



IRAQ

2024-2025 IFRC network country plan

13 March 2024

Multi-Year Funding Requirement **CHF 12M**

In support of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society



18

National Society branches



2,400

National Society staff



11,853

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



220,000

Climate and environment



250,000

Disasters and crises



250,000

Health and wellbeing



120,000

Migration and displacement



80,000

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network multi-year focus

Longer term needs

- health
- livelihoods
- protracted displacement
- climate change adaptation

Capacity development

- positioning
- financial management
- resource mobilization
- youth engagement

Key country data

Population **44.5M**

INFORM Severity rating **high**

INFORM Climate Risk Index **Very high**

Human Development Index rank **121**

Funding requirements

2024

2025**

Total 6.1M CHF

Total 5.9M CHF

Through the IFRC

2.6M CHF

Through Participating National Societies

3.5M CHF

Through Participating National Societies

2.1M CHF

Host National Society

3.8M CHF

**Projected funding requirements

IFRC Breakdown

Longer term needs

150,000 CHF
Climate & environment

250,000 CHF
Disasters and crises

1.8M CHF
Health & wellbeing

100,000 CHF
Migration & displacement

100,000 CHF
Values, power & inclusion

200,000 CHF
Enabling local actors

Participating National Societies

British Red Cross*

Danish Red Cross

Finnish Red Cross*

German Red Cross

Norwegian Red Cross

Swedish Red Cross

*National Societies which have contributed only multilaterally through the IFRC in the first half of 2023.

IFRC Appeal codes

Longer-term needs:

MAAIQ002

Hazards



Climate Change



Violence



Economic hardship



Food insecurity



Displacement



Earthquakes

NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The Iraqi Red Crescent Society is an independent, volunteer-based organization that works to alleviate the suffering of Iraq's most vulnerable communities. The Iraqi Red Crescent Society was established in 1932 and admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1934. As the largest humanitarian organization in Iraq, its knowledge of the country and the political landscape is vast. Its presence and local networks across the country are exceptionally well established, allowing the National Society to reach vulnerable populations who are not served by other humanitarian actors, including in remote areas. This nationwide coverage means the National Society can implement large-scale and long-term preparedness and response programmes, through 18 governorate branches and a national network of 11,900 volunteers who play a critical role at every stage of programming.

The Iraqi Red Crescent Society derives its mandate as an auxiliary to the public authorities' humanitarian efforts through the Iraqi Civil Code. The National Society functions as an autonomous, non-political, non-partisan organization, maintaining its independence. The country's authorities recognize the National Society as a first responder with responsibility for relief and health services in the first 72 hours after an emergency, and the National Society also heads the medical emergency response cell within displacement camps. The National Society closely coordinates its actions with the public authorities and humanitarian organizations active in Iraq.

The main programmes run by the National Society include disaster management, first aid, preventive and curative health, water, sanitation and hygiene dissemination of international

humanitarian law, youth activities, restoring family links, and awareness programmes for the explosive remnants of war. In 2022, the National Society reached more than 6.5 million people through its various long-term services and development programmes, and 409,000 people were reached by its disaster response and early recovery programmes.

The Iraqi Red Crescent current Strategic Plan identifies four key objectives, alongside priorities related to its institutional development:

- Upgrade and maintain diverse programmes, with a focus on recovery
- Build a better surveying and data analysis system
- Upscale the engagement with local communities and authorities
- Improve cooperation with local and international humanitarian actors

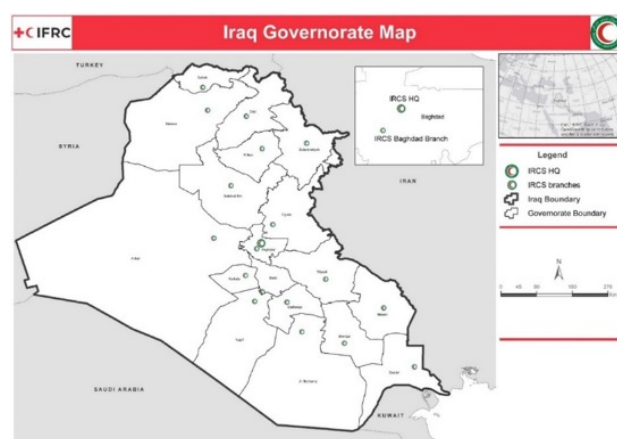


Figure 1: Iraq Governorate Map



A man taking food parcels from the Iraqi Red Crescent volunteers for his family in Moula Berwan, Dohuk province. (Photo: IRCS)

IFRC NETWORK ACTION

JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The protracted humanitarian crisis in Iraq remains one of the largest in the world, and although the number of people needing assistance has decreased, their needs are severe. The people most in need continue to be those who have been directly affected by conflicts, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the [outbreak of cholera in 2022](#). These include internally displaced persons, refugees, and returnees both inside and outside of camps, and host communities. The security situation continues to be precarious, and Iraq is one of the high-risk countries by the [INFORM index](#) due to the likelihood of conflict.

