



# UNHCR IRAQ

## MONTHLY UPDATE

### May 2025

"Sometimes we're contacted directly by refugees or their families through our hotline, sometimes the police station informs us, or other times the investigation judge," explains Raghda, a lawyer with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), UNHCR's legal partner. "Either way we can then step into provide legal representation for the detained individual." Lawyers like Raghda not only respond when called upon — they also work proactively to identify refugees in detention and ensure they receive the legal support they need. Read her story [here](#).

## i CONTEXT

Iraq generously hosts over 339,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, 90% of whom are Syrian and live in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.<sup>1</sup> Close to 83% of refugees in Iraq live in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Of these, some 30% live in nine refugee camps while the majority live in urban areas. Iraq also has over 1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). While the majority live in private accommodation in urban settings or informal settlements, over 104,600 individuals live in 20 IDP camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.<sup>2</sup>

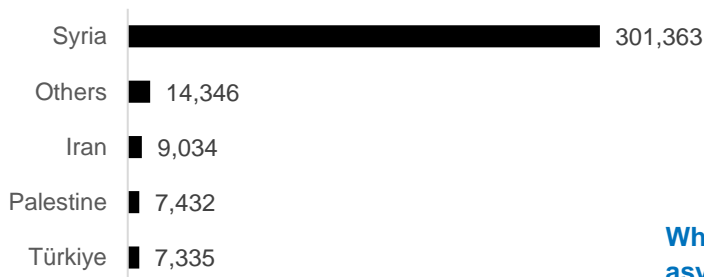
UNHCR works with the Government of Iraq and partners to support the access of refugees and asylum-seekers to protection and their inclusion in public services, such as education and healthcare, as well as their access to economic opportunities and in advancing solutions.

**21%**  
**Funded**

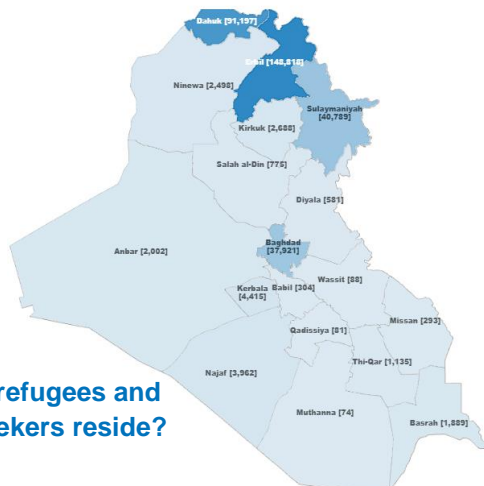
of the \$158.5 million required by UNHCR in 2025 to protect people forced to flee in Iraq

## POPULATION AT A GLANCE

### Where do refugees come from?



### Where do refugees and asylum seekers reside?



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by UN

<sup>1</sup> Some 339,510 refugees are registered with UNHCR in Iraq as of 31 May 2025.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR stats as of 31 May 2025. Around 390 IDPs departed camps in May 2025.

## MAY MONTHLY ACHIEVEMENTS (figures are subject to revision over the course of the year)


**15,100**

Refugees newly registered or verified their registration with UNHCR. This process allows refugees to access government-issued documentation and protects against refoulement.


**213**

Refugees and asylum-seekers released from detention thanks to legal support and interventions by UNHCR and partners.


**174**

Refugees and asylum-seekers prevented from deportation thanks to legal support and advocacy by UNHCR and partners.


**351**

Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned to Syria.


**81**

Refugees departed to different third countries through resettlement.



## WHAT'S NEW IN IRAQ...

- **351 registered Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers returned home in May through the Peshkhabour border crossing.** This represents slight decrease compared to the number of registered returns in April (478). Moreover, according to Al-Qaim border authorities, 57 Syrians, who declared having registered with UNHCR, also crossed the border to Syria during the reporting period (comparable with 58 Syrian refugees in April). UNHCR continues to provide counselling and information to Syrian refugees contemplating return. UNHCR Iraq is supporting the dissemination of [Syria is home](#), a website developed by UNHCR Syria providing information to address some questions refugees may have about the processes and services available to support their return journey to Syria.
- In May, UNHCR and legal partner INTERSOS continued to support Iraqi returnees in Al-Amal centre to obtain their civil documentation. This included taking 245 Iraqi returnees– who were not able to complete their applications inside Al-Amal - to process their applications for national identity documents with the Ministry of Interior at the Civil Affairs Directorate in Mosul. **In 2025, a total of 1,600 applications for national identity documents have been submitted for Iraqi returnees in Al-Amal, with 1,300 national identity card documents issued to date.**
- **In May, UNHCR provided cash assistance to over 7,700 households (41,300 individuals) of the most socio-economically vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers in Iraq.** Many recipients are single mothers, people with disabilities, or survivors of gender-based violence. UNHCR's cash assistance helps refugees cover their basic needs allowing them to pay rent, buy food and other household essentials. This reduces the risk of vulnerable groups falling into dire poverty and decreases the risk of people resorting to harmful coping mechanisms reducing food intake and accumulating debt. Due to funding shortages, UNHCR also informed 1,500 refugee households that they will no longer receive cash assistance from June, having only received support for six out of the originally planned twelve months. Similarly, the remaining 5,000 households were notified that cash assistance amount will be reduced - from an average of \$250 per family to \$150.
- **UNHCR met with authorities from the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the Directorate of Combating Violence Against Women (DCVAW) to discuss upcoming changes to the protection services it provides to refugees.** [Due to financial constraints, UNHCR will phase out from offering some services – such as child protection, support for survivors of gender-based violence, community programmes and mental health and psychosocial support - by the end of June 2025, earlier than initially planned.](#) Gradual transition had been foreseen in the 2025 – 2029 multi-year strategy, the funding constraints accelerated the timelines. This decision has been made as refugees can access these protection services through public programmes provided by the Government of Iraq, which MOLSA and DCVAW reaffirmed during the meetings. For the remainder of 2025, UNHCR will prioritize engagement with authorities on policy and legal reforms, legal assistance, registration, and cash assistance for the most vulnerable refugee families, and support for self-organized returns to Syria.



## SPECIAL THANKS TO PARTNERS

UNHCR in Iraq thanks its major partners of unearmarked funds, as well as those who contribute to directly to the Iraq operation and to the regional response for Syrian refugees: [Australia](#) | [Belgium](#) | [Canada](#) | [Denmark](#) | [España con ACNUR](#) | [European Union](#) | [Finland](#) | [France](#) | [Germany](#) | [Ireland](#) | [Italy](#) | [Japan for UNHCR](#) | [Netherlands](#) | [Norway](#) | [Republic of Korea](#) | [Sweden](#) | [Switzerland](#) | [United Kingdom](#) | [United States of America](#) | [UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe](#)