

SAVING  
LIVES

CHANGING  
LIVES



# Iraq

## Annual Country Report 2019

Country Strategic Plan  
2018 - 2019



World Food  
Programme

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# Summary

Throughout 2019 in Iraq, WFP continued to work to meet the needs of vulnerable people, across the context of the humanitarian, development and peace nexus. WFP distributed food and cash-based assistance to displaced persons and refugees in camps, helped people rebuild their lives through work and training opportunities, and provided healthy meals to children in schools. In 2019, the last year of the Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan, WFP reached 711,639 people, 85 percent of the planned total.

Iraq remains a challenging environment for humanitarian organizations. From August, camp consolidations, closures and relocations affected around 85,400 internally displaced persons (IDPs). From October, violence in northeast Syria caused over 19,000 refugees to flee to Iraq. Civil unrest during the fourth quarter led to delays in food and cash-based assistance. WFP remained agile and met the monthly food requirements for 457,180 IDPs in camps, and provided ready-to-eat food packages to families displaced for the first or second time. Of the 42,476 refugees who WFP supported in the Kurdistan Region, over 17,000 were new arrivals from northeast Syria.

To better meet people's needs, WFP worked to transition from food to cash-based transfers (CBT). Targeting exercises helped prioritise the most vulnerable people for WFP's support.

Work opportunities for IDPs who return home from camps remain crucial. To help recovery and foster livelihoods, WFP scaled up its resilience programme, reaching 70,872 returnees, and indirectly some 126,000 people in the communities. Such initiatives gave returnees the chance to earn a living, or the wider communities to restart agricultural livelihoods, removing barriers such as damaged irrigation systems. Communities who had never worked together before, or mistrusted each other, worked together successfully for the common good. WFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with FAO to further coordinate on livelihood programming. Both organizations continued co-leading the Food Security Cluster.

In its third year, WFP's pioneering "EMPACT-Empowerment in Action" training programme reached 13,665 people. In June, EMPACT was selected by the No Lost Generation Tech Summit in Jordan as an innovative solution for enhancing employment opportunities, through the development of digital and English language skills. WFP allocated nearly half of all places on livelihood projects to women.

In December, WFP recommenced the School Feeding Programme, in partnership with the Ministry of Education. WFP quickly reached 127,446 children in six governorates, providing them with nutritious meals. Nutrition continues to underpin WFP's programmes. School Feeding had been on hold since mid-2018, pending the appointment of the new Minister of Education, and because of civil unrest. Early positive responses from parents, children and teachers indicated how the provision of healthy meals encourages students to attend school and focus in class.

In March, because of funding gaps, WFP was forced to reduce monthly distributions to IDPs to every six weeks. WFP took the initiative to bring together the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD), the Ministry of Trade (MoT)'s Public Distribution System (PDS), and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to discuss coordination. An agreement was reached, that when MoMD distributed food rations to IDPs in camps, WFP provided smaller, complementary "top-ups" of food or cash. These coordination efforts, along with new donor support, allowed WFP to return to a four-week cycle from July. Assisted-people's levels of food consumption dropped while WFP distributed every six weeks, then improved when back on the four-week cycle. Coordination also led to cash and food savings of USD 7.5 million, helping continued support for those most in need.

A cornerstone of WFP's work in 2019 was the PDS partnership, launched with MoT in January. WFP provided technical expertise to test digitalizing the PDS information management system to improve transparency and efficiency, so the right people receive food at the right time. The digital "ePDS" registered 70,000 people in 11 governorates, and introduced iris scanning. WFP is developing an app to make it easy for beneficiaries to update their information in the system without having to visit the PDS office. At MoT's request, the PDS initiative is expanding to all 19 governorates in 2020. It is a pillar of WFP's Country Strategic Plan 2020-2024, which intends to support the government to better meet the needs of its citizens, alongside initiatives that lead to people's self-sufficiency and lasting resilience.

