven into a script for an interactive theatre show performed at the camp.

“The key message is to raise awareness and address problems that were identified in the group discussion with the displaced people as they are facing these issues on a daily basis,” said Hadeel Faiz, program officer at IRD and in charge of the conflict resolution and resilience building programme.

“The main issues addressed are discrimination against displaced by the society, some hygiene issues in the camps and the financial difficulties they are facing,”

The play was attended by many Iraqis and representatives from local and international NGOs. All sides participated actively in discussions about the play in between each act.

“I think this is very good and it really helps all of us to sit together and see how we can engage with the issues of our daily lives,” said 24-year-old Samah, who was displaced from Ramadi and lives in the camp.

“We like the questions and how everyone raises their hands to answer them. It reminds me of school.”

“The interactive aspect helps people to discuss suggestions and solutions for each problem or scenario displayed and their recommendations,” said Hadeel.

“By having people who are facing the issues sit down together and think about solutions, we are raising awareness and also encouraging these people to be more proactive,” she added.

UNHCR hosted the programme in order to identify the root causes of conflict in displaced communities and educate them on how conflict resolution mechanisms work. The programme also aims to strengthen the resilience of communities during displacement.

By Saif Al-Tatooz, UNHCR
Thousands of civilians fleeing Telafar are at extreme risk

Baghdad, 20 August 2017 - Thousands of civilians are expected to flee from Telafar and surrounding communities during the Iraqi military operation to retake these areas from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

“Thousands of people are fleeing Telafar for safety,” said Lise Grande, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq. “Families are trekking for 10 to 20 hours in extreme heat to reach muster points. They are arriving exhausted and dehydrated.”

“More than 30,000 people have already fled the district,” said Ms. Grande. “We don’t know how many civilians are still in the areas where fighting is occurring, but we are preparing for thousands more to flee in coming days and weeks. Conditions are very tough in the city. Food and water are running out, and people lack the basic necessities to survive.”

“Nothing is more important than protecting civilians during the conflict,” said Ms. Grande. “We are deeply worried about the extreme risks that families are facing. Everything has to be done by the parties to the conflict to avoid civilian casualties and ensure people have the assistance they are entitled to under international humanitarian law.”

“The Government is leading the humanitarian operation, providing transport and aid. Humanitarian partners are helping to cover gaps by providing life-saving assistance at muster points and supporting families when they reach emergency sites and camps,” said Ms. Grande.

As of 20 August, less than 50 percent of the funding requested in the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq has been received.

Thousands of Iraqi civilians fleeing Telafar assisted by UN Migration Agency

Erbil, 22 August 2017 - IOM, the UN Migration Agency’s emergency teams are responding to thousands of civilians fleeing Telafar since the launch of the military campaign to retake the city from ISIL on 20 August.

In cooperation with the Government of Iraq and humanitarian partners, IOM is directly delivering medical assistance, non-food items (NFI) and shelter to vulnerable displaced people from Telafar, most of whom had to walk for hours in arduous conditions before reaching safe areas. Many of the displaced people from Telafar arrive exhausted and in poor health, often with critical levels of malnutrition among children, some unable to move.

Within the past four days (since 18/08) around 1,500 individuals have been received at IOM’s Haj Ali emergency site, and more than 1,700 individuals have also been received at Qayara emergency site; both sites are about 60 km south of Mosul. Thousands more are expected to flee in the coming days. These internally displaced persons (IDPs) carried a minimal amount of clothes; some only had what they wore, some were partially clothed. Haj Ali emergency site is expected to accommodate additional new IDPs as several camps in the area are at full capacity.

Civilians fleeing Telafar who arrive at military checkpoints and muster points are bussed by government authorities to areas including Hammam al-Alil, before being transported to camps and emergency sites. A total of 17 recent IDPs from Telafar have been brought to IOM’s field hospital in Hammam al-Alil, some requiring major surgery. Many cases are traumatic injuries, including fractured limbs sustained as a result of the conflict. From the Haj Ali site, the most serious cases were transported to Qayara hospital by IOM ambulance.

During the night shift in Qayara emergency site, IOM medical staff treated 160 of the new arrivals from Telafar. There were several cases of severely malnourished children, gastroenteritis and upper respiratory infections. The Qayara emergency site was built by IOM and has also been receiving IDPs from Telafar.

“I and my eight family members had not had enough food for the past several months. We used to buy wheat, which was very expensive, tossed it with barley and boiled the mixture so that it would be enough to feed us,” said Um Sara, a woman in Qayara who had been displaced from Abu Maria village in Talafar. “The quality of the water in our village was poor and caused us many skin and other diseases. Life was becoming increasingly difficult under ISIL so we decided to flee. We walked for eight hours and reached the Iraqi security forces,” she added.

Many IDPs from Telafar arrived at Haj Ali at night and received NFI kits after being registered and given a tent number at the site. These kits included mattresses, fan, cool box, hygiene kit, rechargeable light and solar light, and were provided by the United States Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).

IOM is bringing additional NFI kits to the emergency sites this week, to prepare for the additional expected new arrivals.
WHO and health authorities deliver 24/7 health services for hundreds of people fleeing the crisis in Telafar, Iraq

Baghdad, 22 August 2017 – As hundreds of people flee the crisis in Telafar, a city west of Mosul, Iraq, the World Health Organization (WHO) and health partners, in collaboration with Ninewa health authority, have established static and mobile medical clinics to offer 24/7 lifesaving emergency and primary health care services to meet the urgent needs of people fleeing the crisis. The static and mobile clinics have been established in 222 points in Buweyr and Musaid, as well as in the 222 screening sites in Badoush and Scorpion Junction. They will provide round-the-clock health services, including essential services. Emergency medical supplies, trauma, and emergency health kits have also been delivered to the field hospitals and primary health care centres in Hammam Al-Alli to cope with the number of people fleeing from the conflict areas. Ninety-nine per cent of all mobile medical clinics in the frontlines are being run by Ninewa Directorate of Health and WHO’s implementing partner DARY. Health services in Hammam Al Alil screening site have been reactivated. Drawing from lessons learnt during the Mosul operations, Ninewa Department of Health, WHO and trauma partners are scaling up frontline trauma care, establishing trauma stabilization points and field hospitals at the frontlines of the crisis and coordinating ambulance for patient transfers so as to cope with the expected increase of trauma patients.

“The Department of Health, WHO and its partners are on the ground working around the clock to ensure that internally displaced persons get immediate health care. The majority of those arriving to the mustering points are exhausted and sick, many have had limited access to health services for a long time. The exhaustion from long distances that people have to walk to access the mustering points have been exacerbated by the soaring temperatures,” says Altaf Musani, the WHO Country Representative in Iraq.

“Our goal is to save lives. Timely access to emergency trauma and essential health care services remains a top priority at this point, hence our efforts to establish additional field hospitals and trauma stabilization points on the frontlines,” added Musani.

WHO is working in collaboration with Iraq health authorities, UN agencies and implementing partners. To ensure adequate coverage of primary health care services, including immunization and trauma care for the newly displaced population while maintaining the emergency response for over six million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance across Iraq. WHO is appealing for urgent support of US$ 59 million to bridge the current 49% funding gap.

Erbil-Tokyo, 28 June 2017 – More than three million Iraqis are currently displaced as a result of the protracted conflict in Iraq. The experience of displacement has been particularly difficult for young people, whose education and employment opportunities have been upended. Immediate support is urgently needed to provide these young people with income opportunities to help them restart their lives and rebuild their country.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Toyota Iraq joined hands in 2016 to provide young displaced Iraqis with access to sustainable income opportunities. Under this flagship programme, UNDP’s Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) refers potential candidates to Toyota Iraq. The Toyota Iraq team provides top-class vocational and on-the-job training whilst ICRRP facilitates job placement, if Toyota Iraq cannot recruit them, in local companies.

The first group of youth graduated in basic vehicle maintenance in January 2017, whilst the second group graduated in customer relationship management and automotive parts storekeeping in June 2017. A third group will begin in August 2017.

This programme also provides job opportunities for women affected by the crisis in Iraq, enabling them to go beyond their gendered role as caretakers.

One of the women trainees, Taghrid Hassan, 29, from Mosul, said: “We thank you for this training; we have benefited so much from it. I am confident that the new skills I have acquired at Toyota Iraq will increase my chances of finding a job in the customer care field.”

UNDP’s Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States, Mr. Mourad Wahba, visited Sumitomo Corporation, shareholder of Toyota Iraq, in Tokyo on 28 June 2017. He discussed with Mr. Naoki Hidaka, Executive Vice President of Sumitomo Corporation, the partnership between UNDP and Toyota Iraq.

Mr. Wahba said: “Partnership between UNDP and leading private sector companies, such as Toyota Iraq, can play a key role in enhancing resilience of young people and empowering them as change makers in Iraq. UNDP is proud to work with Toyota Iraq in the implementation of this successful vocational training and job placement programme. It will help displaced Iraqi youth rebuild their lives.”

Mr. Hidaka said: “Iraq is a special country for us, Sumitomo Corporation. We have been exporting Toyota and Hino products since the 1960s. We would like to contribute to a sound and sustainable development of the Iraqi society through our business activities. We continue to provide more education opportunities to Iraqi people together with UNDP.”

Some of the trainees who have successfully completed the vocational training programme have been recruited by Toyota Iraq, like Omar Hussein Ali, 27, from Ramadi. “I have a degree in mechanical engineering but had no working experience. This programme helped me gain hands-on experience. I am so glad I found a job at Toyota Iraq. With my steady salary, I can pay off my debts and provide for my twins and my wife,” he said.
Opening opportunities to work and earn a living

Iraq, July 2017 - Opening opportunities to work and earn a living is critical to recovery for displaced people and host community members. With UNDP’s Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) support and generous contribution from GIZ, 100 trainees have successfully completed vocational trainings in Erbil on computer literacy for finance, hospitality, and basic construction.

In Duhok, 174 trainees are currently enrolled in several courses, including maintenance and repair of mobiles, computers, cars as well as electrical installation.

Training curriculum is designed according to the standard curricula of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the Department of Education (DoE), in combination with the results of the needs assessments conducted in Erbil and Duhok. “My sales have increased after the market road was rehabilitated. This road used to be flooded and muddy in winter. Now host community members and internally displaced people can easily access the market,” said member of host community in Halabja, Bakri Sawzabrosh.

UNDP’s Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) supported Halabja Governorate to rehabilitate the main market road in Shorsh neighbourhood that is hosting a considerable number of internally displaced people. The rainwater drainage system was also rehabilitated to prevent floods in the market. This project has been made possible by the generous contribution of the Government of Germany.

IOM Iraq’s EU-funded project contributes to peace and stability in Iraq

Baghdad, 02 July 2017 - IOM Iraq contributes to peace and stability in Iraq by promoting dialogue and strengthening relationships between host community members and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and building local capacity through vocational training and soft skills development.

To this end, IOM recently carried out a European Union-funded project in Kirkuk to enhance social cohesion between IDPs and members of the host communities from diverse ethno-religious backgrounds: Kurds, Arabs, Turkmens, Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, Kakayees, Sabean-Mandeans and Christians.

The project started with sewing training for IDP and host community women; as part of the package, women had the opportunity to enhance their communication and dialogue skills through 45-minute awareness sessions. The goal of these sessions was to highlight the importance of dialogue and interaction as a means of strengthening social cohesion among diverse communities. The women worked together over a period of two months to develop their sewing skills and build relationships; they also supported and learned from each other. While participants were busy learning sewing or attending awareness-raising classes, their children were being entertained in an adjacent hall that was turned into a temporary playroom.

“At the beginning of the training, women from different communities used to come and go together, never mixing with others or even talking; Kurds would sit alone, Arabs would sit alone, and the Shi’a and Sunnis were apart. A few weeks later they started to befriend women from other ethno-religious groups and exchanged phone numbers. If one missed a session, others would ask and even call to check on her,” said Mrs. Samia’a, the project’s sewing instructor.

After the women graduated from the sewing course, and in order to build empathetic and supportive relationships in the community, they used their skills to support needy households in the area. They identified women who were struggling financially, took their measurements, and sewed them new clothes. To encourage social cohesion, the IDP graduates visited host community households, whereas the host community graduates visited IDP households.

In addition to vocational training and skills development, IOM also provides a 7-week course in leadership specifically designed for women. A number of women who attended the sewing training have now joined the leadership course. They explained that being involved in IOM activities has increased their self-confidence, and that they wanted to develop their skills so they could take a more active role in the community.

By building relationships and bonds between diverse groups of people and offering a space for an open dialogue to take place, IOM has contributed to reducing inter-communal tensions and to promoting stronger social cohesion between people from diverse backgrounds.

By Sabah Abdulrahman, IOM
UN Migration Agency and Minister of Interior conference on Community Policing

Baghdad, 03 July 2017 - With the support of the UN Migration Agency (IOM), the Iraqi Minister of Interior recently held a conference in Baghdad to introduce the Community Policing (CP) model and its strategy. The conference showcased the ongoing fruitful cooperation between the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and IOM, namely in relation to the two-year programme “Strengthening Community Policing in Iraq”, implemented since February 2016 and funded by the German Federal Foreign Office. IOM’s main project partners are the Government of Iraq, in particular the MoI, and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The programme aims to improve security in the country through cooperation and information sharing between police and local communities.

