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## The United Nations calls on Iraq to ratify the Convention Against Torture

By Latifa Laghzaoui, UNAMI Human Rights Office

On the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, celebrated worldwide on June 26, the United Nations in Iraq called on the Government of Iraq to ratify the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and the provisions of its Optional Protocol.

Iraq has acceded to five out of nine core human rights treaties, as well as the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Iraq has also adopted the 1981 Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, the 1990 Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam and the 1994 Arab Charter on Human Rights. It is worth noting that article VII of the Universal Islamic Declaration stipulates the right to protection against torture - a call that is reiterated in Articles 20 and 13 of the Cairo Declaration and the Arab Charter.

The ratification and effective implementation of this Convention would contribute to :

- ◆ Enable the Iraqi authorities to rigorously ensure that all acts of torture are offences under its criminal law and therefore punishable by appropriate penalties, taking into account their grave nature;
- ◆ Protect individuals from harm caused by a state or its agents, including security forces, by promoting minimum standards for interrogation, investigations, custody and treatment of persons subjected to any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment;
- ◆ Empower the disadvantaged and marginalized by contributing to a more just and inclusive society;
- ◆ Improve relations between communities and law enforcement officials by enhancing the latter performance;



Painting by an Iraqi artist depicting a woman hostage to international silence. The painting is part of a competition organised by UNAMI PIO in 2008. Photo:UNAMI PIO

- ◆ Improve security and stability in Iraq by strengthening governance effectiveness and the Rule of Law;
- ◆ Provide a legal framework for accountability as Iraq would be requested to report to the Committee Against Torture - a body of human rights experts that monitors implementation of the Convention by State parties - in line with the requirements of the Convention;
- ◆ Provide an opportunity to strengthen intra-government cooperation;
- ◆ Contribute to ensuring a more effective participation of the civil society in development processes;
- ◆ Encourage a more effective constructive engagement by the international community and its members in support of Iraq by raising the positive profile and image of Iraq at the international level. ■



**“Iraq has come a long way in recognizing human rights as a priority for**

**building a democratic State where human dignity is preserved and protected but there is yet much more to be done. I urge the Government of Iraq to ratify this important United Nations Convention in the near future and to commit to its principles ”**

*Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ad Melkert*

## Iraq has signed, ratified or acceded to the following Covenants and Conventions:

- ◆ International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racism (ICERD), 14 January 1970
- ◆ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 25 January 1971
- ◆ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 25 January 1971
- ◆ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 13 August 1986
- ◆ Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 15 June 1994
- ◆ Optional Protocol (OP)

## Core treaties to which Iraq is not party to include::

- Optional Protocol 1 and Optional Protocol 2 - ICCPR
- Optional Protocol - CEDAW
- Optional Protocol - ICESCR, CAT
- Optional Protocol - CAT
- Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPD) and CPD-Optional Protocol
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW)

**“ Let us speak with one voice against the perpetrators of torture, and for all who suffer at their hands. And let us build a better, more humane world for all people everywhere ”**



United Nations Secretary-General,  
Ban Ki-moon

## Convention Against Torture - Background brief

By Latifa Laghzaoui, UNAMI Human Rights Office

Torture is a serious crime under international law. It is a human rights violation condemned by the international community as an offence to human dignity and prohibited in all circumstances under international law. In some circumstances it can amount to a war crime, a crime against humanity or genocide. Yet torture and the threat of torture are a daily reality for people around the globe.

Since its creation, the United Nations has worked to eradicate torture. Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment". On 10 December 1984, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), which entered into force on 26 June 1987.

Article 1 of the CAT defines "torture" as "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions".

The term "torture" encompasses a variety of methods including severe beatings, electric shock, sexual abuse and rape, prolonged solitary confinement, hard labour, near

drowning, near suffocation, mutilation, and hanging for prolonged periods. Although there is no exhaustive list of prohibited acts, international law has made it clear that torture is "cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment".

Other provisions of the CAT include a ban on torture and cruel and degrading treatment. Article 2 requires states to take effective legal and other measures to prevent torture in any territory under their jurisdiction. These include acknowledging that torture is a criminal offence (Article 4), and establishing jurisdiction over acts of torture committed by or against a party's citizens (Article 5). The CAT also declares that "no exceptional circumstances whatsoever" may be invoked to justify torture including war such as state of emergency or other external threats. It notes explicitly that neither higher orders nor exceptional circumstances can justify torture (Article 2).

