

Multidimensional Poverty Analysis Iraq 2022

WORKING PAPER

13th April 2022 Draft

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
1. Background and Approach	5
1.1 Introduction	5
1.2 The Scope and Limitations of this Study.....	6
1.3 Consequences of Covid-19	7
2. The Outer Circle: Underlying Development Contexts	9
2.1 Peace and Conflict Context	9
2.2 Political and Institutional context	12
2.3 Social and Economic Context.....	16
2.4 Environmental and Climate Context	19
3. The Inner Circle: Four Dimensions of Multidimensional Poverty in Iraq.....	22
3.1 Resources.....	22
3.2 Human Security	26
3.3 Power and Voice.....	28
3.4 Opportunities and Choice	30
4. Conclusions.....	33
Implications for development.....	34
References	36

Executive Summary

The aim of this Multidimensional Poverty Analysis (MDPA) is to contribute to an understanding of poverty as it is experienced in Iraq and provide the ground upon which development contributions in Iraq can be based. This involves gaining an understanding of the Iraqi context and in so doing identifying vulnerability to poverty within different societal dimensions. The assessment follows Sida's MDPA framework and definition of poverty, which involves defining multidimensional poverty across four dimensions; resources, human security, power and voice, and opportunity and choice.

Main Conclusions and Poverty trends in Iraq

- Data on poverty measurements in Iraq are largely outdated. In 2012, **extreme resource poverty** in Iraq was relatively low.¹ Based on the international measurement 1.9 USD per day, around 800 000 people (2.5 percent) out of then almost 32 million Iraqis lived in extreme poverty in 2012. **In accordance with the 5.5 USD poverty measurement, 57 percent of Iraqis lived in resource poverty (approx. 18.2 million people) in 2012, and almost 19 percent of Iraqis (approx. six million people) lived under Iraq's national poverty line and on less than 3.20 USD per day.**
- **Since 2012**, Iraq has gone through a series of crises including the war against Daesh which led to mass displacement of people, climate- and environmental crises also causing forced displacements, unemployment and disruption to education, as well as the global Covid-19 pandemic, which drove up poverty and unemployment rates substantially. In 2022, approximately 2.5 million people in Iraq still required some form of humanitarian assistance due to difficulties of reintegrating into their home communities. Following the Covid-19 crisis, the number of Iraqis living below the national poverty line is estimated to have increased by 10 percentage points, reaching nearly 30 percent. Unemployment and food insecurity also increased.
- **The main sources of household poverty** can be viewed as linked to poor economic opportunities, highly affected by public investments, the structure of the economy and by head of households' educational access. The main sources of **child poverty deprivations** are seemingly linked to poor living conditions and health, which correlates with head of households' lack of access to formal and secure work opportunities. Several factors, such as lack of adequate investment and an uncompetitive and non-diversified economy, make the job-creation process in Iraq slow. Recent conflict patterns and crises have caused limited government investments in job-growth and institutional barriers and a lack of social provisions in Iraq's private sector has created a large socio-economic divide between those with access to public employment and those who lack such access.

¹ The latest poverty measurement by the World Bank is from 2012.

- **The most vulnerable groups identified in this MDPA are IDPs, refugees and single-headed households.** Five years after the end of the Daesh conflict, 1.2 million Iraqis remain internally displaced and the rate of return has slowed. Within these groups, **women and girls are particularly vulnerable to poverty** since their access to power, voice, opportunities, and choice, is not only hindered by conflicts, corruption, environmental degradation and a lack of public and private investments, but also by discriminatory social norms and gendered legal frameworks. This vulnerability is furthermore magnified by intersectional forms of discrimination based on nationality (and lack thereof), ethno-sectarian belonging, age, disabilities, political beliefs, and perceived affiliations.
- **Globally, Iraq is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change, coupled with severe environmental degradation and mismanagement of natural resources this has created a very real danger for ecosystem collapse in Iraq, specifically threatening biodiversity, water and food security as well as long term stability.** While much of Iraq's environmental woes stem from mismanagement of its water resources as well as actions taken by its riparian neighbours, climate change will act to further worsen these problems. The 2020/2021 drought was Iraq's second worst in 40 years and dramatically reduced harvest yields. Substantial impacts on Iraq's agriculture are already visible and will likely only increase in the coming years. Decreasing precipitation and river flows threatens the most vulnerable in society, particularly in the southern parts of Iraq where an increased migration to urban areas is already under way. The drought and the severe environmental degradation have also been the main drivers for reduced biodiversity. Temperature records are consistently being broken with heatwaves coming earlier and with more severity.
- **Iraq's economy is extraordinarily corrupt and hinges upon its crude oil production which makes it highly affected by oil price fluctuations.** While the relatively improved security situation in recent years has provided Iraq with a growth trajectory, falls in oil prices at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic compromised the government's ability to attend to public investments since more than 90 percent of its budget relies on oil funding. While prices have since rebounded, they exposed the vulnerability of Iraq's most important commodity to market fluctuations. Considering the urgent global need for climate action, Iraq is in dire need of diversifying its fossil fuel-based energy reliance and economy by adapting to a green economy to not exacerbate its already stressing environmental degradation and climate change implications.
- **The Tishreen street protests of 2019 and 2020 lead to a new election law and early national elections in 2021.** The protests were met with immense violence that killed hundreds of protestors and showed the continued limited democratic space for the population to exercise their human rights. While voter participation remained at record low levels, nearly twenty candidates affiliated with the Tishreen movement were elected to parliament. Women increased their representation in parliament from 25 to 29 percent, with more than half winning their seats outside the gender quota by garnering the highest number of votes in their respective electoral constituencies. Hand wringing over the formation of a new government continues five months after the election and a

new president is yet to be appointed. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, Iraq's GDP contracted by 16 percent but has since returned to modest growth. Nevertheless, the structural issues of corruption, unemployment and sectarianism that drove millions of Iraqis out on the streets remain and the new government will face several challenges.

- **Although the territorial war against Daesh is officially over, Iraqis continue to suffer from attacks on smaller scales by Daesh and other armed groups.** This, together with confrontations between external actors in and around Iraq and the violent state backlashes against protestors form threats to human security. The PMF militias that mobilised to counter Daesh have cemented their influence over Iraqi politics. Despite initial fears that the economic effects of the pandemic could lead to increased recruitment to Daesh, a large scale resurgence has not yet taken place, although attacks continue. In the South, economic depravity and challenges related to climate change has created a fertile recruitment ground for PMF forces. The demands from the protestors of addressing sectarianism and provide economic opportunities for a young and growing population have not yet been met. Meaning that structural issues that can allow for future recruitment to Daesh and other violent extremist groups remain.

1. Background and Approach

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to contribute to an understanding of the different dimensions of poverty in Iraq. Poverty measurements can take a multitude of different forms, and have major

Multidimensional Poverty



implications for policies, and henceforth upon people living in poverty. Sida uses a multidimensional poverty model as a conceptual framework to understand and analyse poverty in different contexts. The underlying understanding is that poverty is complex. Multiple causes interplay to push people into situations of poverty—and keep them there. Knowledge about this complexity and how it is manifested for different groups of people is fundamental to be able to define effective policy measures and approaches to reduce poverty.

Sida's model identifies four dimensions of poverty (resources, human security, opportunities and choice, and power and voice). The four dimensions—captured in the inner circle—help identify the main ways in which poverty manifests itself, and how it is experienced by people living in poverty. The outer circle displays the development context, in which poor people live and act. Sida analyses the development context along four aspects—the conflict context, political and institutional context, social and economic context, and the environmental

and climate context. Gender and human rights perspectives permeates all these contexts and dimensions. To be defined by Sida as living in multidimensional poverty, a person needs to be resource poor and poor in at least one other dimension. This framework explains the degree and dimensions of poverty and contains the main elements of a development analysis that explains opportunities and constraints for sustainable and inclusive development, as well as the opportunities for people living in poverty to change their situation.

This MDPA was initiated in the Autumn of 2019 and has been developed through a continuous process involving a series of internal meetings, field trips, and meetings with partners. A draft MDPA was made in 2017 and has been used as a point of departure for this paper. Nonetheless, much has happened in Iraq since 2017. This paper is updated with the latest statistics where possible, and the analysis is based on the concurrent Iraqi context ongoing development contributions interact with. In this sense, this MDPA is a useful tool for understanding poverty and the development context and assessing development contributions and their possible interactions in a conflict sensitive manner. This MDPA was last updated in March 2022.

1.2 The Scope and Limitations of this Study

Existing statistics on poverty in Iraq are mostly outdated. The last National Household Survey in Iraq was conducted in 2012 and does not include gender disaggregated data.² The available data from the World Bank covers the period up to 2012, and the years thereafter are based on estimations. While there exist reports published later, many rely on earlier data sets.

This paper uses the latest statistics from the World Bank together with data from development reports produced by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UN Women, Oxfam and others. However, currently, no existing data set on poverty captures satisfactorily all the dimensions that form Sida's multidimensional poverty framework. Even if multidimensional poverty analyses are becoming more common, the dimensions of human security, power and voice, as well as opportunity and choice, are often neglected. This MDPA therefore triangulates the quantitative multidimensional poverty assessments carried out by OPHI and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA), with other data sets and qualitative analyses capturing the other dimensions. This MDPA assesses poverty on the national, provincial, household, and individual levels, taking into consideration different causes and effects.

In terms of definitions, Sida follows to some degree, definitions set out by the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank in order to make possible comparisons. The World Bank utilises monetary measurements varying from extreme poverty level (1.9 USD per day), to poverty based on 3.2 USD per day and 5.5 USD per day, depending on the contextual level of economic development—GDP per capita. Due to its relatively high GDP stemming from its oil production, Iraq is considered an upper-middle-income country. According to World Bank measurements, this would imply an application of the higher level of measurement (5.5 USD per day) to assess resource poverty. Due to the lack of updated statistics, we assume that people who are dependent on humanitarian assistance are being considered extreme poor.

² World Bank, Household Socio-Economic Survey 2012, Second Round, 4th October 2017. Available at: <https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/2334/related-materials>

1.3 Consequences of Covid-19

As of 2022, Iraq has recorded approximately 2 million cases of Covid-19 and 24 000 deaths, although these figures likely suffer from underreporting and the actual toll is thought to be significantly higher. Early in the pandemic, severe restrictions were rolled out by both federal and Kurdish authorities. However, these measures were largely abandoned in late 2020 and early 2021, in order to support the country's economic recovery. Mandates regarding social distancing and mask wearing remain but are loosely enforced. Only 25 percent of Iraqis have received at least one dose of vaccine against Covid-19, attributable to both unavailability of vaccines in some locations and hesitancy among eligible populations; health authorities continue to try and address both factors. Among IDPs in camps, there have been approximately 1,200 confirmed cases of Covid-19 (approximately 6 per cent of the camp population), and an estimated 100 fatalities. Quarantine and isolation measures have proven unpopular in camp settings. Covid-19 patients are often not willing to be separated from family members.^{3 4}

The unemployment rate increased significantly during the pandemic, from 12 percent in early 2020 to 23 percent in early 2021.⁵ The average Iraqi income decreased by 16 percent over the course of 2020, with incomes for IDPs and refugees decreasing by around 30 percent.⁶ In mid-2021, it was estimated that more than 30 percent of the Iraqi population would be below the national poverty line as a result of the pandemic, an increase by more than 10 percentage points.⁷ Long term economic challenges in the shape of poverty and unemployment are likely to remain even with the rebounding economic growth.⁸

Due to the global Covid-19 outbreak, the demand for oil exports dropped dramatically, and resulted in oil being traded at around 26 USD per barrel in April-June 2020.⁹ This was the lowest traded price in 18 years, and only funded about half of the needs for Iraq's (2019) state budget, which is based on a price of 56 USD per barrel. Oil prices since rebounded and in late 2021 Iraq was at a fiscal surplus due to increased oil prices. However, the sudden drop highlighted how dependent the government in Baghdad is on the global price of oil to deliver basic social services and pay public sector employees, which accounts for about 60 percent of those employed in the formal Iraqi workforce.¹⁰ Iraq's GDP contracted by nearly 16 percent in 2020 as a result of the pandemic and subsequent falls in the price of oil. Partially in response to this contraction the Iraqi government devalued the dinar, leading to significant impacts for Iraqi citizens. Economic growth has since rebounded to modest levels and was predicted to stand at 2.6 percent in 2021.¹¹ Following the economic deterioration of the Covid pandemic, the government of Iraq adopted a White Paper on economic reform in October 2020 which singled

³ OCHA, 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview Iraq p.13

⁴ WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard Iraq [Iraq: WHO Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Dashboard With Vaccination Data | WHO Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Dashboard With Vaccination Data](#)

⁵ World Bank, November 2021, Iraq Economic Monitor: The Slippery Road to Economic Recovery, p.7

⁶ UNDP, May 2021, *Impact of COVID-19 on Iraq's Vulnerable Populations*, p.16

⁷ UNDP, May 2021, *Impact of COVID-19 on Iraq's Vulnerable Populations*, p.25.

⁸ OCHA, 2022, *Humanitarian Needs Overview Iraq*, p.82

⁹ Adul-Zahra, Q. and Kullab, S., "One-two punch of new virus, falling oil prices threaten Iraq" in *AP News*, 20th March 2020. Available at: <https://apnews.com/8cae321c29f093660fb0b0765c476b17>

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ OCHA, 2022, *Humanitarian Needs Overview Iraq* p.15

out Iraq's extreme dependency on oil, bloated state sector and insufficient infrastructure as key structural obstacles that needed to be addressed to achieve a functional Iraqi economy.¹²

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Iraq was low already before the Covid-19 crisis—negative 4.8 billion USD in 2018—indicating that investors took more funds out of Iraq than what was flowing into the country.¹³ While FDI declined by 10 percent during 2020, the following year saw a 27 percent increase, primarily in the energy sector.¹⁴ Considering the direct effects of environmental degradation and climate change in Iraq, causing water stress, food insecurity and loss of farming livelihoods, economic stimulation and livelihood policies following the Covid-19 crisis should be closely linked to economic diversification and environmental adaptation. However, that large scale diversification and adaption is yet to materialise.