“We thank the German Government and IOM for their efforts in support of the Community Policing model, which enhances trust between communities and their police force and therefore contributes to improving security. The Ministry of Interior looks forward to furthering this cooperation to better protect and serve the Iraqi people,” said the Minister of Interior of the Government of Iraq, Qasim Al Araj. “On behalf of Iraqi Government I also thank all the Ambassadors and International Organizations who have been standing by Iraq and its people,” he added.

IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Thomas Lothar Weiss expressed IOM’s wish to further its cooperation with the MoI and implement the next phases of the Programme; he also underlined the importance of the Community Policing model in Iraq as an “essential cornerstone in rebuilding trust and confidence in the country and among its people”.

The model “represents a unique opportunity to develop trust among local community members and police officers,” said Mr. Oliver Schnakenberg, German Consul General to Iraq.

“The Community Policing project strives to reinforce social cohesion and improve security by enhancing interaction between the various security actors in Iraq”, added the Minister of Interior. The programme aims to fill the current gap between law enforcement actors and local communities, by bringing them together in the framework of Community Policing Forums (CPF). CPFs are inclusive platforms that enhance cooperation, transparency and mutual trust between these actors to strengthen basic democratic structures and increase security in Iraq. They are meant to discuss and solve issues raised by their members through negotiation and mediation, rather than violence or revenge.

The implementation of the Community Policing model has triggered a “process driven by Iraqis for Iraqis: local police officers and community members identify and develop initiatives that lead to safer communities and protect the most vulnerable,” said Weiss. The CP model encourages CPF members to “analyze the available resources in their respective communities and to assess the ability of a wide range of actors to find solutions to situations that are potentially dangerous and harmful. As such, CPFs are tools for conflict prevention,” he added.

The model has been shaped and implemented by relying on a deep knowledge of Iraq and its geo-political context, to meet the needs of its social fabric. Through such expertise, the programme has developed a methodology that is able to identify the contexts of conflict in Iraq, the sources of tensions and the actors who can play a positive and peaceful role to defuse them. Also, surveys are conducted at the community level every three months to allow their members to evaluate the model’s impact and performance. Because it is tailored for Iraq, Iraqis and their needs, the programme is self-sustainable on the long term.

In a coordinated move, the MoI, specifically the Community Policing Directorate in Baghdad in coordination with Community Policing Directorate in Kurdistan – led respectively by Brigadier Khaled Almhanna and Col. Dara Faruk – has developed a five-year CP strategy. The plan was elaborated by a Study and Research Center in coordination with IOM, IWPR (Institute for War and Peace Reporting) and several civil society organizations, and followed a scientific research methodology. Additional information was sourced from lawyers, journalists and religious and tribal leaders.

“Community Policing is a matter of coordination between police and community members [...]. Police do not have the resources to be everywhere at all times, hence it is extremely important to have the support of the local communities as they may help in identifying routes for possible crimes,” explained IOM Community Policing Trainer Bassam Yousif during a training for Anbar community members that was held in Baghdad. In Anbar Governorate 5 Community Policing Forums have been established as part of the Community Policing Programme.

IOM’s Community Policing programme aims at strengthening the capacity of both police and civil society in identifying and discussing security related issues, to prevent potential conflicts from degenerating into crimes, thus contributing to stabilization and recovery in Iraq. The ongoing IOM Community Policing Programme is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, and supported by the Central Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government.
A fresh, safe beginning

Baghdad, 8 July 2017 - “All I want is to be able to provide for my children and myself and to see my family safe,” said 40 year old Um Thair, mother of four, who was displaced from West Mosul to Erbil and then to Southern Iraq’s Nasiriya province when armed groups took control of her area and killed her husband and father. Um Thair used her culinary skills and Mosul-style cuisine to make a living. With assistance and a basic kitchen set that UNHCR provided, she was able to start a small business that earned her enough money to rent a house of her own and put her children through school. “I make Kubba (traditional rice roll stuffed with minced meat and spices) and bake bread for the neighbours and local stores, my food is very popular here and this encouraged me to continue and make more varieties,” said Um Thair.

Um Thair wishes to remain with her children in Nasiriya, citing fears of an unstable security situation in Mosul and the lack of infrastructure. “My children are happy to be here. We feel safe, they can stay out late and we don’t even lock the doors that often,” “How can I return to my house without my husband? I can’t,” she added. With help from UNHCR, Um Thair and dozens of other displaced women are able to work and provide for their families.

“All I want is to provide for my children and myself. I don’t want to have to ask for anything from anyone. That’s all. I hope no one goes through the hardships we’ve been through,” she said.

By Saif Al-Tatooz, UNHCR

Firefighters without water: local authorities struggling to save Basra’s unique urban heritage are looking at UN-Habitat for planning guidance

Basra, 9 July 2017 - Approaching the end of its 18 months of field work and consultations, UN-Habitat presented an integrated plan for the conservation and development of the historic quarters of Basra to the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH) in Baghdad, as one of the key outputs of the ongoing EU-funded Local Area Development Programme (LADP), led by UNDP. The team was humbled by the opportunity to discuss cultural heritage in front of an audience of 50 Iraqi experts in conservation and documentation, in a lecture hall adjacent to the recently restored National Museum of Iraq which houses thousands of precious artefacts from the Mesopotamian, Babylonian and Persian civilization. Aside from the phasing of rehabilitation and infrastructure upgrading investments, the proposed Old Basra plan addresses the gaps and loopholes in the legal framework that allow owners to demolish their shanasheel homes with impunity to make the most of the real estate value of their properties. Mr Qais Rasheed, Chairman of SBAH and Deputy Minister of Culture, praised the work and emphasised how important it is to strengthen the judiciary system along with the prioritisation of physical interventions. In the same week, the UN-Habitat team met also with selected members of the Basra Provincial Council to discuss a set of legal disincentives that may dissuade property owners from tearing down historical buildings, counterbalanced by loans and grants that would assist them to restore these fragile houses to their former grace while providing much needed housing space in the city centre. The final proposal to be presented to the Governor in the summer will include financial assistance packages along with bold legal deterrents critical to the application of the rule of law and enforcement of building control in the historical quarter of Basra.
EU and UNESCO organize high-level workshop on “Building a roadmap for effective groundwater management in Iraq”

Treviso, Italy, July 10-11, 2017—The European Union and the UNESCO organized a high level meeting on “Building a Roadmap for Effective Groundwater Management in Iraq”, in the context of the EU-funded project entitled “Advanced hydrogeological survey of groundwater resources in Iraq phase 2 (ASHRI-2)”. The meeting aimed at setting out a path towards developing the future national capacity strategy of the water sector in Iraq.

Building upon UNESCO’s long experience and studies in the field of drought and water resources’ management in Iraq, ASHRI-2 crucially addresses water shortage and scarcity, and its dangerous outcome on socio-economic and cultural development, health, environment and eco-systems.

Since its launch in November 2013, ASHRI-2 has delivered critical data, information and knowledge management tools required for sound management of groundwater resources in Iraq and deployed state-of-the-art methodologies and techniques in geo-scientific mapping of groundwater resources, and IT-based database management, forming important outcomes of the. Recognizing the Iraqi authorities’ ownership of these products and tools, key project partners including the Ministry of Water Resources in Baghdad (MoWR), the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MoWAR) of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Prime Minister’s Advisory Committee (PMAC), discussed a set of recommendations to develop and utilize water resources sustainably.

H.E. Abdulsatar Majeed, the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources in KRG underlined that “the workshop is an important step for this project and the nation. We are keenly aware of the issues facing our water, particularly those in our region. Groundwater tables are decreasing, in some areas by 100m. KRG looks forward to engaging in the discussion and has two requests: Firstly, the assistance in developing micro-dams for capturing water for agriculture and multi-purposes in the local areas, including groundwater recharge.

Secondly, assistance in building irrigation systems to assist in diverting and allocating water to specific areas for domestic and agriculture uses.

Dr Sadeq Al Jawad, the Advisor for Agriculture and Water of PMAC noted that “information on groundwater needs to be consolidated, and expanded, so that Iraq can manage and use these precious resources sustainably. Thanks to strategic sector studies carried out over the past few years, and the ASHRI-2 project, the water sector authorities have been provided an advanced knowledge base on the national groundwater resources; ASHRI-2 is in a position to provide guidance to the government to move forward with solid recommendations regarding the sustainable management of limited water resources”.

Through EU contribution of five million Euros, "ASHRI-2" has validated and updated essential data and information on Iraq’s groundwater resources, improving the government’s management capabilities in this field. Building upon UNESCO’s long experience and studies in the field of drought and water resources’ management in Iraq, ASHRI-2 crucially addresses water shortage and scarcity, and its dangerous outcome on socio-economic and cultural development, health, environment and eco-systems. Towards the end of ASHRI-2, UNESCO Office for Iraq aims to harness a more developed knowledge base on groundwater resources, and to provide evidence based policy guidance and recommendations to the Government.

Three workshops on the development of Provincial Response Plans organized by UNDP

Erbil, 11 July 2017 - From 2-11 July 2017, three separate workshops on the development of Provincial Response Plans for the Governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk and Ninewah were organized in Erbil by the Local Area Development Programme (LADP), implemented by UNDP and funded by the EU. In total, 65 officials from the four governorates and academics and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participated in the workshops.

The aim is to actively include the Iraqi administration in the central governorates in the planning process and the actual Community-Based Strategic Planning (CBSP). Participants acquired skills on how to develop action plans, and learnt about Project Cycle Management (PCM) as well as other key planning tools that support better implementation of the plans. They also gained important competences in using modern planning tools and practiced them in a series of exercises which will form the basis for their future work.
The UK contributes US$5.2 million to stabilization in Iraq

Baghdad, 17 July 2017 – The Government of the UK has contributed an additional US$5.2 million to UNDP’s Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS), which finances fast-track initiatives in areas liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). This brings the UK’s total contribution to FFS to US$15 million to date.

Based on priorities identified by the Government of Iraq and local authorities, FFS helps quickly repair public infrastructure, provides grants to small businesses, boosts the capacity of local government, promotes civil engagement and community reconciliation, and provides short-term employment through public works schemes.

UNODC/TPB programme generously funded by the Government of Japan

UNODC/TPB provides technical assistance to Iraqi judges on international cooperation to respond to terrorism-related threats

Baghdad, 23 July 2017 - Within the Global Project on “Strengthening the legal regime against terrorism in Iraq”, The Terrorism Prevention Branch at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC/TPB) with the support of The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) organized a national workshop in Baghdad, from 5 to 6 July 2017 on the “International legal framework to counter terrorism and good practices to strengthen international cooperation to respond to terrorism-related threats in Iraq”. This activity marked the launching of phase four in the Iraq project led by UNODC. The main objective of this event was to support Iraqi judges who will be deployed in Mosul after its liberation from ISIL fighters.

The training was attended by senior Iraqi officials from the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior, the Director General of the Judicial Institute (under the Ministry of Justice) as well as the chargé d’affaires of the Embassy of Japan in Iraq and the regional advisor of UNODC/TPB in the MENA Region. Thirty (30) trainee Judges from Iraq participated in the training, benefitting from a wide range of expertise on the matter provided by UNODC/TPB experts from the headquarters in Vienna and the regional office in Cairo via Skype.

The two-days’ workshop started with an overview on the international legal instruments to counter-terrorism and relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, then moved to discuss the Iraqi Legal Framework to counter terrorism. In addition to these topics, the international legal framework to counter financing of terrorism, the challenges facing states with FTFs Returnees from conflict zones, substantive and procedural rules in countering terrorist acts and their impact on national criminal laws, in addition to international judicial cooperation in terrorism related cases were also extensively discussed.

With the constant losses that terrorist organizations are suffering from, the need to intensify the efforts in combating terrorism, enhance the cooperation and ensure the effective implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions and international instruments in the framework of the legal regime against terrorism, is now more than ever. Both participants and experts expressed their satisfaction with the workshop and their wish that UNODC/TPB continues implementing specialized workshops, which will continue to take place under the same programme in different future activities.

This workshop was organized under UNODC/TPB programme generously funded by the Government of Japan.
Happy to be back in business

Mosul, 13 July 2017 - Divorcee, 35 year-old Jumana Najim Abdullah, used to live in the old city in West Mosul. But last year, during the government military offensive to take the city, she fled her home, moving in with relatives in eastern Mosul until she was able to finally rent an apartment in Al Khadora neighbourhood in November.

As the area in eastern Mosul had been declared cleared of extremist groups, Jumana took a risk: renting a building and becoming the first person in the neighbourhood to open up a hairdressing salon – which she has called Jumana Salon.

“I was the first person to open”, she said, smiling. “I felt very proud. People warned me it could be dangerous and said I might face consequences, but luckily I had no problems.”