The CAT also forbids countries from returning, extraditing or refouling any person to a state "where there are substantial grounds to believing that the individual would be in danger of being subjected to torture" (Article 3).

Largely perceived as a landmark treaty, the adoption of the CAT was an important step in the much-needed process of globalizing human rights and acknowledging that torture, and all forms of inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, are absolutely and universally illegal. In 1997, the General Assembly decided to mark this historic date and designated 26 June each year as the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The CAT has been honoured around the world since 1998 to show solidarity with and support for torture survivors and to

promote the ultimate goal of a torture-free world.

To date 147 UN Member States have ratified the CAT, while the remaining 45 are yet to ratify this Convention<sup>1</sup>. These States parties are required to report to the UN Committee Against Torture, a human rights treaty body set up in 1987 to monitor compliance with the Convention and to assist States parties in implementing its provisions. Although the vast majority of states have put in place laws that prohibit torture, many still practice this crime and fail to prosecute the officials who commit it. Some states, including well established democracies, continue to maintain amnesties that protect torturers from prosecution and deny justice, reparation and rehabilitation to torture victims. ■

<sup>1</sup>List of states that have accessed, signed or ratified the CAT.



**“ Torturers, and their superiors, need to hear the following message loud and clear: however powerful you are today, there is a strong chance that sooner or later you will be held to account for your inhumanity. Governments, the United Nations, NGOs, human rights defenders, the media and all the rest of us need to ensure that this message is backed by firm action ”**

United Nations High Commissioner for  
Human Rights,  
Navi Pillay

## EU and UNOPS assist 3,000 victims of torture in Iraq with access to rehabilitation services

By Dina Basian and Caroline Hammarberg, UNOPS Iraq



Painting by an Iraqi artist depicting torture. The painting is part of a competition organised by UNAMI PIO in 2008. Photo UNAMI PIO

The practice of torture has been reported in Iraq both before and after the fall of the former regime in 2003. As victims suffer psychological complexities such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression, and relatives run an increased risk of violence and secondary traumatising, the need for preventive measures and rehabilitation services persists.

For the past two years, the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) have been managing a project dealing with the protection of detainees and torture victims. The project supports two local rehabilitation centres in the north and south of Iraq.

To date, these centres have treated about 3,000 men, women and children within the framework of this EU funded project that is being implemented by UNOPS. Vulnerable individuals living in suburban

areas surrounding the two centres have also been reached by mobile teams and reintegration activities have been conducted with the aim of facilitating the productive re-involvement of victims of torture in the community.

“To victims of torture and their families, the access to rehabilitation services can reduce daily challenges and mean the chance for a normal life. Every person rehabilitated is a great victory”, said UNOPS Human Rights Portfolio Manager, Ms Micaela Pasini.

In addition to advocacy on the prevention of torture, the centres’ staff was trained to provide medical and psychotherapeutic services to primary and secondary victims of torture, victims of violence and internally displaced persons.

On June 26, in observance of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture,

the rehabilitation centre in the south brought patients and their families together with experts on the rights of torture victims in an advocacy event. In addition, the centre in the north issued a press release calling on the Government of Iraq to ratify the UN Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The Kirkuk Centre for Torture Victims in Northern Iraq offers specialised child rehabilitation programmes through play, music, sand and group therapy. A team from the centre also periodically visits the juvenile prisons, offering a weekly rehabilitation program to traumatized youth who are able to continue their rehabilitation at the centre even after being released. ■

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## United Nations task force of grave child rights violations established

By UNAMI Human Rights Office and UNICEF

In an effort to strengthen the United Nations' implementation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations against children in Iraq, on June 7 the MRM Country Task Force, co-chaired by UNAMI and UNICEF, was formally established.

The MRM Task Force is comprised of relevant UN entities, represented at the most senior level in the country, and includes UNAMI, UNICEF, OCHA, UNHCR, UNOHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, ILO, UNOPS, WHO, DSS, and UNIFEM<sup>2</sup>, as well as international agencies such as the ICRC (as an observer) and international and national non-governmental organizations.

