



Iraq Country Profile

Urban Context

Urban challenges in Iraq are twofold:

1. Risks of Rapid Urbanization

Iraq's cities accommodate more than 70% of the population and are growing rapidly. Many people, particularly the poor, live in sub-standard housing and informal settlements, and suffer from the side-effects of polluted water sources, poor air quality and growing traffic congestion.

2. Destruction after the Fight against ISIL

Iraq has been challenged by multiple conflicts resulting in a protracted political crisis and instability for more than four decades. The 2014-2017 occupation by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) created one of the world's most complex humanitarian crises. Although ISIL was declared militarily defeated in 2017, the physical destruction of the cities affected by fighting is tremendous. As displaced families return in ever increasing numbers to their communities of origin, many find that their homes require major repairs, exacerbating pre-conflict housing shortages in the country. This also results in people moving into crowded living conditions with relatives, renting or setting up temporary shelters in abandoned or destroyed buildings. The Government of Iraq estimated in 2018 that the reconstruction of areas damaged in the fight against ISIL will exceed USD 100 billion.



Total population is 41.1 million



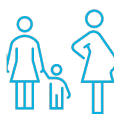
Iraq's cities accommodate more than 70% of the population



12.9% of the population live in informal areas



1.7 million have been displaced



2.5 million are in need of humanitarian assistance



100+ billion is needed for reconstruction of areas damaged in the fight with ISIL

UN-Habitat in Iraq



UN-Habitat has been active in Iraq since 1996. After 2003, UN-Habitat was largely engaged in early recovery efforts, particularly those supporting internally displaced persons (IDPs) through the provision of shelter and reconstruction solutions. Since then, the portfolio of UN-Habitat Iraq has expanded beyond emergency responses to include humanitarian programmes, such as providing IDPs and returnees with dignified shelter and living environment and development programmes that provide technical and capacity development support to the national and local government counterparts through activities such as development of the National Urban Strategy and the National Housing Policy, upgrading informal settlements, and support to decentralization. UN-Habitat also chairs the Housing, Land and Property Rights Sub-Cluster in Iraq under the Protection Cluster and represents on the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) Cluster and Shelter Cluster Strategic Advisory Groups.

Following the conflict with ISIL, UN-Habitat has been engaged in the rehabilitation of war damaged houses and WASH and communal infrastructure, enabling local skilled and unskilled workers to be engaged in rebuilding their communities. In addition, through the provision of vocational training and by creating skilled and unskilled job opportunities, UN-Habitat enables young men and women from the affected communities to broaden their skills and increase the employment rate.

Through its interventions, UN-Habitat has contributed to:

- Improved living conditions of approximately 50,000 IDPs and returnees through rehabilitation of more than 3,100 war-damaged houses and construction of more than 4,000 durable housing units.
- Rehabilitation and upgrading of public spaces and infrastructure including water and sanitation facilities, health clinics, and primary and secondary schools.
- Protected housing, land and property rights of approximately 40,000 IDPs, returnees and minorities through provision of legal support and recognition of occupancy rights.
- Supported livelihoods of young men and women in conflict-affected communities through vocational training and job creation for approximately 2,500 persons.
- Improved living conditions of informal settlements across Iraq.
- Enhanced technical capacity of the Government of Iraq to collect, manage and analyse data for better urban planning

US\$ 40,000,000

Total Value of Ongoing Projects

8

Number of Active Projects in 2023

BUILDING BACK BETTER IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED CITIES



24 months



US\$ 5,000,000



Mosul in Ninewa Governorate, Ramadi and Faullujah in Anbar Governorate, Baiji in Salah Al Din Governorate



Ministry of Planning, Relevant governorates and municipalities



2,722,000 in targeted cities

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to promote reconstruction and sustainable development of key conflict-affected cities through an integrated and strategic urban planning process and the development of the technical capacity of relevant counterparts. The project contributes to strengthening the humanitarian and development nexus by directly supporting national and local counterparts, particularly Ninewa Governorate, to make a seamless transition from emergency phase to development phase and to facilitate collaboration between humanitarian and development actors in conflict-affected cities through effective urban planning processes.

Project Description

Under this project, UN-Habitat will train the local authorities and civil society in drafting multi- sectoral city-wide strategic spatial and area- based community plans that integrate housing, infrastructure, services, and livelihoods in a way that recognizes the needs, voice, and role of women, men, and youth in generating economic recovery and sustained growth. As a pilot, the reconstruction plan for the targeted cities will be developed through the consultation with key stakeholders involved in the ongoing recovery, stabilization, and reconstruction activities. It will be also based on the analysis of the pre-2014 Mosul city profile as well as the review of outdated masterplans, in addition to compiling lessons learned and recommendations for an updated, medium-term vision for the targeted cities.

Project Strategy

- One of the key lessons learned from UN-Habitat's experience in Iraq on urban planning is the necessity of involving government counterparts, both at the national and local levels, to ensure the government ownership and sustainability. Under this project UN-Habitat will work in close collaboration with the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Municipalities, Construction and Housing and Ministry of Justice, as well as the relevant governorates and municipalities throughout the project – including project design,

implementation, and monitoring. Capacity building of the counterparts in the Ministries and the relevant governorates and municipalities is an essential component of the project.