When the area was controlled by hard-line extremists, businesses like beauty salons and hairdressers were forced to close. Jumana said she still managed to earn some money going to the homes of people she knew and trusted to cut her clients’ hair - but it was a high risk. Being caught would have brought severe punishment.

Now she has opened her salon, business is flourishing. It has allowed Jumana to rent her own small apartment and buy new equipment for the salon, as well as hiring one staff member.

“Even though this is not my original home, I will stay here now”, she told me. “Our former house in West Mosul is destroyed.

“I feel confident about the future. I want to expand my business and get more customers, and I believe I can do that because my prices are competitive.

“My daughter has returned to school. Her clothes are old and her hair is destroyed.

“I feel confident about the future. I want to expand my business and get more customers, and I believe I can do that because my prices are competitive.

By Caroline Gluck, UNHCR

Food security training for the Iraqi National Food Security Committee

Baghdad 18 July 2017 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Iraq, in collaboration with the Regional Food Security Analysis Network (RFSAN), held a three-day training for the Iraqi National Food Security Committee from 16 to 18 July in Baghdad. The training focused on strengthening the members’ understanding of food security concepts, main approaches, methodologies, survey instruments and indicators for measuring food insecurity in Iraq. In addition to food security, the training covered theory and practice of national early warning systems and its implications for future needs in capacity development.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Fadel El-Zubi FAO Representative in Iraq welcomed the participants from the Iraqi National Food Security Committee and experts from RFSAN. He said that the committee is in its advanced stage of approval by the Prime Minister’s Secretariat in February of this year to discuss and recommend actions on how best to achieve food security at the national level. Dr. El-Zubi highlighted the role of the civil society organizations as well as the private sector that also play an important role in the achievement of food security and nutrition by all.

Dr. Hussein Ali Saud, Ministry of Agriculture Adviser for animal resources activity noted, “FAO is our main partner in the ministry and we appreciate its continuous efforts to accomplish an integrated food security system in Iraq. The establishment of the Food Security Committee in Iraq is a significant step for future sustainable development in food security. I hope that this training workshop will create a better understanding of food security concepts and build the essential skills for the members.”

Mr. Rene Verduijn, FAO Chief Technical Advisor of RFSAN, provided an overview of RFSAN’s training objectives and stated that with the recent developments in Mosul and acknowledging the immediate needs of a large number of IDPs in the country, it seems the country is closer to entering a reconstruction phase.

“The establishment of the Iraqi National Food Security Committee comes therefore at an opportune time. Inter-ministerial cooperation is required to achieve food security at the national level, particularly given the constraints facing the country, but it also requires participation from international, national and subnational partners. FAO is pleased to be part of this process, working on concrete steps towards achieving food security and nutrition for all,” said Mr. Verduijn.

Following the training and consultations, participants agreed on several recommendations, including the drafting of a road map for further capacity development, strengthening of food security monitoring and information management, and the drafting of a new food security policy, all of which require financial support.

A partnership between FAO and iMMAP, RFSAN provides technical support in identified priority areas of food security information and early warning systems and delivers consensus-based food security and nutrition data to support humanitarian and resilience-based programming in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.
Iraqi museum professionals gain new skills on preventive conservation of museum collections

Amman, 19 July 2017 - Twenty officials of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage of Iraq completed a training course on “Introduction to Preventive Conservation of Museums Collections”. The course took place from 9 to 16 July 2017 in Amman, Jordan, within the framework of the project for “Preventive Conservation of Iraq’s Museum Collections and Cultural Heritage Sites at Imminent Risk”, funded by the Government of Japan.

The training course was organized by the UNESCO Office for Iraq in partnership with the ICCROM-ATHAR Center in Sharjah, with the aim of mitigating risks that face museum collections, and ensuring a sound environment for the display and storage of artefacts. Participants comprised curators and personnel from various museums in Iraq. The training course programme aimed at introducing the main concepts and tools of preventive conservation for museum collections, providing an approach to assess the various potential threats to collections, and devising plans of action. The training programme activities comprised theoretical approaches, active discussion, practical exercises, and presentations by the participants. The programme also included a visit to The Jordan Museum, providing an opportunity for the participants to learn from its experience in the display and presentation of objects, as well as the functions of its various facilities, such as those related to the documentation, conservation, and storage of objects.

Participant Ghaidaa Al-Janabi said: “The training course provided us with new insights on how to preserve the rich cultural heritage through a well-structured training programme”.

“The training course helped open new horizons and provided a new approach in the preventive conservation of museum collections, with the objective of protecting and conserving the rich cultural heritage”, said Muhaned Abdel Razzaq, Director of the Museum of the Palace of King Ghazi in Diwaniyah.

The project “Preventive Conservation of Iraq’s Museum Collections and Cultural Heritage Sites at Imminent Risk” aims at contributing to the protection of Iraq’s cultural heritage, through the provision of technical assistance and capacity building to the State Board of Antiquities for the reinforcement of its monitoring and protection measures for sites and museum collections.

Through UN-Habitat’s technical support the Council of Ministers adopts a Draft law to address informal settlements and provide adequate housing

Baghdad, 20 July 2017 – The Council of Ministers of Iraq has approved the new legislation to address sustainable solutions to challenges of informal settlements in Iraq and contribute in resolving the protracted suffering of internally displaced people who were accommodated in the informal areas for long time. UN-Habitat through financial support from the US Bureau of People, Refugees and Migrants produced the draft law following long and intensive legal and technical urban research and negotiations among the concerned institutions. The new legislation would entail the implementation of a number of context-specific solutions, including physical upgrading, minimal relocations, land realignment, integrated urban planning and formalization efforts as well as preventing new encroachments and informalities.

In July 2015, the Council of Ministers had endorsed a roadmap for addressing the phenomenon of informal settlements in Iraq, submitted by the Ministry of Planning in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), which poses a heavy burden on the Iraqi cities with its growing adverse impacts on all socio-economic, physical and security levels. The roadmap is based on four main pillars notably the technical, financial, legal and institutional.

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme in Iraq has been working with the Ministries of Planning, Construction, Housing, Municipalities and Public works and the Governorsates on the delineation of all informal settlements including the areas where IDPs are settled within the urban centres to enable the application of the technical urban solutions according to the new legislation.

The national programme for the Rehabilitation and Regularization of Informal Settlements and IDPs Areas is a complementary component to the Government’s major programme on reconstruction and would certainly enable mainstreaming the new urban agenda and contribute to the implementation of the SDGs in the urban context of Iraq.
IOM Iraq, Re:Coded organize social innovation hackathon in Erbil, Iraq

Erbil, 21 July 2017 - The first Social Innovation Hackathon in Erbil, Iraq, will take place on 21–22 July organized by Re:Coded, a humanitarian innovation non-profit organization. The event will be supported by IOM, the UN Migration Agency.

The Social Innovation Hackathon will bring together more than 50 local developers, designers, social entrepreneurs, humanitarians and community residents to develop creative technology solutions that address the specific challenges facing refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. These include barriers to education, difficulty accessing the job market and social cohesion between displaced Iraqis and host community members. Since early 2014, over 3.3 million Iraqis have been internally displaced due to conflict, and more than 240,000 Syrian refugees currently live in Iraq. The humanitarian crisis has created many difficulties, disrupting sectors such as education and employment.

The Social Innovation Hackathon is an expression of the belief that the collaborative development of technology-oriented solutions can address these issues. Participants will bring their expertise and collaborate on designing technology-oriented solutions that address the challenges associated with displacement.

Re:Coded staff and experienced developers will provide technical mentorship to teams throughout the event; humanitarian community leaders will also advise the teams to ensure understanding of the many deep-rooted challenges facing refugees and IDPs in Iraq. At the event’s conclusion, seed funding will be awarded to the project judged to have the greatest potential for positive impact.

EU and UNESCO reinforce national capacities in sustainable groundwater management

Amman, Jordan, July 22-27, 2017 - The European Union and UNESCO held four training courses on advanced methods in GIS-aided surveying and groundwater monitoring under the EU-funded project entitled “Advanced Hydro-geological Survey of Groundwater Resources in Iraq – Phase II (ASHRI-2)”. The courses aimed at upgrading the capacity of the Iraqi geologists, hydrogeologists and engineers on best practices in sustainable groundwater management. Building upon UNESCO’s long experience and studies in the field of drought and water resources’ management in Iraq, ASHRI-2 crucially addresses water shortage and scarcity, and its dangerous outcome on socio-economic and cultural development, health, environment and eco-systems.

Since its launch in November 2013, ASHRI-2 has delivered critical data, information and knowledge management tools required for sound management of groundwater resources in Iraq and deployed state-of-the art methodologies and techniques in geo-scientific mapping of groundwater resources, and IT-based database management, forming important outcomes. A total of 37 participants of the Ministry of Water Resources in Baghdad and KRG’s Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, represented almost all governorates of Iraq.

In his opening notes, Dr. rer. nat. Lück, the project manager of ASHRI-2, indicated the importance of these training courses for Iraqi water sector experts, notably being introduced to shifting from old practices to new international standards and methods. Through ASHRI-2, water sector authorities have been provided an advanced knowledge base on the national groundwater resources; besides, ASHRI-2 offers guidance to the government in moving forward giving recommendations towards the development of capabilities in the sustainable management of limited water resources.

Through an EU contribution of five million Euros "ASHRI-2" has validated and updated essential data and information on Iraq’s groundwater resources, improving the governments’ management competence in this field. Towards the end of ASHRI-2, UNESCO Office for Iraq aims to harness a more developed knowledge base on groundwater resources, and to provide evidence based policy guidance and recommendations to the Government.
Small business, big success

Maysan, 24 July 2017 - “I work here and support my large family and all I want to see is my grandchildren to go back to school and live a happy life,” said 52 year old Abu Murad who fled his home in Mosul in 2014.

Abu Murad and his family fled their Mosul home and currently live in Oyoon Maysan displacement camp in Maysan governorate in southern Iraq. He used to work as a carpenter in Mosul, but now owns a small shop inside the camp that sells food and household essentials.

“Using what little cash I had saved up and with the help of camp authorities who let me use this space, I managed to open this small shop which supports me and my family,” said Abu Murad as two young children in his shop bought juice.

“I can make anywhere between 6,000 to 8000 IQD per day, which is enough.”

Abu Murad expressed his desire to return to Mosul and live there with his family of eight.

He said he will have to rent a house because his home was confiscated and he doesn’t know in what condition it’s in now.

“I’ve taught my three sons carpentry. That is their profession now, I’m spending my time in the shop. Things are good here, but I want to go back home and I want to be able to visit Mecca and perform the Haj (pilgrimage),” he added.

By Saif Al-Tatooz, UNHCR

The Secretary General of the Council of Ministers stresses the need to formulate a comprehensive plan for reconstruction and stabilization in coordination with International organizations

Baghdad, 24 July 2017 – On 24 July 2017, the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, H.E Dr. Mahdi Al-Allaq, Head of the Civil Crisis Management Unit, chaired a meeting organized by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Center to discuss the framework document for the National Plan for Reconstruction and Development of the governorates affected by terrorist acts and hostilities as proposed by the Ministry of Planning.

H.E the Secretary-General reviewed the results of his recent field visit to the city of Mosul and the Nineveh Plain, noting that some projects have been completed and others are under way, which will contribute to the return of displaced persons to those areas. He added that intensive efforts are being made under the framework of community reconciliation and rehabilitation of infrastructure, praising the role of Ministries, Local Governments and the Stabilization Support Group.

Dr. Al-Allaq pointed out the need to intensify meetings with Local Governments and International Organisations in support of the formulation of a comprehensive plan for reconstruction and stabilization in coordination with International Organizations to avoid duplication in delivery of services. There is an international effort to provide support to Iraq as part of the commitments of the international community for the sacrifices made by Iraq to drive away the threat of terrorism from the region and the world.

The meeting included the review of the proposed United Nations vision for sustainable solutions presented by the representative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT). The participants stressed the need for consistency with the 10-year Comprehensive National Development Plan with the aim of unifying efforts and channeling national capacities and international backing to support Iraq’s efforts in reconstruction, stabilization and recovery of liberated areas.

The meeting was attended by the Director of the Joint Center, the Director General of the National Operations Center, Deputy Minister of Displacement & Migration, Deputy Minister of Planning, the Governors and representatives of the Joint Center in Nineveh Babil, Baghdad, Diyala and Kirkuk governorates, Director of Japanese JICA Office and the Deputy Director of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

EU and UNESCO organizes Workshop on “Strategic Planning for Groundwater”

Padova, Italy, July 25-26, 2017- The European Union and UNESCO organized a workshop on “Strategic planning for groundwater”, in the context of the EU-funded project entitled “Advanced Survey of Hydro-geological Resources in Iraq - Phase II (ASHRI-2)”. The workshop delivered introductory planning courses on sustainable management of groundwater resources during which Iraqi delegates identified priority areas for having ASHRI-2 management tools and methodologies (e.g. the so-called “Geofía-Web Portal”) applied in order to be further built upon.