Six years after the end of the large-scale military operations against the [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant \(ISIL\)](#), out of the [six million people displaced](#) during the 2014-2017 conflict, [five million](#) have returned to their homes. Although reconstruction and stabilization efforts have been initiated in the conflict-affected areas to promote the sustainable return of people, significant challenges and needs remain. This is particularly true for returnees who live in remote and disputed areas, due to limited government attention and resources for the provision of basic services. More than one million internally displaced persons have not yet found a sustainable path back home following the conflict. The most vulnerable live in abandoned, unfinished buildings and informal settlements. They lack access to healthcare and sanitation facilities, and face food insecurity and protection risks.

The years of conflict and economic stagnation have affected nearly every aspect of the society and give rise to social and political tensions. Many people have been unable to recover economically and have lost their resilience to overcome the crisis, which has affected access to food, drinking water, protection, education, hygiene, and shelter. A great number of vulnerable households had to adopt drastic measures to survive, reducing their number of meals, neglecting health care needs and accumulating debts. Many left their homes as they were unable to afford the rent.

Decades of war, sanctions, occupation, social instability, and the COVID-19 pandemic have left health systems fragile

and strained. Community-based surveillance and health management information systems are weak. There are shortages of trained health personnel, drugs, and other medical supplies. The availability of primary health care services is limited, and the health care infrastructure is either inadequate, damaged, or destroyed. The already complex humanitarian situation is compounded by outbreaks of acute watery diarrhea and cholera, as well as COVID-19 and Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever.

According to the UN Environment Programme, [Iraq is the fifth most vulnerable country in the world](#) to decreasing water and food availability and extreme temperatures. Extreme weather events such as heat, drought and dust storms are becoming more frequent and intense due to climate change. Environmental degradation is rising across the country and increased salination threatens agriculture on 54% of land. Despite historically being one of the Middle East's most water-rich countries, Iraq's water crisis is expected to persist and may bring humanitarian, economic, security and social consequences, including population movement. [Balancing the needs of the environment and agriculture in Iraq is a challenge](#), and the Iraqi Government faces challenges with management of plans. The security risks associated with water depletion could also be exacerbated by [drought](#) and climate change. Iraq is also prone to floods and earthquakes.

Gaps in the humanitarian response in Iraq are mostly due to a lack of funding, access, partner presence, camp closures and the reprioritization of assistance. Funding is declining dramatically and is currently insufficient to maintain core services in camps for internally displaced persons, much less to fill gaps in public services. Humanitarian organizations report deteriorating living standards in the communities affected. Although the situation remains precarious, there is general agreement that the focus needs to shift from humanitarian assistance to longer-term objectives and interventions. The humanitarian community in Iraq has taken several steps in support of this transition, scaling down the existing "whole system" international humanitarian assistance architecture. Through robust advocacy by the humanitarian community in Iraq, immediate gaps are filled, however challenges remain for medium to long-term planning, and more acute crises in other parts of the world compete for limited global resources.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Climate and environment

Iraq faces multiple challenges which are either caused or exacerbated by climate change. These include prolonged heat waves, record low rainfall, loss of fertile land, salinization, insufficient infrastructure investment, water shortages and dust storms. Heatwaves of above 50 degrees Celsius are becoming more frequent. Environmentally, the key climate-related risks are around floods, droughts, and water scarcity. Food production has also declined due to the erosion of the topsoil and declining land productivity.

As water levels have fallen in the once great Tigris and Euphrates rivers, salt levels have risen, and water quality has deteriorated. Recent studies show water scarcity to be a primary driver of migration from rural to urban areas, alongside challenges to sustainable agriculture and food security. In the latest stark warning of the threats that the warming climate poses, a report by Iraq's Ministry of Water Resources in late 2021 predicts that without urgent action, Iraq's two main rivers will be entirely dry in coming years.

Drought has affected northern Iraq since early 2021, and governorates in the south have now seen lower water supply and quality for several years. Crop and livestock production has plummeted, impacting vulnerable communities that had already been affected by the conflict and displacement of recent years. At least seven million people in Iraq have been affected by drought in recent times, taking a massive toll on access to water, food, basic services such as electricity, and farmer livelihoods.