The MRM Task Force is leading the United Nations and the international community's efforts to develop strategic action plans to engage and maintain dialogue with the Government and parties to the conflict to put an end to all grave violations that are continuing against children. The Task Force also works to improve the protection of children affected by conflict in Iraq.

Last year, for the first time, the United Nations Secretary-General listed Iraq as a country where grave violations against children were occurring which, according to Security Council Resolution 1612, triggered the initial establishment of the MRM. Consequently, in the last 12 months, UNICEF has trained a total of 327 UN and NGO staff in the most conflict-affected areas of Iraq to monitor and report on grave child rights violations thereby significantly improving the identification and verification of violations that are taking place. Between January and June 2010, the MRM has confirmed 166 children killed and 161 injured due to violent incidents.

The MRM focuses on six grave child rights violations including: the killing and maiming of children; the recruitment and use of children associated with armed forces and groups; abductions; rape and other acts of grave sexual violence against children; attacks on schools and hospitals and denial of humanitarian access.

The MRM Task Force is guided by specific terms of reference that have been developed in-country but follow a global template developed by the Office of the Secre-

tary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. Iraq is one of 13 countries globally where a UN MRM Task Force is officially established. ■

<sup>2</sup>List of Acronyms used in this article:

**OCHA:**

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**UNHCR:**

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**UNOHCHR:**

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

**UNDP:**

United Nations Development Programme

**UNFPA:**

United Nations Population Fund

**UN-HABITAT:**

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

**ILO:**

International Labour Organization

**UNOPS:**

United Nations Office for Project Services

**WHO:**

World Health Organization

**UNIFEM:**

United Nations Development Fund for Women

**UN DSS:**

United Nations Department of Safety and Security

**ICRC:**

International Committee of the Red Cross



Children peering into the shell of a bombed car. Photo: UNICEF/Sabah Arar

## Foundation stone laying ceremony: Rebirth of Erbil Citadel

By George Papagiannis, UNESCO Iraq

With the placement of a ceremonial stone, the Erbil Citadel entered a new phase in its rebirth as one of Iraq's enduring historical and cultural treasures. The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRS), Mr. Ad Melkert, participated in the foundation stone laying ceremony that was held at the Citadel on 30 June.

The ceremony marks the second phase of the implementation of a project in which UNESCO is assisting the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalization (HCECR) in carrying out urgent preventive works on ten of the Citadel's most unstable buildings.

UNESCO's work in support of the Citadel dates back to 2007 with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding for phase one. Since then, UNESCO has expanded its efforts. In addition to the work that will be undertaken as part of phase two, the organization is working with local and national authorities in their efforts to enlist the site on the World Heritage List. This year, an initial step was taken with the placement of the Citadel on the Tentative List.

In his speech, the Governor of Erbil, Mr Nawzad Hadi, stressed the importance of the work that is currently underway to conserve and rehabilitate the Erbil Citadel, and expressed his hope that the Citadel would soon be a World Heritage Site.

The Director of the UNESCO Iraq Office, Mr Mohammed Djelid, says restoration of the Citadel yields many positives that may not be obvious. "There is the collaboration between the national authorities and the Kurdistan Regional Government, for example, as well as the impact on tourism development and job creation in the city".

SRS Melkert said that he was impressed



SRS Ad Melkert, and Head of the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalization, Dara Al-Yaqoubi, lay foundation stones at the Erbil Citadel. Photo: UNESCO

with the beauty of the Citadel, and that he supports the efforts of UNESCO and the Kurdistan authorities toward its rehabilitation.

This second phase of the Erbil Citadel Revitalization Project builds on the first phase that aimed at reinforcing local capacities in the field of conservation and restoration techniques, undertaking studies for urgent remedial works to prevent further damage, and establishing a Conservation Master Plan. Phase two of the project was planned with a view to enhance the capacities of the HCECR, while at the same time carrying out the implementation of projects on the ground. Other elements of the project include:

◆ Establishing Management and Operational Procedures;

◆ Capacity building of the HCECR;

◆ Development and Rehabilitation of the Citadel;

◆ Stabilization of the Citadel Slope and Buildings.

