

3RP PARTNER SUPPORT TO IRAQ'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Second version, as of 1 July 2020

3RP partners in Iraq require USD 77,986,534 to support national efforts in the response to COVID-19 over a period of 6 months

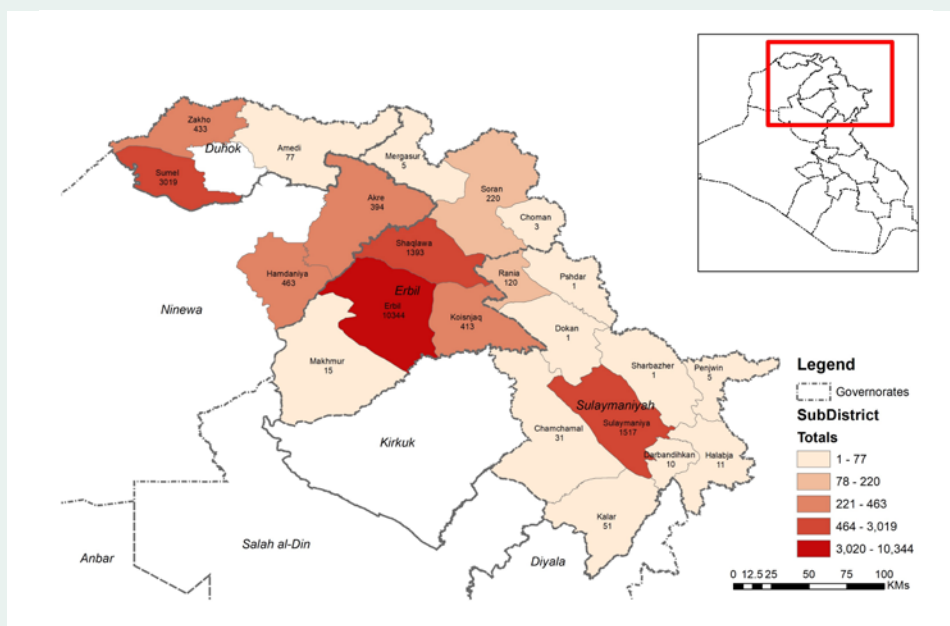
COVID-19 measures adopted by the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government are temporarily affecting the ability to implement some of the 3RP activities. Still, most basic services continue to be delivered in camps and in areas with a high density of displaced populations, and overall access to health and WASH services continues to be guaranteed. The two main challenges to date are the halt of certain activities due to movement restrictions in the KR-I and the closure of border crossing points. UNHCR, as the 3RP lead agency, will continue to monitor the rapidly changing situation and, in close collaboration with 3RP Sector leads, further assess and advise on how to implement life-saving activities in case the COVID-19 measures adopted by the host authorities in Iraq continue to negatively affect the 3RP response due to limitations in freedom of movement, limited access to persons of concern, and non-functioning public services.

The 3RP Sectors identified priority activities to respond to the COVID-19 emergency and to ensure continuity in humanitarian refugee response. The proposed priority activities have characteristics such as life-saving response, sensitive protection work and COVID-19 awareness-raising and hygiene outreach related to containing the virus, and are in conjunction with the prioritized HRP activities endorsed by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and COVID-19 Operations Cell based on PC1/PC2 UN Programme Criticality Assessment in Iraq (December 2019). The COVID-19 response and measures will be incorporated and coordinated through the existing Iraq Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) structures at national, regional, and governorate level, targeting some 290,000 refugees and asylum seekers of all nationalities, and will be in conjunction with guidance and instructions from the GoI, the KRG, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the COVID-19 Crisis Operations Cell.

Figure 1:
Overview of Refugees with COVID-19 Risk Profile¹ in Kurdistan Region of Iraq²

¹ Risk Profiles based on UNHCR ProGres Registration data: Registered Refugees and Asylum-Seekers above 60 years old and Registered Refugees and Asylum-Seekers under 60 years old with a Serious Medical Condition.

² The vast majority of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Iraq reside in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. In total 19,019 Refugees and Asylum-Seekers are categorized in the Risk Profile (all nationalities accumulated). Source: UNHCR Information Management Unit (irqerbim@unhcr.org) – The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



Priority Interventions and Requirements by Sector



PROTECTION

Financial Requirements: USD 10,152,502

- Alternative and remote modalities for Protection (Legal, SGBV and Child Protection) activities
- Advocacy for access to territory and freedom of movement to access essential services
- Identification of, referrals of and response to urgent protection cases
- Awareness raising and identification of persons with specific needs (f.e. hotlines)

The Protection Sector is temporarily switching to new remote and alternative modalities to continue ensuring the provision of priority protection services in times of limited access, while avoid mass gatherings. Registration activities continue to be implemented remotely and through limiting the number of individuals in registration centres. Legal assistance, counseling, case management and protection monitoring continue to be provided to the beneficiaries through telephone lines.