- Intensive “Design Charrettes” will provide a platform for discussion between public and private stakeholders, representatives of civil society and academics to provide input and set the direction of a project. Spatial planning is a powerful tool for ‘Building Back Better’ as it provides an integrative framework for assistance and development, while taking the reconstruction process as opportunity to improve some of Mosul’s pre-conflict shortcomings.
- On another note, it is important to mention that before the conflict, Iraq had a very complex land tenure/registration system due to deep historical roots and imposed socialist system by Baath’s regime. After the conflict, the land registration system and verification of ownership rights worsened and became very challenging. Based on assessments conducted by humanitarian partners, it has been highlighted that many Iraqis never registered their land rights or never updated their land records. Also, many land registration offices were damaged during the conflict and the property records were lost or damaged.
- To avoid any HLP abuse and violation, the verification of ownership rights and provision of legal assistance of the houses eligible for rehabilitation is a mandatory process before any housing intervention in Iraq. Since 2018, UN-Habitat as Chair of the HLP Sub-cluster has been supporting partners on the verification process of ownership rights in Iraq through guidance notes to ensure that HLP rights are fully respected during the housing intervention. Further, UN-Habitat also issued different guidance notes and awareness material for compensation to ensure that partners and beneficiaries are fully aware of the compensation mechanism and process in Iraq. Lastly, UN-Habitat in collaboration with Global Land Tool Network, has introduced a new approach of alternative proof of ownership rights by issuing Occupancy Certificates to the households who never had or missing ownership documentation. The certificates are endorsed by federal and local authorities.

Main Expected Accomplishments

- Working group meetings of key stakeholders in targeted cities are organized and convened on a regular basis.
- Analysis of the existing masterplans for targeted cities and pre-2014 urban profile of Mosul is conducted, and lessons learned, and recommendations are formulated.
- Reconstruction Plan for targeted cities to guide immediate and medium-term reconstruction and development is developed.
- National and local government counterparts as well as university staff members are trained on post-conflict urban recovery, and sustainable urban planning and development through workshops, training courses and on-the-job trainings.

HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED CITIES



36 months



US\$ 20,000,000



Mosul, Ninewa Governorate; Ramadi and Heet, Anbar Governorate; Yathrib, Salah Al Din Governorate



Ministry of Construction and Housing, Municipalities and Public Works



10,500 vulnerable returnees in Ninewa, Anbar and Salah Al Din

Purpose

Initial satellite assessment of damaged houses conducted by the Ministry of Planning and UN-Habitat in January 2018 suggested that the distribution of damage between governorates is approximately as follows: 65% in Ninewa - 20% in Anbar - 10% in Salah Al Din - 5% in Diyala, Baghdad, Kirkuk.

Taking into consideration this distribution of damage and based on the Housing Damage and Rehabilitation Database operated by UN-Habitat and Shelter Cluster Iraq, Salah Al Din has received comparatively limited support to rehabilitate damaged houses. Analysis from the Housing Damage and Rehabilitation Database also indicates that there is, in particular, a gap of housing rehabilitation projects in the Tal Afar area in Ninewa Governorate, which has been significantly damaged by the retaking military operations.

The purpose of this project is to support reconstruction of conflict-affected cities in three governorates: Mosul, Ninewa Governorate; Ramadi and Heet, Anbar Governorate; Yathrib, Salah Al Din Governorate through provision of adequate houses and employment opportunities.

Project Description

Under this project, UN-Habitat will rehabilitate “severely damaged” houses and construct low-cost core housing units to accommodate vulnerable returnees whose houses are “destroyed.” These low-cost core housing units can be incrementally expanded if required, providing affordable and durable shelter solutions to returnees, and thereby facilitating their reintegration to and rebuilding of lives in the areas they return to.

Project Strategy

- UN-Habitat promotes community-based reconstruction in crisis-affected countries. Engaging community members themselves in reconstruction activities, this community-based approach will empower them socially and economically, enabling them to plan and manage their own activities for more peaceful and stable community.
- As soon as the liberated areas were declared safe, UN-Habitat has been promoting urban recovery and supporting returnees through community-based housing rehabilitation. UN-Habitat ensures that community members are capacitated and employed to undertake the rehabilitation of war-damaged houses, thereby creating job opportunities, and supporting their livelihoods, as well as encouraging them to engage in the rebuilding of their community. UN-Habitat engineers are engaged on site daily, conducting field assessments and supervising the contractors undertaking the rehabilitation activities and running the final inspection before handing-over the rehabilitated houses to their owners. Their constant presence ensures the high quality of the work conducted. Throughout the process, the community members are provided with necessary construction and rehabilitation skills through tailored capacity building sessions. This approach thereby empowers the community members both socially and economically, increases community ownership, and encourages targeted communities to solve their problems independently, which is the key to peaceful recovery and resilience.
- UN-Habitat's substantive experience on working closely with government counterparts and community members to support reconstruction and rehabilitation of housing and infrastructure in areas that are liberated as well as hosting refugees and IDPs, gives UN-Habitat a comparative advantage and technical expertise to plan and implement this project.
- Lessons learned from the programmes/ projects implemented in Iraq suggest that effective interventions require responsiveness to local conditions, including cultural considerations and respect to gender sensitivities, based on community involvement in planning and implementation. This project builds on these lessons learned, and ensures local conditions, cultural considerations and gender sensitivities are taken into consideration in project design and implementation.

Main Expected Accomplishments

- Damage to houses and infrastructure in key conflict-affected areas in Iraq, namely in Ninewa, Anbar and Salah Al Din Governorates, is assessed.
- Damage maps in targeted areas are developed and updated on monthly basis and shared with government counterparts and other stakeholders.
- 500 majorly and severely war-damaged houses are rehabilitated.
- 1,000 low-cost core housing units are constructed, benefiting well over 6,000 people.
- Employment opportunities are created for vulnerable returnees.