These challenges are likely to have serious impacts on the health of the people of Iraq, as well as the agricultural and industry sectors, which contribute significantly to Iraq's GDP. Iraq's internal governance faces challenges that hinder its capacity to enhance water management, handle inter-provincial and inter-tribal conflicts, attract investments and expertise, generate new jobs in the green economy, and adapt to the shifting climate. The Iraqi government is in the process of developing the National Adaptation Plan, with support of partners, while its revised Nationally Determined Contribution, submitted late 2021, increases its mitigation targets.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Iraqi Red Crescent is part of the IFRC Global Climate Resilience Programme, which aims to foster an unprecedented scale-up in locally led climate-smart disaster risk reduction and adaptation efforts to prevent and reduce climate-related

disaster impacts, and build community-level climate resilience. The programme aims to support 500 million people in 100 of the most climate-vulnerable countries, focusing on the least supported and marginalized communities. This holistic, multi-year programmatic approach consists of four operational pillars: (1) scaling up climate-smart disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action, and preparedness (2) reducing the public health impacts of climate change (3) addressing climate displacement; and (4) enabling climate-resilient livelihoods and ecosystem services.

The Iraqi Red Crescent is also a signatory to the Climate and Environment Charter for humanitarian organisations since October 2021.

The National Society seeks to ensure communities can better address the evolving impacts of climate change and take ownership of programmes to address climate risks by contributing their own insights, knowledge, and ideas. This includes supporting communities to serve as agents of change, catalyzing efforts to mitigate climate change and promote sustainable environmental practices, with the assistance of trained volunteers, youth, and senior management.

Planned activities in 2024

- Develop environmental campaigns to mobilize greater efforts to mitigate climate change and to encourage behaviour changes, such as tree planting and restoration, beach clean-ups, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing plastic use
 - Conduct a study with the Iraq Meteorological Department on rainfall data, pattern, weather forecasting, early warning, and impact on the local communities in target areas
 - Assess the indigenous knowledge for climate change adaptation and mitigation at community level
 - Develop a local adaptation plan of action for targeted communities
 - Plant drought-resistant seeds and tree species, and demonstrate resilient soil conservation methods
 - Promote small-scale rainwater harvesting methods
 - Integrate climate smart programming into the National Society's programmes and operations
 - Run awareness-raising sessions on climate change adaptation in governorate branches
 - Train staff, volunteers and youth volunteers about climate change and environmental sustainability
-

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Iraqi Red Crescent across its climate action and environmental sustainability efforts. This includes increasing advocacy, broader awareness raising and networking with the relevant government departments. It also

includes connecting the National Society with major initiatives, such as [Early Warnings for All](#), in which the IFRC leads the pillar on preparedness and response capabilities.

The **Danish Red Cross** will support the National Society on climate-smart disaster risk reduction, and anticipatory action.



Disasters and crises

For real-time information on emergencies, see [IFRC GO page Iraq](#).

The diverse and varied geography of Iraq means that it is exposed to a broad array of environmental hazards. In addition to hydrometeorological hazards becoming more severe due to climate change, geophysical hazards also present a threat. Iraq is situated in an active seismic zone and large parts of central Iraq are classified as high-risk areas.

Enduring conflict and civil violence, displacement and vulnerability to climate change all combine to make Iraq one of the region's most food-insecure countries. The complex crisis has created massive food insecurity and has profoundly affected the food system infrastructure, with many buildings, assets and fields destroyed, and disruption to the commercial activities that provide income for people to buy food. In rural areas, many employment opportunities sit along the food production chain, relying on agricultural production. In the Iraqi context, economic recovery and food security are tightly linked.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Iraqi Red Crescent Society has an auxiliary role to the public authorities in the humanitarian field with activities that cover the entire country. The National Society is a major player in disasters and crisis response and works closely with authorities at national and local levels.

The National Society seeks to enhance community resilience to shocks and hazards, while providing timely assistance and support to those affected by crises. The Iraqi Red Crescent continuously invests in its preparedness and readiness to respond to multiple and compounded hazards, including through the [Preparedness for Effective Response](#) (IFRC-PER) approach, and for [cash and voucher assistance](#) (CVA). It also aims to ensure a well-defined auxiliary role in [disaster risk management](#), and help improve the country's [disaster law](#) and frameworks.

Planned activities in 2024

- Provide in-kind and [cash and voucher assistance \(CVA\)](#) for communities affected by disasters
- Organize [community-based disaster risk reduction](#) awareness-raising sessions, develop plans for local communities, train local farmers, and support implementation
- Conduct skill development and vocational trainings, specifically targeting vulnerable women
- Form and train village disaster management committees in target communities
- Support communities to conduct [vulnerability and capacity assessments](#) (IFRC-VCA)
- Conduct school safety activities including awareness sessions, development of evacuation plans and mock evacuation drills
- Participate in the Cash Consortium of the Iraq technical working group
- Build capacity of staff and volunteers around CVA
- Review the National Society contingency plans for a multi-hazards approach
- Ensure branches in the multi-hazard prone governorates have a functioning emergency operation center
- Develop surge capacity by integrating technical human resources into its risk reduction register
- Conduct a training of trainers for [community-based disaster risk management](#) (road to resilience) and school safety for National Society staff, youth and volunteers

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The **IFRC** supports the Iraqi Red Crescent across its disaster risk reduction and community resilience efforts. It will accompany the National Society with its cash and voucher preparedness and readiness for response, recovery, and resilience interventions, including through revising standard operating procedures and assessing financial service providers. The IFRC will also guide the National Society in the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) approach and help develop and implement a workplan based on the PER assessments results. Other support includes procurement of 10,000 food parcels for stock prepositioning and developing the National Society surge capacity. **IFRC** mechanisms such as the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (IFRC-DREF)

and Emergency Appeals will be drawn on as needed for the National Society to respond to disasters and crises.