Community awareness and sensitization key messages are being share to refugees inside and outside the camps through a variety of channels, such as social media, bulk SMS, hotlines and outreach volunteers. The Protection Sector works closely together with the Health and WASH

Sector, and the Iraq Information Centre to ensure that refugees have access to COVID-19 information and have the opportunity to report urgent protection issues.

Due to movement restrictions, refugee households are confined to their homes with limited access to livelihood opportunities. This situation increases the risk for some forms of SGBV and negative coping mechanisms. SGBV partners continue to provide lifesaving SGBV activities to survivors among refugees, including case management, individual psychosocial support, referrals and distribution of dignity kits, considering alternative modalities due to limited access. Awareness raising activities promote gender tailored interventions related to COVID-19 that are also culturally sensitive.

Child protection cases are expected to increase due to risks presented by COVID-19 and related control measures, including children identified as unaccompanied after being separated from their parents/caregivers. Risks such as psychosocial distress, abuse and neglect may also increase. Child Protection actors will prioritize awareness raising, identification, referrals and case management services, additional safe forms of alternative care specific for children who may become unaccompanied due to being separated due to the isolation/quarantine or loss of their parents/caregivers and family-based psychosocial support.



FOOD SECURITY

Financial Requirements: USD 12,834,000

- Food assistance to newly identified vulnerable households due to COVID-19 Situation
- Continuation of regular food assistance for eligible households

Currently, WFP is providing life-saving support to 40% of Syrian refugees residing in ten refugee camps, including newly arrived Syrian refugee households in Bardarash and Gawilan camps. The restricted movements, combined with the closure of shops and non-essential businesses, have dramatically affected the food security

of low-income families and those whose livelihood depends on daily and seasonal employment.

The Food Sector will reconsider households with changes in vulnerability due to the COVID-19 situation and will include newly identified food insecure households into the food assistance program. Moreover, WFP continues to closely monitor changes in market prices, to ascertain whether the cash transfer values to families need to be adjusted and to ensure they can continue to meet their basic food needs.

There are currently delays in cash for food distributions to Syrian refugees in the camps as a result of the limited access to the camps for mobile money providers and the closure of the banks in KR-I. WFP is coordinating

with the local authorities to obtain access letters for service providers to ensure that eligible food insecure households receive food assistance.

WFP has a contingency plan in place in case refugee camps remain in lock-down and beneficiaries may no longer be able to access markets to purchase food. WFP has identified traders to set up food markets in the camps, in case mobile money providers are unable to distribute cash in camps. The Food Sector, in consultation with local authorities, has developed specific guidelines to ensure safety and health of both beneficiaries and staff during distributions and other relevant activities. Other activities, such as EMPACT, are, for the time being, put on hold, due to the closure of academic institutions and government restrictions on public gathering.



EDUCATION

Financial Requirements: USD 2,371,000

- Provision of alternative/remote education for children during closure of schools
- School readiness activities to prepare school for reopening

The following two COVID-19 specific activities are prioritized by the Education Sector until the schools reopen: provision of alternative education for children who are currently home, through e-learning and self-learning, and school readiness activities to allow schools to reopen with no delay or hiccups once restrictions are lifted.

The Education Sector is supporting the KRG Ministry of Education to produce new education content for online and offline use, to establish a system of online/

offline support for content related queries and technical glitches and for psychosocial support and to train Department of Education personnel and teachers on how to support learners using distance and e-learning platforms. In addition, Education partners are planning to purchase and distribute connectivity devices to the most vulnerable children and personnel to be able to access education and training materials.

Back to school and readiness activities will be prioritized to ensure that school can reopen without delays and any hiccups once government restrictions are lifted. Education partners will ensure the safe return to quality learning for teachers, learners and school communities by disinfection of schools, provision of adequate WASH supplies and thermometers, and provision of a back-to-school package (information materials on safe reopening of schools and COVID-19)



HEALTH

Financial Requirements: USD 24,048,998

- COVID-19 Health Awareness Raising and Capacity Building
- Material support to Departments of Health and health institutions
- Continue support to Public Health Care Centres and referrals to secondary and tertiary health care
- Procure medical Protective Personnel Equipment

The Health Sector identified eleven priority activities during the COVID-19 response, of which eight are identified to be COVID-19 specific, in line with WHO's COVID-19 Contingency Plan. Most basic health services continue to be delivered in camps and in areas outside camps with a high density of displaced populations. Measures have been put in place to strengthen COVID-19 awareness and knowledge among beneficiaries and Public Health Care (PHC) centre staff.

Health awareness on transmission and prevention of COVID-19 was initiated in all refugee camps, as well as in registration centres and in some urban areas. Key messages have been distributed through camp

management, camp PHC centres, and community outreach volunteers. UNHCR is supporting the Directorate of Health in Duhok and in Erbil to provide training on case definition and detection, as well as on management of suspected COVID-19 cases.

Additional capacity building with the Department of Health (DoH) and public health labs in KR-I is needed, to support with the utilization of case investigation forms to accompany specimens as an information resource for epidemiological purposes, infection prevention and control in hospitals and quarantine facilities, basic awareness on risk assessment and appropriate use of Protective Personnel Equipment, and case management. The Health Sector is working with the health authorities to mend gaps in terms of medical equipment and supplies.