The workshop, designed for directors, hydrogeologists and geologists tasked with daily decision-making, aimed to (1) revisit basics of management tools on groundwater resources and (2) elaborate specific action-plans which the Ministry of Water Resources in Baghdad and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and continue to utilize, deploying ASHRI-2 tools for advancing their hydro-administrative capacity towards a sustainable management of groundwater resources.
The Final draft Roadmap for Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) for Iraq discussed at a workshop

Baghdad, 27 July 2017 - UNDP and Iraq’s Ministry of Health and Environment have jointly conducted a workshop at Baghdad University, on 26-27 July 2017, to discuss the final draft Roadmap for Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) for Iraq. Forty participants from Iraqi ministries, universities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have actively participated in the workshop, and decided to make the Roadmap ready by the end of August 2017.

France contributes US$980,600 to resilience in Iraq

Baghdad, 02 August 2017 – The Government of France has contributed US$980,600 (€833,500) to UNDP’s Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) to promote recovery and resilience-building in areas liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis fled the ISIL takeover of the Ninewah Plains in 2014. Most have yet to return. Families from these areas, particularly Karemles, Hamdaniya (Qaraqosh), and Bartella, face multiple challenges due to the destruction caused by ISIL, including a lack of job opportunities, the disruption of basic services, and heavily damaged housing.

France’s contribution to ICRRP will help restore livelihoods and facilitate the return of internally displaced people from the Ninewah Plains, including vulnerable minority communities, through housing rehabilitation and the provision of grants to small businesses. The project will be implemented by two non-governmental organizations, L’Oeuvre d’Orient and Fraternite’ en Irak.

UNDP’s Resident Representative for Iraq, Ms. Lise Grande, said: “These communities have been through so much. France’s contribution comes at just the right time to help families return home safely, voluntarily and in dignity.”

The French Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Bruno Aubert, said: “This integrated project will allow these communities to benefit again from basic services, and help them engage in local economic activities that produce income for their families.”

UNDP’s ICRRP provides fast-track support to vulnerable families in newly liberated cities and villages where social tensions threaten community cohesion. ICRRP is designed as a resilience and recovery programme to help families withstand the multi-dimensional shocks associated with post-liberation and large-scale returns.

UNDP and UNICEF to promote emergency preparedness amongst children in Iraq

Baghdad, 03 August 2017 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) are joining efforts to conduct child-centric advocacy and promote school-based preparedness along the Tigris River flood path in Iraq. The two sister agencies signed a partnership agreement in this regard in Baghdad.

UNDP Country Director for Iraq, Mr. Mounir Tabet, said: “We are pleased to work closely with UNICEF to maximize emergency preparedness in Iraq where needed most. Awareness amongst children is key to their safety and helps to build resilience of their communities in the long run.”

UNICEF Representative in Iraq, Mr. Peter Hawkins, said: “Investing in child-centered disaster risk reduction can save lives. Together with UNDP, we will work to involve children in finding solutions and making decisions that will help them shape their own security and therefore, their future.”

In the coming weeks, UNDP and UNICEF will launch an advocacy campaign engaging selected school authorities in the preparation of a local evacuation plan. Furthermore, they will make arrangements for a number of schools to serve as temporary evacuation centres in consultation with respective authorities.

With funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UNDP has been supporting the Government of Iraq in emergency preparedness related to Mosul Dam. UNDP is also working closely with the National Operation Centre of the Office of the Prime Minister, Civil Defense, and Ministries of Water Resources and Health and Environment, in addition to respective Governorates, in order to build capacities and systems to promote national preparedness and community risk awareness.
“Strategic Urban Recovery and Development Plan of Ramadi” workshop held in Baghdad

Baghdad, 16 August 2017 – Over 40 Iraqi government officials from the Ministries of Planning and Municipalities, Construction and Housing and Public Works, and Anbar Governorate convened in Baghdad to take part to the workshop “Strategic Urban Recovery and Development Plan: Ramadi Physical Assessment & Prioritization of Needs”, held under the auspices of the EU-funded Local Area Development Programme and implemented with UNDP.

Destruction in Ramadi has notoriously been more severe than anywhere else in Iraq. As of today, after nearly 18 months since its liberation, the scale of the physical destruction of homes, public facilities, services and infrastructure is still apparent and humbling. Analysis of satellite imagery reveal that destruction of some neighborhoods as Baker and Aramel etc. exceeded 80% including housing and public facilities. The transition from humanitarian assistance and recovery efforts to sustainable urban development in these areas will entail large and long-term multi-sectorial investments from both the public and private sectors, with support from multi-lateral agencies and lending institutions.

H.E. Mr Suhaib Al-Rawi, Governor of Anbar, appreciated the fact that most of the executive managers attended the event and expressed his gratitude to UN-Habitat for organising such an important workshop as well as its fruitful housing support interventions in Ramadi which have helped people to return to the district. Dr Erfan Ali, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq Programme, stated that “UN-Habitat is well aware of the challenges and the wide-ranging expectations, and will exert its expertise in post-conflict urban planning and strategic thinking for the drafting of a plan for the recovery and development of Ramadi in close consultation with the local authorities”.

The proposed approach of ‘building back better’ will hinge upon opportunities to relocate selected land uses and spatially guide investments towards future economic poles and infrastructure nodes where they will have a multiplier effect on the future socio-economic prospects of the city. Dr Ibrahim Al-Aosaj, Mayor of Ramadi, said “The workshop was very fruitful. I think that if everything that was discussed today will be implemented using such methodology, Ramadi will be in a much better situation”.

Swiss Ambassador visits West Mosul and camps for displaced Iraqis

Mosul, 20 August 2017 - Swiss Ambassador to Jordan and Iraq, H.E. Hans-Peter Lenz, conducted a joint mission with UNHCR to West Mosul and the displacement camps of Hammam Al-Alil and Al-Salamiyah during his recent visit to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

In Mosul, Ambassador Lenz visited a family who had recently returned from months living in a displacement camp. The family was gradually trying to resume their life amidst day-to-day challenges such as the minimal availability of services and infrastructure, and the high cost of living. Ambassador Lenz also met families who had received UNHCR shelter kits, allowing them to do basic repairs to their homes.

He also visited Hammam Al-Alil and Al Salamiya camps and met organizations working there to understand the operations, services provided and any gaps. In Hammam Al-Alil 2, the Ambassador met with a displaced family who had fled Mosul after their house was destroyed.

The visit was an opportunity for the Ambassador to observe the current situation of displaced families and the challenges they face, both in the displacement camps and upon their return to Mosul.
The Ministry of Planning and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) launched the results of the identification of informal settlements in Iraq

Baghdad, 20 August 2017 - The Ministry of Planning, in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat), have launched the results of the identification of informal settlements in Iraq, which comprised of 3,687 informal settlements in 12 governorates, inhabited by about 3.2 million Iraqis. This came during the event held by the Ministry of Planning and the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) in Baghdad within the framework of the National Programme for Rehabilitation and Regularization of Informal Settlements and IDPs areas in Iraq implemented by UN-Habitat and funded by the Office of Refugees and IDP Affairs at the US Embassy.

H.E. Dr. Salman al-Jumaili the Minister of Planning said that "the problem of Informal Settlements has been exacerbated by the aggravated housing crisis in the country, which is increasing year after year, in addition to the lack of enforcement of laws and regulations that contribute to reduce this problem, noting that the problem of Informal Settlements has become widespread and is hindering community development programs".

On his side, H.E. the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers Dr. Mahdi Al-Allaq pointed out that the Cabinet's Resolution No. 279 of 2015, which includes the endorsement of the road map that was submitted by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, paved the way for the implementation of the National Program for the Rehabilitation and Regularization of Informal Settlements In Iraq, and contributed to addressing the problem in a comprehensive manner in terms of its political, economic, health, physical and social aspects, within a sustainable and practical framework.

The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq Ms. Liz Grande praised the efforts of the Iraqi Government and the United Nations Human Settlements Program in carrying out this work, noting that the United Nations "will make every effort to help to resolve this problem and that the current national programme has provided the relevant technical solutions based on modern and successful experiences in many countries". "Iraqis can trust that they can count on the United Nations as they rebuild their country", and she assured that "there will be a global conference to be held soon to help on the reconstruction in Iraq".

In the same context, Mr. Cris Dilworth, the Representative of the Office of Refugees and IDP Affairs at the US Embassy added "this project will contribute to addressing the Informal Settlements and finding solutions for the displaced people, especially in the presence of areas that are heavily destroyed in many cities of Iraq, that caused the emergence of new slums", expressing his belief that "thanks to this intervention, we will be able to impede the growth of slums during the post-ISIL era".

The Head of UN-Habitat in Iraq, Dr. Erfan Ali, emphasized on the continuation of the national programme to support the Iraqi Government to carry on the agreed action plans and strategies, to upgrade the informal settlements and IDPs areas, and continue together to implement the legal ,technical and institutional steps according to the work methodology of the programme following the endorsement of the legislative framework by the Parliament, and upon issuing the regulation for establishing the Informal Settlements Rehabilitation Fund by the Iraqi Council of Ministers.

The current results revealed that there are 3,687 informal settlements including 521,947 illegal housing units where 3.2 million inhabitants are accommodated. The capital Baghdad was the city with the largest number of informal settlements, with 1,022 areas, followed by Basra and Dhiqar with 677 settlements and 333 settlements, respectively. The current identification of informal settlements covers 12 Governorates excluding the KR-I and the Governorates of Nineva, Salahadin and Anbar, where the areas identification work began recently.
Electricity in UNHCR Iraq camps east of Mosul helps displaced families feel safer

Mosul, 21 August 2017 - Amuna Ramadan Ugla and Nada Salah Abdullah are internally displaced single mothers currently living in camps. They are neither related nor have similar aspirations in life; yet both find themselves in similar situation.

Amuna is from Zummar district, which is to the northwest of Mosul City and Nada from Tal Aswad village, not far from her current location in Hasansham U3 camp. Until a few weeks ago, both spent their days in sweltering conditions without electricity and were seriously thinking of leaving the camp, because conditions were so difficult.

Nada, a 27 year old mother of six, has been living in Hasansham U3 Camp since it opened in November. The camp currently hosts more than 1,500 displaced families. At the time of the interview, she was happily cooling off in front of an air cooler, having a rest after preparing lunch and looking after her kids. She said that since street lights were installed, it was easier and safer for her and her children to use restroom at night.

Amuna, 32, lives with her three daughters and two sons in Chamakor Camp. “The nights were so hot. We did not care for snakes or scorpions. Thanks to God now, we have electricity!” she said. The lives of these two families, with thousands of others, have significantly improved since electricity was installed in Hasansham U3 and Chamakor camps. Now, all camps east of Mosul have electricity for ten hours per day.

“The provision of electricity has not only made the extreme heat more bearable for people, but it has significantly improved the security and the protection of displaced families at night, due to public lightening”, said Frederic Cussigh, UNHCR’s head of Erbil Field Response Unit.

“This is a humanitarian response at its best, where several organizations have worked together to mobilize funds and install electricity in the camps in less than two weeks,” he added.

With USD 3.1 million from the Iraq Humanitarian Pooled Fund (IHPF), UNHCR with its implementing partner, Erbil Joint Crisis Coordination Center (EJCC) finished electrical works in the camps and distributed lightbulbs to families in Chamakor and Hasansham U3 camps. The Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD), also distributed air coolers and rechargeable fans to all families.

Key water treatment plant reopened in Mosul

Mosul, 22 August 2017 - The Government of Iraq and UNDP’s Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) officially reopened the Al Qasoor Water Treatment Plant at a ceremony yesterday in Mosul.

Al Qasoor is the second largest water treatment plant in eastern Mosul, providing safe drinking water for 35 percent of residents. The plant provides 12,000 cubic metres of fresh water per hour to 24 neighbourhoods, reaching 300,000 people.

Most of the plant’s pumps, valves, switches and control panels were destroyed as well as its chlorination system and filtration pools. Work began on Al Qasoor in early May, even as the fighting in western Mosul continued. The Ninewah Water Directorate oversaw the US$ 1.3 million project, which was implemented by Iraqi company Thaf Al Rafidain employing hundreds of workers from Mosul.

At the ceremony marking the reopening of the plant, Ninewah Governor Nofal Hammadi said: “We are doing everything we can to help Mosul re-build. I’m proud of the Iraqi workers who bravely began work even while fighting was ongoing directly across the river. This project is a vital step to improving the well-being of the people of Mosul, and we’re grateful for the continuing support from the United Nations.”

“The plant has been repaired in record time,” said Ms. Lise Grande, UNDP Resident Representative for Iraq. “Now that the fighting has stopped, everything possible needs to be done to stabilize and reconstruct Mosul.”

More than 330 projects are already underway in Mosul through UNDP’s Funding Facility for Stabilization.

“Ninety-five percent of all stabilization initiatives are contracted through the Iraqi private sector. This lower costs, ensures high levels of local ownership and generates jobs in the areas where they are needed the most. Nearly 10,000 people from Mosul are working on stabilization initiatives,” said Ms. Grande. “There’s a lot more to do in Mosul, and we will be there to help the Government and people of Iraq.”