The nation-wide lockdown and spread of the pandemic had implications on all societal dimensions. Gender-based violence increased in Iraq during the pandemic as more time at home, reduced mobility and limited access to prevention and support services coalesced to put women at greater risk.¹⁵ In response to this, civil society organisations, as well as the UN, urged the Iraqi Parliament to speed up the endorsement of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law drafted prior to the crisis.

Large risks also exist with relation to the dissemination of false information regarding the virus and prevention from it. Reports have stated that pro-government media outlets spread government propaganda without question, while pro-Iranian outlets have attempted to disseminate conspiracy theories to steer public perception into resentment of the US and in favour of Iran and China.¹⁶ The lack of factual and impartial information has meant that information and theories people can make sense of can latch on, which can lead to increased tensions between groups and to an initiation of harmful practices.¹⁷ In light of the crisis, there has been an increased demand for impartial and factual information accessible by all, and an emphasis amongst activists on the vital role the media plays in societies.¹⁸ At the community level, violence against communities and households with perceived connections to Daesh grew, particularly against IDPs and returnees, with the intent to deter displaced households from returning to their areas of origin. Attacks by Daesh increased over 2020, however the pandemic did not lead to a large scale resurgence of the group.¹⁹

The pandemic had the most damaging impact on already vulnerable groups, daily workers without stable employment saw their livelihoods most negatively affected by Covid-restrictions. Higher food prices stemming from Covid-19 measures meant that 30 percent of all households decreased their food intake, rising to 42 percent of all households in rural areas.²⁰ OCHA have noted that many of the basic services that were closed or limited in the early stages

¹² Government of Iraq, 22 Oct 2020, The White Paper for Economic Reforms: vision and key objectives, Accessed April 7 2022: [The White Paper for Economic Reforms: vision and key objectives \(gds.gov.iq\)](https://www.gds.gov.iq/)

¹³ World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2018.

¹⁴ World Bank, November 2021, *Iraq Economic Monitor: Slippery Road to Economic Recovery*, p.9

¹⁵ UNDP May 2021, *Impact of Covid-19 on Iraq's Vulnerable Populations* P.7

¹⁶ Available at: <https://www.mediasupport.org/cv19-iraq/>

¹⁷ International Media support (IMS),

¹⁸ IMS, "THE PARADOX: RECORD AUDIENCES, SHRINKING REVENUES", 2020. Available at: <https://www.mediasupport.org/covid19/>

¹⁹ UNDP, May 2021, *Impact of COVID-19 on Iraq's Vulnerable Population*, p.21

²⁰ UNDP, May 2021, *Impact of COVID-19 on Iraq's Vulnerable Population*, p.6-7

of the pandemic have remained closed, and that the range of services offered to the most vulnerable has not returned to previous levels, despite the availability of vaccines and the economic recovery of 2021.²¹

2. The Outer Circle: Underlying Development Contexts

2.1 Peace and Conflict Context

The peace and conflict context refer to the factors of peace, conflict, justice, social cohesion and trust, as well as the existence of violence, tensions, grievances and conflicting interests that affect poverty.

Iraq has endured a series of conflicts in recent decades, involving both domestic and international actors, which has deeply affected the Iraqi economy, internal social cohesion and peoples' vulnerability to multidimensional poverty. Daesh was territorially defeated in 2017 and largely successful counter-terrorism operations have managed to reduce the group's activities in Iraq, however as of early 2022, the organization still had between 6000 and 10 000 fighters across Syria and Iraq.²² Asymmetrical terrorist attacks have continued to injure, kidnap and kill civilians, community leaders, and Iraqi armed forces.²³ The international coalition, the Iraqi Security Forces and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), consisting primarily of Shiite militias, some of whom are backed by Iran, have remained active in operations to suppress terrorist activity and the latter has gained an enhanced position in society to uphold security.²⁴ The PMF were formally incorporated into the Iraqi state apparatus in 2017 and have since split into different factions based on loyalty towards Iran.²⁵ The PMF has actively suppressed peaceful protestors seeking reform, and militias falling under the PMF have attempted to capture increased budget expenditures and maintain influence, which has contributed to the populations' contempt with the states' security services.²⁶

The growth of Daesh also needs to be viewed in relation to social and political conditions at the time, particularly within the Sunni community, stemming from decades of political disillusionment and distrust in Iraqi society. Prior to 2013, Sunni Arabs declared a confluence of motivations to why they opposed the political leadership in Baghdad, including rejection of the post-2003 political order along ethno-sectarian lines, Iranian influence, and the violent treatment by security services.²⁷ The disillusionment felt by many Iraqis today, not only Sunnis, due to the lack of practical change risks once again sway marginalised groups towards non-democratic political actors.²⁸

²¹ OCHA. 2022. *Humanitarian needs overview Iraq 2022*.

²² *Fourteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat*. p.6

²³ Human Rights Watch, Iraq Events of 2018.

²⁴ The Middle East Institute, "What's next for coalitions forces in Iraq?", 10 March 2020. Available at: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/whats-next-coalition-forces-iraq>

²⁵ Hammargren, B. 2022, *Iraqis Striving for Change*. p11

²⁶ The Middle East Institute, "What's next for coalitions forces in Iraq?", 10 March 2020. Available at:

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/whats-next-coalition-forces-iraq>; The Middle East Institute, "What's next for coalitions forces in Iraq?", 10 March 2020.

²⁷ International Crisis Group, p. 9; Hammargren 2020.

²⁸ Saferworld, Conflict Analysis 2019, p. 11.

The atrocities committed during the war against Daesh also deepened social divides, which has made reconciliation difficult, and retaliation based on perceived affiliations a reoccurring phenomenon. The war crimes committed by Daesh furthermore places Iraq, and the wider region, in a difficult political situation with regards to transitional justice and social cohesion, with risks of perpetuating ethno-sectarian divides and conflicts if not dealt with aptly. Iraq has long lacked legislation integrating war crimes and crimes against humanity into specific offences under Iraqi law, thus Iraq's anti-terrorist legislation remains the main prosecutable offence.²⁹ In 2021 a law was passed classifying Daesh crimes against women and girls from Yezidi and other minority groups as crimes against humanity and genocide, however no Daesh member has yet been convicted under this law.³⁰ The anti-terrorism legislation mainly focuses on 'membership' of terrorist organisations, without distinguishing between those who perpetrated violence and committed international crimes, and those who were coerced to join for survival. Sentences for terrorist crimes are typically life sentences or execution.³¹ Criminal trials of defendants charged under Iraq's overbroad terrorism law, most often for alleged membership in Daesh were generally rushed and did not involve victim participation. Convictions were based primarily on confessions including those apparently extracted through torture. The low age of criminal responsibility allow children as young as 9 to be prosecuted on terrorism charges in federal Iraq and parts of Kurdistan.³²

While there have been some attempts of strengthening social cohesion on the basis of an Iraqi state identity, most attempts have been either linked to larger ideas of pan-Arabism or closely connected to ethno-sectarian belonging. Iraq's Baathist regime 1968–2003 was a decisive creator of the identity crisis in present-day Iraq.³³ During Saddam Hussein's time in power, Iraq went through a comprehensive Arabisation programme, with extensive displacement, deportation and systematic killing of various population groups in order to alter the demographic composition in favour of Saddam Hussein's own Sunni support base.³⁴ The legacy of the Hussein regime, including the policy of Arabisation and subsequent Anfal campaign 1987–1988, led to profound political cleavages which continue to affect relations between Iraq's Kurds and (particularly Sunni) Arabs.³⁵

The relations between Iraq's different ethnic and religious groups remain fragile and is affected by a political system that builds on ethno-sectarian affiliations . However, the widespread protests of late 2019 and early 2020 were represented by people across ethno-sectarian lines which indicated signs of shared political aspirations concerning the need for political reform in order to acquire social justice. The popular protests initially mainly consisted of graduate students who brought to attention that, even after having pursued higher education, they were left with no better job opportunities. The protests grew and came to represent both women and

²⁹ Human Rights Watch, *Flawed Justice: Accountability for ISIS Crimes in Iraq*, 2019. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/12/05/flawed-justice/accountability-isis-crimes-iraq>

³⁰ HRW, 2022, *World Report 2022, Iraq Events of 2021*.

³¹ Human Rights Watch, *Flawed Justice: Accountability for ISIS Crimes in Iraq*, 2019. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/12/05/flawed-justice/accountability-isis-crimes-iraq>

³² HRW, 2022, *World Report 2022, Iraq Events of 2021*.

³³ Marr, P., in *Writing the Modern History of Iraq : Historiographical and Political Challenges*, (2012), World Scientific Publishing: Singapore, p. 26.

³⁴ "The Clash of Identities in Iraq", in *Iraq Between Occupations*, p. 52.

³⁵ Bengio, O., "On the Brink: State and Nation in Iraqi Kurdistan", in *Iraq Between Occupations*, p. 62.

men across classes and ethno-sectarian groups, although mainly in Baghdad and the southern provinces.³⁶ The Iraqi youth has been viewed as a particular driver for change in the demonstrations, demanding political, economic and social reform and an end to sectarianism and foreign political and security interference.³⁷ One report suggested that the Tishreen protests may lead to a large cultural and political shift as young women were an integral part of the movement.³⁸ The large proportion of protestors from Iraq's Shia majority has moreover indicated a large disapproval from the Shiite population towards the Shia-led political coalitions and the PMF.

Iraqi security forces and militias responded to the protests with excessive force and killed hundreds of demonstrators, some protestors also used lethal forces against security services. Targeted killings have continued long after the protests subsided, several arrests have been made in response to the killings but no convictions have been handed out.³⁹ The state's violent responses in the name of survival, and the fight against terrorism, has provided yet another layer of conflict, and has perpetuated already existing conflicts between different ethno-sectarian groups, causing large problems for reintegration and social cohesion.⁴⁰

Geopolitically, Iraq's political development is also greatly affected by Iran through influences on politicians in power, funding of Shiite paramilitary militias, and since the beginning of 2020, escalating tensions between Iran and the US. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia has reportedly countered Iranian influence by supporting Sunni groups and militias.⁴¹ Turkish military interventions in North-eastern Syria and attacks against the Kurdish Security Forces fighting Daesh in these areas (YPG and YPJ) pose new risks of insecurity in Iraq.⁴² This has large implications for Daesh's capability of resurgence, and thus upon Iraq's security, political and development trajectory.

A factor driving conflict that only recently has begun to move up on the agenda are the climate-related security risks facing Iraq. The country is one of the Middle East's most climate vulnerable countries and with the combination of its hydrological limitations, increasing temperatures and extreme weather events, this puts pressure on basic resources and undermines livelihood security for Iraq's population. Failure to monitor and manage these climate-related risks will increase the risk of different types of social unrest and conflict, including contributing to Daesh and post-Daesh terrorist groups gaining support and regaining strength within resource-constrained communities.⁴³

³⁶ Hammargren, B. 2022, *Iraqis Striving for Change*.

³⁷ Hammargren, B. 2022, *Iraqis Striving for Change*. pp.12-13

³⁸ Hammargren, B. 2022, *Iraqis Striving for Change*. p.33

³⁹ UNAMI, May 2021, *Update on Demonstrations in Iraq*. p.4

⁴⁰ MENA Conflict Analysis, p. 9; Human Rights Watch, Iraq Events of 2018, 2019.

⁴¹ Saferworld, MENA Conflict Analysis, p. 17.

⁴² International Crisis Group, p. 20.

⁴³ Sipri, Aug 2018, *Iraq Climate-related Security Risk Assessment*, available at: <https://www.eastwest.ngo/sites/default/files/iraq-climate-related-security-risk-assessment.pdf>

2.2 Political and Institutional context

The political and institutional context constitutes formal and informal political institutions, rule of law, norms present and how these factors affect multidimensional poverty.

Due to Iraq's vast oil resources, politicians have been less dependent on taxes as a source for state revenues and have been able to distribute material benefits and appease demands for political representation. Throughout Iraq's modern history, politicians have selectively extended and withdrawn benefits and political rights, pitting groups in society against each other.⁴⁴ In this way, Iraq's national oil production has affected regime stability, state conflict proneness, democratisation, political accountability and trust in the political system

Iraq's government structure has historically been based on centralisation, where all financial and administrative functions have been performed by national ministries with delegated responsibility to governorates, districts and sub-districts.⁴⁵ This has given way to a series of overlapping functions between ministries on different levels, resulting in inefficient bureaucratic procedures, high public expenditures with an overemployment of public staff, and profoundly embedded corruption.⁴⁶ No transparent investigation on corruption has been conducted since the invasion but the current minister of finance Ali Allawi has estimated that between 150 and 300 billion USD of largely "illegitimately acquired" assets were held overseas by Iraqis.⁴⁷ Since 2013, responsibility for administrative and financial functions and public services has been gradually transferred to governorates, although not always with the necessary resources or differentiation of functions across Government. Decentralisation efforts risk being derailed by the struggle over power and resources not only between the central government and the governorates but also between governorates, as well as by the opaqueness of the legal framework set out in the Constitution concerning the governorates' mandates.⁴⁸ As a result, institutions at province level have remained relatively weak, which has translated into a lack of ability to deliver basic public services and security, and in that sense, accountability vis-à-vis the populace.⁴⁹ Simultaneously, this has undermined the state's presence on the ground, giving way to increased political disillusionment with the state.⁵⁰

Iraq's ethno-sectarian political system, *muhassassa*, permeates all political and public institutions.⁵¹ The *muhassassa* assumes religious differences as the primary markers of modern political identities, and divides power between Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs, and Kurds, making secular national formations impossible. While ethnic distribution of politically important positions is not enshrined in the constitution, consistent praxis since the US invasion has been that the premiership should be held by a Shia Arab, the Presidency by a Kurd, and the Speaker of Parliament position by a Sunni Arab.⁵² The Prime Minister selects the heads of Ministries

⁴⁴ Hinnebusch et al., (2019) *Handbook on Middle East Security*, London, Routledge.

