



Country: Iraq

Committee: UNDP

Topic: Strengthening the integration of crisis resilience systems with peacebuilding initiatives and conflict prevention strategies

Iraq, a country with a rich cultural heritage and a history of ancient civilizations, faces ongoing challenges in rebuilding its society and economy after decades of conflict and instability. Iraq is located in the Middle East, encompassing the historical lands of Mesopotamia, home to the first civilizations in human history, such as the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, and Assyrians. It shares borders with Turkey, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Jordan. This strategic location has made Iraq a cultural and commercial crossroads throughout history. Iraq has a population of approximately 44 million, consisting mainly of Arabs and Kurds, with smaller groups of Turkmen and other ethnicities. The majority of Iraqis are Shia and Sunni Muslims, with Christians, Yazidis, and other religious minorities. Despite its rich cultural heritage, Iraq currently faces significant challenges.

Iraq's path toward peace and resilience is hindered by multiple ongoing challenges. The complex interplay of ethnic divisions, coupled with external interference and economic vulnerabilities, has created a fragile state. The experiences of the last two decades illustrate the critical need for integrated approaches to crisis management, peacebuilding, and conflict prevention. Initially, Iraq has been deeply affected by conflict. During the ISIS insurgency (2014-2017), over 6 million people were displaced, with an estimated 1.2 million still unable to return to their homes. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), millions continue to face food insecurity, lack of basic services, and inadequate healthcare. In addition to the humanitarian side of the conflict, Iraq's government continues to struggle with corruption and inefficiency, ranking 165th out of 180 countries on the 2023 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index. Additionally, Iraq's security forces remain deeply divided along sectarian lines, which compromises their ability to maintain order and protect citizens from future threats. Rebuilding trust in the government and security apparatus is vital to Iraq's peacebuilding efforts.

In partnership with international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, Iraq has made progress in rebuilding war-torn areas, particularly in Mosul and Anbar. The UNDP's Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (CRRP) aims to provide essential services and rebuild infrastructure in conflict-affected areas. However, progress remains slow, and 60% of infrastructure in liberated areas remains severely damaged because Iraq lacks comprehensive systems for conflict prevention and early warning. The country has struggled to address the underlying causes of conflict. Consequently, Given Iraq's strategic location in the Middle East, regional cooperation is essential for preventing cross-border conflicts and fostering stability. Iraq proposes the creation of a Middle East Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Forum, where neighbouring countries, including Syria, Turkey, and Iran, can collaborate on issues such as border security, refugee management, and terrorism. This forum would facilitate information-sharing on emerging threats and offer solutions for joint action.