The **Danish Red Cross** supports the Iraqi Red Crescent on community-based disaster risk reduction and the implementation of CVA interventions for communities affected by the complex crisis. Support includes capacity building of the National Society staff.

The **German Red Cross** supports the National Society on CVA interventions for communities affected by the complex crisis and staff, and staff capacity building.

The **Swedish Red Cross** supports the Iraqi Red Crescent with strengthening local response capacity and community-based disaster risk reduction, as well as capacity building of staff and volunteers in disaster preparedness.



Health and wellbeing

Over the last four decades, Iraq has witnessed rapid demographic and epidemiological change. The country's health care system is struggling to recover from years of war, sanctions, loss of workforce and political interference. Health facilities and the workforce are unevenly distributed and unable to meet public health needs. Along with a decline in medical and surgical services provided by the Ministry of Health, this has had a deep and widespread negative impact on public health. Many health facilities and hundreds of ambulances were damaged or destroyed in the conflict, and the remaining resources are now overwhelmed. Although the Ministry of Health is working to address the issues, creating equitable access to health care in Iraq is an arduous and complex task. Issues around how health care is financed, and the role of private health care are only now being tentatively addressed.

By 2019, non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and chronic lung diseases, accounted already for 55 percent of deaths in Iraq. Communicable disease outbreaks also represent a significant health threat. In June 2022, Iraq's health authorities announced a cholera outbreak after at least 13 cases were confirmed across the country and thousands of hospital admissions for acute diarrhea were reported. The number of diarrhea cases kept increasing well beyond the normal ranges witnessed in previous years. As of 02 November 2022, there was a total of 3,063 confirmed cholera cases and 19 deaths across the country. Cholera remains a threat to public health and an indicator of inequity and lack of awareness in communities. Experts say that the irrigation of vegetables with sewage water, an increasingly common

practice due to water shortages in both the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, is the reason behind the outbreak.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Iraqi Red Crescent seeks to realize its auxiliary role in providing health services, ensuring its position on the relevant country level public health strategy and policy platforms. At the community level, the Iraqi Red Crescent will continue to ensure communities can access sustainable, affordable health services and that health dignity is maintained throughout emergencies. It will also continue to invest for communities to have increased access to affordable, appropriate and environmentally sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, and deliver emergency WASH services.

The Iraqi Red Crescent hospitals are an essential element of safely and effectively preventing, diagnosing, and treating illness and disease, and rehabilitating patients. With an under-resourced health system lacking medical equipment and diagnostic tools, providing access to accredited urgent medical and surgical services for critical cases such as trauma and accidents is a key contribution of the National Society's hospitals.

The National Society plans to improve the rehabilitation services for people with disabilities and restore and upgrade the center in Mousal, northern Iraq. The center will also provide in-service training for physiotherapists and for prosthetic and orthotic technicians. Northern Iraq is littered with unexploded munitions, which cause many casualties. This center will treat patients providing them with artificial limbs and rehabilitation services.

Planned activities in 2024

- Develop well-informed, culturally appropriate, and context-specific risk communication to improve community members' knowledge of health issues, and use local and social media to reinforce these messages
- Conduct health education sessions on various health topics such as non-communicable diseases, safe motherhood, infectious diseases, and home-based care to improve knowledge and practices of community members
- Conduct first aid training and provide first aid equipment at community level
- Build and maintain communities' capacity to respond effectively to outbreaks of infectious disease
- Enhance integration of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in its programmes
- Conduct water and sanitation assessments in communities, carry out awareness sessions on hygiene promotion (handwashing, use of latrines) and procure hygiene kits for targeted communities
- Repair existing water sources and water points in communities, as well as mobile or household water treatment plants
- Ensure water trucking capacity to provide water as a life-saving intervention and when more sustainable sources are unavailable
- Develop a contingency plan adequately responding to the health consequences of disasters and crises

- Build capacity among health staff and volunteers on key health issues, community engagement, and in planning and running tailored community-based health activities
 - Promote itself as an officially recognized and appropriately positioned member of relevant public health emergency preparedness and response coordination platforms
-

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will continue to support the Iraqi Red Crescent in its positioning as a major provider of health care and WASH services in the country, and help the National Society to maintain fit-for-purpose health and WASH strategies and contingency plans. The IFRC will also provide technical support as needed for community-based health and first aid, and epidemic preparedness and response.