⁴⁵ UNAMI, Common Country Analysis, April 2020, p. 95.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Chatam House. June 2021, *Politically sanctioned corruption and barriers to reform in Iraq* p.12

⁴⁸ UNESCWA, Revisiting decentralization in Iraq: Challenges and policy recommendations, working paper 2017, pp. 26-28, 36.

⁴⁹ UNESCWA, Revisiting decentralization in Iraq: Challenges and policy recommendations, working paper 2017, p. 22.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Marr, P., (2010) "One Iraq or Many: What Has Happened to Iraqi Identity?" in *Iraq Between Occupations: Perspectives from 1920 to the Present*, Palgrave Macmillan: New York, p. 24.

⁵² Hammargren, B. 2022, *Irawis striving for change "We want a homeland"*. p.7

and presents the cabinet to a vote by the Council of Representatives, headed by the Speaker of Parliament. Due to Iraq's majority Shia population, government posts have been dominated by Shia politicians, whose pursuit of sectarian interests has left many minorities feeling marginalised and alienated.⁵³ This power-sharing arrangement among Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis has thus served to reinforce the political salience of ethnic identities and has inhibited the formation of political representation based on other issues or priorities.⁵⁴ The system has also cemented corruption and made Iraq one of the most corrupt countries in the world.⁵⁵

Since Iraq's Shiite population forms a demographic majority, a coalition of Shiite parties and blocs have been able to establish a majority in Parliament.⁵⁶ The Kurdish KDP and PUK won 33 and 15 seats respectively in the 2021 election, and the rest were divided among Sunni-led coalitions, Tishreen protest-affiliated candidates, smaller parties and independents.⁵⁷ To ensure minimum representation for minorities, a system of reservation ensures seats for Christians (5), Fayli Kurds (1), Yazidis (1), Sabeen Mandaeans (1), and Shabaks (1).⁵⁸ The Iraqi parliament has 329 seats in total with a 25 percent quota for women. The quota has ensured women are represented in parliament but has not yet translated into any substantial increase of women on government posts. In the 2018 government, still in power awaiting the formation of a new government following the 2021 elections, only two women hold Minister posts. The parliamentary quotas ensure minimal representation from minorities and women, yet there is no assurance of representation for women from minorities.⁵⁹ In the 2021 elections seats for Fayli Kurds, Shabak and Yazidi components did not have any female candidates competing.⁶⁰ A census has not been held since 1997, which makes it difficult to ascertain if electoral constituencies are fairly delaminated and if seat allocation for national minorities are fairly allocated.⁶¹

Calls for a technocratic government, away from identity-based divisions, arose throughout the Arab Spring and grew louder throughout the Tishreen protests of 2019 and 2020. This led to early elections held in 2021, they saw a voter turnout of 44 percent, among the lowest since the ousting of Saddam Hussein.⁶² The EU's observers deemed the election technically well managed and competitive, though concerns were raised over campaign spending, freedom of the press and some undue restrictions on electoral rights.⁶³ While Shia affiliated parties remained the largest in parliament, parties and independent candidates associated with the Tishreen movement were elected to parliament, suggesting some political staying power of the protest movement.⁶⁴ Voter turnout country-wide was 48 percent for women and 52 percent for men, with 29 percent of elected parliamentarians being women. More than half of which (57), won their seats based on the number of votes and not due to the quota system. However,

⁵³ Saferworld, MENA Conflict Analysis, p. 19.

⁵⁴ Freedom House, Country Report Iraq, 2016.

⁵⁵ Hammargren, B. 2022, *Iraqis striving for change "We want a homeland"*. p.7

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ EU Election Observation Mission in Iraq 2021 Parliamentary Elections.

⁵⁸ Freedom House, Country Report Iraq 2019

⁵⁹ Oxfam & UN Women, GENDER PROFILE – IRAQ, 2018, p. 12.

⁶⁰ UNAMI, gender Analysis of Iraq's October 2021 National Elections,

⁶¹ EU Election Observation Mission in Iraq 2021 Parliamentary Elections, p.8

⁶² EU Election Observation Mission in Iraq 2021 Parliamentary Elections. p.33

⁶³ EU Election Observation Mission in Iraq 2021, Parliamentary Elections, p.1

⁶⁴ EU Election Observation Mission in Iraq 2021 Parliamentary Elections p.

experiences of female candidates in the October 10 elections show that women faced similar challenges as in 2018, namely: online gender-based attacks, gender stereotyping, inadequate financial resources to run effective campaigns and patriarchal structures across society⁶⁵

The Kurdish regional Parliament reserves seats for Turkmen (5), Christians (5), and Armenians (1), and 30 percent of the seats for women.⁶⁶ The Kurdish government has established a Special Directory and the High Council of Women's Affairs with the tasks to follow-up on cases of violence against women in all three Kurdish governorates, and support gender mainstreaming in policy-making.⁶⁷ The political status of women has therefore been considered slightly and relatively more equal in Kurdistan compared to the provinces solely adhering to the federal Iraqi and local religious legislatures.

Following Iraq's Supreme Court 2017 ruling on Kurdistan's secession referendum as unconstitutional and the subsequent military attempt to seize control of Kirkuk, the disputed oil-rich region in Kurdistan, the relationships between Kurdistan and Baghdad, and between rival Kurdish parties and the KDP and PUK have intensified.⁶⁸ These tensions have particularly affected people living in the contested areas where politicians have politicised the environment along ethno-sectarian lines.

Historically unaddressed political instability and economic grievances can henceforth be viewed as both drivers of conflict as well as drivers of widespread corruption and ethno-sectarian political elitism.⁶⁹ As a result, there is a lack of political accountability and democratic governance fuelling these factors in a reinforcing fashion. There are several anti-corruption bodies in Iraq, but their mandates are weak due to, among other things, a lack of intra-agency coordination.⁷⁰

In 2014, Iraq was the first country in the MENA region to launch a National Action Plan on UNSC Resolution 1325. The development of the Iraqi National Action Plan (INAP) to implement the UNSCR 1325 was a significant step towards enabling women's participation and protection in conflict resolution and peace-building in Iraq.⁷¹ However, even with such developments, women have continued to be under-represented in decision-making and peace-building fora. The INAP 1325 has been largely underfunded, and has lacked implementation, monitoring and follow-up mechanisms. A second INAP 1325 was adopted in late 2020.⁷²

Political norms in Iraq can be characterised as gendered and systemically discriminatory, which deprive women across ethno-sectarian groups of political voices and representation. The Constitution refers to Islam as a foundational source of legislation and prohibits the passing of legislature that contradicts its established rulings and authorises local religious groups to govern Personal Status Law.⁷³ Consequently, women's situation in Iraq depends on local

⁶⁵ UNAMI, gender Analysis of Iraq's October 2021 National Elections, p.4

⁶⁶ Freedom House, Country Report Iraq, 2016.

⁶⁷ Oxfam & UN Women, GENDER PROFILE – IRAQ, 2018, p. 16.

⁶⁸ MENA Conflict Analysis, pp. 19-20.

⁶⁹ Freedom House, Country Report Iraq, p. 13.

⁷⁰ FCG, 2021, Anti-Corruption Support to Iraq, p.7

⁷¹ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 18.

⁷² UN Women, *Iraq National Action Plan*, Gathered from: [Iraq National Action Plan I What we do: Leadership and political participation | UN Women – Iraq](#)

⁷³ Oxfam & UN Women, GENDER PROFILE – IRAQ, 2018, p. 5.

interpretations and implementations of Islamic law and custom.⁷⁴ Although Iraq adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1986, the Iraqi Penal Code fails to enforce gender equality. The Constitution states that all forms of violence and abuse in the family, society and the state are prohibited, yet the Penal Code's stipulation of a husband's legal right to exercise discipline has meant that marital rape and domestic violence are not criminalised.⁷⁵ This has made it possible to override rape offenses if the perpetrator legally marries the rape victim, which has become a manner to deal with rape cases, particularly applied upon younger women, in order to 'save the family honour' related to perceptions of women's sexuality and appropriate behaviour.

The previously mentioned 2021 Law on Yazidi Female Survivors which allows for crimes by Daesh against minority women to be tried as genocide is yet to be applied.⁷⁶ In the aftermath of the atrocities committed against Yazidi women and girls, including the use of rape as a weapon of warfare, women and children have been ostracised from their communities, and have been provided little power and voice to attain justice.

Traditional gender norms contribute to the iteration of gender roles which often associate decision-making with male domains. In an Arab Barometer survey conducted in 2019, around 70 percent of both women and men across ages indicated they believe men are better political leaders.⁷⁷ In the same survey, 75 percent of men and 65 percent of women agreed that husbands should have the final say in all decisions concerning the family.⁷⁸ Yet, on the other hand, 78 percent of men and women indicated that they think it would be acceptable to use gender quotas to give women fairer political representation, suggesting there may be a will for reform among the population.⁷⁹

The Iraqi state fails to deliver basic services to its population, the water supply and sanitation sector suffers from a number of challenges, including a lack of performance standards and management autonomy, civil service laws that protect poor staff performance, low administrative skills, and weak accountability mechanisms. A low-skilled labour force and weak enforcement of tariff and connection policies. Inconsistencies in institutional roles and responsibilities, lack of strategic direction, and lack of formal coordination mechanisms, which may in part be attributable to the absence of a comprehensive Water Law.⁸⁰

The electricity sector in turn suffers from constrained budgets and damage wrought by war, meaning that Iraq is not producing enough electricity for its rapidly growing population, a problem that is exacerbated by Iraq's poor electricity grid which suffers from some of the highest network losses in the world.⁸¹

⁷⁴ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 5.

⁷⁵ UNFPA, Gender Justice & the Law: Iraq.

⁷⁶ HRW, *World Report 2022 Iraq, Events of 2021*.

⁷⁷ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 9.

⁷⁸ Arab Barometer, Women's rights in the Middle East and North Africa, August 2019.

⁷⁹ Arab Barometer, p. 10.

⁸⁰ World Bank Group, 2017, *Status of Water Sector Regulation in the Middle East and North Africa*, p.79

⁸¹ IEA; 2019, *Iraq's Energy Outlook – Roadmap to a Brighter Future*, pp.8-9

2.3 Social and Economic Context

The economic and social context includes the size and growth of the economy, fiscal policy, structure of the economy, demography, labour market, health care system and dependencies on natural resources.

Iraq's oil-based economy makes it the fifth-largest economy in the MENA region, with a GDP of 4 890 USD per capita.⁸² As such, Iraq is, by and large, classified as an upper-middle-income country.⁸³ Harboursing the fifth largest known oil reserve in the world, Iraqi oil revenues make up about 65 percent of its GDP, yet employs only about one percent of the country's total labour force.⁸⁴ Only a handful of countries in the world are as economically dependent on oil as Iraq.⁸⁵ Iraq's non-diversified economy has meant that its whole economy is highly dependent on exports of brent crude oil and other raw materials to global economies such as China, India, South Korea and Japan to fund its public administration.⁸⁶ The outbreak of Covid-19 globally led to a substantial decrease in oil prices, which had severe consequences for the Iraqi economy and the ability to provide social services to the population.⁸⁷ Likewise, due to poor investments and climate- and environmental changes in the agricultural sector and private sector more generally, Iraq imports most of its food, textiles and machineries, which makes it highly dependent on its foreign relations.⁸⁸

Following years of conflict, Iraq is in a fragile state, with reconstruction and recovery needs of core infrastructure and public health services estimated at 88.2 billion USD.⁸⁹ At the same time, Iraq's population has increased rapidly in recent decades, and is expected to double over the next 25 years.⁹⁰ In 2022, the Iraqi population is estimated at 41.2 million.⁹¹ Women constitute 49.5 percent of the population.⁹² Almost 60 percent of the population is under the age of 25, and the median age is 21 years old, among the lowest in the world.⁹³⁹⁴ This puts substantial pressure on the government to keep up with providing basic public services, education, housing, and job opportunities.

Due to decades of conflict during which political priority has been given to security and defence, the growing needs among the population have largely been unmet. In 2019, the federal budget allocated 2.5 percent of its budget to the health ministry, whereas the security forces received 18 percent and the oil ministry 13.5 percent.⁹⁵ Iraq is the country that spends the least on public education in the region.⁹⁶ This has resulted in poor quality of education and health

⁸² Statistics from IMF October 2021

⁸³ OCHA, Humanitarian Response, Humanitarian Needs Overview Iraq, November 2019, p. 4.

⁸⁴ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 5.

⁸⁵ World Bank Data, *Oil Rents (% of GDP)* Accessed 12 April 2022: [Oil rents \(% of GDP\) | Data \(worldbank.org\)](https://data.worldbank.org/SH.OI.RV)

⁸⁶ Oxfam & UN Women.

⁸⁷ World Bank, November 2021, Iraq Economic Monitor The Slippery Road to Recovery.