There is also a need to procure additional medical Protective Personnel Equipment, such as masks with filters and disposable shoes to use at borders and in refugee camps, and specialized protective equipment, such as surgical masks, gloves, and disposable medical gowns, for daily use by medical staff at PHCCs in refugee camp.



BASIC NEEDS

Financial Requirements: USD 16,660,187

- Multi-purpose cash assistance to newly identified vulnerable households due to COVID-19 Situation
- Assistance for vulnerable households to access adequate basic hygiene items delivered through financial service providers
- Continuation of regular multi-purpose cash assistance for eligible households

The movement restrictions imposed by the Kurdistan Regional Government is having a negative effect on the access to employment and livelihoods opportunities for refugees and host communities in KR-I. The Basic Needs Sector continues to respond to the negative socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 situation by providing multi-purpose cash assistance to vulnerable refugee households.

The cash distributions to Syrian refugees in urban areas are currently on hold due to access restrictions for mobile money providers and the closure of the banks in KR-I. UNHCR is coordinating with the local authorities

and to consider mobile money providers as essential services in order to give them access to areas where refugees can cash-out their assistance.

To counter the negative economic effects of the current situation on already vulnerable households, UNHCR is planning to frontload the equivalent of 3 months multi-purpose cash assistance for eligible households during the next cash distribution. UNHCR will also ensure that newly identified vulnerable households, due to the current situation, are included in the regular

multi-purpose cash assistance. Additionally, UNHCR is planning to provide vulnerable refugee families, mainly in camps, with additional one-off cash assistance to guarantee they have the necessary means to access adequate basic hygiene items.

Ongoing distribution of basic needs items is temporarily switching to new modalities to continue ensuring the distribution of assistance, this includes door-to-door and tent-to-tent distribution to avoid mass gatherings.



SHELTER

Financial Requirements: USD 2,612,960

- Ensure continuation of camp management activities in all refugee camps
- Provide refugees with adequate shelter conditions

The Shelter Sector continues to ensure that newly arrived refugees will have access to adequate shelter upon arrival in Bardarash or Gawilan refugee camp. In addition, any severe damage to shelters in camps will be repaired to ensure that shelter remain up to standard and adequate for living, especially during times where households are confined to their homes.

Camp management activities will continue during the COVID-19 response to ensure that essential services within the camps are available to all camp residents and well-coordinated with all stakeholders within and outside the camps, including humanitarian actors, the refugee community and relevant government actors.



WASH

Financial Requirements: USD 4,526,887

- Hygiene promotion and awareness raising
- Provision of sufficient and safe water supplies, sanitation services and waste disposal in camps
- Provision of sufficient and safe WASH services in essential public services
- Distribution of COVID-19 prevention and hygiene kits

The WASH Sector has identified 5 COVID-19 specific priority activities that primarily focus on a response to camp populations. In the event that COVID-19 enters a camp, given the concentration of the people at household levels and the proximity of shelters, social distancing and isolation of suspected and confirmed cases will be difficult to maintain, and the virus is likely to quickly spread throughout the population.

The current situation exacerbates specific vulnerabilities and challenges refugee households are facing and puts more strains on essential services, such as lack of access and ability to purchase key hygiene materials that are otherwise available for the general population. The WASH Sector Iraq has developed a COVID-19 preventive and response technical guidance note for its partners and other relevant stakeholders.

WASH actors will continue to ensure that refugee households in camps are provided with water (more liters per household than the normal standard). Services, such as desludging, water trucking, and garbage collection, are essential and must continue whether there is an active outbreak or not. The WASH Sector will continue advocacy with local authorities and camp management to prevent disruptions of services, which could lead to an increase in disease spread.

The WASH Sector recommends house-to-house hygiene promotion as opposed to mass hygiene promotion. Hygiene promotion will be conducted by trained staff, community/block level volunteers, and in collaboration with camp management and Health partners.

The WASH Sector COVID-19 Prevention Kit is designed as a preventive measure. These kits are designed as a “top up” kit on top of regular hygiene kit distributions from previous or in upcoming months. Blanket distribution of the COVID-19 kits is suggested in camp settings given the close proximity of households. Out of camp, vulnerable households will be identified using criteria such as age, pre-existing medical conditions, and risks of exposure. Additionally, cleaning kits for households and communal facilities should also be distributed. To minimize close contacts among the population, large gatherings of people are not recommended for distribution of hygiene kits. The WASH Sector instead recommends that the kits be distributed directly to households through door to door distributions.



LIVELIHOODS

Financial Requirements: USD 4,780,000

- Increased targets for Livelihoods interventions (cash-for-work)
- Referrals to and coordination with Food, Basic Needs and Protection Sector

support from social protection schemes, have access to sufficient livelihoods and income-generating support in case they lost their sources of income, are unable to cover their basic needs or resorting to negative coping mechanisms.

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