IFRC mechanisms such as the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (IFRC-DREF) and Emergency Appeals will be drawn on as needed for the National Society to respond to health emergencies, as was the case with the cholera outbreak which started in 2022. The IFRC-DREF allocation of over CHF 360,000 supported the Iraqi Red Crescent in assisting close to 23,000 people with health and WASH interventions over an eight-month period.

The **Danish Red Cross** supports the National Society for community education such as on non-communicable diseases, safe motherhood, infectious diseases, and home-based care.

The **Norwegian Red Cross** assists the Iraqi Red Crescent on improving access to primary health care and pre-hospital services, and on community and school-based WASH interventions.



Migration and displacement

The decision of the government to close displacement camps and their reclassification as informal sites in all affected governorates except for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has led to departure of many households from the camps. This has led to premature returns to areas where conditions are still severe, or to situations of secondary displacement, especially to informal displacement sites where displaced people have little access to public services or other forms of assistance. In some instances, households have returned to areas

highly affected by intra-group violence or to areas under the control of multiple security actors. In 2023, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) indicated that almost 600,000 out of the total returnees lived in locations presenting high-severity conditions, questioning the sustainability of returns.

Humanitarian actors and other civil society groups have called on the Government to give internally displaced persons more time before closures, and to enhance coordination across

regions, to ensure returning internally displaced persons can reach their destinations across checkpoints and receive assistance. The UN has stressed that returns must be dignified, durable, informed, non-discriminatory, safe, and voluntary.

Humanitarian organizations in Iraq, including the Iraqi Red Crescent, are addressing the needs of internally displaced persons by providing livelihoods support, training, and job placements, helping to build household resilience, reducing reliance on negative coping mechanisms, and minimizing exposure to exploitation and abuse.

Iraq hosts refugees from Syria, Türkiye, Iran, Palestine, and Sudan. The distribution of refugees highly depends on the ethnic and religious background of the host community, as well as the relative stability and security of the area. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq is hosting most refugees and asylum seekers.

Climate and environmental migration is already a reality in Iraq. At the end of 2021, in ten out of the 18 governorates of Iraq, [IOM recorded](#) approximately 20,000 people displaced due to water scarcity, high salinity, and poor water quality. As environmental changes intensify, displacement is likely to increase exponentially.

Iraq is also a country of origin of both refugees and Iraqis who have legally migrated out of Iraq, with the EU as their main destination. Iraq has also become a destination country for international migrant workers who come in response to demand in growth sectors, such as construction, domestic work, and hospitality services.

There are multiple governmental authorities involved in the registration of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as internally displaced and returnees, and these are: the Ministry of Migration and Displacement; the Directorate of Residency at the National Ministry of Interior; the Directorate of Residency at the Ministry of Interior of the Kurdistan Regional Government; the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) at the Ministry of Interior of the Kurdistan Regional Government; and the Asayish which is the primary security agency operating in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Iraqi Red Crescent provides significant support to internally displaced people and returnees, including through its regular programmes. The National Society seeks to ensure that displaced persons and other migrants, irrespective of their status, have continued access to humanitarian assistance and protection, as well access to durable solutions when appropriate. It also aims to engage displaced persons, migrants, and host communities to assess, understand, and respond to their priority needs more effectively.

Planned activities in 2024

- Ensure internally displaced persons and the affected populations of different ages, gender and circumstance are involved in the needs assessment and planning process – including representatives of host communities – ensuring that different needs, concerns, and perspectives are represented
- Address specific needs to ensure dignity and promote empowerment, and promote access to essential services, including inclusion perspectives
- Ensure safe and secure referral systems for displaced people and migrants to access essential services
- Advocate for access to shelter – specifically, safe accommodation for internally displaced persons and migrants

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will continue to support the National Society with tailored training migration and displacement-related issues, as well as tools, guidance, and other documents to support the engagement of the National Society in the field of migration and displacement. It will facilitate the National Society participation in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Middle East & North Africa Migration Network ([MENA Migration Network](#)), and exchange of information and good practice across the IFRC network.



Values, power and inclusion

Iraq's long and tumultuous history of political unrest and waves of forced population movement have created a layered structure of displaced population groups across many communities. Particularly vulnerable groups include people without civil documentation, people with a perceived affiliation to the ISIL, female-headed households, women, children, older people, and people who live with disabilities. For people departing camps suddenly, and people with a perceived affiliation to ISIL, it is often difficult to reintegrate and find a safe, dignified life either in their areas of origin or elsewhere. Women, girls, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups at a heightened protection risk, due to compounded factors such as stigmatisation and social norms, harassment, traumas arising from the conflict, and limited livelihood opportunities. The main protection risks they face include exploitation and abuse, gender-based violence, and human trafficking.