⁸⁸ European Commission, EUROSTAT, 2020.

⁸⁹ UNAMI, UN Common Country Analysis 2020, March 2020, p. 20.

⁹⁰ UN, World Population Prospects, 2019.

⁹¹ OCHA, 2022, *Humanitarian Needs Overview Iraq*. p.8

⁹² World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2018.

⁹³ CIA World Factbook, Country Comparisons Median Age, Accessed 28 March 2022: [Median age - The World Factbook \(cia.gov\)](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/median_age.html)

⁹⁴ UNAMI, Common Country Analysis 2020, March 2020, p. 50.

⁹⁵ UNDP, *Impact of COVID-19 on Iraq's Vulnerable Population*, . p.10

⁹⁶ UNAMI, Common Country Analysis 2020, March 2020, p. 41; Oxfam & UN Women, p. 34.

for the population, and has deepened socio-political cleavages since it means only those who can afford private alternatives can gain access to adequate education.

The lack of economic diversification leaves Iraq highly vulnerable to global oil price fluctuations and dependent on a single budget source for nearly all in-country needs, from infrastructure to military spending to staff salaries and pension funds.⁹⁷ An increase in the price of oil in 2021, following the downturn of the initial phase of the Covid pandemic, once again brought the government budget to a surplus. However, rebounding oil prices may continue to inhibit the will for economic reform and the government is still unable to provide funding for adequate social services.⁹⁸ Further, the gap between outputs of education and the needs of the labour market presents an economic challenge.⁹⁹

The public sector represents around 60 percent of those who are formally employed, with the Government of Iraq providing 40 percent of those jobs.¹⁰⁰ Gender disaggregated data is largely unavailable when it comes to public-sector work participation. An estimation however locates about 60 percent of women employed in the formal workforce in the public sector because of its previously associated financial security, labour law rights and higher wages.¹⁰¹

Until 2016, only public-sector employees qualified for social protection, which disincentivised private sector employment. Iraq now has a social insurance system that covers people in the private sector, which includes social protection related to old age, illness, invalidity and disability, employment injury and maternity leave.¹⁰² However, even if about 56 percent of people above statutory pensionable age receive a pension, only three percent of private sector employees qualify.¹⁰³ The current private sector social insurance system does not cover medical care, which has meant that catastrophic health expenditures remains a critical factor to vulnerability and poverty. Approximately 96 percent of Iraqis are without health insurance, and therefore most Iraqis rely on the central government-run public health care system, with poor funding and low diversity of treatment options.¹⁰⁴ The existing social protection schemes fail to cover the unemployed, refugees, IDPs, and those without access to their civil documentation.¹⁰⁵ Corruption and poor policy choices have held back investments in service delivery.¹⁰⁶

The female labour force participation rate in Iraq stands at 13 percent and is among the lowest in the world.¹⁰⁷ Unemployment grows even wider amongst people with disabilities, where labour force participation among men is 43 percent and five percent among women with disabilities.¹⁰⁸ Youth unemployment is also elevated and stood at 25 percent in 2019 and may

⁹⁷ UNDP, May 2021, *Impact of COVID-19 on Iraq's Vulnerable Population*, p.12

⁹⁸ World Bank, November 2021, *Iraq Economic Monitor. The Slippery Road to Economic Recovery*, pp.ix-x

⁹⁹ ILO, November 2021, *A Diagnostic of the Informal Economy in Iraq* P.13

¹⁰⁰ UNAMI, Country Profile. Available at: http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=941&lang=en

¹⁰¹ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 25.

¹⁰² ILO, World Social Protection Report 2017–19: Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, 2017, pp. 52, 140.

¹⁰³ World Bank, *Iraq Economic Monitor: From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery*, 2018, p. 8.; ILO, World Social Protection Report 2017–19: Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, 2017, p. 143.

¹⁰⁴ IRFAD, *Healthcare in Iraq*, 2014. Available at: <http://www.irfad.org/healthcare-in-iraq/>

¹⁰⁵ UNAMI, *Iraq Common Country Analysis 2020*, March 2020, p. 23.

¹⁰⁶ FCG, 2021, *Anti-corruption Support to Iraq* p.1

¹⁰⁷ UN Women, 2021, *Impact of COVID-19 on Women's economic participation in Iraq*. P.9

¹⁰⁸ UNAMI, *Common Country Analysis 2020*, March 2020, p. 72.

have reached as high 30 percent in 2021.¹⁰⁹ In comparison to men, women have larger difficulties finding employment in the formal economy, suggested by the larger unemployment rates amongst women actively searching for work opportunities (30 percent for women, 10 percent for men).¹¹⁰ The relatively few women actively looking for work opportunities together with the few women already active in the labour force also suggests there are other barriers to women’s labour force participation than *solely* the lack of work opportunities. In other words, around 59 percent of women of working age are neither in formal employment nor searching for formal employment. This can relate to the prevalence of traditional gender roles, which locates women’s role in the household, while the role as head-of-household and bread-winner often is taken on by a male family member. Another explanation relates to the existence of the informal sector, within which labour participation data is largely unavailable. Further, the lack of childcare, Iraq’s preschool enrolment rate stands at seven percent, presents a major obstacle for women’s participation in the labour market.¹¹¹ Iraq’s low formal private sector participation is a reflection of the large informal sector existing alongside formal employment, which may be accounting for up to 75 percent of private sector activity.¹¹²

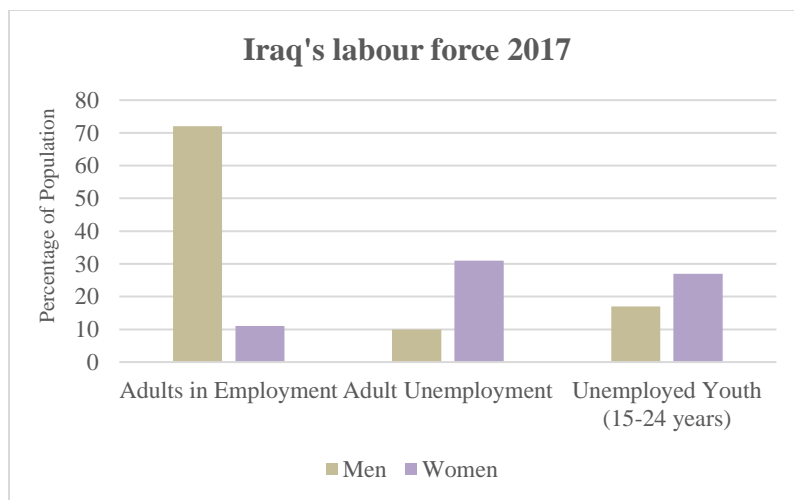


FIGURE 1, DATA FROM ILO, OXFAM AND UN WOMEN

Bureaucracy has been reported to be a barrier to entrepreneurship in the formal private sector, where only about 20 percent declare that it is easy to register a business.¹¹³ This, together with institutional regulations, most likely contribute to the difficulties of moving from the informal into the formal private sector.

Earlier episodes of liberalisation with support of international financial institutions ended up transferring state ownership to crony-capitalistic monopolies not seldom dependent on imports, which has limited domestic production and competition in certain sectors.¹¹⁴ A market competition law was enacted in 2010, but Iraq still lacks an authoritative body that can ensure neutral competition between businesses. This has been a contributing factor to the distortion of

¹⁰⁹ OCHA, 2022, *Humanitarian Needs Overview Iraq*, p.81

¹¹⁰ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 25.

¹¹¹ UN Women, 2021, *Impact of COVID-19 on Women's Economic Participation in Iraq*. p.10

¹¹² UNAMI, Common Country Analysis 2020, March 2020, p. 60.

¹¹³ Arab Barometer, 2019, p. 6.

¹¹⁴ World Bank, MENA ECONOMIC UPDATE OCTOBER 2019: Reaching New Heights: Promoting Fair Competition in the Middle East and North Africa, pp. 15-16.

market incentives together with the lack of social security, since there today exists no law-enforcing mechanism preventing large companies from eliminating smaller rivals, furthermore causing higher prices for traded goods.¹¹⁵ The ability to move a business from the informal sector into the formal thus comes with certain risks concerning the lack of market regulations, not to mention the already unstable investment environment due to risks associated with reemerging conflicts.

2.4 Environmental and Climate Context

The environmental and climate context refers to the causes and drivers of environmental degradation and the situation, trends, and consequences of climate change, pollution, water quality and loss of biodiversity that affect people in poverty. This is also closely related to the other contexts, since conflict and fossil fuel dependence have large impacts on the environment.

The series of conflicts Iraq has endured in recent decades have had severe negative impacts on the country's land, water, air and general health levels. Toxicants still contaminate soils in some areas, such as around Mosul and Baghdad, affected by chemical weapons used in the eight-year-war with Iran in the 1980s, and by depleted uranium from the Gulf Wars. The area is under-researched but toxicants have led to recorded increased incidents of cancer and birth defects and has made some agricultural land unsafe for cultivation.¹¹⁶ Explosive remnants of war are present in various locations and by some accounts Iraq is the country most contaminated by explosives anywhere in the world.¹¹⁷ This poses another difficult challenge to farming and reconstruction which, in turn, make it difficult for IDPs to return and resettle.¹¹⁸

Iraq's environment is also greatly affected by neighboring countries, and is prone to a variety of natural disasters including drought and flooding. Concurrently, Iraq experiences serious environmental degradation and climate change impacts, which only risk becoming more acute in the years to come. If unchecked, there is a very real threat for total ecosystem collapses. The 2020- 2021 rainfall season in Iraq was the second driest in the last 40 years, causing a reduction of water flow in Tigris and Euphrates by 29 and 73 per cent respectively¹¹⁹ The absence of transboundary agreements between Iran, Turkey, Syria and Iraq, all highly impacted by the developments in the river flows, has limited cooperation and international responses despite its regional implications. Even though Iraq has bilateral riparian agreements with both Turkey and Syria, these have not been implemented in practice.¹²⁰ As a result of dam constructions in Turkey and Iran, the water levels in the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers have declined with more than 60 percent in the last 20 years.¹²¹ The Iraqi Government predicts a 35 percent reduction in the amount of water flowing into Iraq by 2035 compared to 2015 levels.¹²² This has large

¹¹⁵ World Bank, MENA ECONOMIC UPDATE OCTOBER 2019: Reaching New Heights: Promoting Fair Competition in the Middle East and North Africa, October 2019, pp. 15–17.

¹¹⁶ Abdullah Fathi et.al., "Environmental pollution by depleted uranium in Iraq with special reference to Mosul and possible effects on cancer and birth defect rates", 2013.

¹¹⁷ Acaps, 2021, Briefing note: Iraq mine action, p.2

¹¹⁸ OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Iraq, November 2019, p. 8.

¹¹⁹ UNICEF, Running Dry: Unprecedented Scale and Impact of Water Scarcity in the Middle East and North Africa, August 2021

¹²⁰ Social Inquiry, When the Canals Run Dry: Displacement triggered by water stress in the South of Iraq, February 2020, p. 12.

¹²¹ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 27. FAO, p.22

¹²² Social Inquiry, When the Canals Run Dry: Displacement triggered by water stress in the South of Iraq, February 2020.

implications upon the available water supply in downstream Iraq, and will give rise to an increase in environmentally forced displacement amongst people in the south of Iraq.¹²³

The reduced water supply has resulted in increased utilization of ground water resources. However, the increased pumping of ground water has been unsustainable and, in turn, resulted in lowered ground water levels.¹²⁴ The scarce water resources lead to competing needs between farmers, industries and domestic users, which risks giving rise to, or exacerbating already existent, local disputes. Nearly 80 percent of the national water resources are meant to satisfy agricultural demand, yet leakages and salt infiltration has meant that only 30–40 percent of the water actually reaches farmers.¹²⁵ Simultaneously, 82 percent of waste water is not recycled, which could otherwise provide some leverage to the currently stringent water supply.¹²⁶ Poor water recycling and high water demands may therefore be viewed as large obstacles to sustainable production and consumption in Iraq, giving rise to competition for existing resources.

Iraq is already suffering under the consequences of climate change and is experiencing earlier, longer and more frequent heatwaves, with temperatures over 50 degrees recorded.¹²⁷ Iraq will remain one of the hottest countries on the planet and will suffer some of the highest temperatures increases in the region in the coming decades.¹²⁸ Drought and environmental degradation, partially linked to climate change, is already driving increased migration to urban areas in southern Iraq.¹²⁹

Climate change is one of the main factors causing increased temperatures and changes in rainfall patterns in Iraq and is projected to have a large impact on the already challenging situation regarding water scarcity. Iraq's marshlands suffer from water stress, seawater intrusion and pollution, as well as by municipality effluents, and oil and pesticides contamination, which risks leading to drought, desertification, increased dust storms, loss of biodiversity, and the spread of waterborne diseases.¹³⁰ About 70 percent of agricultural land has suffered reduced crop yields due to high soil salinity.¹³¹ Likewise, the number of fish species in the marshlands have reportedly declined from 70 to 10 in recent years.¹³² Subsequently, this has large health and socio-economic impacts on both farming communities and those who depend on fish in the marshlands, since it diminishes the productivity and quality of yields. Decreasing rainfall caused by climate change could lead Iraq to lose 8 percent of its arable land by 2030.¹³³

¹²³ The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), Collaborative Programme in Euphrates and Tigris Region, Final Synthesis Report, May 2019, p. 38.

¹²⁴ UNESCWA, 2013, *Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia* [Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia \(uneswa.org\)](https://uneswa.org)

¹²⁵ Social Inquiry, p. 12.

¹²⁶ World Bank, *Beyond Scarcity : Water Security in the Middle East and North Africa*, 2018.