# 711,639

Total Beneficiaries in 2019

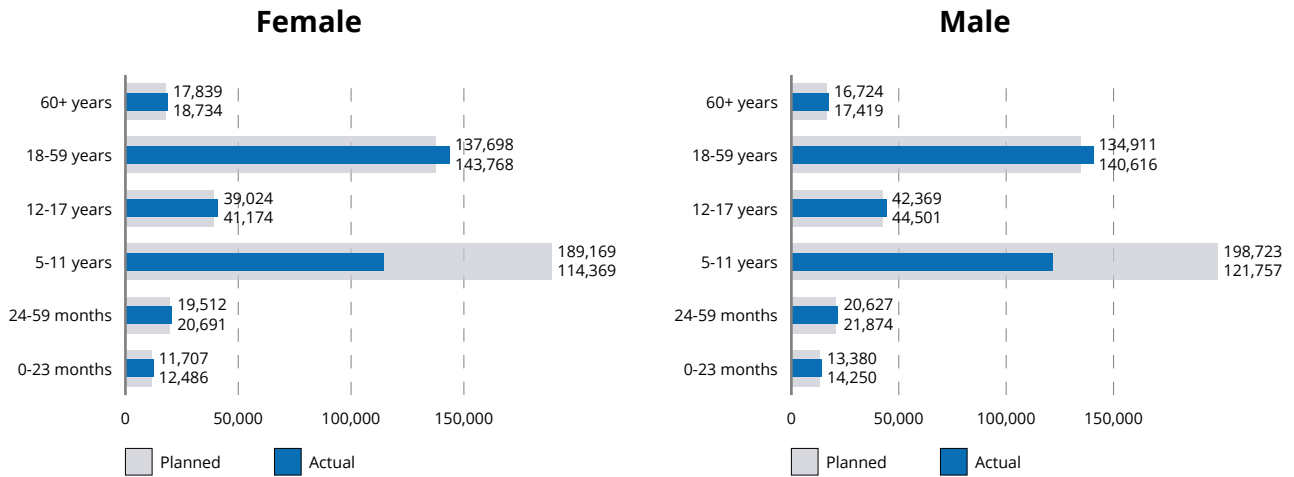


49% female



51% male

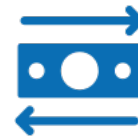
## Beneficiaries by Sex and Age Group



## Total Food and CBT

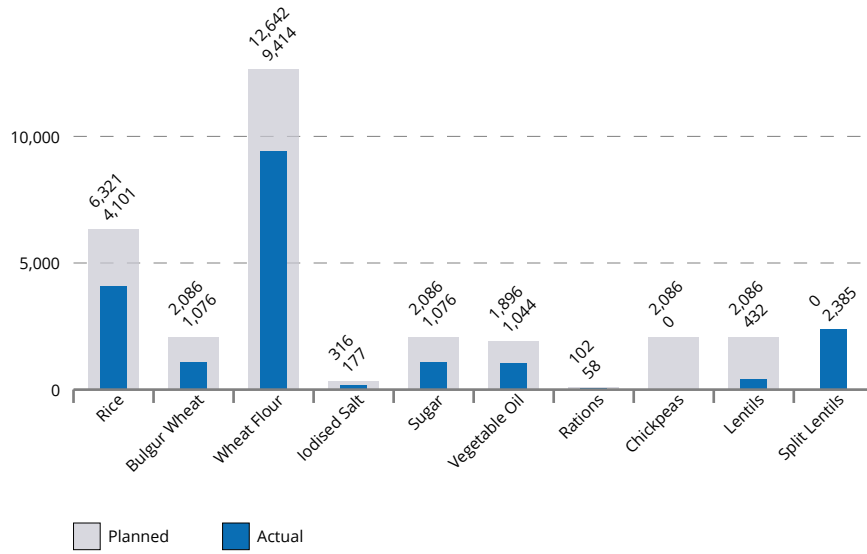


**19,763 mt**  
total actual food transferred in 2019  
of 29,622 mt total planned

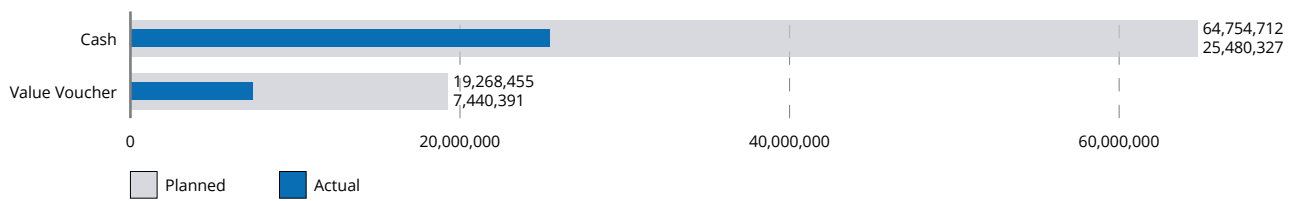


**US\$ 32,920,718**  
total actual cash transferred in 2019  
of \$US 84,023,168 total planned

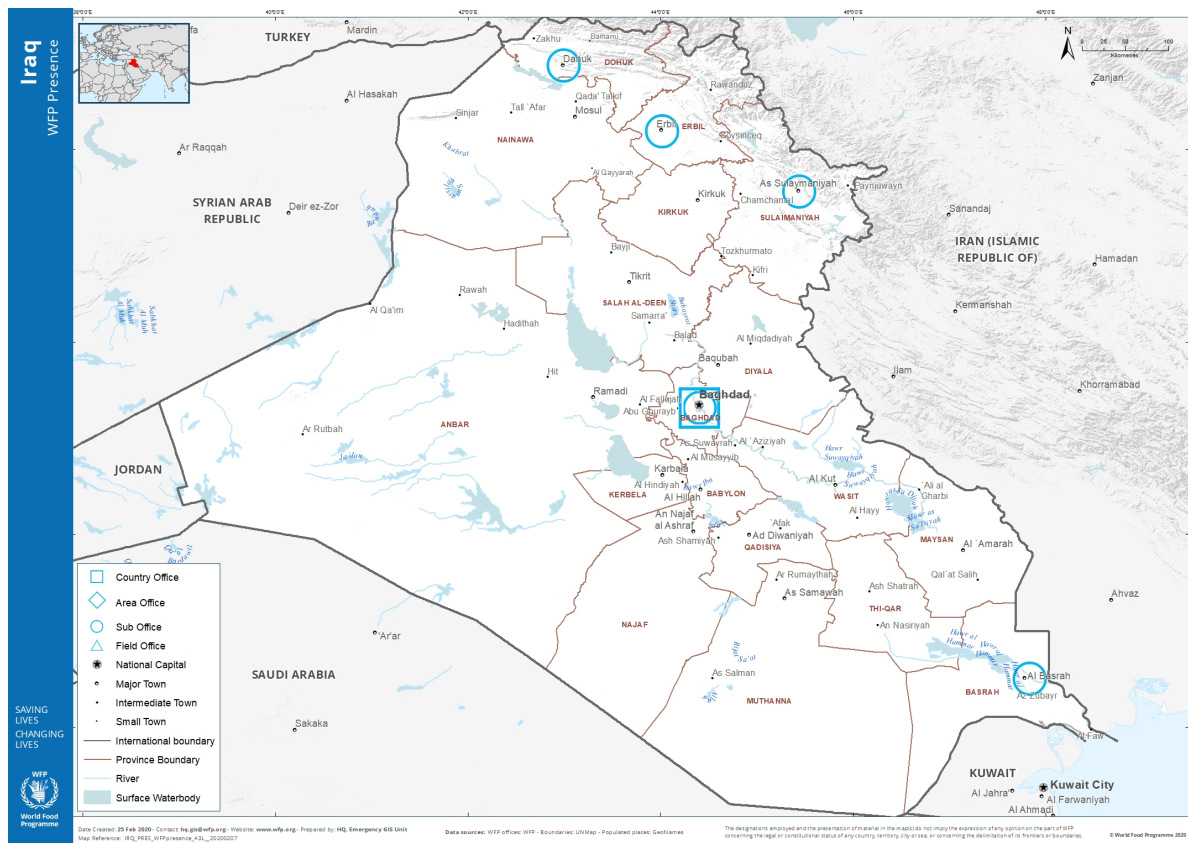
### Annual Food Transfer



### Annual Cash Based Transfer and Commodity Voucher



# Context and Operations



Although more than two years have passed since the Iraqi government declared victory over the Islamic State, by the end of 2019 some 1.77 million people were still in need of food assistance, including 1.41 million internally displaced people (IDPs). Following renewed conflict in northeast Syria, the resulting influx brought the total number of refugees in Iraq to 245,810 by the end of the year. With tendencies towards political and socio-economic instability, conflict, even natural disasters, Iraq is in the unusual position of being officially an upper middle-income country, with uneven distribution of income and at risk of humanitarian crises.

The last quarter of the year was characterized by anti-government protests (except in the Kurdistan Region (KR) and some northern areas), spurred by a dearth of employment opportunities, perceived corruption and a lack of basic services. By the end of December, violent clashes led to some 500 fatalities, and 21,000 people injured.