Mosul was one of the last major hold-outs in Iraq of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which took control of the city in mid-2014. The military campaign to liberate the city started in October 2016 and continued for 10 months. Nearly one million civilians were evacuated during one of the largest managed evacuations in modern history.

Mosul was declared fully liberated by the Prime Minister of Iraq in early July. More than 700,000 civilians are still away from their homes, waiting to restart their lives. Through its Funding Facility for Stabilization, UNDP has been implementing projects in Mosul since late 2016.

Established in June 2015, FFS is working in newly liberated areas in Anbar, Salah al-Din, Ninewah, Diyala and Kirkuk Governorates. More than 1,100 projects are completed or being implemented across 23 locations. Since the start of the crisis, over 2.1 million people have returned to their homes.
Iraq is addressing strategic urban development of the Pilgrimage governorates

Karbala, 27 August 2017 – UN-Habitat and UNDP are helping Iraq to address strategic urban development of the Pilgrimage governorates of Najaf and Karbala. Nearly thirty Iraqi officials convened in the holy city of Karbala, on 22-23 August 2017, to partake in an intensive two-day workshop titled “Governorate Urban Strategies for the Pilgrimage Cluster: Meeting the SDGs in Iraq”.

The officials represented the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Municipalities, Construction and Housing, and Public Works, both the national and local levels, as well as Karbala Governorate. UN-Habitat organized the workshop under the Local Area Development Programme (LADP), a project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funded by the European Union (EU).

Director General for Local and Regional Planning at the Ministry of Planning, Mr. Mohammed Al-Sayed, said: “We appreciate the chance to enhance coordination between Governorate officials and improve the capacity of the staff at the central and local levels, in line with the decentralization efforts of the government.”

The workshop focused on the on-going spatial analysis of urban issues and development indicators concerning the governorates of Najaf and Karbala, being developed by UN-Habitat in close coordination with the Ministry of Planning. The proposed strategy hinges upon the concept of “development corridors” at the regional level to stimulate sustainable socio-economic growth and facilitate the movement of millions of pilgrims and visitors, particularly during religious events.

The EU Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Patrick Simonnet, said: “We welcome very much this timely initiative. Against the current backdrop of stabilization, we need to reconcile some in-country migration currents. There is now an opportunity to recalibrate urban planning and align it with the realities on the ground, making it durable on the one hand, and prone to investment on the other. It is more so relevant for these two governorates, adding a touch of “spiritual” to the “spatial”.”

“Both Karbala and Najaf have seen the convergence of two overlapping immigration flows, one of people fleeing the insecure areas of conflict, and the other one of farmers leaving the rural hinterland to seek better opportunities in the city,” said UNDP Assistant Country Director for Iraq, Mr. Ali Kamouna. “Developing sustainable urban strategies is critical for these Governorates.”

UNICEF organized training on how to address adolescent legal cases

Baghdad, 27 August 2017 - Legal cases involving adolescents can be difficult to judge, particularly as Iraq transitions out of active conflict and into recovery. Teenagers and young adults face specific issues that require both thorough legal knowledge and a good deal of understanding for individual situations.

In order to have a well prepared judiciary, UNICEF’s Child Protection specialists held a 3 day training in partnership with Justice Gate Organization and cooperation of Higher Judiciary Council on how to address adolescent cases.

This training was made possible with through funding from ECHO.

IFAD and Iraq invest in new partnership to revitalize smallholder agriculture

Rome, 31 August 2017 - In an important step toward financing its first post-war agricultural investment project in Iraq, the UN’s International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) met with a high-level Iraqi delegation in Rome last week. The project will target 20,000 rural households in the poorest southern governorates of Missan, Thi Qar, Qadissiyah and Muthana.

The delegation was welcomed by Khalida Bouzar, IFAD’s Director for the Near East, North Africa and Europe, along with her team from the regional Division.

“The rationale for the current project stems from the fragility of Iraq and IFAD’s commitment to assist countries with fragile situations. IFAD has significant experience in areas in which the Government of Iraq needs assistance, such as agriculture and rural development,” said Bouzar.

“Investment in agricultural growth is not only important to growth in national income, but is also vital to growth in employment, food and nutrition security and reduction of poverty in Iraq.”

During the meeting, Bouzar expressed her confidence that the new project would be a milestone for IFAD and Iraq. “This will be an example of the stronger and more efficient collaboration that characterizes the renewed partnership between IFAD and Iraq’s government,” she said.

Iraqi Ambassador Ahmed A.H. Barmarini thanked IFAD for its promptness in creating the project, and said that he believed the project would directly support the Iraqi government’s reconstruction efforts following years of conflict.

Implemented by the Iraqi ministries of agriculture, water resources and environment, the new project will enhance resilience to climate change as well as improve the productivity and profitability of small-scale crop and livestock producers by providing access to finance, technologies and remunerative markets.

The meeting between IFAD and Iraqi officials follows an initial high-level meeting held in Jordan in October 2016 where participants developed the first strategic roadmap for investment in smallholder agriculture and rural development in Iraq. It set the stage for identifying the priorities for IFAD’s engagement in Iraq, including the main strategic objectives, as well as the framework for the first ever IFAD investment in the country.
Baghdad, 3 August 2017 – The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has confirmed its commitment to support stabilization and humanitarian activities through mitigation of explosive hazards in Mosul, Iraq with a contribution of 500,000 Euros to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS).

The battle with Da'esh in Mosul drove much of the population to leave their homes to become internally displaced persons (IDPs). Of the 54 residential neighbourhoods in West Mosul, 15 are heavily damaged and 23 are moderately damaged following the fighting in Mosul. This is affecting the return of over half a million civilians. One of the main concerns for people returning to Mosul, now and in the future, is the extensive presence of explosive hazards such as Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and unexploded ordnance (UXO). UNMAS teams have already conducted initial assessment missions to Western Mosul, and confirmed significant damage to infrastructure such as water and electric plants and sewage systems. Western Mosul represents one of the largest and most complex stabilization challenges the United Nations has faced.

Identification and removal of explosive hazards is the first step before stabilization initiatives or humanitarian interventions can take place and is a crucial enabling factor for any stabilization activities in Iraq. Until areas have been assessed, it is not safe for people to return. UNMAS has been supporting humanitarian access in East Mosul since August 2016 and in West Mosul already since February 2017, carrying out assessments, survey, and clearance operations. UNMAS is supporting the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS). UNMAS has so far completed 147 stabilization tasks in both east and west Mosul. Out of the additional 255 stabilization tasks that UNMAS is currently working on, 95% are within Mosul city itself and the remaining 5% is for key infrastructure in areas surrounding Mosul. The Fine Arts School for Boys in East Mosul, of the stabilization tasks supported, was expected to contain explosive hazards. During the clearance carried out by UNMAS, twenty explosive items and bomb making material were found and safely removed. Following clearance, 111 teachers, 140 staff, and over 1,000 students are now safe from the threat posed by the explosive hazards and materials and can continue to use the school.

Based on priorities identified by the Government of Iraq and the local authorities in Mosul, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg contribution allows UNMAS to extend its support and activities to ensure that explosive hazards are identified and removed enabling lifesaving work and supporting the safe return of IDPs to Mosul.

“The generous support from the Government of Luxembourg will significantly contribute towards enabling the return of displaced people to Mosul through survey and clearance of infrastructure required for stabilization,” said Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Senior Programme Manager.

Iraq One year Fallujah - Supporting stabilization and reconstruction through addressing explosive hazards

Fallujah, 7 August 2017 - “The city of Fallujah is slowly getting back to normal day by day and there is hope,” said Pehr Lodhammar, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) Iraq Senior Programme Manager. Over a year ago, on 26 June 2016, Fallujah was retaken from Da'esh. Booby-traps and other improvised explosive devices (IEDs) where left behind causing victims among the returning civilians. Through survey, clearance and explosive hazard awareness campaigns, UNMAS supported stabilization and reconstruction efforts to enable the population to return to their homes safely.

Speaking for the local government in Fallujah, Mayor Issa Modgen commented, “UNMAS contributed greatly to the clearance of infrastructure and making rehabilitation possible. All these sites are cleared from explosives now and provide services to the people of Fallujah.”

Awareness of potential explosive threats saves lives. UNMAS provided mine risk education sessions in IDP camps and Fallujah neighborhoods including Ramadi and Habbaniya to returning civilians, warning them of the explosive hazards. Through over 4,900 life saving risk education sessions through partners, UNMAS and partners reached over 127,000 beneficiaries of which 89,400 children and 18,200 women. A mother of a family who returned to Fallujah in 2016 used her new knowledge when she, upon return to her home, saw wires sticking out of the mud oven. Suspecting it could be an IED she warned her husband and children to leave the house, reported to explosive experts who could confirm that it was an IED placed inside the oven and later cleared the item.

UNMAS responded with security risk assessment missions into the city starting July 2016 with follow up survey and clearance in August 2016. In the last year UNMAS conducted 263 tasks in Fallujah working on water points, power plants, sewage sites, schools and healthcare facilities. Based on priorities identified by the Government of Iraq and the local authorities in Fallujah, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg contribution allows UNMAS to extend its support and activities to ensure that explosive hazards are identified and removed enabling lifesaving work and supporting the safe return of IDPs to Mosul.

One of the tasks was the General Hospital in Fallujah. Nine operating theaters which were destroyed during Da'esh occupation. After UNMAS conducted survey, reconstruction of the hospital buildings could start and staff could return in September 2016. The hospital is now functional again with 300 beds and 900 staff of which 65 specialist doctors and 30 resident doctors. The hospital in Fallujah serves a community of over 800,000 people. An average of 10,000 people a month receive treatment including major surgery.

In Fallujah UNMAS cleared 5,247,655 sqm over the last year removing 315 IEDs and 613 Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). Through this UNMAS is enabling humanitarian assistance and stabilization activities to take place so that key infrastructure, schools, health care centers and roads can be restored. The work of UNMAS in Fallujah was made possible through the generous support from Australia, Denmark, Estonia, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.
**96 Iraqi police officers successfully complete first responder course**

**Baghdad, 8 August 2017** – Ninety-six Iraqi police officers have successfully completed the first responder community police training course aimed to enable them to deliver risk education to local communities and provide immediate response, if an explosive hazard is suspected or identified within their community. The training was conducted by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), in cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Interior and with funding provided by the Government of Japan.

The training was conducted at Al Anbar Police Academy in Habaniya, Al Anbar Governorate, during the month of August, and directly supports the development of national capacities in response to explosive threats in recently retaken areas. Since the beginning of July, UNMAS has provided three one week-long training courses to Iraqi police officers from Fallujah and Ramadi.

H.E. Mr. Fumio Iwai, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, said on this occasion that “we strongly hope that all the participants of this training course will contribute further to the stabilization of the liberated areas applying what they learned.” He added that “Japan would continue to stand by Iraq and assist the people and Government of Iraq in order for them to overcome the crisis and achieve peace and stability for their country”.

Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager, UNMAS Iraq, highlighted that "Iraqi police will play a critical role in responding to explosive hazard threats in Iraq and in saving lives and limbs. Police will often be in the front line to provide immediate response.”

**Education**

**Iraqi nationals receive internationally recognized certification from UNIDO-supported vocational training centre**

**Erbil, 28 June 2017** – Four Iraqi vocational training instructors from the Swedish Academy for Training (SAT) in Erbil, Iraq, were awarded, for the first time ever today, Level 3 certificates for the Learning and Development course in the education sector. The certificates were presented by the Director General of Iraq’s Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Arif Hito, in the framework of a UNIDO project supported by the Government of Japan to promote stability, economic recovery and reconstruction support for communities affected by the conflict in Iraq.

“The workshop was very beneficial, as we have been introduced to a new lesson format, new teaching methodology, new questioning techniques, safety, and safeguarding the trainees,” said Michael Patto, a mechanical instructor who received the certificate. “This will help us to make our courses more standardized. The level 3 certificate is very important for my career, as it is internationally recognized.”

Ashti Sharif (forklift truck operations instructor), Zhero Mustafa (English tutor), and Zana Rafiq (mechanic instructor) were the three other recipients of the certificate. Letters of appreciation were also presented to Huner Abubaker and Younis Akbar of SAT in recognition of their time and efforts.

The course focused, among others, on understanding principles and practices of assessment and of learning and development; assessing vocational skills, knowledge, understanding, and competence in the work environment; facilitating learning for individuals; and reflective teaching methods.

The participants’ competencies were evaluated by the United Kingdom-based Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) under the Pearson Edexcel framework. Evidence was gathered over a number of months through written exams, self-evaluation and reflection, video recordings of teaching and training sessions, workshops and online interviews.

“We want to increase the prospects for securing employment with international companies operating in Iraq, where a recognised and verifiable safety level of training is required,” said Jason Hiscocks, UNIDO Technical Adviser in vocational training, when asked about the objectives of the Learning and Development course. “Achievement of this certificate is a clear indicator of UNIDO’s capacity building efforts for the host Government and falls within the overall framework of the project objective to train youth for work.”