¹²⁷ ISS, October 2021, "Arab Climate Futures", p.5, p.38

¹²⁸ ISS, October 2021 *Arab Climate Futures*, p.10

¹²⁹ IOM, 2021, "Responding to Climate-Induced Informal Urbanization and Inequality in Basra, Iraq".

¹³⁰ ICBA, pp. 42–43.

¹³¹ UNAMI, *Common Country Analysis 2020*, March 2020, p. 83.

¹³² Social Inquiry, 43.

¹³³ ISS, October 2021, *Arab Climate Futures*, p.14

In places where local water shortages have been intricate, food imports from Iran, Turkey and Jordan have kept food markets stocked, and have provided cheaper options than local produce.¹³⁴ Although the state has implemented some purchasing programmes that pay above market prices for locally produced goods, low priced imported produce may discourage local productions in the long term, and increase the dependency on imported goods.¹³⁵ The Covid-19 pandemic caused food prices to increase significantly. In Basra and Kirkuk some local markets increased prices with 25 percent and 20 percent respectively.¹³⁶

Due to its vast oil resources, Iraq's fossil fuel consumption makes up 96 percent of its total energy consumption.¹³⁷ The basins in the Euphrates and Tigris have been developed to host hydropower generation facilities close to maximum potential, yet these have been poorly used due to recent conflicts.¹³⁸ Solar power provides another renewable energy source with great potential in Iraq. Due to its high average solar potential (2,000 kWh/m²/year), Iraq ranks one of the most productive locations for solar power in the world.¹³⁹ Solar energy investments have however remained low hitherto due to recent conflicts yet provide a significant opportunity for Iraq in terms of climate change adaptation and decreasing oil reliance as both the primary domestic energy source and export. Hence, solar energy can provide a potential pathway towards a more sustainable and diversified economy. However, as energy consumption in Iraq is projected to double in 2030, compared with 2018 levels, very large amounts of renewable energy would need to be added for it to constitute a significant part of the Iraqi energy mix.¹⁴⁰

Regional energy integration and bilateral electricity trade through interconnected electricity grid connections pose both opportunities and challenges to Iraq. The electricity grid connections make it possible for Iraq to trade electricity with Iran and Syria to meet electricity needs in energy deficit areas, but it also involves a potential risk of lack of electricity in certain areas if neighboring countries refuse to cooperate.¹⁴¹ Iraq is therefore highly dependent on good foreign relations with its neighbors since its electricity supply concurrently relies on their cooperation. Electricity access is particularly important during the increasingly warm summer months, where power shortages frequently lead to protests.¹⁴²

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

¹³⁵ Social Inquiry, When the Canals Run Dry, Displacement triggered by water stress in the South of Iraq, February 2020, p. 11.

¹³⁶ World Food Programme (WFP), Iraq Market Monitor Report, April 2020.

¹³⁷ UNDP, Iraq Country Profile, Human Development Indicators,

¹³⁸ The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), Collaborative Programme in Euphrates and Tigris Region, Final Synthesis Report, May 2019, pp. 32–34.

¹³⁹ ICBA, p. 32–34.

¹⁴⁰ IEA 2019, Iraq's Energy Sector: A Roadmap to a Brighter Future p.50-51

¹⁴¹ ICBA, p. 35.

¹⁴² US Energy Information Administration, Feb 24 2021, Iraq, [International - U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#)

3. The Inner Circle: Four Dimensions of Multidimensional Poverty in Iraq

3.1 Resources

The previous sections have looked at how different institutional contexts give way to multidimensional poverty deprivations in Iraq. The following sections look closer into different dimensions of poverty in order to analyse who is affected and how the deprivations are manifested. In doing so, the analysis will establish who is subject to multidimensional poverty, and to the degree possible, map where poverty deprivations are more prominent. According to Sida's framework, being resource poor means not having access to power over resources needed to sustain a decent living standard or to meet basic needs and improve one's life. In this sense, resources can be both material and non-material, and involve a decent income or human capital, such as education, health, professional skills, agricultural tools or transportation.

The last available measurements from 2012, relating to the World Bank's International monetary poverty line 1.90 USD per day located 2.5 percent of Iraq's population in extreme poverty.¹⁴³ The 3.20 USD per day measurement situated 17.9 percent of the population of people in monetary poverty.¹⁴⁴ By comparison, the 5.50 USD per day measurement indicated that 57 percent of the Iraqi population live in poverty.¹⁴⁵ This shows that although a relatively low number of Iraqis lived in extreme poverty in 2012 (approximately 2.5 percent), a large proportion of Iraqis lived in resource poverty relative to national measures (57 percent of the population). In line with Iraq's national poverty line, based on average national income, consumption and expenditure poverty measures, 28.9 percent of Iraqis were regarded as resource poor., an increase of nearly ten percentage points and a figure that is expected to decrease with the economic recovery.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ World Bank, World Bank Indicators, Iraq, 2012. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.DDAY?locations=IQ>

¹⁴⁴ World Bank, World Bank Indicators, Iraq, 2012. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.UMIC?end=2012&locations=IQ&start=2006&view=chart>.

¹⁴⁵ World Bank, Poverty & Equity Brief Middle East & North Africa, October 2019.

¹⁴⁶ World Bank, November 2021. *Iraq Economic Monitor The slippery Road to Economic Recovery*. p.14,

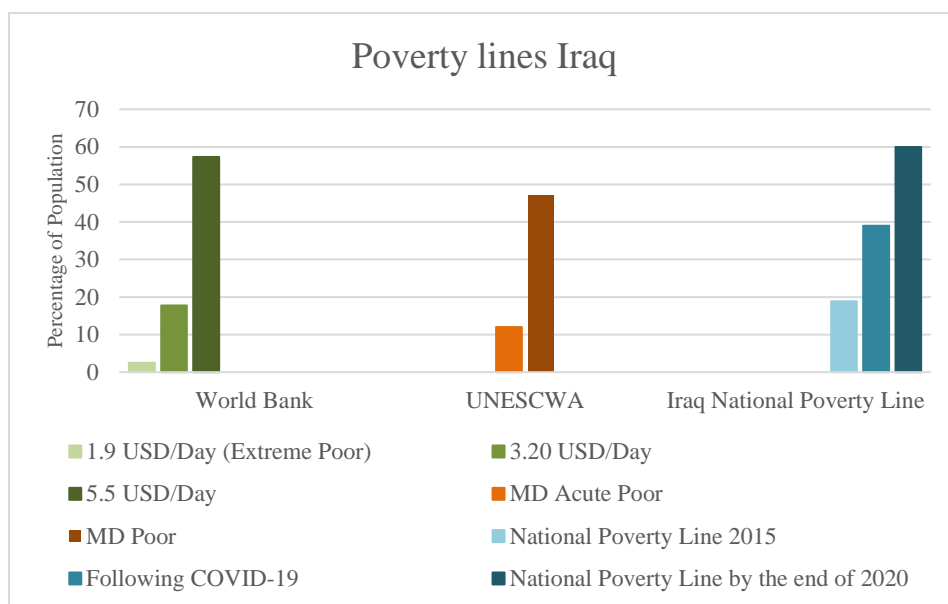


FIGURE 2 DATA FROM WORLD BANK AND UNESCWA

The UNESCWA's multidimensional Arab poverty analysis from 2017 is presented on household level and furthermore includes root causes of deprivations. While the data was collected in 2011-2014, the report's findings are telling of which groups can be considered poor in Iraq. From a regional perspective, UNESCWA estimates acute poverty to be relatively low (12 percent), whilst there is a medium level of poverty in Iraq (47 percent).¹⁴⁷ About half of Iraq's population can therefore be regarded as living in multidimensional poverty. The report also underlines the widespread occurrence of child poverty. Even though acute levels of child poverty are relatively low, most children in Iraq suffer from at least one poverty deprivation, and as the report notes, children are more affected by overlapping forms of deprivations than adults.¹⁴⁸

The report shows that children in families with low, or no educational backgrounds, are more than twice as likely to experience acute poverty than children in families where one head of household has received at least primary education.¹⁴⁹ As such, lack of education is reported to be the largest contributor to household poverty, resulting in lower wages, and henceforth poorer housing conditions and nutrition for children in such families, which become the main sources of child poverty deprivations.¹⁵⁰ The report also makes it possible to draw the conclusion that in relation to local geographies, people in rural areas are more likely to be poor. The Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report estimates multidimensional household poverty to be just under 20 percent in urban areas, and just over 30 percent in rural areas.¹⁵¹

The poverty line data is largely outdated, no large scale survey has been conducted since the war against Daesh and the Covid pandemic. However, briefer surveys and estimates have been conducted. The global multidimensional poverty index from OPHI¹⁵², relying on data from

¹⁴⁷ UNESCWA, Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report, 2017, p. 18.

¹⁴⁸ UNESCWA, Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report, 2017, p. 21.

¹⁴⁹ UNESCWA, p. 27.

¹⁵⁰ UNESCWA, p. 27, 33.

¹⁵¹ UNESCWA, Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report, 2017, p. 25.

¹⁵² OPHI - Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative

2012 and 2018 and using a stricter methodology than UNESCWA, found that 8.6 percent of Iraqis live in multidimensional poverty.¹⁵³ In 2018, around 60 percent of Iraqi households suffered from the lack of either access to clean water and adequate sanitation, food security, and daily 12 hours of electricity.¹⁵⁴ The Covid pandemic and subsequent fall in oil prices likely lead to a 10 percentage point increase in the national poverty rate and a steep rise in unemployment, with the effects of the economic recovery still unknown.¹⁵⁵ The World Bank is currently working with the Iraqi government in conducting a third round of their Household Socioeconomic Survey (IHSES), with the second one having been conducted in 2012.

The short term effects of disrupted education by conflict are hard to measure and the highest impacts are likely in the long term.¹⁵⁶ The Covid pandemic lead to a decrease in the number of children attending school, and according to media reports, increased the number of children working as day labourers.¹⁵⁷

As indicated within the Economic and Social Context above, a relatively large part of the population struggles to get access to secure economic opportunities. The degree to which people become vulnerable to poverty, however, is related to the possibility to rely on the financial capability of a spouse or other family members. Even before the Covid-19 crisis, farmers in the southern and western Iraq has been a group particularly vulnerable to poverty since many not only lacked adequate long-term education but were also at increasing risk of losing their food security and livelihoods due to environmental degradation. A recent interview study in the southern governate of Thi Qar found that a combination of economic deprivation and environmental impacts on agriculture had created a large segment of unemployed young males that has impacted stability.¹⁵⁸ Since the educational level is typically lower in this group, rural workers often struggle to gain access to public sector employment. The Public Distribution System (PDS), the government's food distribution system, provides basket of foods including wheat flour, rice, sugar and oil, to all Iraqis, but this has simultaneously made productions of certain goods unprofitable for farmers since they are sold at a set rate to the government.¹⁵⁹ While some farmers have been able to sustain themselves by selling their produce, some of the most vulnerable farmers (often those without access to their own land, livestock or machinery) only manage to generate around 40 percent of their own income, while the rest is supplemented by social transfers and loans, while relying on food consumption from the PDS.¹⁶⁰ Debt levels amongst vulnerable households are thus increasing as loans is a commonly resorted to coping-mechanism.

Single-headed households are, due to their lower income levels, at greater risk of poverty. A large proportion of women of working age in previously Daesh occupied areas are either widowed, divorced, separated or caring for a sick spouse, which situates these women in one the most vulnerable segments of the population. Female head-of-households represent 10

¹⁵³ OPHI, *Global MPI Country Briefing 2021: Iraq (Arab States)*, p.1

¹⁵⁴ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 5.

¹⁵⁵ World Bank, *Iraq Economic Monitor: The Slippery Road to Recovery*.

¹⁵⁶ UNESCWA, p. 34.

¹⁵⁷ UNDP, 2021, *Impact of COVID-19 on Iraq's Vulnerable Populations*, pp.23-24

¹⁵⁸ WFP, 2022, *Improving Prospects for Peace and Stability in Vulnerable Communities in Southern Iraq* p.40

¹⁵⁹ Oxfam, *Household Economic Analysis - Baseline Assessment for Building Resilience*, March 2019, p. 16.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

percent of Iraqi households, and 13 percent of IDP and returnee households, out of which 80 percent are widows.¹⁶¹ Extreme resource poverty is particularly prevalent among IDPs, refugees, and returnees. Out of a total 6.1 million displaced during the Daesh crisis 1.2 million Iraqis remain internally displaced after the defeat of Daesh in 2017, The vast majority in protracted displacement in out-of-camp settings. The rate of return for IDP's remaining slow, only 35 000 Iraqis returned in 2021.¹⁶²

In late 2020, the government of Iraq announced the sudden closure of 16 camps for IDPs , leaving at least 34,801 displaced people without assurances that they could return home safely, get other safe shelter, or have access to affordable services. The 16 camps were closed in early 2021.¹⁶³ Those that are still displaced face large challenges to return, reintegrate, and finding durable work opportunities. Many of those who do return face HLP challenges (uninhabitable houses due to heavy damage, secondary occupation, missing ownership certificates, or not owning a property to return to).¹⁶⁴ OCHA estimated that in 2022, 2.5 million Iraqis remain highly vulnerable and in need. This accounts for half of all IDP's and a third of all returnees. The number of people in acute need decreased from 2.4 million in 2021 to 960 000 in 2022.