Gender-based violence is a key protection issue recognized by all humanitarian actors in Iraq. Women are often unable to fully participate in civil life and face heightened risks of discrimination and abuse. Iraq's wider context counts with existing patriarchal social structures and practices which include honour killings, child marriage, bridal exchange, restrictions on women's mobility in public spaces, two different forms of temporary marriage (among Muslim Shia populations) and, in certain areas of the country, low participation of women in labour and in secondary school enrolment.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Iraqi Red Crescent seeks to create positive change in communities by encouraging wider understanding, ownership, and concrete application of humanitarian values, especially among young people. It aims to ensure that all programmes and operations provide dignity, access, participation, and safety for everyone involved, including vulnerable groups, and are designed with child safeguarding in mind.

The National Society promotes the systematic application of agreed minimum standards for protection, gender and inclusion in programmes and in emergencies, by targeting of vulnerable groups. It works to scale up efforts to address

sexual and gender-based violence and establish and improve systems for recording and monitoring prevention and response activities.

Planned activities in 2024

- Carry out community engagement and accountability (CEA) assessments and activities with communities and ensure CEA standard operating procedures are in place as part of institutionalization
- Ensure the targeting of vulnerable groups – displaced people, people with disabilities, older people, survivors of gender-based violence, and children in response
- Include child protection within programming by building awareness of key terms, global minimum standards, practical actions and tools
- Develop a pool of youth as agents of behavioural change peer educators
- Foster youth-led projects through the uniting power of football projects
- Ensure that staff and volunteers complete online IFRC courses on child protection and safeguarding

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Iraqi Red Crescent to apply protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) principles and standards across its work, and to take concrete steps to ensure that all its programmes and services are inclusive and accessible for all vulnerable groups. This includes promoting safeguarding within programmes which can strengthen child safeguarding practices and reduce the risk of harm towards children as outlined in the IFRC Child Safeguarding Policy. It also includes support to scaling-up efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence.

The IFRC will also provide support to ensure the National Society is a safe, inclusive organization where dignity, access, participation, and safety for people of all identities are held as core values.

ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The Iraqi Red Crescent Society is committed to pursuing institutional strengthening and has carried out the self-assessment part of the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (IFRC-OCAC) process twice; first in 2013, and again in 2021. The self-assessment is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies as a whole in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities. The Iraqi



Strategic and operational coordination

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Iraqi Red Crescent is one of the most respected and accepted humanitarian actors in the country, recognized by stakeholders as a trustable, credible, and professional responder in case of disasters and crises. It ensures that the IFRC network and wider Red Cross Red Crescent Movement draws an example of effective communication and coordination among all its components at both strategic and operational levels, thus ensuring complementarity, collective action, and rationalization of resources. The National Society, in line with the [Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation \(SMCC\)](#) agreed principles, is closely coordinating with the IFRC, ICRC, and sister National Societies active and present in Iraq.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the National Society to maximize partnerships with UN agencies and expand partnerships with multilaterals, leveraging the international status of the IFRC. Activities for enhancing IFRC membership coordination will

Red Crescent Society is also committed to the Preparedness for Effective Response (IFRC-PER) process, and is at the orientation phase. The PER Approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyse the strengths and gaps of its preparedness and response mechanism, and take necessary action to improve it.

include rolling out the IFRC MENA Membership Framework and maintaining membership coordination platforms. The IFRC will continue to coordinate and provide technical support in respective partners technical working groups with the National Society, covering National Society development, disaster and crisis management, health, and WASH, and expand shared leadership opportunities within the IFRC membership. Contribution to Movement coordination and cooperation includes:

- Promoting joint statements and increasing coordination on communication, and cross-coordination between operations and communications
- Exploring the possibility of having a Movement data and information sharing portal and of developing Movement contingency plans
- Designing and rolling out training for National Society staff about Movement coordination
- Further strengthening Movement dialogue on policy issues



National Society development

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Iraqi Red Crescent recognizes the need to transform into a strong and sustainable National Society to keep pace with the changing trends and patterns of the humanitarian context and service delivery. Enhancement of the National Society's organizational capacity is required both at central and branch levels. The OCAC self-assessment enabled the development of a comprehensive two-year plan of action. The plan includes prioritizing strategic management (including policy development and a strong planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (PMER system), resource mobilization, internal communication, integrity and risk management, volunteer management, and HR system development (including all the functions such as career, training, and performance management).