In August, the government began to consolidate and close several IDP camps, with the goal of all IDPs returning home by the end of 2020. WFP continued to support its partners in identifying durable solutions, such as livelihood projects, for those who wished to return home. WFP also registered the newly-transferred families for support in the receiving camps, with special attention being paid to their need for protection. Many people were unprepared to go home because of a continued lack of security, jobs and services in their areas of origin. Nonetheless, compared to the end of 2018, the number of IDPs in Iraq had fallen by about 400,000; numbers were decreasing even before the relocations. Despite the influx from northeast Syria, there were 7,000 fewer refugees overall in Iraq. The number of people in need of food assistance had been reduced by about 730,000.

Civil unrest caused some delays in operations, including approvals for the transportation of food, and payments to people assisted took longer than usual. To adapt and respond flexibly as needed, under the new Country Strategic Plan 2020-2024, WFP prepared a budget revision for January 2020 that included a contingency for food assistance in unexpected emergency situations. Cash-based transfers (CBT) remain the preferred option for people assisted. Transport clearances and banking delays affected many humanitarian actors, and WFP continued to collaborate with its partners to find solutions, such as closely liaising with local government.

2019 saw the publication of the second WFP Iraq Socio-Economic Atlas. The areas in most need are still in the governorates that directly experienced conflict – among them Anbar, Ninewa, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din - plus those still hosting significant numbers of refugees and IDPs, such as Duhok.

Under Strategic Outcomes 01 and 02, WFP provided monthly in-kind food or CBT assistance to IDPs and refugees in most need, and concluded assessments on the situation of both groups, to be able to prioritize the most vulnerable. WFP's assessment on the situation of refugees concluded in February 2019. From April to June, WFP and partners undertook an IDP assessment. WFP further refined the numbers by piloting a second round of targeting in three camps in Duhok. This was later scaled up to reach all the KR and Baghdad camps in 2020. Under Strategic Outcome 01, the School Feeding Programme restarted in December, prioritizing the most vulnerable children in



poverty-affected areas. The programme sources from local suppliers, thereby invigorating local economies as well as assisting students.

WFP welcomed a team of researchers led by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in March, whose preliminary findings were that WFP's work contributed to social cohesion, peacebuilding, reconciliation and reintegration. WFP continued to meet the food needs of people in camps, regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation. Through Strategic Outcome 03, WFP scaled up resilience projects and training, which brought together conflict-affected communities, refugees and returnees, who participated harmoniously, fostering social cohesion and mutual understanding. In 2020, bolstered by the reopening of the Basra office, WFP plans to run resilience projects in the south, where poverty indicators are worst, aggravating tensions, and communities are at risk from the effects of climate change.