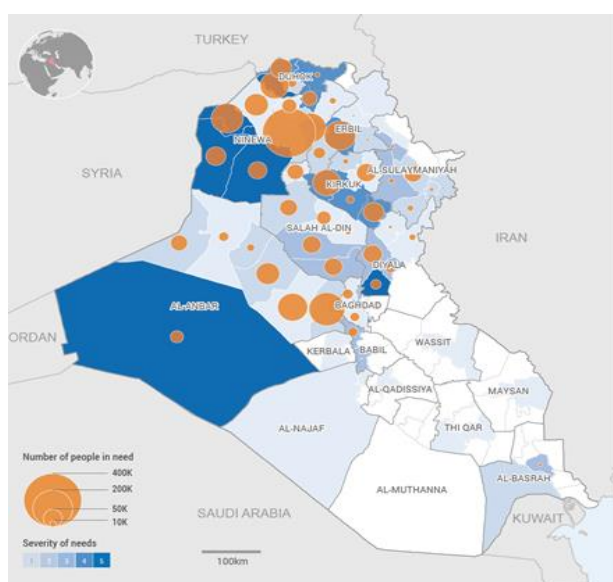


FIGURE 3, SEVERITY OF HUMANITARIAN CONDITION AND NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN NEED BY DISTRICT , OCHA 2022

However, OCHA has stressed that much of this reduction is due to a revised methodological approach rather than an improved context and that many people previously assessed as being in need remain so.¹⁶⁵ The governorates with the highest number of IDPs are Ninewa (278,000 people), Duhok (252,000 people), Erbil (211,000 people), Al-Sulaymaniyah (132,000 people) and Kirkuk (91,000 people).¹⁶⁶ Spontaneous returns remain slow in most areas and are often

¹⁶¹ UNAMI, Common Country Analysis 2020, p. 7, 62.

¹⁶² OCHA, February 2022, Humanitarian Needs Overview, Iraq, p.19

¹⁶³ Human Rights Watch, June 3 2021, Iraq: Inadequate Plans for Camp Closures, accessed 8 april 2022: [Iraq: Inadequate Plans for Camp Closures](https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/06/03/inadequate-plans-camp-closures) | Human Rights Watch (hrw.org)

¹⁶⁴ OCHA, February 2022, Humanitarian Needs Overview, Iraq, p.96

¹⁶⁵ OCHA, Global Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022, Iraq [Iraq | Global Humanitarian Overview \(unocha.org\)](https://www.unocha.org/iraq/global-humanitarian-needs-overview)

¹⁶⁶ OCHA, February 2022, Humanitarian Needs Overview, Iraq, p.22

unsustainable due to unresolved challenges in areas of origin, including limited infrastructure, services and livelihoods; safety and security issues; and social tensions.¹⁶⁷

The IDP population are also highly vulnerable to climate change, with around 74% of IDPs estimated to live in high deficit zones for precipitation.¹⁶⁸ The effects of climate change and dam projects in neighbouring countries could increase displacement and forced migration along Iraq's populous rivers. In combination with erratic rainfall, if water is diverted by neighbouring countries, the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people in Iraq would be affected, potentially causing further displacement and forced urban migration.¹⁶⁹

3.2 Human Security

In accordance with Sida's framework, being poor in terms of human security means that violence and insecurity are constraints to collective groups' and individuals' possibilities to exercise their human rights and find paths out of poverty.

Although Daesh has been territorially defeated, terrorist attacks, kidnappings, and threats continue to affect civilians as well as political officials, and the organisation's presence within society remains a large obstacle to societal reconstruction, reintegration, and social cohesion. The use of rape as a weapon of war against other ethno-sectarian minorities, where Yazidi women and girls were particularly targeted, have not only caused Yazidis to fear for their lives, but have also given way to ostracization of women and girls from their home communities because of the gender-based violence used against them. Shaming and banishment of Yazidi women and girls, as well as of potential children born from situations of rape thus situates these groups in poverty with regards to human security, since it means they often are discriminated against in finding work opportunities and because they often lack the security previously provided by their families.

People with *perceived* affiliation with Daesh are also at particular risk of violence and public punishment from their home communities due to stigma and retribution.¹⁷⁰ Sunni men have been subject to arbitrary detention and torture, where some instances have led to deaths of detainees in jails controlled by the Ministry of Interior.¹⁷¹ Reports have stated that detainees not seldom are arrested without court orders or arrest warrants, suggesting that there are several instances where the authorities have systematically violated the justice system and have used irregular methods to extract confessions.¹⁷²

Aside from consequences of recent conflicts, Gender-based Violence (GBV) continues to affect the lives of many Iraqis. Sex trafficking, labour exploitation, and patriarchal practices are largely present within society, and affect individuals differently depending on their intersectional identities. Domestic violence, early enforced marriages and sexual and honour-related crimes threaten women and girls' lives and enjoyment of their human rights, sometimes

¹⁶⁷ OCHA, 2022, Humanitarian Needs Overview, Iraq, p.13

¹⁶⁸ REACH, November 2021, *Precipitation and Temperature Change in Iraq – November 2021*.

¹⁶⁹ Sipri, Aug 2018, *Iraq Climate-related Security Risk Assessment* <https://www.eastwest.ngo/sites/default/files/iraq-climate-related-security-risk-assessment.pdf>

¹⁷⁰ International Crisis Group, p. 15.

¹⁷¹ Human Rights Watch.

¹⁷² Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, "Irak – Mänskliga rättigheter, demokrati och rättsstatens principer: situationen per den 30 juni 2019".

with support in legislation.¹⁷³ Between 2020 and 2021, reported acts of gender-based violence in Iraq increased by 125 percent.¹⁷⁴ Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a prevalent danger to the lives of many girls in Iraq since it is not only a practice associated with gendered violence attempting to control women's sexuality, but also with serious health effects including reoccurring infections, infertility, complications during child birth and neonatal death.¹⁷⁵ The practice may lead not only to serious health issues, but also involve high costs because of expensive treatments, leading to increased vulnerability to resource poverty.

Other harmful coping strategies have been reported as other obstacles to women and girls' exercise of their human rights. The increase in sexual exploitation and forced child marriages to settle tribal conflicts is one such example, made possible by Iraq's delegation of Personal Status matters to local religious authorities and lack of national law enforcements. Personal Status law has set the legal age of marriage to 18, but child marriage is allowed in practice for children above the age of 15 in federal Iraq with the guardian's consent, and the age of 16 in Kurdistan, despite Iraq's ratification of the Convention of the Right of the Child (CRC).¹⁷⁶ In Iraq, almost 25 percent of marriages involve early enforced marriages of girls under the age 18, and the prevalence of child pregnancy (mothers younger than 18 years) is 23 percent.¹⁷⁷ About 34 percent of marriages are arranged outside of Iraqi courts, with 22 percent involving early enforced marriages of girls under the age of 14.¹⁷⁸ This has large consequences for girls' school attendance, and henceforth upon women's and children's vulnerability to resource poverty as well as multidimensional poverty.

Another coping strategy is reflected in the increase in men' violence against women and children to reassert lost power and a sense of masculinity. The increase is arguably linked to the societal and economic standoff following Daesh's occupation, which significantly inhibited men from performing their societal roles, such as protecting and providing for their families.¹⁷⁹ In light of the Covid-19 crisis, there are indications that domestic violence against women and children have increased, with up to 94 percent of reported incidents during lockdown relating to domestic violence.¹⁸⁰

From a regional perspective, Iraq also stands out with regards to sexual harassment, where more men than women answered that they experience reoccurring instances of sexual harassment. This indicates that sexual violence forms a human security issue for both men and women in Iraq.

¹⁷³ Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Irak – Mänskliga rättigheter, demokrati och rättsstatens principer: situationen per den 30 juni 2019, p. 2.

¹⁷⁴ UNICEF, 8 March 2022, On International Women's Day, UNICEF and GDCVAW in KRI launch the radio station "Voice for Equality", with support from USAID, to empower women and adolescent girls' Accessed on 8 April 2022: [On International Women's Day, UNICEF and GDCVAW in KRI launch the radio station "Voice for Equality", with support from USAID, to empower women and adolescent girls'](#)

¹⁷⁵ UNESCWA, Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report, 2017, p. 12.

¹⁷⁶ UNDP, Iraq: Gender Justice and the Law, December 2019, p. 2.

¹⁷⁷ UNAMI, Common Country Analysis 2020, p. 69; UNESCWA, Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report, 2017, p. 13.

¹⁷⁸ UNAMI, Common Country Analysis 2020, p. 69.

¹⁷⁹ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 28.

¹⁸⁰ UNFPA, "How many more women should suffer before there is a law to protect them?", 3 June 2020. Available at: <https://iraq.unfpa.org/en/news/how-many-more-women-should-suffer-there-law-protect-them>

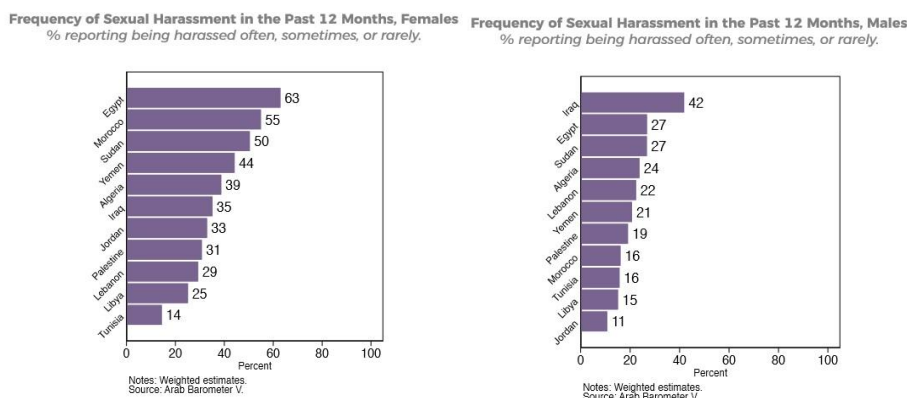


FIGURE 4 AND 5, ARAB BAROMETER, 2019

Same-sex sexual relations are not illegal in Iraq, but LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and intersex) persons risk violence and ostracism if they organise or are open about their sexual identities. The institutional issues relating to public morality nevertheless make homosexuality legally disputed, and LBTQI persons have been subject to attacks by Daesh, Shiite militias as well as their home communities, consequently making them more likely to be subject to multidimensional poverty.¹⁸¹ Violence against LGBTQI people in Iraq has been described by Human Rights Watch as occurring with impunity and state forces and state controlled militias are often complicit in violence.¹⁸²

As stated above, being multidimensionally poor according to Sida means being resource poor as well as deprived in at least one other dimension. Amongst those who are resource poor, this paper finds that many IDPs, refugees, returnees and people who lack civil documentation or citizenship may be regarded as multidimensionally poor since many struggle to gain access to financial security as well as human security. This also applies to female-headed-households, women and girls, people from minorities and LBTQI persons due to the prevalence of discrimination against these groups, gender-based violence and associated harmful coping mechanisms such as early enforced marriages.

3.3 Power and Voice

Being poor in terms of power and voice relates to people’s ability to articulate their needs, concerns, and rights, and to partake in decision-making affecting those concerns.

As indicated the political and institutional context, most political parties in Iraq are dominated by one ethnic or religious group. This has meant that Iraqis often are forced to vote for representatives from their sects rather than upon a basis of political concerns, which often disenfranchises minority groups and concerns predominantly affecting them. Iraq’s political system, *muhassassa*, moreover makes it more difficult for the political positions of President, Prime Minister and Speaker of Parliament to be held by any other than representatives from Iraq’s largest ethno-sectarian groups (Shia, Sunni and Kurds), which marginalises people of other ethnic and religious descent. People from minority groups are therefore in the light of

¹⁸¹ UNAMI, Common Country Analysis 2020, March 2020, p. 66.

¹⁸² Human Rights Watch, 2022, “Everyone Wants Me Dead” Killings, Abductions, Torture and Sexual Violence Against LGBT People by Armed Groups in Iraq.

discrimination on the labour market, and deprivation in political power and voice regarded as multidimensionally poor.

Iraq's Constitution stipulates that all Iraqis are equal before the law and prohibits discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, origin, colour, religion, sect, belief, opinion, or economic and social status.¹⁸³ Nonetheless, the Iraqi government has a limited capability to prevent and punish violations to ensure this in practice.¹⁸⁴ In response to the 2019-2020 protests, unidentified armed groups responded with violence to shut down demonstrations and target demonstrators and activists with impunity.¹⁸⁵ This has deprived protestors, out of which Iraq's youth form a large part, from their right to, and exercise of, their political voice, but also of the access to economic opportunities and adequate education their demands have been calling for. Considering the lack of economic opportunities for Iraq's growing youth and their limited ability to power and voice situates this group in multidimensional poverty. This vulnerability is however subject to intersectional forms of deprivations linked to for instance gender, nationality, ethnicity, and other social identities as well as the socio-economic situation of their families, and thus young people's ability to rely on the financial security of their family members.

Although Iraqi law stipulates that all children born on Iraqi soil to Iraqi parents acquire Iraqi citizenship, children born outside of marriage, and particularly in situations of rape, are in practice sometimes denied this right. Iraqi law stipulates that children are automatically registered as Muslims if one of the parents are Muslim.¹⁸⁶ Consequently, children born to mothers whom have been subject to rape by a man from another ethnicity or religion may be denied registration in the local community and may not acquire citizenship and civil documentation. This diminishes the child's ability to exercise their rights, access political power, status before the law, and freedom of movement in the long term. The lack of legal identity and civil documentation may also restrict the right of an individual to social services including healthcare, pursuing a court case, work opportunities and education. Anyone lacking such documentation is thus at increased risk of multidimensional poverty.

