



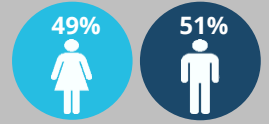
World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



## WFP Iraq Country Brief February 2020

## In Numbers



**378,203 people** assisted  
in February 2020

**178 mt** of food assistance distributed

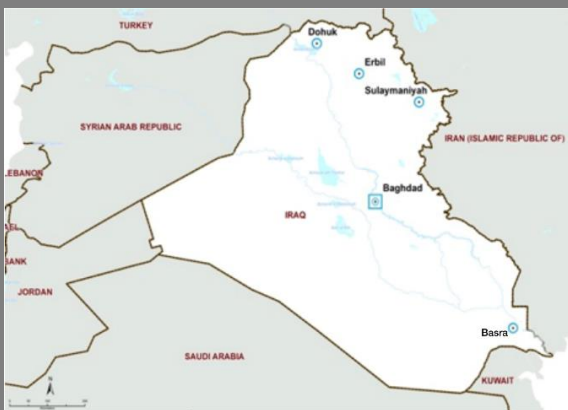
**USD 681,337** distributed through  
cash-based transfers

**USD 47.1 million** six months net funding  
requirements (April – September 2020)

### Operational Context

In Iraq, intermittent conflict continues to aggravate the poverty rate and threaten livelihoods. Following the return process that began in 2018, the situation and needs of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees remain precarious. WFP Iraq's assistance focuses on saving lives and protecting livelihoods – supporting the Government of Iraq's social safety nets towards zero hunger. The challenges of rebuilding infrastructure, providing basic services, promoting social cohesion, demobilizing militias, creating jobs, and progressing towards gender equality whilst maintaining security have impeded the country's efforts to make progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 2: Zero Hunger.

A Zero Hunger Strategic Review was carried out in 2018 with participation of key Government partners and stakeholders. WFP's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2020-2024 in Iraq has been informed by the findings and recommendations of this review and has an all-encompassing goal of supporting the Government of Iraq to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, shifting WFP's role from implementer to enabler. This is critical in a context that is transitioning away from immediate crisis response to greater resilience, and a longer-term transition to peace and development. Mainstreaming gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive programming is also key.



Population: **39 million**  
(Ministry of Trade, 2019)

Poverty rate: **22.5%**  
(World Bank, 2017)

2019 Human Development Index:  
**120 of 188** (lowest)

**1.41 million** IDPs (IOM)  
**247,568** Syrian refugees in Iraq (UNHCR)

### Operational Updates

- In February, WFP delivered food assistance to 378,203 people in 11 governorates, reaching 58 percent of the monthly target of 652,661 people. This was mainly due to banking transfer delays, and growing operational challenges due to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). 209,031 IDPs from the January cycle were also reached in February.
- Protests continue in Iraq (except in the Kurdistan Region and some northern areas), spurred by disenfranchised people because of a lack of employment opportunities, perceived corruption and a lack of basic services. There was continued uncertainty and civil unrest after the rejection of both the former Prime Minister and PM-elect.
- In 2020, WFP has shifted its food assistance from in-kind food to cash-based transfers (CBT) in an additional three governorates: Anbar, Ninewa and Salah al-Din. This has resulted in 96 percent of all assistance in Iraq being provided through CBT. Sensitization materials continued to be disseminated throughout the camps, as part of ongoing communication with communities work.
- By the end of February, 21,448 people had fled from northeast Syria into Duhok in the Kurdistan Region, following the Turkish operations that started in October, and WFP has delivered food assistance for over 21,000 refugees in Bardarash and Gawilan camps. In both camps, WFP is continuing to distribute ready-to-eat food packages (IRR) for new arrivals, and one-month family food rations (FFR) after two days. Arrivals slowed to 40-60 per day.
- WFP's Resilience Team met with FAO to discuss operationalising a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed last year. The agencies will collaborate on a workshop to plan resilience activities in Basra, on mapping current activities in the north, and on a roadmap for joint programming for the next five years.
- WFP's Supply Chain team is putting in place the essential requirements for the CSP contingency plan, in case the situation ever requires switching from cash-based to in-kind food assistance. The preparations entail measures for local food procurement, inland and warehousing contracts, handling and customs services, among others.

