COMMUNITY-BASED RECONCILIATION & REINTEGRATION IN IRAQ (C2RI):

CONFLICT ANALYSIS 2022

Six Pilot Areas: Al-Qa'im and Habbaniyahh in Anbar; Yethrib and Tuz Khurmato in Salah al-Din; Ayadiyya and Muhalabiya in Ninewa

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GLOSSARY

CBO	Community Based Organization
CCPC	Coexistence and Community Peace Committee
CDC	Communal Dialogue Committee
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
C2RI	Community-based Reconciliation & Reintegration in Iraq
DIBs	Disputed Internal Boundaries
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
LPC	Local Peace Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIF	Network for Iraqi Facilitators
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
PMF	Popular Mobilization Forces
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
SAD	Salah al-Din Governorate
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
US	United States
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Upon request from the Government of Iraq, UNDP Iraq has launched the “Community-based Reconciliation & Reintegration in Iraq" (C2RI) project in 2020 to support the return and reintegration of 4,000 perceived ISIL-affiliated families in Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Al-Anbar Governorates by enhancing the community readiness of and fostering dialogue within the six target communities of Al Qa´im, Habbaniyahh, Muhalabiya, Ayyadiya, Yethrib and Tuz Khurmato to accept the return of these families through tailored MHPSS, livelihoods, PVE and infrastructure rehabilitation programme interventions.

Persons formerly associated with ISIL are at high risk of becoming a permanently stigmatized underclass in Iraq aggravated by unresolved ethnoreligious tensions, a lack of communal trust and weak governance. Displaced women and children, including widows of ISIL combatants face additional challenges such as the threat of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence. Local conflicts, such as access to housing, land, and property as well as insecurity, crime and difficult inter-tribal relations further complicate the situation.

This highly dynamic context in Iraq calls for age, gender, and conflict-sensitive approaches to programming as well as regular reviews and adaptations to remain in sync with the rapidly changing reality in the selected pilot areas. In line with this background, UNDP Social Cohesion has produced this conflict study:

- to analyze the socio-economic, developmental, political, environmental, and security-related factors which serve as triggers of conflict within the C2RI target locations
- to identify key stakeholders that are key to facilitating positive changes to these triggers of conflict
- to describe potential bottlenecks and risks with regards to the implementation of UNDP-supported interventions in the framework of the C2RI project
- to ultimately present key recommendations that can inform the design of interventions that can foster stability in the targeted areas

Through an inclusive and participatory methodological approach and in close collaboration with 13 field facilitators within the C2RI target areas, the UNDP Social Cohesion team has conducted 30 Focus Group Discussions reaching 394 community members, 90 interviews with key community actors, a targeted online survey reaching additional 413 respondents, one validation workshop session as well as a thorough desk review of secondary sources. This wide-array of qualitative primary data has enabled this study to identify main sectoral conflict drivers/actors and to develop stakeholder-specific policy recommendations to inform the design of key interventions to improve security, enhance community reconciliation, to foster economic growth, to enable the return of IDPs and to ultimately build sustainable peace in the targeted areas.

The overall data has demonstrated that conflict drivers are multi-layered, complex and can vary within the respective target locations. Stakeholders’ dynamics that negatively and positively affect conflict

operate at various levels, both internally within Iraq and externally from neighbouring countries. Thematic conflict drivers that have been identified have however many times been consistent throughout all the target locations.

It has become clear that for the most part, political tensions largely stem from ethnic conflicts of interests and sectarian tensions between the biggest Shia'a & Sunni political blocs, which often also translate into tribal tensions at the local level.

Some respondents have also accused federal and local authorities of following political agendas of their sectarian affiliation. It was highlighted that leading political parties and their tribal allies promote violence and encourage revenge between sectarian groups to serve their political interests.

Related to this, data has shown that particularly rural societies are tribal in nature, in which tribal and religious figureheads hold the most influence and powers. Civil society organizations have often a positive impact serving as mediators, but due to their limited technical experience, authority, and knowledge, they often do not have the capacities to have an evident/long term impact. However, there have been some success stories that could be further developed and duplicated with more advanced methods to adapt them to the current security and political circumstances of the local context.

International community actors have been portrayed to play a mixed role. External interference through regional/ international actors is driving conflict through financial and logistical support to political/armed proxies that best serve their own geopolitical interests. Targeted programmatic approaches of donor countries, humanitarian and development actors however have proven to have a positive role in decreasing tensions and have been received positively by most of the respondents.

The key recommendations for federal government authorities focus on putting in place strategies at the national level which can contribute to developing the justice system and accompanying legal frameworks, enforcing the rule of law, advancing social justice, combatting corruption, and fostering economic development. Furthermore, the federal government plays a key role in fostering partnerships to decrease tensions and develop peace-building mechanisms with international and local stakeholders.

With support from the international community, federal authorities should further focus on implementing social cohesion activities and developing plans on preventing violent extremism and on improving human rights conditions - including women's rights, involving women actively in peace processes, and starting restorative and transitional justice processes, as well as rehabilitation programs that focus on the disarmament and reintegration of former fighters.

Jointly with local public institutions, federal authorities further need to put in place swift and efficient compensation schemes which rank as one of the main obstacles to the return of IDPs. On an economic level, both local and federal authorities need to incentivize investment, create conducive conditions for entrepreneurship and work together with civil society and international partners to build capacities of marginalized groups such as youth and women. Respondents have particularly

highlighted the lack of public support for the agricultural and industrial sector which has served as a breadwinner for many rural communities, particularly in Salah-al-Din, Ninewa and Anbar governorates.

At the local level, corruption and a lack of objective law enforcement have been mentioned as a key driver for deteriorating security conditions within the target locations. Thus, recommendations for local government authorities specifically highlight the need to create a merit-based security system and law enforcement mechanism rather than hiring based on personal relations or sectarian affiliation.

Recommendations for local civil society organizations and academia pointed out in this study focus on strengthening their role as mediators/connectors through which they play a significant part in fostering long-term/sustainable peace planning, restoring communal trust and in supporting the government's transitional justice and reconciliation processes. Relatedly, the international community can play a key role in ensuring effective rule of law by supporting good governance structures and promoting accountability mechanisms and by providing the government with relevant professional technical support based on their needs. Technical support to local/federal authorities is further highly recommended in the areas of anti-

As far as community leaders are concerned, respondents have praised them throughout as one of the most respected actors within the target locations due to their objectivity and due to the nature of societal structures. Thus, related recommendations have amplified the significant role they can play in mediation, developing national dialogue and other peacebuilding activities, while religious leaders can emphasize tolerance and co-existence practices in their programs.

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