SAT will undergo a full audit in July 2017 by LANTRA to receive the accreditation required to deliver courses meeting the standards of safety for forklift truck operations equivalent to those of any training centre worldwide.
Malala highlights education needs of Iraq’s displaced children

Hasansham, Iraq, 12 July 2017 – During her first visit to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai on Tuesday called for world leaders to invest in education for children in conflict stricken countries.

Education cannot be ignored. Especially for countries that are going through conflict. Education is a basic human right. Every world leader gives their child education so let’s give it to these children,” she said during a visit to a camp for Iraqis displaced during the fighting to retake Mosul.

“It’s important to speak out for internally displaced girls because I was displaced for three months, so I know how hard it is to get an education when you don’t have a home,” the girls’ education campaigner and UN Messenger of Peace said.

Malala was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 for her work championing education rights for children. In her native Pakistan, she was shot in the head by a Taliban gunman after speaking out on the importance of girls’ education.

Highlighting the needs of displaced Iraqis in Hasansham U3 camp, home to 7,600 Iraqis displaced by the conflict in Mosul, Malala told UNHCR that the loss of education for young people is one of the worst losses in conflict, and that education can protect children, particularly girls. “Education is necessary to protect children both now and in the future,” she said.

More than 900,000 people have been displaced by the fight to retake Mosul from extremists. Some have since returned home, but many are still sheltering in UNHCR-built camps on the outskirts of Mosul, renting, staying with friends or family or living in war-damaged buildings.

There are more than three million displaced Iraqis throughout the country, including around 350,000 children who are not enrolled in school, which is almost half of all those of school age.

Displaced children studying in camps face extra challenges such as the soaring summer temperatures and the difficulty of studying inside tents with a shortage of books, stationary and limited sanitary facilities.

Hasansham U3 camp has a primary and secondary school housed in a tent that runs in shifts. In the camp there are currently 1,115 primary school children and 425 secondary school children enrolled.

Malala praised UNHCR’s work supporting displaced families in Iraq, but highlighted a lack of funding. “We need to support the organisations working here by giving a little donation or some support on social media. Let’s speak up for these children,” she said.

Malala visited the tent of student Anwar Ahmad Ayesh, 13, whose family fled violence and bombing in western Mosul in April. Anwar’s father was killed by extremists and like many other children in the city during their three-year rule, she did not attend school. Instead, she would wake up every day hopeful that their problems would soon be over.

“I used Malala as a source of hope and inspiration to overcome my difficulties. I knew that one day I would be able to go back to school,” she said.

To cover UNHCR’s overall funding requirements, USD 126 million is urgently needed to meet the critical needs of vulnerable children, women and men and to continue to provide protection, shelter, camp coordination, management and assistance to the displaced and those seeking to return home.

By Cathy Otten, UNHCR

From Malala’s blog:

During Malala’s Girl Power Trip stop in the Kurdistan region of Iraq last week, she met two courageous Yazidi girls—Hadea and Najla—who fled child marriages and ISIS just to go to school.

Teenagers Hadea and Najla told Malala about refusing marriage proposals from their families. Najla remembers running away in her wedding dress: “I left my high heels because I couldn’t run in them.”

She explained to her would-be husband, “I don’t want to marry you because I have a dream to be a journalist and I am too young.” Both girls faced alienation from their families as a result of their defiance. Their path to education became even harder when ISIS invaded their towns. The Yazidis are a Kurdish religious minority persecuted by ISIS. More than 5,500 Yazidis have been killed in Iraq and over 90,000 others forced to leave the country.

As a result of the invasion, Hadea and Najla fled their homes again. As she escaped, ISIS fighters shot at Najla and hit her hand. She still has the scar to prove it. Hadea walked nine hours through the mountains to safety.

Today the girls live in a concrete shell of an unfinished building in Kurdistan and walk over an hour to school. But they are happy to be free and in a classroom again. Hadea proudly told Malala that she is the top student in her class—she wants to become a writer one day and share her story with the world.
UNIDO-supported vocational training centre in Iraq receives internationally recognized accreditation

Erbil, 17 July 2017 – A significant achievement was made last week as the Swedish Academy for Training (SAT), a UNIDO-supported vocational training centre in Erbil, the capital city of Kurdistan Region in Iraq, has received the accreditation to deliver internationally recognized courses in forklift truck operations.

Following in-depth audit by the United Kingdom-based accredited curriculum provider Lantra, SAT received an ‘Approved Lantra Provider’ certificate, making it the first provider of Lantra courses in the Middle East region. Graduating from a Lantra-certified course can help young job seekers find employment, especially with international companies, as employers can be confident that candidates have proven working ability and workplace safety awareness.

Lantra performed a comprehensive inspection of the SAT vocational training centre, including the training area, the equipment and the building, to ensure that it met the standards for a safe and professional learning environment. Instructors were also interviewed and observed while delivering the course.

Auditor George Walton observed a well-rehearsed and clear structure for the class that enabled all students to progress together. He added that, “It was impressive to watch their confidence grow as a direct result of the professional connection made between the trainers and learners.”

The full audit of the Academy and the Lantra certification mark the culmination of a UNIDO project, which began in 2016 with assistance from the Government of Japan, to develop Iraq’s capacity to train internally displaced youth, refugees, and host communities so they can find employment. The project included, among others, the installation of equipment and machinery, the creation of an operations and policy manual, the completion of a train-the-trainer course, and the establishment of Learning and Development qualifications.

The SAT was set up by UNIDO in partnership with Scania, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), international education specialists Education First, and the Kurdistan Regional Government’s Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

IOM supports vocational training of IDPs

Baghdad, 23 July 2017 - IOM aims to assist displaced Iraqis and facilitate returnees’ reintegration to their communities of origin. In cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, IOM is supporting displaced youth through the provision of vocational training courses and jobs opportunities.

“As part of Ministerial Capacity Developing Program, IOM supplied the Vocational Training Center’s Electrical Installation Workshop in Salah Al-Din Governorate with raw materials. These materials will help to train young people, create jobs opportunities and prevent them from engaging in violence,” said Engineer Aziz Ibrahim Khalil, General Director of the Vocational Training Department.

“I am good at tailoring, and I used to have a very good home-based business before ISIL occupied our city and destroyed everything. They threatened my husband because he was member of the Iraqi police; we felt our lives were in danger, so we decided to leave,” said Shaima, a 36-year-old who displaced from Salah al-Din in 2015.

Shaima arrived to Basra with her five children, the oldest of who is deaf. She had to find a way to earn a living to feed her family after her husband became ill and was unable to work.

“When we arrived in Basra we realized that we needed to secure a livelihood. We had nothing but the clothes we were wearing. Our neighbors offered to help and bought me a sewing machine when I told them I was good at sewing, and I started from there,” Shaima said.

“My oldest son Muthana, who is 24, is deaf; he used to wash cars in the town. It was good to have another source of income to support the family. Sadly, he was made redundant because his employer wanted to reduce the number of workers,” added Shaima.

When Shaima learned about IOM’s Business Development Service, she quickly applied and attended a four-day training course provided by the IOM Community Revitalization Program in Basra. The course enabled her to enhance her business skills and to develop new skills.

“I am very happy to attend this training course. I am learning new ways to keep my business running, thanks to my youngest son, Ahmad, who is helping me to read and write the assignments,” said Shaima.

After Shaima successfully completes her Business Development Service training, she will be offered a business package including sewing tools, worth USD 1,350 which in addition to the sewing machine provided by her neighbors, will help her start a small home-based business.

This project is funded by U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
IOM organized a two-week training course in farming in Basra

**Basra, July 2017** — “I used to have basic information on cattle breeding. After I joined IOM’s training course, I learned new techniques and methods that I will use to get the best results when I start my own business. I am very optimistic that this course will help me generate income to support my family”, said Ali, a 37 year-old who was displaced from Mosul in 2014, and one of 30 trainees from both host community and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who attended IOM’s two-week training course in farming in Basra.

This training course was organised by IOM’s Community Revitalisation Program (CRP), and funded by U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

Training for kindergarten teachers on how to best care for children with special needs

**Baghdad, 6 August 2017** - IOM’s Psychosocial Support Programme conducted a five-day workshop to train 11 kindergarten teachers on how to best care for children with special needs. The training’s subjects revolved around specialized psychosocial support and included practical activities for the promotion of the mental development and social inclusion of displaced children as well as their integration with the host community, through building the capacities of their teachers and caregivers.

“In this workshop, I learned how to deal with children who suffer from autism and hyperactivity. I applied the information I learned through the videos in my interactions with the children, such as engaging in specific games and intellectual challenges. I also learned to help children express their feelings through painting therapy and creative drama,” said Sura Talib, a 23-year-old teacher of children with special needs. This activity is funded by Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.

An intensive training on vehicle maintenance has just started in Erbil

**Erbil, 10 August 2017** - “My passion has always been to work in the automotive industry. I hope I will be able to find a steady job, utilizing the skills that I will learn from this training”, said Rooney Rajaa, 24, displaced from Bartella, near Mosul.

The UNDP’s Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) and Toyota Iraq are providing young, displaced Iraqis with access to income opportunities. The third group of displaced people just started an intensive training on vehicle maintenance in Erbil.

After graduation, ICRRP is facilitating job placement in local companies so that displaced youth can earn a living and restart their lives.
Baghdad, 12 August 2017 – International Youth Day, commemorated around the world under the 2017 theme “Youth Building Peace” was celebrated today with a special event in Baghdad, Iraq, hosted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in the presence of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake. The event marked the first international mission of the new Envoy and the first International Youth Day since UN Secretary-General António Guterres took office with a commitment to placing young people at the centre of his agenda for conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

As one of the most youthful countries in the world with over 60 percent of the population under the age of 25, Iraq – despite the many challenges it faces - is uniquely positioned to harness the potential of its young generation to promote peace and prosperity. Challenges will remain however, and continue to obstruct a path to development and peace if they are not matched by offering young people real opportunities for education, employment and civic participation.

The event, organized in partnership with the UNFPA Country Office in Baghdad, convened over 1,000 young people from all over Iraq and was attended by His Excellency Mr. Abed Al-Hussein Abtan, Minister of Youth and Sports of Iraq, and Ms. Lise Grande, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Iraq.

Speaking at the Iraqi national event to mark International Youth Day, Ms. Wickramanayake said “Today, thousands of young women and men work tirelessly, often under very dangerous conditions and with very little support or recognition, to build peace and promote security for all. They are the most valuable force we have to shape a better future.” In a message directed to the young people of Iraq, Ms. Wickramanayake said, “The United Nations is with you and I, as your Envoy, will do everything within my power to ensure that your voices are heard.”

H.E. Mr. Abtan called on Iraqi youth “to play the true role in contributing to all aspects of life in order to create an advanced Iraq that conveys a positive picture to the world.”

“Reconciliation is—right now and without doubt—the highest priority in Iraq. The key to ensuring that reconciliation is sustainable is ensuring that youth are involved in every reconciliation meeting, every reconciliation initiative and every reconciliation conference,” said Ms. Grande.

On the occasion of International Youth Day, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in a video statement, “I am committed to the empowerment and inclusion of every young person around the world. Empowered young men and women can play a critical role in preventing conflicts and ensuring sustainable peace.”

Around the world, young people gathered at hundreds of events to commemorate International Youth and recognize the ways in which young people contribute to peacebuilding. While in Baghdad, Ms. Wickramanayake met with young people from different backgrounds to discuss issues affecting Iraqi youth with a particular focus on young women, internally displaced young people, and young people who are neither in employment, education, or training. In addition, she met with the Officials of the Ministry of Youth and the Heads and Officials of UN Country team and UNAMI and discussed further avenues to strengthen youth focused programs.

Marking the day at UN headquarters in New York, young people joined UN officials in showcasing how young people contribute to peace.
UN Youth Envoy wraps first international mission to Iraq underlining the importance of youth empowerment

Baghdad, 14 August, 2017 – On her first international trip, the UN Youth Envoy saw first-hand in Iraq the devastating effects of conflict on youth but also witnessed hope in them, and encouraged the young women and men to be leaders in their communities. Underlining the importance of engaging and empowering youth, Ms. Wickramanayake commemorated this year’s international youth day in Iraq, at an event with the Minister for Youth and Sports, H.E. Abdul-Hussein Abtan and over one thousand young Iraqis. During a four day visit, the envoy met with government officials as well as youth in a camp for Internally Displaced Persons, and undertook a wide array of youth activities.

Leaving Iraq, Ms. Wickramanayake said, “I have been moved by the strength, hope & resilience of Iraqi youth despite the dark cloud of war which has lingered for too long. I was honoured to meet with so many young people who have dedicated themselves to the country’s peace-building efforts and I stand in solidarity with the youth of Iraq who don’t deserve the consequences of a war they did not create.”