According to the World Heritage Centre, the Citadel is regarded as one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the world, dating back 7,000 years. Its urban fabric, the current layout of streets and buildings, is thought to date back several hundred years, and of the 500 houses about 330 are considered to be of important cultural and architectural interest. ■

For more information, please contact George Papagiannis: [g.papagiannis@unesco.org](mailto:g.papagiannis@unesco.org)

## Photo Gallery



Governor of Erbil, Nawzad Hadi, talks to the press following the ceremony at the Erbil Citadel. Photo: UNAMI PIO



Inside Erbil citadel Photo: UNESCO



View of Erbil Citadel Photo: UNESCO

## Over 300 families displaced by conflict in Sulaimaniya receive aid

By Antonio Salanga, IOM Iraq

Recent military actions along the borders of Iraq's Kurdistan region have displaced hundreds of families in the governorate of Sulaimaniya. Many of the families taking refuge in Sangasar lost their homes and livestock to artillery fire, and found themselves living in tents

with few basic supplies. In response to this situation, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has distributed essential relief items to the families displaced into the sub-district of Sangasar.

Aiming to reduce the difficulty endured by being displaced, IOM dispatched eight trucks loaded with relief items to the families in need of assistance. The beneficiaries, who were identified in cooperation with local authorities and community leaders, received a kit of household items including mattresses, bed frames, plastic cabinets, ice chests, carpets, water filters, pillows and blankets. Distribution of these items began immediately

upon the arrival of the trucks in Sangasar and continued late into the night to ensure that every family received assistance.

Having addressed the most immediate needs of the displaced families, IOM is providing continued assistance with a comprehensive package of community assistance and livelihood development initiatives through its Programme for Human Security and Stabilization.

As a member of the UN Country Team (UNCT) for Iraq, IOM Iraq works closely with the UN system and the Iraqi authorities in support of the Iraqi National Development Plan 2010 - 2014, and is integrated into all sector outcome teams of the UNCT Coordination Structure. ■

For more information, please contact Antonio Salanga: [asalanga@iom.int](mailto:asalanga@iom.int)



IOM trucks carrying aid kits being offloaded in Sangasar. Photo: IOM

## Development

### UN-HABITAT strengthens the capacity of Iraqi planners

By Rafid Al Hamawandi, UN-HABITAT Iraq

In towns and cities, the growing confidence in the future of Iraq translates into demand for land and sites for housing, schools, commercial and business use. Managing this demand and creating an appropriate land use plan and infrastructure investment framework to support it, is the role of town and city planners. However, a number of qualified planners taking on this challenging task tend to have limited planning skills.

To support ongoing rebuilding efforts as the country recovers from decades of conflict, the UN-HABITAT project on Urban Development Capacity Building has been focusing on training and building the skills of Iraqi planning officials from the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works (MMPW) and the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation (MoPDC).

In consultation with relevant ministries, UN-HABITAT selected professionals and academics from the private sector and academic institutions including the High Institute of Urban and Regional Planning in Baghdad University and the University of Erbil to be trained as 'Trainers of Trainers' commonly called 'ToTs'. This type of initiative caters for the increasing demand of training of planners.

A ten-day training course on Urban Planning and Local Economic Development was con-

ducted over the course of April in Baghdad and Erbil. Some 52 staff from MMPW, MPDC and Ministry of Municipalities in Kurdistan Regional Government participated in this training.

Developed in collaboration with the Government Organisation of Physical Planning, Egypt, the training programme introduced latest and best practices in urban planning and economic development.

Topics covered included strategic planning, design and planning standards, development control, informal settlements, land rights and management issues. A team of experts focused on local economic development examining the linkages between land use planning and economic objectives and how to prepare a local economic development plan.

It is too early to measure the success of the application of these new approaches. However, there is a growing understanding and commitment to participatory and strategic planning approaches within target ministries. Similarly the need to link economic development

planning with land use planning objectives is increasingly acknowledged.