At the request of the government and in response to overwhelming feedback from citizens over the year, WFP will scale up Public Distribution System (PDS) digitalization in 2020. Contributing to greater efficiency and transparency, WFP has taken the initiative to involve the Ministry of Interior on a framework linking the PDS digital identity to the national ID system. This will enable digital data exchange, sharing and much-needed interoperability between the Ministry of Trade and other line ministries.

Such partnerships contribute towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, SDG 2: Zero Hunger and SDG 4: Quality Education. WFP's 22 operational partners were instrumental in assisting people, and joint collaboration will continue both directly and through the clusters in 2020.

# CSP financial overview

At the close of the Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (TICSP), the operation was relatively well-funded at 72 percent. However, the timing of the receipt of contributions continued to cause challenges, resulting in a changing funding situation throughout the year, which impacted several activities. WFP prepared a Partnership Action Plan: connecting partner priorities to WFP's strategic outcomes and activities, mapping out opportunities to enhance partnerships with traditional and non-traditional donors, Iraqi government, UN agencies, civil society, academia and the private sector.

The top 10 donors to the TICSP were Germany, USA, Japan, Canada, Italy, Belgium, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Ireland and the UN Pooled Fund. Multilateral funding accounted for 9 percent of the received resources.

The funding environment for Strategic Outcome 01 (food assistance for internally displaced people, IDPs) was challenging all year. Due to funding constraints early in the year, WFP was forced from March until June to reduce distributions from four to six weeks. WFP's system of "top-ups" to the government's assistance saved over USD 7.5 million. Coordination, along with new donor contributions, plus a reduction in people prioritized due to the targeting exercises, allowed WFP to move back to a four-week distribution cycle in July. The approach helped ensure value for money in the use of government and donor resources.

At the end of 2019, food assistance for IDPs was 61 percent funded. The top five donors were the United States Agency for International Development's Office of Food for Peace (USAID FFP), Japan, Germany (GFFO), Canada and Belgium. Multilateral funding accounted for 4 percent of the contributions received. Such multilateral contributions were vital to ensure an agile response and cover shortfalls around the middle of the year.

School Feeding was fully-funded by the Iraqi government. Given the programme's delayed start in December, most of the funds are transferred into the new CSP starting in January 2020, to implement the School Feeding Programme during the 2019-2020 academic year.

Under Strategic Outcome 02, assistance to Syrian refugees, WFP had a significant carryover from 2018, which combined with large contributions from Germany, USA and multilateral funding, ensured the activity was fully-funded. Given increased needs following violence in northeast Syria in the fourth quarter, WFP intensified its fundraising efforts and sought to diversify its donor base. Contributions received from the Republic of Korea and Italy in December will hence be utilised in 2020. Under the CSP in 2020, the Syrian refugee response will be merged with the IDP response. The consolidation will enable WFP to better plan and deliver programmes to maximize the impact for people assisted and of donor resources.

The Empowerment in Action "EMPACT" digital skills and English training programme, under Strategic Outcome 02 for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Iraqi youth, was well-funded by Germany (BMZ). WFP secured a unique partnership with Google, which donated Chromebooks for participants to use for small-scale freelancing ("Microwork"). International private sector relationships played a vital role in the success of EMPACT, linking participants directly to the global digital economy.

Strategic Outcome 03's livelihoods and resilience activities, in support of Iraqi returnees from camps and local host communities, were well-funded, and received considerable support from Germany (BMZ) and Japan. WFP continued to advocate with donors for predictable, multi-year funding to ensure longer-term interventions; Canada signed a new multi-year commitment to WFP. WFP's work to digitise the PDS was also encompassed under this activity, and WFP received its first donor contribution from FFP for these vital reform efforts.

In 2019, under the TICSP, WFP undertook a Budget Revision (BR04) [1], bringing the total value to USD 341 million (179 in 2018 and 162 in 2019).

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