Coinciding with International Youth Day, Ms. Wickramanayake discussed the positive role young people can play in securing and sustaining peace with Minister Abtan. She emphasized the importance of ensuring inclusive and meaningful engagement of young people from diverse backgrounds in the reconciliation process as the country sets off on the path of recovery and reconstruction, and underscored the importance of empowering young women to reach their full potential.

In addition, Ms. Wickramanayake met with Officials of the UN Family including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ján Kubiš, and his Deputy, Lise Grande, as well as Representatives of the UN agencies, funds and programmes in Iraq. These discussions focused on how to support youth-focused initiatives and programs and ensure a coordinated and cohesive approach on youth across the spectrum of UN’s work in Iraq, encompassing humanitarian, peace and security as well as development efforts.

Ms. Wickramanayake together with Minister Abtan and Mr. Ramanathan Balakrishnan, UNFPA’s Representative in Iraq, also visited a youth center in Al Bounouk neighborhood in Baghdad for the launch of a UNFPA-led project on youth and peacebuilding funded by the German Government. At the center the Envoy joined a workshop on “The Iraq We Want” of Y-Peer Iraq, a national network of young people in 13 Iraqi governorates that focuses work on empowering young people to take informed decisions regarding health and life. The Envoy shared with them her experiences in her homeland Sri Lanka and how youth can promote national reconciliation in a post conflict environment.

Later, the Envoy visited an Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp in Baghdad’s Hay al Jameaa where she had an opportunity to meet young displaced Iraqis mostly from Mosul and its surroundings. The young group shared their experiences and sufferings under DAESH and the difficulty of living in a camp. However, the discussions also brought out their optimism and willingness to engage in the renewal of their country and its peace building. Ms. Wickramanayake committed to leveraging her mandate to ensure the stories and concerns of Iraqi youth are heard in global platforms and addressed.
UNESCO closed the project for "Preventive Conservation of Iraq's Museum Collections and "Cultural Heritage Sites at Imminent Risk" and launched the "Response Plan for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in Liberated Areas of Iraq"

Baghdad, 3 August 2017 – On the occasion of the closing ceremony of the project for "Preventive Conservation of Iraq's Museum Collections and Cultural Heritage Sites at Imminent Risk", funded by Japan (USD 1.5 million), UNESCO and Ministry of Culture of Iraq jointly launched the "Response Plan for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in Liberated Areas of Iraq". This Response Plan is now the road map for spearheading recovery and rehabilitation of cultural heritage in the liberated areas, said Feryad Rawanduzi, Minister of Culture of Iraq, adding that the Response Plan was informed by the recommendations of the International Coordination Conference for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in Liberated Areas of Iraq, co-convened by the Ministry of Culture and UNESCO in February 2017. "The Response Plan that we are launching today puts the recovery of Iraq's cultural heritage at the heart of future reconstruction and reconciliation efforts... Our message is clear: cultural heritage protection and conservation cannot be done in isolation. Culture must be a driver and an enabler of development and peace in Iraq", said Louise Haxthausen, Director and Representative of UNESCO to Iraq. She thanked the Government of Japan for its generous support, through which UNESCO has been able to address over the past two years the cultural emergency in Iraq as an integral part of humanitarian and stabilization efforts. The event was also the occasion to handover the equipment provided through the project to the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage. "Conserving Iraqi cultural heritage and passing it on to the next generation is extremely important, not only for Iraq but for the entire world as well. In this regard, Japan has contributed to this cultural heritage protection and conservation..." UNESCO has been able to address over the past two years the cultural emergency in Iraq as an integral part of humanitarian and stabilization efforts. The event was also the occasion to handover the equipment provided through the project to the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage. "Conserving Iraqi cultural heritage and passing it on to the next generation is extremely important, not only for Iraq but for the entire world as well. In this regard, Japan has contributed to this field aiming for preservation of cultural heritage by Iraqi people and for Iraqi people through training programmes and financial aid", said Fumio Iwai, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq. Qais Rasheed, Vice-Minister of Culture for Tourism and Antiquities Affairs thanked the Government of Japan for its unfailing support in the recovery and rehabilitation of cultural heritage in Iraq since 2003, and, UNESCO for its technical assistance throughout. "Through the project, the first emergency protection measures have been implemented at a site devastated by Daesh, namely the archaeological site of ancient Nimrud", said Qais Rasheed. "...we hope that recovery in the liberated areas will start soon; the recovery of cultural heritage cannot be separated from the recovery of people." The project "Preventive Conservation of Iraq's Museum Collections and Cultural Heritage Sites at Imminent Risk" aims at contributing to the protection of the Iraq's cultural heritage, through the provision of technical assistance and capacity building to the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage for the reinforcement of its monitoring and protection measures for sites and museum collections. Through the project, several activities have been carried out including training, monitoring and documentation of cultural heritage sites, emergency activities at sites at risk, and delivery of pertinent equipment.

The power of film

Baghdad, 9 August 2017 - Young Iraqi filmmaker, 25-year-old Hamza al Fakhry, fled Mosul with his family just days after extremists took control of the city in 2014. He describes his early years in exile as a refugee in Turkey as a difficult time as his family struggled with the language and to find work. But now he works as a full-time graphic designer and motion graphics artist for Alghad FM, a radio station which broadcasts into Mosul, even when it was held by extremists, and, in his spare time, a film-maker. His short film, Reem, In the Name of Life, about a young girl from Mosul in displacement transforming a journey for refugee into a journey of discovery, is now doing the rounds of international short film festivals. All of the actors in the short film are Iraqi refugees. In December, it will be screened in New York at the Plural + Youth Festival. “I believe filmmaking is one of the most powerful weapons against ISIS. They came to power using the media and we must fight against them”, he said by phone in Samsun, Turkey. “I want to tell the world that most people from Mosul are not terrorists. We want to tell the world how people are suffering – especially children.” “I'm very excited that my film has been screened in these festivals.” “I'm hoping to have freedom. We need freedom to live like other people in other countries; we just want to live like other humans. “Mosul is now under government control, but I don’t know if my house is still there. At least 200 houses were destroyed in my neighbourhood. “Right now, I don't even think about returning. We lost so many things; we have a lot of sad stories; five people in my uncle's family were killed”, he said. “Maybe I will think about returning after five or ten years. There are a lot of stories to tell”, he added. By Caroline Gluck, UNHCR
A 21 century “Babylonian” artist tells UNAMI PIO how she empowers Iraqi women through her brush

Baghdad, 10 August 2017 - Meet Malak Jamil, Vice-President for the Fine Arts in the Iraqi Artistic Association and activist fighting against gender-based violence. Eve; her artistic name, puts on many hats. She spoke to UNAMI PIO.

UNAMI PIO: Malak, you have won several awards including an international one for creativity in 2010 at the Hurghada Festival, that must be a lot of hard work. How have you been able to reach such heights in your painting career?

Malak: I dedicated myself to my country to raise the name of Iraq high. I take advantage of every minute of my time for my artistic and cultural future. For me, art is in my blood; the drawing frame, colors and the brushes are my friends, with whom I discuss the stories of life. Since I was a child, I will go on school trips to the ancient city of Babylon. I would stand before the Ishtar Gate, fascinated by its colors, designs and details, especially the "chamomile" flower, the paintings and sculptural works on the walls and the Lion of Babylon. When I returned, I will sit and draw them.

I participated in most school exhibitions and attended most of the painting exhibitions held inside and outside Iraq. I established Kahramana Gallery in 1994. Prominent artists such as Fa’eq Hassan, Ismael Al-Sheikhly, Saa di al-Kaabi, Alaa Bashir and Nazih Salim have attended the gallery and given me their views, ideas and constructive criticism.

For over three decades, Eve has been juggling her different hats by managing art galleries while serving as the Museum Director in the Ministry of Culture, and the Head of Kahramana Cultural Organization for Arts.

UNAMI PIO: What pictures do you paint and what type of stories do you tell?

Malak: In most of my own exhibitions and artistic works, I focus on the role of women in life and their role in the civilizations of Mesopotamia. My style is inspired by ancient myths in Mesopotamia and the Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian and Assyrian civilizations. I was influenced by the Arts of Mesopotamia and the stories of the ‘One Thousand and One Nights’ (Arabian Nights), and this became obvious in my works. I had an exhibition entitled ‘Women of the civilizations of Mesopotamia 2011,’ where I highlighted most of the women who ruled Iraq and had honorable roles such as: Shubad (Puabi), Semiramis, Queen Zokuto.

Iraqi women throughout the ages have been queens, ambassadors, scholars, artists, and successful specialists in the domain of law, medicine, and engineering. I also look at figures in the current era; notably the architect Zaha Hadid. The exhibition was shown in five states in the United States, at the invitation of the Iraqi Embassy and the Iraqi Cultural Center in Washington.

In my exhibition, I address the personal life of Eve; her choices, love, waiting, treachery and manipulation, patience and faith: “Eve, oh Eve, choose a man who does not walk out when he sees you sad, and puts up with your anger even if you are stubborn. Choose a man who loves you reasonably and sails crazily in the sea of your love.”

UNAMI PIO: Tell me about the Queens of Babylon

Malak: Iraq has been ruled by many queens, each leaving a certain legacy in the history of Babylon and its inhabitants. One of the most prominent queens and most famous name is Queen Semiramis; who honorably represented the Iraqi civilization with lots of achievements during her reign. Semiramis (Smurmat), a Babylonian by birth, was known for her beauty and wisdom, she became a symbol of the glories of Mesopotamia’s civilization.

UNAMI PIO: How do you support other women who need to develop their art skills?

Malak: “Firstly, through cultural programmes; this includes identifying young talents, through poetic and literary competitions, among girls between the ages of 10 to 18 years, from less privilege homes in remote areas. Secondly, I organize awareness campaigns on the topics of economic empowerment and educate them on self-esteem; not to beg for money, but to look for ways to beat the challenges of poverty and negative exploitation. Thirdly, in coordination with some TV channels, we organize art exhibitions for female artists, as well as cultural and artistic symposia and fashion shows to develop a good taste and enjoy the beauty of colors. We produced TV shows such as ‘Ishtar Show; the Iraqi costumes encyclopedia’.

When Malak is not wearing her artistic hat, she is putting on the one for activism; paying visits to secondary schools and conducting trainings for girls on folk crafts, while attracting widows and divorcees through workshops to the art of sewing and designing. She also conducts workshops on psychological support and mitigation of war effect on children, human rights exhibition and workshops on peace and conflict resolutions.

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Story by Celia Thompson and Thura Kareem (UNAMI PIO)
Translated from Arabic to English by Mohammed Al-Ataeri (UNAMI PIO)
UN Migration Agency, Global Fund support Iraqi Ministry of Health in combatting TB

Iraq, 11 July 2017 - Iraq has one of the highest tuberculosis (TB) prevalence rates in the region, with more than 15,000 individuals infected annually, according to Iraq Ministry of Health. In response, IOM Iraq is providing urgent medical support to TB patients across the country.

Since 2014, IOM’s Emergency Health Program has been supporting the Iraqi Ministry of Health’s National Tuberculosis Program (NTP), focused on assistance to displaced Iraqis, Syrian refugees, and vulnerable host community members, in cooperation with WHO and Health Cluster partners. In the last three months alone, IOM provided initial screening for more than 2,400 presumptive TB cases.

IOM Iraq’s TB in emergencies activities were initially carried out in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), and in Kirkuk governorate. This year, working hand in hand with health authorities, IOM expanded its TB activities to operate in 12 governorate across the country: Anbar, Baghdad, Basra, Diyala, Duhok, Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Najaf, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Sulaymaniyyah.

“The conflict in Iraq has created enormous humanitarian challenges, including placing additional strain on the health system, and the exacerbation of health needs,” said IOM Iraq’s Chief of Mission, Thomas Lothar Weiss. “IOM Iraq is pleased to work together with Iraq’s Ministry of Health and humanitarian partners to educate vulnerable populations about the risk of Tuberculosis and to support prevention and treatment.”

In 2017 IOM was selected as the principal recipient of the Global Fund to provide support for the Iraqi NTP, through which IOM and NTP designed a major TB program intervention. This program aims for tuberculosis control in Iraq, especially among IDPs, returnees and Syrian refugees.

Efforts include awareness raising, medical staff training, support to screening facilities, and early detection and diagnosis of TB cases among IDPs in emergency sites and camps.

IOM carries out initial screening at camps and in host communities; diagnostic tests to confirm cases are carried out at NTP laboratories. Between 2014 and 2017, IOM supported detection of more than 300 TB cases by NTP health facilities among IDPs and Syrian refugee populations in the KRI and Kirkuk. Within the last four months, more than 50,000 IDPs, refugees and host community members have been visited by IOM mobile medical teams to raise their awareness about TB.

According to Iraq’s NTP, in 2016, 7,246 TB cases were identified -- 47% male and 53% females -- with age groups ranging between one to four years old (164 cases) and upwards to 65 and older (1,075 cases). Of the total 305 individuals were IDPs.

In 2015, of the total number of patients, which reached over 8,000, 29% were cured, 62% successfully completed treatment, and 3% (240 individuals) died; other cases were transferred, or did not complete treatment.