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the National Society on branch development, including on establishing a reporting cycle in governorate branches, providing technical support on digitalisation and innovation, and on ensuring functioning emergency operations centres in hazard-prone governorates. The IFRC will assist the Iraqi Red Crescent investment in National Society development through accessing dedicated funding mechanisms, such as the National Society Investment Alliance, jointly led by the IFRC and ICRC, the Capacity Building Fund, the Empress Shôken Fund and other innovative approaches.

The **Danish Red Cross, German Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and Swedish Red Cross** support the National Society on different development priorities and internal systems strengthening, based on their areas of expertise. The Netherlands Red Cross and the Swedish Red Cross will also support the Iraqi Red Crescent Society to adopt and use a digital fundraising platform.



Humanitarian diplomacy

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Iraqi Red Crescent Society seeks to promote the National Society's image and advocate for change, affecting public behaviour, policies, and decisions. It engages with authorities at a leadership level to amplify the National Society's voice and collaborates to build a network of local influencers on key issues, such as climate change and migration. Positioning the National Society and advocating on behalf of the most vulnerable people includes use of data collected through needs assessments and programming, for an evidence-based approach.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will continue to support the Iraqi Red Crescent in mobilizing public and governmental support, promoting the National Society's image, and advocating for change, on a domestic, regional, and global scale. The IFRC will help produce humanitarian diplomacy briefing notes and develop tailored key messages for humanitarian diplomacy. It will also support the organization of least two-skill shares on digital communications, audio visual production, audio and lives on social media and managing reputational risks.



Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

As part of its development objectives, the Iraqi Red Crescent seeks to strengthen its financial management system, and planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (PMER). It plans to implement new tools to enhance financial reports, including to meet commitments with stakeholders regarding quality and timely submissions. Through the institutionalization of PGI, the National Society also works to reinforce safeguarding mechanisms.

The National Society is adopting a digital transformation approach, and developing its systems, tools, and data management at national headquarters and governorates level branches.

The National Society also seeks to innovate, and in 2022, has supported youth-led innovation as part of the IFRC “Climate Change Champions” initiative. This aimed to empower young people to take an active role in contributing to their

community's welfare and instill a sense of social responsibility towards climate action.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Iraqi Red Crescent Society in integrity strengthening through the inclusion of compliance mechanisms and safeguarding. The IFRC will support the National Society to undertake a Protection Gender and Inclusion (PGI) organizational assessment, and to familiarize the staff and volunteers with the code of conduct, and with policies around child safeguarding, protection, and prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Together with the **Danish Red Cross** and **Norwegian Red Cross** which supports on financial and administrative management, the IFRC will assist the National Society in improving its financial systems and provide technical advice on financial aspects, including support to meet commitments with stakeholders regarding quality and timely submission.

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC, through its country delegation, supports the Iraqi Red Crescent Society in its partners Task Force and other coordination mechanisms, as well as with strategy development and planning. It also promotes organizational development. The National Society undertook an IFRC-OCAC assessment in 2021, and this has informed the development of a new National Society development strategy. The IFRC also facilitates humanitarian diplomacy with UN agencies and

embassies in Iraq, and accountability, helping with planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting to stakeholders.

In recent years, IFRC supported the Iraqi Red Crescent through several Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) and Emergency Appeal [operations](#), in relation to population movement, disease outbreaks, earthquakes, floods, droughts, civil unrest, and technological hazards.



Iraqi Red Crescent volunteers supporting the people affected by sandstorms by providing masks, health services and medical advice. (Photo: IRCS)

IFRC Membership coordination

The IFRC coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, humanitarian situations, and needs; agreeing common priorities; co-developing common strategies to address issues such as obtaining greater humanitarian access, acceptance, and space, mobilizing funding and other resources; clarifying consistent public messaging; and monitoring progress. This also means ensuring that strategies and programmes in support of people in need incorporate clarity of humanitarian action and development assistance, and of efforts to reinforce the auxiliary role of National Societies in their respective countries.

Participating National Societies providing direct technical and financial support to the Iraqi Red Crescent include:

The **Danish Red Cross** is assisting the Iraqi Red Crescent on [mental health and psychosocial support \(MHPSS\)](#), cash and voucher assistance, health, and finance and administrative development.













The **German Red Cross** supports the National Society's cash activities to returnees in Ninawa in various ways, including multi-purpose cash assistance, and cash for work and shelter. It also supports the National Society in rehabilitating health and education facilities in Ninawa, as well as in volunteer

management and insurance, and the management of resource mobilization.

The **Norwegian Red Cross** supports the National Society in the improvement of access to primary health care services and WASH in schools in Basra, Salahuddin and Ninawa. It is also working with the Iraqi Red Crescent on improved access to primary health care and pre-hospital services in Basra, Ninawa, Anbar and Baghdad, and is engaged in the ICRC [Health Care in Danger](#) initiative in Baghdad, Ninawa, Basra, Anbar and Wasit. The Norwegian Red Cross also provides financial development support to the National Society's headquarters.