Reliable data is missing, but according to United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Iraq has one of the largest populations of persons with disabilities in the world. They face significant legal barriers and have low access to political participation, this includes the power of judicial authorities to deprive persons with certain disabilities of their right to vote.¹⁸⁷

Freedom of expression and the media are guaranteed in Iraq's constitution, so long as they do not violate public order or morality. Given a lack of public funding few media outlets are truly independent. Many subject their outlets to self-censorship to limit risks of repercussions from the authorities or non-state actors. Most publications, radio and tv stations are owned or controlled by political parties or the state, which tend to slant coverage and sway opinions to the interest of the group or patrons.¹⁸⁸ Both during the protests and the Covid-19 crisis, there

¹⁸³ UNFPA, Gender Justice & the Law: Iraq, 2019.

¹⁸⁴ Freedom House, Iraq 2019.

¹⁸⁵ UNAMI, Human Rights Special Report: Demonstrations in Iraq – 2nd update, 9th December 2019, p. 2.

¹⁸⁶ Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 9.

¹⁸⁷ HRW, 2021, "No one represents us" Lack of access to Political Participation for People with Disabilities in Iraq."

¹⁸⁸ Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 7.

have been examples of increases of violations against civil society organisations, journalists and media outlets due to the politicised context.¹⁸⁹ Since 2019, at least six journalists have been killed in Iraq.¹⁹⁰

Women in Iraq are increasingly more likely to be multidimensionally deprived than men, which is furthermore amplified by intersectional factors such as nationality, ethno-sectarian belonging, age, disability, beliefs, and perceived affiliations. Women engaged in public affairs are not seldom subject to harassment and personal attacks, with insults to their person, family and ‘honour’, resulting in women fearing for their own safety and reputation.¹⁹¹ This limits women’s engagement in politics, and hence, their power and voice in policy-making fora. However, a recent study found that the new electoral law was favourable to women because they could run individually and in smaller districts, and the votes they received were non-transferable. The new law gave women more visibility and an opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities. Women were able to rely on themselves, their own capabilities, and their achievements to win votes, rather than relying on a political party. This led to their success in the October elections. Even from candidates who did not win, the view is that the new electoral law is much better because it made it difficult for political parties to “steal” votes from women as had happened in the past.¹⁹²

The highly politicised media landscape has shaped an environment of limited available democratic space to exercise freedom of speech, where bloggers, activists and others who disseminate information online criticising authorities in society are at risk of targeted violence. This is furthermore a gendered space where women, the youth, girls and boys, ethnic and religious minorities and socio-economically vulnerable groups are at increased risk of multidimensional poverty.

3.4 Opportunities and Choice

Being poor in terms of opportunities and choice relates to an individual’s possibility to develop and use resources to move out of poverty. This includes acquiring productive employment, education, gaining access to health clinics and information to act upon the choices and opportunities available to escape poverty.

The government’s lack of investments in education, private-sector job opportunities and efforts to counter climate crises are large drivers of poverty in Iraq today. This has large gendered implications moreover affected by intersecting identities based on age, ethnicity and other socio-political factors. Wide-spread discrimination has posed difficult challenges for Christians, Yazidis and Shabaks, amongst other minority groups, to gain access to social services, housing, adequate and formal work opportunities, which has given rise to forced displacements.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ UNESCO Iraq Office, “UNESCO and Iraqi journalists celebrate World Press Freedom Day”, 4 May 2020.

¹⁹⁰ UNESCO observatory of killed journalists – Iraq Available at: [UNESCO observatory of killed journalists - Iraq | UNESCO](#)

¹⁹¹ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 24.

¹⁹² UNAMI, gender Analysis of Iraq’s October 2021 National Elections,

¹⁹³ UN, Common Country Analysis 2020, March 2020, pp. 65-66.

In a survey published in 2019, 53 percent of Iraqis said it was necessary to pay a bribe to gain access to better education, 56 percent to receive better health care, and 94 percent that it was frequently used to get employed.¹⁹⁴ People’s opportunities to gain access to adequate education, health care and productive employment is therefore limited by endemic corruption.

The access to education is one of the main factors determining women and girls’ as well as men and boys’ future economic and political participation, or conversely, vulnerability to poverty. UNICEF has estimated that the last decades of conflict and under investments in education has led to 3.2 million children in primary school age lacking access to education, and 355 000 internally displaced children (48 percent) remain out of school.¹⁹⁵ Large drop-outs and repetition rates exist among those enrolled, with evident gender gaps.¹⁹⁶ In primary education, girls represent the largest out-of-school rate at 11 percent, compared to five percent for boys. The drop-out rate grows larger in secondary school, where 60 percent of girls between the ages of 14–18 are reported not to be attending school, compared to 43 percent for boys.¹⁹⁷

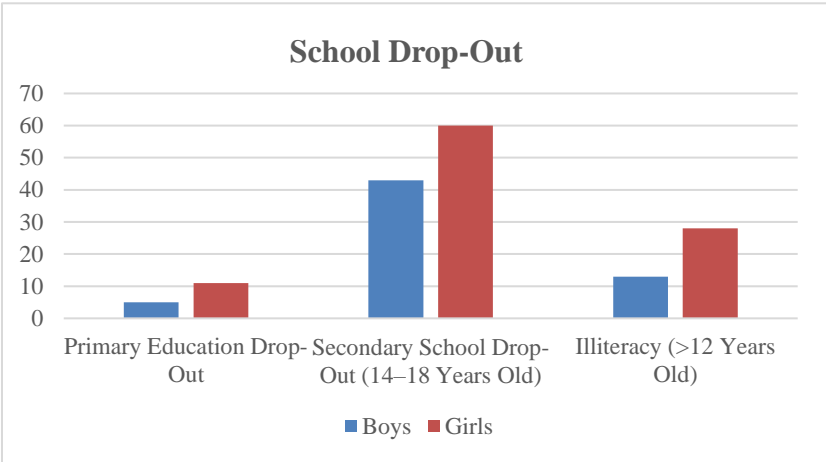


FIGURE 6, DATA FROM ILO, UNDP, UN WOMEN AND OXFAM, 2017

Girls reportedly have a lack of control over their pursuit of education throughout educational levels, where family and social norms impact the development trajectory of many girls, which is moreover exacerbated by Iraq’s deteriorating economy.¹⁹⁸ Girls’ dropout rates are often closely tied to taking on household duties, either in their family, or in a new household through marriage. Child marriage has large consequences on poverty including health as early pregnancies involve greater health risks for both mother and child and on the economic status of the household. As established above, child poverty is mainly expressed in poor nutrition and housing conditions, and closely tied to the households’ socio-economic status and the head-of-households’ educational levels. There is therefore a strong correlation between early school drop-out rates, early enforced marriages and poverty.

Although it is prohibited to discriminate against women, traditional gender roles still permeate legislation and its practical implementation, as well as people’s views on work-related issues. Women have the right to equal pay for work of equal value in accordance with Iraqi labour

¹⁹⁴ Arab Barometer, Arab Barometer V: Iraq Country report, 2019, p. 2.
¹⁹⁵ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 33.
¹⁹⁶ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 33.
¹⁹⁷ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 34.
¹⁹⁸ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 34.

laws, yet there is a lack of legal provisions prohibiting termination of employment based on pregnancy. When employing women, labour laws require employers to provide childcare services, but there is no enforcement of this in practice which inadvertently contributes to disincentivising the employment of women.¹⁹⁹ Women are not allowed to be recruited to do ‘arduous work’, or to work at night, unless in cases of unforeseen circumstances.²⁰⁰

Gender roles and the concept of men as breadwinners and head of households has implied that men should make most house-related decisions, including decisions on behalf of the women in the household and about their economic participation.²⁰¹ Women’s roles are still perceived as traditionally linked to the role of housekeeping and child-care, although a shift in attitudes can be perceived amongst younger generations, particularly amongst younger women.²⁰² In a survey, 66 percent of the youth taking part responded they support women’s right to work, compared to 42 percent of the older population.²⁰³

In rural areas, logistical and security concerns form barriers for women to access education, health services, and non-agricultural job opportunities.²⁰⁴ Women in agricultural work seldom have control of the resources and financial transactions related to the work, such as setting prices, sales and purchases, and managing the finances in the business, often in spite of loans having targeted women specifically.²⁰⁵ An effect of recent conflicts has however been that women have taken on new roles in business and finances when men have been absent due to the conflict. This has paved the way for increased female agency and re-negotiations of gender roles and responsibilities.²⁰⁶

Women and girls are thus at increased risk of multidimensional poverty since they have limited opportunities and choice to pursue long-term education, which affects their ability to be financially independent. Some men and boys experience similar limitations, but this is not unusually linked to the socio-economic situation of their families, rather than intersecting deprivations based on gender. Discrimination based on ethnic and religious belonging make certain ethno-sectarian groups more vulnerable to multidimensional poverty. Iraq’s structural political and economic issues relating to its non-diversified economy and conflicts however situate a large proportion of Iraqis in multidimensional poverty since many lack adequate opportunities and choice to move themselves out of poverty.

¹⁹⁹ UNAMI, Common Country Analysis, 2020, March 2020, p. 68.

²⁰⁰ UNAMI, Common Country Analysis 2020, March 2020, p. 68; Oxfam & UN Women, 2018 p. 26.

²⁰¹ Oxfam & UN Women pp. 27–28.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ Oxfam & UN Women., p. 26.

²⁰⁴ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 27.

²⁰⁵ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 27.

²⁰⁶ Oxfam & UN Women, p. 28.

4. Conclusions

A large proportion (**57 percent**) of the Iraqi population was regarded as resource poor in 2012 and lived on less than 5.5 USD per day, while approximately **2.5 percent of Iraqis lived in extreme poverty** (on 1.9 USD per day) in 2012. These measurements are however outdated and plausibly misrepresentative of poverty developments since Iraq has experienced a series of crises since that data collection. A somewhat updated account can be provided by Iraq's national poverty line which measured up to almost 20 percent in 2012, but now points to nearly 30 percent due to an increase during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Previously financial security, including social security nets, childcare provisions, and pensions, was closely tied to employment in the public sector. This located vulnerability to poverty primarily amongst those without access to public sector employment. The Covid-19 pandemic dramatically increased poverty rates, unemployment and food insecurity. While an economic recovery has begun in tandem with rising oil prices it will likely take a long while before these economic gains reach the most vulnerable segments of society.

The main reason for resource poverty in Iraq is the lack of work opportunities for its growing population. Factors such as armed conflict, political instability, and environmental degradation have given rise to a poor investment climate associated with high risks, which has limited work opportunities in the private sector. At the same time, poor public investments in social services such as health, education and social security nets have deprived people of ways out of poverty.

Social and gender norms have structurally and systematically disenfranchised **women and girls** as well as **ethno-sectarian minorities, IDPs, refugees, returnees, and LGBTQI persons** in search of financial security. This vulnerability is moreover amplified by intersectional forms of discriminations based on gender, nationality (and lack thereof), ethno-sectarian belonging, disabilities, age, political beliefs, and perceived affiliations. **Single-headed-households** have been reportedly more vulnerable to resource poverty due to their inability to rely on another financial income, and **female-headed-households** particularly vulnerable because they are forced to interact with men in male-dominated spheres as well as taking on household duties, leading to women taking on 'double burdens'.

In accordance with Sida's poverty framework, those who also suffer from intersecting deprivations relating to human security, power and voice, and opportunities and choice are regarded as multidimensionally poor. In Iraq, this includes a large proportion of those who are resource poor, since many Iraqis lack access to adequate education and economic opportunities, and hence the ability to change their situation. **Iraq's youth** represents a large proportion of the population which are deprived of opportunities and choice as well as power and voice to change their situation. This group is nevertheless not monolithic, but rather, their deprivations should be viewed through an intersectional perspective where factors relating to socio-economic situations of families, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religious belonging and sexuality intersect and affect individuals differently and to different degrees within the different poverty dimensions. Many **women and girls are living in multidimensional poverty**, because their deprivations are not only linked to resource deprivation, environmental degradation, and limited

economic prospects, but also to social norms, and gendered legal restrictions that deprive them of their right and ability to lead their own lives.

Environmental challenges remain a source of tensions and conflicts in the region, not least through the transboundary water crisis around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which are extensive drivers of poverty and displacement in Iraq. Water scarcity and food insecurity risk becoming a larger problem in the years to come, and risk exacerbate already existing domestic and international conflicts. **Rural farmers** in Iraq's north-western and southern provinces, dependent on farming, fishing or cattle livelihoods, are increasingly vulnerable to poverty and displacement. Water scarcity is not only related to climate change but also to chronic mismanagement of Iraq's water resources. However, climate change is already making itself felt, particularly in southern Iraq where drying rivers and saltwater intrusion is making life for the rural population increasingly difficult.

Iraq's institutional and political contexts are saturated with mistrust and corruption, not only between political leaders and the population, but also between public officials. The lack of political transparency and accountability has spurred on ethno-sectarian elitism, mistrust and corruption in a mutually reinforcing fashion, which has deprived Iraqis of transparent and accountable political representation that can provide the power and voice and hence the opportunities and choice to move out of poverty. This has resulted in entrenched political disillusionment amongst the Iraqi population, largely reflected in the reoccurrence of popular protests demanding decent social services, adequate education and work opportunities.

Implications for development

- Iraq continues to be solely reliant on its oil resources for its economy to function. The Covid-19 pandemic and ensuing drop in the price of oil laid bare the vulnerability of relying on this one commodity. Poverty and unemployment increased as a result, and although an economic recovery is now visible it will likely take a long time for ordinary Iraqis to recover, all the while, deeply rooted structural issues remain.
- Internal and international conflicts risk derailing ongoing popular political movements demanding social justice, transparency and democracy, and risks pushing people further into poverty. Adopting a conflict sensitive and gender sensitive approach, with a well-founded understanding for tensions and power dynamics and how these are manifested within different societal spheres, is therefore important when assessing contributions in order not to do any harm or support a particular side in conflict, and moreover to possibly identify opportunities for peace. Conducting actor mappings and stakeholder analyses can help identify risks including aiding and sponsoring certain stakeholders which can agitate local or regional hierarchies and conflict dynamics as well as it can help identify sources of cohesion amongst actors that could benefit from closer cooperation in their work.
- Iraq, and the wider region, will be characterised with insecurity and fragility if the roots of instability are not addressed. Corruption, political clientelism and lack of public investment in social services deprive people of social justice and equal opportunities.