Key planning staff are keen to apply lessons more holistically and UN-HABITAT is considering implementing a programme that will upgrade the training for planners within the tertiary education sector. At the same time, establishing a more proactive professional institute for planners in Iraq providing short courses, networking and learning exchange and formal courses of study is under consideration. ■



Iraqis participate in a training course on urban planning and local economic development. Photo: UN-HABITAT

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## UNDP supports strengthening of the Rule of Law framework in Iraq

By Paal Aarsaether, UNDP Iraq

Reduced access to justice severely impacts on communities, especially women and the most vulnerable. The latter have limited access to the formal justice system and little confidence in its workings, often relying on traditional justice mechanisms instead. While these play an important role in promoting social reconciliation, they are often not compliant with national and international human rights standards.



Representatives of UNDP-Iraq and other partners supporting the Court in Erbil. Photo: UNDP

Since 2008, UNDP has been implementing an EU-funded project to improve Iraq's operational Rule of Law framework for administration and justice, to increase the efficiency of the justice system to provide greater court transparency, accessibility and accountability, as well as contributing to the rebuilding of social cohesion and consolidation of peace in the country.

The project includes the piloting of "model courts", where UNDP's support is

provided to pilot courts in Erbil and Basra through a comprehensive package of capacity development activities, which include technical assistance; training on substantive legal and human rights and court management issues; automation of the court and development of case management systems; establishment of legal research units and associated training; promoting accessibility to the court - focussing on vulnerable and disadvantaged people - and a broad rights awareness raising campaign.

The US\$20 million project supports the Erbil Investigative Judges Court to improve the court's operations and accessibility. A recent meeting was held in Erbil where Head Judge, Dahan Akram, met with representatives of UNDP-Iraq and other partners to review the jointly-developed strategic plan for the court.

Under the plan, UNDP-Iraq and other partners will work together with the Erbil Court to streamline case handling, provide training for judicial staff on legal issues, management and court administration, establish a legal research unit and promote public awareness of legal rights and the role of the Judiciary.

"The strategic plan is the basis for support to the Erbil Investigative Judges' Court provided by international organisations.

The plan ensures that international assistance to the Court follows the priorities of the Kurdish Judicial Council and will strengthen the Judiciary to operate effectively and uphold the rights of people", said Mohamed el Ghannam, Officer-in-Charge of UNDP-Iraq's governance team.

The three-year project specifically contributes toward Millennium Development Goal 3: "Promoting gender equality and empowering women", as the lack of application of Rule of Law is rendering women more vulnerable to social, tribal and religious rulings and practices, as well as variances in application of court rulings.

As the largest United Nations agency in Iraq, UNDP has over 140 national and international staff based at its headquarters in Amman, Jordan, and in Baghdad, Erbil, Basra, Ramadi and Najaf in Iraq. With an annual budget of some US\$90 million, UNDP has delivered over US\$500 million in humanitarian and development aid to Iraq since 2004.

UNDP's role is to support the government and the people of Iraq in their transition towards reconciliation, peace and stability by focusing on the areas of governance, poverty alleviation, economic recovery, mine action and environment. Currently the agency implements over 60 projects across Iraq. ■

For more information, please contact Paal Aarsaether: [Paal.Aarsaether@undp.org](mailto:Paal.Aarsaether@undp.org)

### News Briefs

## UNESCO's program for the development of communication

The UNESCO-Iraq office announced its International Program for the Development of Communication (IPDC), which is a UNESCO grants-making program. The IPDC is designed to develop free and pluralistic media that contributes to democratic development.

The program offers a maximum of US\$40,000 grant to media projects that promote freedom of expression and media pluralism, develop community-based media, and develop human resources within a media framework.

UNESCO indicates that projects submitted for consideration under the promotion of freedom of expression and media pluralism should encourage the free flow of

information at the national as well as the international levels, as well as strengthening of communication capacities in developing countries. Within the context of Iraq, this includes the development of democratic and participatory media initiatives for citizens through the opening of information channels to individual beneficiaries and/or communities who may not otherwise have access to mainstream media.

Projects should also aim to promote the increase of information dissemination within and beyond local communities, and to develop networks with similar media initiatives both regionally and internationally. UNESCO's call for proposals insist on the respect of freedom of expression and

on the development of community-based media initiatives by ensuring media pluralism, diversity of content, and the representation of different groups and interests, including the voices of women and youth.

