



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Iraq Country Brief April 2020

In Numbers

327,433 people assisted
in April 2020



18 mt of food assistance distributed*

USD 3.21 million distributed through
cash-based transfers

USD 57.2 million six months net funding
requirements (June – November 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, creating jobs, developing skills, 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.

WFP's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2020-2024 in Iraq 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 the transitioning from immediate crisis response to greater resilience, and longer-term peace and development. Mainstreaming gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive programming is also key.

The first case of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 was recorded in Iraq on 24 February. Given the increasing cases reported by the Ministry of Health, and the decision taken by the Iraqi Government to limit gatherings, WFP and its partners are taking additional measures to safeguard the health and wellbeing of people assisted.



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

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

2019 Human Development Index:
120 of 188 (lowest)

1.39 million IDPs (IOM)
247,440 Syrian refugees in Iraq (UNHCR)

Operational Update & COVID-19 Response

- In April, WFP delivered food and predominantly cash-based assistance to 327,433 people in 13 governorates, reaching 99 percent of the target of 329,413 people.
- Anti-government demonstrations continue in Iraq (except in the Kurdistan Region) but at a much lower level due to fears regarding the spread of COVID-19 and enforcement of related curfews. The PM-designate Mustafa al-Kadhimi plans to form a government in May. In other developments, as well as the increase in COVID-19 cases, there has been an increase in incidents involving the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).
- To help mitigate against COVID-19, a partial curfew continues across the country. WFP's provision of lifesaving food assistance to IDPs and refugees is ongoing. Resilience programmes are suspended. The school meals programme is also suspended due to nationwide school closures, but take-home rations were distributed to 23,862 vulnerable students and their families in the last week of April, using the remaining school meal supplies in storage. The distributions took place in Ninewa, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Wassit, Anbar, Qadisiya, Thi-Qar, Al-Muthanna and Basra governorates. The main food items distributed were water, juice, dates and cheese. The quantities received by families were sufficient for a minimum of two weeks, and all items are consumed during Ramadan.
- In response to the impact of COVID-19, WFP has worked with UNHCR and partners to identify and include an additional 35,000 Syrian refugees and 10,000 IDPs in relief food assistance, and to continue to reach a further 25-30 percent of IDPs who were at the borderline to self-sufficiency before the pandemic. Many families who were previously close to no longer requiring assistance are being pushed into food insecurity. Key messages have been shared with people assisted, to ensure they are aware of the changes. The adjusted plan includes an additional requirement of USD 31.9 million to meet increased humanitarian needs due to the pandemic.
- In addition, WFP is preparing Emergency Livelihoods projects to reach 300,000 additional vulnerable

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Photo: To encourage better nutrition in order to stay healthy, even when options are limited, and to provide a practical item for people in camps, WFP has been distributing canvas shopping bags to people, with advice on what to eat, hygiene and exercise. Baharka camp, Erbil. WFP/Photo Library

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

Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)
473 m	83 m
Total Requirements for 2020 (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (June – November 2020)
179 m	57.2 m

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.

(cont'd) Iraqis in peri-urban areas including Baghdad, Basra, Mosul, and potentially Thi-Qar and Qadisiya – who have lost their jobs and are unable to work during the pandemic due to COVID-19 induced restrictions. This is to help provide immediate economic support.

- The Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) covered more than 95 percent of the IDP camp population in the period January – April 2020, distributing a monthly emergency package of 20.3 kg. WFP’s coordination continued accordingly to provide smaller, complementary “top-ups” of assistance. From January to April, this has resulted in significant savings of USD 5.1 million. MoMD also indicated a planned expansion of their assistance to refugees which started in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Duhok

(except Bardarash) camps in April. This is the first time MoMD has provided assistance to refugees.

- Following violence in northeast Syria in late 2019, 21,535 people fled into Iraq. The unofficial border crossing at Sihela remains closed due to COVID-19. WFP has delivered food assistance for almost all 21,535 refugees who arrived in Bardarash and Gawilan camps in Duhok, Kurdistan Region. In both camps, WFP distributed ready-to-eat food packages (IRR – Immediate Response Ration) for new arrivals, and one-month rations (FFR – Food Family Ration) after two days. From March, a “hybrid” of in-kind food / cash assistance was distributed to the northeast Syrian refugees, to be followed by full cash assistance in June.
- WFP is exploring a mobile based e-voucher solution linked to SCOPE that would leverage Mobile Network Operator (MNO) delivery channels as an alternative to SCOPECARD. This would provide for a contactless redemption process to mitigate against COVID-19 health risks, for people assisted and merchants. WFP is also pioneering new “cashless transactions” for people to shop directly from their mobile phones in camps, eliminating the need to redeem physical cash entitlements.
- WFP is continuing to arrange for a contingency stock of in-kind food assistance: Family Food Rations (FFRs) for one month for 330,000 people which are expected to be in country by mid-June, in addition to ready-to-eat Immediate Response Rations (IRRs) for 60,000 people that have been locally procured and pre-positioned in WFP’s warehouse.

Monitoring and Assessments

- In April, WFP and its cooperating partner conducted 167 site monitoring sessions, 96 of which were conducted remotely because of COVID-19 national precautionary measures. The sites included one in-kind food distribution point, 83 cash-out points for internally displaced people (IDPs) and Syrian refugees, 51 e-voucher points, 30 shops and two resilience activities. In addition, 39 monitoring interviews were carried out, mostly remotely.
- A system of Food Security and Market Functionality monitoring through phone calls is now up and running. Statistically representative data at governorate level is collected daily and reported on a weekly basis.

Funding and Pipeline update

- WFP needs an additional USD 57.2 million to ensure that operations can continue without interruption through November 2020.

Donors

WFP would like to thank all donors for their contributions including: Belgium, Canada, France, 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.