This year, NTP has confirmed a rise in the number of TB cases identified; this is mostly due to TB patients coming from Mosul, and IDPs in remote areas or hard to reach locations, for whom there has been a delay in diagnosis and treatment, or interruption of treatment due to difficulty accessibility to reach health services.

IOM’s TB project involves several steps, starting with awareness campaigns in IDP camps and informal settlements. In coordination with NTP, IOM performs initial screening for all IDPs, who come forth, believing they have symptoms of diseases. An IOM TB team then offers transportation to suspected TB patients from the camp or informal settlement to a NTP center.

At the NTP center a specialist provides patients with a comprehensive physical examination, radiological investigation, tuberculin skin test, sputum smear or culture.

When results are received, NTP identifies those with TB. This year with Global Fund support, IOM is providing anti-TB medication to patients through NTP’s pharmaceutical department.

TB patients are put on a strict 6-month medication plan. Directly observed treatment (DOT) is applied for some patients in need of guidance. Selected vulnerable patients receive high protein TB food packages to enhance their physical strength.

After two months, IOM brings the patient back to the NTP center for another round of tests. If the results are negative, the patient is deemed cured. If however the results are positive, then the patient will be subjected to NTP treatment protocol. IOM, in coordination with NTP, continues follow up through the entire duration until the patient demonstrates complete recovery.

Due to the Mosul conflict, after months of grinding urban warfare, 824,034 individuals (137,339 families) are still in displacement.

Some IOM Iraq activities in Emergency Sites Qayara and Haj Ali in Ninewa governorate, were temporary paused at the end of last week due to security concerns. As of this week, activities have fully resumed. The two sites together host nearly 80,000 displaced Iraqis.

IOM Iraq’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is now weekly releasing figures of IDPs who transit through Hamman al-Aleel screening site — from the beginning of West Mosul operations. The cumulative figure of IDPs from West Mosul, who transited in Hamman al-Aleel (since 25 February 2017), stands at 695,677 individuals.

IOM’s DTM actively monitors displacement across Iraq.

The latest DTM Emergency Tracking figures on displacement across Iraq are available at: http://iraqdtm.iom.int/EmergencyTracking.aspx
The World Health Organization inaugurated the Polio Outbreak Simulation Exercise (POSE) training in Baghdad

Baghdad, 20 July 2017 - The World Health Organization (WHO) inaugurated the Polio Outbreak Simulation Exercise (POSE) training in Baghdad from 18-20 July 2017. Thirty-Five senior staff from 11 governorates and central Ministry of Health (MoH) departments such as the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), Communicable Disease Control Centre in Baghdad, and the National Polio Lab attended the training. The POSE exercise trains the MoH staff on the different scenarios for responding to any potential risk of a Polio outbreak. It also entails different aspects of management at the Ministerial, Governorate and district levels with a focus on advocacy and management; strengthening communication techniques; and strengthening vaccination and surveillance activities. The training was interactive and involved group work for the simulation exercise facilitated by the WHO Polio Regional Office team in Amman.

Iraq Ministry of Health launches the web version of the Clinical Management of Rape Protocol

Baghdad, 18 July 2017 – The Iraqi Ministry of Health, in partnership with UNFPA, launched the online version of its Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) protocol. The protocol aims to strengthen services offered to survivors of sexual violence in conflict areas and to create an enabling environment for access to quality, confidential and comprehensive life-saving clinical services to survivors for sexual violence. With the endorsement of the CMR protocol, the Ministry of Health (MoH) says it is "committed to leading the implementation process of the protocol" including training all concerned health providers along the same standards. Mr. Ramanathan Balakrishnan, UNFPA Representative said "The protocol is the first of its kind in Iraq and is a testament to the commitment of the government of Iraq in taking the issue of sexual violence seriously. The protocol standardises the medical approach to the treatment of sexual assault survivors and is a critical element of survivor support services". The protocol was developed in close collaboration with UNFPA, and in consultation with other UN sister agencies (WHO, UNICEF), Government Ministries, and GBV sub-cluster, child protection sub-cluster and the health cluster.

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, delivers a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every child birth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.

The Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA launched the National Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Strategy (2018-2020)

Baghdad, 24 July 2017 - Under the Patronage of Her Excellency the Minister of Health & Environment Dr. Adeslah Hamoud Hussien, Public Health Directorate (PHD) in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) launched on 20 July 2017 the National Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Strategy (RMNCAH) 2018-2020. The strategy was developed in alignment with the national development plans and strategies to map the road for galvanizing actions to achieve the Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs) for health in Iraq. With the present various health challenges and public health risks and threats like disease outbreaks and high maternal and child mortality rates, the community of health professionals in Iraq needs an updated national RMNCAH strategy (2018-2020) that would support stepping up joint efforts to complete the unfinished work of the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs). The RMNCAH strategy aims to address the inequities among underserved areas in Iraq, stricter compliance to measurement and monitoring of progress, the inclusion of the humanitarian aspects and adherence to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals particularly those related to women, children and adolescents health, and the inclusion of innovative approaches for monitoring the progress during the implementation of the RMNCAH strategy 2018-2020. WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA will work together with the national health authorities and civil society to support the government of Iraq with the necessary technical and operational modalities to improve the health and wellbeing of women, children, and adolescents in the country.
Investment in healthcare is urgently required to save the lives of mothers and newborn babies in Iraq

Baghdad, 10 August 2017 – Decades of conflict and under-investment have placed a huge strain on Iraq’s healthcare system, and pregnant women and their babies are paying for it with their lives.

Although progress has been made to lower maternal mortality rates, there has been slow headway in reducing the mortality rates for children under five. Newborn babies are particularly vulnerable because of poor birth practices, inadequate referral mechanisms and inefficient neonatal care, particularly in remote areas.

Breastfeeding, neonatal resuscitation, kangaroo mother care for preterm babies, and the prevention and treatment of infections will help prevent these infant deaths.

With the support of UNICEF, the Ministry of Health has launched the Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP), which was developed jointly with UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The ENAP is an evidence based strategy to invest in, and improve the quality of maternal and newborn care.

“Providing high quality care before and after birth not only saves lives, it is also an investment to ensure Iraqi children have the best start in life and meet their full potential,” said Peter Hawkins, UNICEF’s Representative in Iraq. “WHO and other partners will work to support the Government of Iraq through the Ministry of Health to achieve equitable universal health coverage, including the provision of comprehensive services for every woman and newborn in Iraq in order to contribute to the substantial reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity,” said Musani Altaf, WHO Representative in Iraq.

“Neonatal mortality contributes significantly to child mortality in Iraq. UNFPA is proud to have played a part in the formulation of the Newborn Action Plan and commits to support the Ministry of Health in its implementation,” said Ramanathan Balakrishnan, UNFPA’s Representative in Iraq.

The Iraq ENAP has been developed in alignment with the Global Every Newborn Action Plan. It is expected to serve as a roadmap that redefines and focuses national and sub national strategies and activities to reduce deaths and disability, ensuring no newborn is left behind.

Children of Mosul are dancing again

Mosul, 6 July 2017 - After 3 years, some of the children of Mosul are dancing again.

400 children from retaken areas of Mosul participated in a Life-Skills event. The event featured music and dancing as a way to express messages of citizenship and civic participation.

This UNICEF program was made possible through funding from the government of Germany.

Oath of the Executive Secretary of ESCWA

New York, 17 July 2017 – The Secretary-General António Guterres sworn in today Mohamed Ali Alhakim of Iraq as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). Mr. Alhakim was the Permanent Representative and Ambassador of Iraq to the United Nations from 2013 to 2017. Mr. Alhakim brings to the position deep knowledge of the governmental landscape in the region, coupled with strong networks across the region. He was previously, Permanent Representative and Ambassador of Iraq to the United Nations, Geneva (2010-2013), Ambassador and Director of Arab, European, International Organisations and Policy Planning, Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Baghdad, Iraq (2006-2010), Iraq Minister of Communications (2004-2005), Member of Iraq National Assembly and Foreign Relations Sub-Committee (2005-2006) and Senior Social and Economic Adviser to the Vice President of Iraq (2004-2010).
Training session for local journalists on protection of refugees and internally displaced persons

Dohuk, 20 July 2017 - UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, organized a one-day training session for local journalists and media agencies operating within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq on protection of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Some 45 journalists, representing 22 news agencies that cover refugee and internally displaced persons (IDPs) issues, participated in the session which was held at the UNHCR Office, Duhok Governorate. The session was aimed at broadening the knowledge of the participants on refugee and IDP issues, potential risks and dangers that media coverage could put refugees and IDPs into; and how to prevent that happening. The session also gave the participants an overview of UNHCR’s mandate and a better understanding of the work of UNHCR and its partners in camps and non-camp settings in responding to refugee and IDP situations in the region and ways to access to accurate information and statistics.

Water conservation awareness campaign continues

Baghdad, 28 July 2017 — The FriendsOfUNICEF volunteer Iraqi youth group continue to build awareness and share information with the Iraqi community on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) issues, holding another outreach event on Friday, 28 July 2017, at Zayona mall in Baghdad. In addition to enlightening the public on the importance of water conservation, the youth group also imparted information on the effectiveness of proper hand-washing to keep diseases such as cholera at bay.

The FriendsOfUNICEF youth volunteer group is supported by the UNICEF Iraq WASH programme and the Public Information Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

Candle light vigil for victims of Sinjar

Erbil, 3 August 2017 – IOM organized a candle light vigil at Jano’s Cinema Cafe in Erbil commemorating the tragedy of Sinjar. After three years, thousands of people from Sinjar are still in displacement and have not been able to go back because much of the town was destroyed.
**UNHCR holds a handicraft exhibition for displaced women in Laylan 1 camp**

**Kirkuk, 4 August 2017** – UNHCR Iraq held a handicrafts exhibition in Laylan 1 displacement camp in Kirkuk to support the efforts and role of displaced women and girls in their community.

The exhibition was organized by the women center and committee of Nazrawa and Laylan 1 camps and was attended by over 200 visitors from UN agencies, local and international NGOs as well as the families of participating women.

Many hand-made items were on display such as knitting, paintings, clothes, drawings and calligraphy. The items sold help the displaced women’s financial situation. The activity is also a means to bolster the women’s role in their community.

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**UNDP’s activities in rebuilding community cohesion**

**Diyala, 6 August 2017** — “I wish we could revive Diyala cultural heritage. Local art is key to rebuilding community cohesion”, said Abud Al-Qaisi, Head of Theater Department at the Directorate of Youth and Sport in Baquba, Diyala.

UNDP’s Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) is supporting the Local Reconciliation Committee, internally displaced people and host community members to conduct a baseline study for conflict and reconciliation analysis in Diyala Governorate. Capacity building sessions on data collection took place in June 2017.

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**IOM continue activities to promote psychosocial wellbeing, resilience and positive attitudes between IDPs and host community members**

**Babylon Governorate, 6 August 2017** — “When the academic school year came to an end and summer holidays started, I was bored; I did not have friends, I did not have a hobby, but I loved swimming, especially because the weather is very hot. I was happy to hear that IOM was organizing swimming courses. I enrolled in a two-week course and learned to swim well,” said Hassan Salim.

In 2014, Hassan and his family displaced from Mosul, Talafar district, to Babylon Governorate. With another 15 children (10 IDP children and 5 host community children) Hassan participated in the course, aimed at promoting psychosocial wellbeing, resilience and positive attitudes between IDPs and host community members. The program in the Central Governorates of Iraq is supported by Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.

“I hope that one day I can become a competitive swimmer and participate in international competitions,” added Hassan, who is 11 years old now.
Baghdad, 19 August 2017 - Humanitarian Day is celebrated around the world. It’s the Day that we remember how many people require humanitarian assistance in Iraq and all of the other countries of the world. And it’s the Day that we celebrate and honour the humanitarian workers who provide assistance to people who need it the most. Here in Iraq, there are 5 million civilians who have been displaced during the current conflict. 3.3 million people are still displaced, including 700,000 civilians who have fled Mosul and are waiting to go home. On this Day, we ask that everyone remember that humanitarian assistance is a global priority and that everyone, regardless of where they live, regardless of their background, regardless of their political beliefs, has the right to humanitarian assistance.

United Nations Iraq remembers fallen colleagues on World Humanitarian Day

Baghdad/Erbil, 20 August 2017 - The United Nations in Iraq today commemorated the 14th anniversary of the 2003 terrorist attack on the UN offices in Baghdad in which 22 UN colleagues lost their lives, including UN Envoy Mr. Sérgio Vieira de Mello. The ceremony held this morning at UNAMI Headquarters in Baghdad and at the UNAMI Regional Support Office in Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, also marks the observance of World Humanitarian Day designated by the General Assembly in 2008 to coincide with the date of the bombing in Baghdad. The Canal Hotel bombing (19 August 2003) was a massive loss for the United Nations and the humanitarian community, and marked a turning point for humanitarian operations in Iraq and worldwide. World Humanitarian Day also honours humanitarian aid workers who have been killed or injured during the course of their work.