According to the call for proposals, the selection process will be highly competitive. Only proposals that address the IPDC's priorities will be considered upon the review of UNESCO's communication advisers. Proposals that do not follow the submission instructions will be returned and may not be considered for funding. ■

Submit proposals to: [ipdc@iraq.unesco.org](mailto:ipdc@iraq.unesco.org)

For further information, please visit <http://www.unesco.org>

## World Refugee Day: Some Iraqis returned home; others remain displaced

On World Refugee day, honoured on 20 June of each year, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Iraq paid tribute to the thousands of Iraqi refugees outside of Iraq as well as to the hundreds of thousands of displaced Iraqis in their country. This year, the selected theme of World Refugee Day 2010 was *Home*.

With the help of the Government of Iraq and with international support, some 500,000 Iraqis from neighbouring countries and from inside Iraq have returned to their homes in the past two and a half years.

“UNHCR has been helping many families to restart their lives in their communities. For instance, through the Diyala Initiative

to re-integrate returnees, we have rehabilitated over 3,200 shelter units since last year”, said Daniel Endres, UNHCR Representative in Iraq.

The Diyala Initiative was launched in September 2009, and is led by the Government of Iraq which, in partnership with 10 international actors, supports the reintegration of returnees into their Governorate. In the past year, UNHCR has rehabilitated and constructed over 10,000 shelter units in Iraq, benefiting some 65,000 people.

UNHCR is assisting Iraqis through its 15 Protection and Assistance Centres and 40 mobile teams which provide free legal services to returnees. Despite the returns, 1.5 million Iraqis remain internally dis-

placed living under very poor conditions. According to Mr. Endres, the lack of housing, access to basic social services in their areas of origin and insecurity in some parts of Iraq constitute a major challenge for their return.

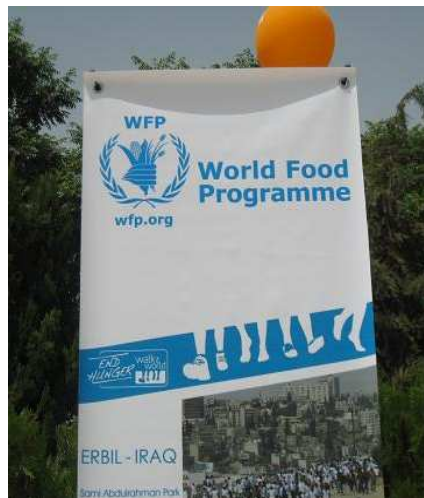
On the occasion of World Refugee Day, UNHCR called on donors to increase their contributions to ensure that return is a realistic and sustainable option for Iraqi returnees. UNHCR’s budget for its operation in Iraq for 2010 amounts to US\$264 million. To date the agency has only received US\$75 million for its operation inside Iraq. ■

For more information, please contact Helen Caux: [caux@unhcr.org](mailto:caux@unhcr.org)

## Thousands walk together to fight hunger

On Sunday 6 June, thousands of people took to the streets of Erbil, Kurdistan region of Iraq, and in cities around the world to show their support for the work of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in the fight against global hunger. This was the first time such an event was held in Iraq. The 160 walks that took place in 70 countries across the globe raised funds to feed 10,000 children in school for one year.

Officials from the Kurdistan Regional Government led the Walk through the Sami Abdulrahman Park in Erbil where over 250 participants gathered for the occasion. The Ministry of Culture had arranged a children’s music group to accompany other school children who came from Chamchamal district in Sulaimaniya to



Walk the World WFP banner, Sami Abdulrahman Park, Erbil. Photo: UNAMI PIO

perform traditional dances and songs for the audience.

Launched eight years ago, the *Walk the World* initiative is sponsored by three of WFP’s global private sector partners: global mail service provider TNT, consumer goods company Unilever and nutrition and life-science specialists DSM.