The **Swedish Red Cross** works with the National Society to improve the durability of WASH interventions and incorporate environmental aspects. It does this by combining humanitarian, emergency, and recovery approaches. The Swedish Red Cross is also implementing a programme in partnership with the **French Red Cross** to strengthen the Iraqi Red Crescent local response capacity and community-based disaster risk management. Its core focus for capacity building is around systems for information management and planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, [WASH](#), [community engagement and accountability \(CEA\)](#), and [protection, gender and inclusion \(PGI\)](#). Restoring family links capacity building will also be incorporated in partnership with the ICRC.

Participating National Society Support

| National Society name | Funding Requirement | Climate | Disasters and crises | Health and wellbeing | Migration | Values, power and inclusion | Enabling local actors |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---|---|--|-----------|---|---|
| Danish Red Cross | 1.2M |  |  |  | |  |  |
| German Red Cross | 1M |  |  | | | |  |
| Norwegian Red Cross | 718,000 | | |  | | |  |
| Swedish Red Cross | 600,000 | |  |  | | | |

Total Funding requirement

3.5M

Movement coordination

The National Society chairs monthly coordination meetings for Movement partners, including the IFRC, ICRC and participating National Societies present in Iraq. The Iraqi Red Crescent Task Force was originally established to develop the National Society's strategic plan and later to coordinate response operations. Since the end of the war in Mosul, the Task Force has been converted to a Movement coordination forum. Additional technical groups are also in place for disaster and crisis management, health, WASH, and National Society development. This is carried out in line with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation ([SMCC](#)) principles, and the newly adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#).

In Iraq, the ICRC helps displaced people, refugees and civilians in places affected by fighting during times of crisis. It improves access to clean water and health care, visits detainees and enables them to maintain contact with their families and supports the authorities' efforts to clarify the fate of people missing from earlier conflicts. The ICRC also supports the National Society in its development and operations, as a primary partner with a focus on the [Safer Access](#) approach. This approach promotes safer access to people affected by conflict and violence, while minimizing risks to staff and volunteers. The ICRC also continues to support the National Society in explosive remnants of war, relief stocks and other activities falling within its operational mandate.

Coordination with other actors

The Iraqi Red Crescent is a member of the National Disaster Response Committee chaired by the Government Department of Migration and Displacement and of the country's main emergency coordination mechanisms, including the National Operation Cell (NOC), Operations Room for Displaced People, Joint Coordination and Monitoring Centre (JCMC) and Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC). At the national and governorate level, the Iraqi Red Crescent coordinates its activities with the Prime Minister's office, local government, and directorates in targeted governorates, and with the Ministries of Health and Environment, Education, Displaced and Migrants, and Reconstruction and Development. It also coordinates with other national and international humanitarian organizations. The National Society also has strong relations with Iraqi ministries and educational institutions to support learning, developing staff capabilities and coordinating online and in-person trainings in the National Society headquarters.

The Iraqi Red Crescent and the IFRC actively engage in several Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) cluster meetings with other national and international humanitarian organizations, including in Erbil. Cluster and working group meetings on shelter and non-food household items, food, and WASH are held every two weeks, and include national and international humanitarian organizations.

The Iraqi Red Crescent has also established partnerships with other key stakeholders, including the EU, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Development Programme. Through these organizations, it implements projects related to water and sanitation, awareness of environmental and mine risks, and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Centre, which identifies risks and divides response mechanisms among the relevant ministries, organizations, and institutions.



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 15 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [IFRC Global Plan and Country Plans](#)
- [Subscribe for updates](#)
- [Donor response](#) on IFRC website
- [Live Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\)](#) data
- Operational information: [IFRC GO platform](#)
- National Society data: [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)
- [Evaluations database](#)

This plan reflects the priorities of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, the IFRC and National Societies providing international support, for 2024 and subsequent years. It is aligned with IFRC [Strategy 2030](#), representing the collective ambitions of IFRC membership, and is the result of a joint planning process and will serve for joint monitoring and reporting. It will be revised on an annual basis to adjust priorities and funding requirements to the needs in-country.

Contact information

Husam Sabri

Head of International Relations Department
Iraqi Red Crescent Society
T +964 770 462 1141
relations.dept@ircs.org.iq
www.ircs.org.iq

Yara Yassine

Head of Strategic Engagement & Acting Head of
Strategic Engagement & Partnerships
IFRC Regional Office for Middle East & North Africa,
Beirut
T +961 79 300 562
yara.yassine@ifrc.org

Cristhian Cortez Cardoza

IFRC Head of Delegation for Iraq
and Lebanon
T +961 7180 2926
cristhian.cortez@ifrc.org

Sumitha Martin

Lead
IFRC Global Strategic Planning & Reporting Centre
New Delhi
sumitha.martin@ifrc.org