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**Photo:** A healthy meal at the primary school at Aqeeltat Al-Talrbeen, Basra, where WFP's School Feeding Programme has relaunched. ©WFP / Najla Suhail

## Country Strategic Plan (CSP, 01 January 2020–31 December 2024)

Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)
<b>473 m</b>	<b>50.0 m</b>
Total Requirements for 2020 (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (April – September 2020)
<b>179 m</b>	<b>47.1 m</b>

### Strategic Result 1: Access to food (SDG Target 2.1)

**Strategic Outcome 1 (SO 1):** Crisis-affected people in Iraq, including IDPs and refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises throughout the year

**Focus area:** Crisis Response

**Activities:**

- Provide unconditional food assistance to IDPs, refugees and other crisis-affected people.

### Strategic Result 4: Sustainable food systems (SDG Target 2.4)

**Strategic Outcome 2 (SO 2):** Targeted communities, including farmers, have enhanced livelihoods and increased resilience to shocks by 2024

**Focus area:** Resilience building

**Activities:**

- Provide livelihood support, asset creation and climate adaptation activities, including capacity strengthening, to targeted farmers and communities.

### Strategic Result 5: Capacity strengthening (SDG Target 17.9)

**Strategic Outcome 3 (SO 3):** National and subnational institutions have strengthened capacities and systems for targeting and assisting food-insecure vulnerable people by 2024

**Focus area:** Resilience Building

**Activities:**

- Provide institutional capacity strengthening to government officials and partners.
- Provide support to government officials and partners in enhancing information technology for managing PDS modernization and in strengthening the safety net component of the government social protection system.

- WFP's Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) consultant on nutrition conducted a meeting, with extensive government and partner participation. The new campaign, to promote healthy eating, will roll out in the coming months.
- Preparations are underway for the start of the new EMPACT "Empowerment in Action" programme in Anbar, Baghdad, Erbil, Ninewa, Duhok and Sulaymaniyah. Due to COVID-19, it is likely that the start of classes for the new cohort will be pushed from March to April or May.
- Two Protection, Gender and Accountability to Affected Populations training sessions were held as part of wider workshops with cooperating partners, e-voucher retailers and WFP staff.

- Since its relaunch in December 2019, the School Feeding programme continues to expand across Iraq. In February, three additional targeted governorates (Wasi, Thi-Qar and Maysan) started, expanding the reach to over 312,000 children. Due to COVID-19 however, many schools across the country are temporarily closed as a precautionary measure, meaning that the delivery of meals is also on hold.
- Under the testing phase of the digitalization of Iraq's social protection programme, the Public Distribution System (PDS) of food rations, WFP is providing thought leadership in identity management and interoperability services to the government. This is to leverage existing iris biometrics captured by the Ministry of Interior (as the custodian of identity documents in Iraq) for the verification and provision of other government social protection services. Discussions with the Ministry of Interior continue around linking the PDS functional identity with the national unified foundational ID document.

## Monitoring and Assessments

- In February 2020, WFP and its partner on Mobile Money Transfers (MMT) conducted 113 site visits, including five in-kind distribution sites, 54 cash-out points for internally displaced people (IDPs) and Syrian refugees, 13 sites implementing the provision of readily available income through conditional cash transfers, 20 e-voucher points and 21 shops. In addition, 12 monitoring interviews were carried out with people assisted.
- WFP's Supply Chain, Vulnerability and Assessment Mapping (VAM) and Programme teams are in the process of undertaking a nationwide "Markets and Supply Chain Assessment" to inform and influence the delivery of WFP assistance to people in the north, central and south of Iraq. This exercise is coordinated with the WFP Regional Bureau Cairo and Headquarters and the results of the study are expected to be produced by mid-2020.
- The second phase of IDP targeting based on household expenditure is ongoing in camps in Duhok, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Baghdad. Some locations could see reductions in the numbers of eligible people assisted.

## Funding and Pipeline update

- WFP needs an additional USD 47.1 million to ensure that operations can continue without interruption through September 2020.

## Donors

WFP would like to thank all donors for their contributions including: Belgium, Canada, Germany, the Government of Iraq, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and the United States.

*N.b. all assistance-related numbers are provisional estimates, and may be revised upwards or downwards after reconciliation.*