Many other partners showed their support through online activism where fans posted pictures and videos and participated in a virtual walk by making a donation. A photo competition for the best pictures from the walks around the world ran until 11 June 2010. ■

For more information, please visit: [www.wfp.org/walktheworld](http://www.wfp.org/walktheworld)

## Photo Gallery



Walk participants at the Sami Abdulrahman Park in Erbil. Photo: UNAMI PIO



Launching balloons after the Walk. Photo: UNAMI PIO



Traditional Kurdish dancers perform at the event. Photo: UNAMI PIO



## United Nations in Action

### UNDP:

◆UNDP-supported Rule of Law project convened a meeting on 9 June in Erbil at the Erbil Investigative Judges Court with the Head Judge of Erbil Investigative Judges' Court and other partner organizations. The meeting examined the jointly developed strategic plan for the Court, which was prepared with the assistance of UNDP and funded by the European Union.

### UNESCO:

◆Ministry of Higher Education officials, and Journalism educators and students from Iraqi universities, including Kurdish institutions, joined UNESCO experts in June at a four-day workshop in Amman to discuss unifying the journalism curricula in all schools and updating it in accordance with international standards. The UNESCO Model Curricula for Journalism Education in Developing Countries was used as a reference guide, providing the basis for a meaningful discussion about the goals and objectives of journalism education in Iraq. In addition, the workshop explored ways of adapting a modernized curriculum for the internet and creating distance learning opportunities through e-Learning. Professors, students, Ministry officials and experts left the workshop with homework for the next several months that will set the framework for the development of the updated curriculum and e-Learning tools. They will reconvene in the fall and expect to present a draft curriculum for consideration by colleagues and Ministry of Higher Education officials by the end of the year.

### UNICEF:

◆In June, with funds from the USA, UNICEF completed the construction of two Primary Health Care Centres in villages in Basra and Qadisiya governorates and the expansion of three primary health centres in Marshlands villages in Thi-Qar governorate. The five health centres have improved delivery of health services to more

than 170,000 people in some of the most rural and impoverished areas of Iraq thereby contributing to the attainment of MDG 4 - reducing child mortality, MDG 5 -

improving maternal health, and MDG 6 - reducing disease. With funds from Australia, UNICEF also completed water and sanitation facilities in seven schools in Thi-Qar and Erbil governorates benefiting over 2,500 children and contributing to the attainment of MDG 2 - universal primary school education and MDG 7 - improving access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation services. In two rural villages in north Basra governorate, around 20,000 villagers now have access to safe drinking water due to a water network that UNICEF completed and handed over to Iraqi authorities.

### UNIDO:

◆The United Nations Industrial Development Organization initiated a four-week Community Leadership Programme focusing on Community Development and Planning; Local Economic Development/Enterprise Development, Project Management, Strategic Management and Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in support for job creation and self-employment through the promotion of micro industries in the Ninewa governorate.

### UNOPS:

◆On 23-27 June, the United Nations Office for Project Services organised a training in Erbil aiming at strengthening partnerships between civil society and local authorities from Basra, Thi-Qar, Missan, Muthanna. The training served as a forum for dialogue and interaction and focused on citizens' participation concepts, community mobilization, networking, accountability, advocacy, and coalition building to improve the quality of the awareness raising campaigns under implementation.

### WFP:

◆According to the joint 2008 World Food Programme and Government of Iraq Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis, food insecurity in Iraq is a result of many chronic factors, and their complex interactions, including low income and high unemployment. To help the most vulnerable in Iraq and protect them from food insecurity, WFP provided

food assistance to 2,097 pregnant and lactating women, 76,494 malnourished children and their families and 365 Tuberculosis patients in the identified most vulnerable districts. Some 238,637 school children benefited from nourishing date bars.

◆In June, WFP received a contribution from the Iraq Trust Fund Steering Committee to help reform the public distribution system. The project seeks to strengthen the Government of Iraq's capacity to efficiently manage the supply chain of the public distribution system including procurement, shipping, quality control, pipeline management, logistics including land transport, warehousing and commodity tracking, monitoring of the public distribution system and strategic grain reserves. The project assists the Government in designing and implementing effective social safety nets to protect the most vulnerable groups.

◆An induction workshop for the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) took place in Erbil on 20-21 June. Participants from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Trade, UNICEF, WHO, NGOs and WFP came together to discuss partnership strategies for strengthening programme quality and implementation as well as longer-term perspectives on School Feeding and Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition in Iraq. WFP is currently negotiating with the Government of Iraq to fund the PRRO activities. ■

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