This gives rise to deepened multidimensional poverty and political disillusionment which makes it possible for violent groups and militias to co-opt popular movements to further other agendas. Considering that enlistments to terrorist organisations can be viewed as a negative coping-mechanisms related to poverty implies that reducing the risks of Daesh's resurgence may also have to involve combating poverty and addressing the motivations that make enlistment to such organisations seem like a rational choice. Making sure people have equal opportunities *as well as* making sure that the population acquires information about their rights and opportunities and furthermore *feel* that they can gain access to such opportunities are important aspects in countering terrorism and violent political movements.

- Iraq's increasing younger population is both a challenge and a historic window of opportunity. The series of conflicts in the recent decades has made it challenging for the Iraqi government to provide adequate education, social services and work opportunities for its fast-growing population. Investing in the population, and particularly in youth, would not only provide Iraqis with the right and opportunity to lead their own life, but also provide great potential for long term poverty elimination and moreover for Iraq's future economic outlook.
- Iraq's environmental challenges need to be addressed to secure ecosystem functions, decrease food insecurity, protect livelihoods, and sustain and diversify economic growth and energy production. Since the causes for water stress and environmental degradation are multiple, development contributions within this sector needs to incorporate an environmental perspective into contributions to limit the risks of increasing environmental distress, but also to maximise positive change. Some environmental adaptation strategies may have to involve creating resilience by increasing local, provincial and national capacities to manage water, waste, pollution, and sewage. Other environmental strategies may have to be transboundary since causes and environmental impacts are international. Since climate change will have far-reaching consequences and implications on all life and work in Iraq, all contributions should include environmental analyses and planning to limit increased environmental distress but also, where possible, involve environmental adaptation.
- Since social gender norms saturate societal relations and Iraq's institutional body, contributions for gender equality need to be multifaceted so that women and girls also can benefit from development. This means identifying the needs, risks and vulnerabilities experienced by women in relevant sectors, viewing women and girls as active agents of change, as well as engaging men and boys, political and religious leaders in addressing normative change to make changes in practice possible and to be able to mitigate potential backlashes.
- Where financial investing has focused on women specifically, gender norms have sometimes inferred delegation of responsibility to male partners, because men have traditionally dealt with decision-making. Making sure contributions include technical assistance and capacity-building measures could enhance the ability for women to benefit from, for instance Micro, Small, and Medium sized Enterprise (MSME) projects.

Likewise, working with regional institutions to influence increased financial accessibility for women could put pressure on banks and financial institutions to be more inclusive of women.

- Incentivising productive investment in the private sector have potential institutional barriers. Considering Iraq's general lack of enforcement of market competition law, new small and medium sized companies may struggle to compete with current market beneficiaries who can undercut new rivals by imposing predatory pricing or exclusive requirements on distributors to eliminate new competition. The impact of institutional change could in this regard potentially be challenged by current beneficiaries, and any contribution would as such benefit from a stakeholder and context analysis to identify institutional limitations.
- When opportunities for increased investments in Iraq open, risk analyses need to include the risks involving institutional regulative frameworks and the potential social, political and economic impacts upon people living in poverty. Although investments can lead to increased work opportunities and socio-economic development, a lack of regulations and neutral competition can simultaneously increase corruption and crony-capitalism, which can exacerbate intra- and interstate social hierarchies, and enhance popular political discontent with the state.

References

Acaps, 2021, Briefing note: Iraq mine action

IRFAD. 2014. *Healthcare in Iraq*. Accessed May 14, 2020. <http://www.irfad.org/healthcare-in-iraq/>.

Abdullah Fathi, Riyad, Lilyan Yaqub Matti, Hana Said Al-Salih, and Douglas Godbold . 2013. "Environmental pollution by depleted uranium in Iraq with special reference to Mosul and possible effects on cancer and birth defect rates." *Medicine, Conflict and Survival* 29 (1): 7-25.

Adul-Zahra, Q, and S Kullab. 2020. "One-two punch of new virus, falling oil prices threaten Iraq" in AP News, . " *AP News*, March 20.

Arab Barometer. 2019. "Arab Barometer V: Iraq Country report." Public Opinion Survey.

Arab Barometer. 2019. "Arab Barometer V: Iraq Country report."

Benigo, O. 2011. "On the Brink: State and Nation in Iraqi Kurdistan." In *Iraq Between Occupations: Perspectives from 1920 to the Present*, by R Zeidel, A Baram and A Rohde. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

CIA. n.d. *The World Fact Book*. Accessed May 13, 2020. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>.

European Council on Foreign Relations. 2020. *A Gulf apart: How Europe can gain influence with the Gulf Cooperation Co*. February 25. Accessed March 2, 2020. https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/a_gulf_apart_how_europe_can_gain_influence_with_gulf_cooperation_.

EU *Election Observation Mission in Iraq 2021 Parliamentary Elections*.

- Freedom House. 2019. *Iraq 2019*. Accessed February 11, 2020. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/iraq>.
- Guiu, Roger. February 2020. *WHEN CANALS RUN DRY: Displacement triggered by water stress in the south of Iraq*. Social Inquiry, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre & Norwegian Refugee Council in Iraq.
- Hammargren, Bitte. 2020. *Iraq moving closer into Iran's orbit*. FOI Memo (7024), Stockholm: FOI.
- Hinnebusch, and et.al. 2019. *Handbook on Middle East Security*. London: Routledge.
- Human Rights Watch. 2017. *Flawed Justice: Accountability for ISIS Crimes in Iraq*. December 5. Accessed February 5, 2020. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/12/05/flawed-justice/accountability-isis-crimes-iraq>.
- . 2019. *Iraq: Events of 2018*. Accessed March 10, 2020. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/iraq>.
- Humanitarian Response. November 2019. *Humanitarian Needs Overview Iraq*. OCHA.
- ICBA. 2019. "Collaborative Programme in Euphrates and Tigris Region." Final Synthesis Report.
- IEA, 2019, "Iraq's Energy Sector. A Roadmap to a Brighter Future.
- ILO. 2017. *ILOSTAT Country Profiles: Iraq*. Accessed March 18, 2020. <https://www.ilo.org/ilostatcp/CPDesktop/?list=true&lang=en&country=IRQ>.
- ILO. 2017. "World Social Protection Report 2017–19: Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals."
- IMF. n.d. *Iraq At a Glance*. Accessed March 10, 2020. <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/IRQ>.
- IMF. April 2020. "World Economic and Financial Surveys." Regional Economic Outlook Update.
- International Crisis Group. 2019. "Averting an ISIS Resurgence in Iraq and Syria." Bursells.
- International Media Support (IMS). 2020. *Covid-19, Iraq*. Accessed May 26, 2020. <https://www.mediasupport.org/cv19-iraq/>.
- International Media support (IMS). 2020. *HE PARADOX: RECORD AUDIENCES, SHRINKING REVENUES*. Accessed May 29, 2020. <https://www.mediasupport.org/covid19/>.
- IOM, 2021, "Responding to Climate-Induced Informal Urbanization and Inequality in Basra, Iraq
- IRFAD. 2014. *Healthcare in Iraq*. Accessed May 5, 2020. <http://www.irfad.org/healthcare-in-iraq/>.
- ISS, October 2021, "Arab Climate Futures",
- Hammargren B, 2022, Iraqis Striving for Change,
- Human Rights Watch, 2021, "No one represents us" Lack of access to Political Participation for People with Disabilities in Iraq."
- Marr, P. 2010. "One Iraq or Many: What Has Happened to Iraqi Identity?" In *Iraq Between Occupations: Perspectives from 1920 to the Present*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- NRT. 2020. *Iraq's PM-designate outlines priorities for his prospective government*. March 28. Accessed March 29, 2020. <http://nrttv.com/En/News.aspx?id=20383&MapID=2>.
- OCHA. 2019. "Humanitarian Needs Overview Iraq."
- OCHA, February 2022, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq
- OPHI. September 2019. "Global MPI Country Briefing 2019: Iraq (Arab States)." Country Briefing.
- OPHI, Global MPI Country Briefing 2021: Iraq (Arab States),
- Oxfam & UN Women. 2018. *GENDER PROFILE – IRAQ*. Oxfam.

- Oxfam. 2019. "Household Economic Analysis - Baseline Assessment for Building Resilience."
- REACH , November 2021, Precipitation and Temperature Change in Iraq – November 2021.
- Rudaw. 2020. *UNAMI chief urges Iraqi leaders to 'act fast' for end to political paralysis*. March 3. Accessed March 4, 2020. <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/030320203>.
- SIPRI. 2020. *The resurgence of the Islamic State in Iraq: Political and military responses*. June 9. Accessed June 9, 2020. <https://sipri.org/commentary/essay/2020/resurgence-islamic-state-iraq-political-and-military-responses>.
- . 2020. *The resurgence of the Islamic State in Iraq: Political and military responses*. June 9. Accessed June 9, 2020. <https://sipri.org/commentary/essay/2020/resurgence-islamic-state-iraq-political-and-military-responses>.
- Social Inquiry. 2020. "When the Canals Run Dry: Displacement triggered by water stress in the South of Iraq."
- Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. 2019. *Irak – Mänskliga rättigheter, demokrati och rättsstatens principer: situationen per den 30 juni 2019*. Swedish MFA.
- The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA). May 2019. "Collaborative Programme in Euphrates and Tigris Region." Final Synthesis Report.
- The Middle East Institute. 2020. *What's next for coalition forces in Iraq*. March 10. Accessed March 15, 2020. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/whats-next-coalition-forces-iraq>.
- Tripp, C. 2018. "Theatres of blood: Performative violence in Iraq." *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 12 (2): 167–181.
- UN. 2019. *World Population Prospects*. Accessed March 15, 2020. <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>.
- UNAMI. 2019. "Human Rights Special Report: Demonstrations in Iraq – 2nd update."
- UNAMI. January 2020. "Iraq: UN report on ISIL trials recognizes efforts and raises concerns." https://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=12306:iraq-un-report-on-isil-trials-recognizes-efforts-and-raises-concerns&Itemid=605&lang=en.
- . n.d. *UNAMI, Country Profile*. Accessed April 20, 2020. http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=941&lang=en.
- UNAMI, May 2021, Update on Demonstrations in Iraq.
- UNDP. n.d. *Iraq Country Profile*. Accessed February 2020. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/IRQ>.
- UNDP, 2021, Impact of COVID-19 on Iraq's Vulnerable Populations,
- . n.d. *Iraq Human Development Indicators*. Accessed May 13, 2020. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/IRQ>.
- UNESCO Iraq Office. 2020 . "UNESCO and Iraqi journalists celebrate World Press Freedom Day." *Press Conference 4 May 2020*. Baghdad.
- UNESCO. 2020. "UNESCO and Iraqi journalists celebrate World Press Freedom Day."
- UNESCO Observatory of killed journalists, accessed March 21 2022, UNESCO observatory of killed journalists – Iraq Available at: UNESCO observatory of killed journalists - Iraq | UNESCO
- UNESCWA. 2017. "Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report."
- UNESCWA. 2017. "Revisiting Decentralization in Iraq: Challenges and policy Recommendations." Working Paper.
- UNFPA. n.d. "Gender Justice & the Law: Iraq."

- UNFPA. 2020. "How many more women should suffer before there is a law to protect them?"
<https://iraq.unfpa.org/en/news/how-many-more-women-should-suffer-there-law-protect-them>.
- UNICEF, August 2021, Running Dry: Unprecedented Scale and Impact of Water Scarcity in the Middle East and North Africa
- UN SC, 16 Feb 2021, *Fourteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat*
- Vilardo, Valeria, and Sara Bittar. 2018. *GENDER PROFILE – IRAQ: A situation analysis on gender equality and women's empowerment in Iraq*. Research Report, Oxfam, UN Women.
- World Bank. 2018. "Beyond Scarcity : Water Security in the Middle East and North Africa." MENA Development Report, Washington, DC.
- World Bank. 2017. "Household Socio-Economic Survey 2012." Accessed March 4, 2020.
<https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/2334/related-materials>.
- World Bank. 2018. "Iraq Economic Monitor: From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery."
- World Bank. Spring 2020. "Iraq Economic Monitor: Navigating the Perfect Storm."
- World Bank. 2019. "MENA ECONOMIC UPDATE OCTOBER 2019: Reaching New Heights: Promoting Fair Competition in the Middle East and North Africa."
- World Bank, 2021, Iraq Economic Monitor: The Slippery Road to Recovery
- . 2019. *The World Bank In Iraq*. October 1. Accessed March 3, 2020.
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/overview>.
- . 2012. *World Bank Indicators Iraq*. Accessed June 9, 2020.
<https://data.worldbank.org/topic/poverty?locations=IQ>.
- . 2012. *World Bank Indicators, Iraq*. Accessed February 2020.
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.UMIC?end=2012&locations=IQ&start=2006&view=chart>.
- . 2012. *World Bank Indicators, Iraq*. Accessed February 2020.
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.DDAY?locations=IQ>.
- World Food Programme. April 2020. "Iraq Market Monitor Report." Issue No. 30.
- World Food Programme, 2022, Improving Prospects for Peace and Stability in Vulnerable Communities in Southern Iraq