

# Iraq: Country Update

## May 2018

### Context

The humanitarian needs in Iraq remain extremely high. Years of conflict have taken a staggering toll on people's lives: thousands have lost their homes; medical facilities lay under piles of rubble and may be contaminated with explosive devices; and many children and adults in post-conflict areas cannot access basic services such as water, electricity and healthcare. Mental health services are urgently needed to help people recover from numerous traumatic events, and post operative and rehabilitative care are a major gap, especially for war-wounded patients.

More than 2 million internally displaced people (IDPs) have not been able to return home and remain in camps, shelters or private residencies. IDPs will have a continuous need for healthcare and other services in the camps until they are able to return to their homes.



## Médecins Sans Frontières in Iraq

Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has been working in Iraq since 1991. We have more than 1,500 staff in Iraq who provide free, quality healthcare for all people regardless of race, religion, gender or political affiliation.

MSF delivers primary and secondary healthcare, services for expectant and new mothers, treatment for chronic diseases, surgery and rehabilitation for war-wounded, mental health support and health education activities. We currently work in the governorates of Erbil, Diyala, Ninewa, Kirkuk, Salaheddin, Anbar and Baghdad.



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*Jasim Hammed, 32, fled his home in Muqdadiah (central Iraq) in 2014, and eventually settled in Alwand 1 camp. Jasim now works for Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) as counsellor in the camp.*

*"As part of my role with MSF, I identify people who need mental health support, I try to increase people's awareness about mental health and the services MSF provides and I run group counselling sessions with my colleagues. If we identify a very severe case, we refer them to the MSF psychologist," Jasim says.*



### Mass measles vaccination campaign in Qayyarah

Between 30 March and 2 May 2018, MSF vaccinated more than 42,000 children against the measles virus. The vaccination campaign took place in the Airstrip, Jeda'ah 1-6 and Haj Ali camps around Qayyarah.

Measles mainly affects children, especially those aged five and under, and can prove fatal for those who suffer complications and do not receive treatment in time. Before the campaign, it was estimated only 30 percent of the residents in the Qayyarah camps were fully vaccinated. The

vaccination campaign was carried out in close coordination with the Ninewa Directorate of Health.

*A child is vaccinated by a MSF nurse in Qayyarah,*

### Mental healthcare for Ramadi residents

MSF opened a new mental health unit inside Ramadi Teaching Hospital in April 2018. The facility provides specialised mental healthcare to patients with moderate and severe mental health disorders, including psychiatric care. The unit will serve the general population and will also allow patients from our clinics in Amriyat Al-Fallujah and Habbaniya Tourist City camps to continue their treatment when they return to their homes in the Ramadi area.

### Donation of Tuberculosis drugs

MSF donated a large quantity of first-line Tuberculosis (TB) medication to Iraq's National TB Programme in March 2018. The 60,000 tablets are an important contribution to the treatment of TB in Iraq as there is currently a world-wide shortage of first-line TB drugs. MSF is also working to build the capacity of TB specialists in Iraq through international trainings and workshops in patient care and treatment.

## Helping war-wounded recover in East Mosul

In April 2018, MSF opened a comprehensive post-operative care facility in East Mosul to provide services for people injured by violent or accidental trauma during the recent conflict.

The facility is located at the Al'Salaam and Al'Shifaa hospital complex and includes a mobile operating theatre, a 33-bed in-patient ward where people can recover from surgery, mental health services and a rehabilitation unit. The facility is run by a team of 30 highly qualified international and Iraqi medical experts.

## Maternity care in Ninewa governorate continues to expand

MSF hospitals in West Mosul and Tal Afar district are now assisting more than 1,000 deliveries per month. Both hospitals also offer emergency services and inpatient new-born care. In West Mosul, MSF has the surgical capacity to provide 100 emergency and elective C-sections every month.



## Hygiene kits distributed to families in Mosul's old city

MSF distributed 550 hygiene kits to families living in Mosul's old city in April 2018. It's estimated there are between 5,000 and 7,000 people who have



returned to Mosul's old city. Many families are living in damaged homes without water, electricity and with very little access to healthcare. People often cannot afford to buy basic items.



The hygiene kits contained items such as soap, toothbrushes, shampoo and water containers, and will help families stay clean, maintain their dignity and prevent the spread of diseases.

*A mother and child receive a hygiene kit in Mosul's old city.*

## **New health services for people in Hawija**

Following the return of people to the Hawija area, MSF opened a clinic in Al-Abassi for the treatment of noncommunicable diseases (NCD) and mental health care. Since the AlAbassi clinic opened in January, MSF staff have enrolled 638 NCD patients for treatment. MSF rehabilitated the water supply systems in Al-Abassi and will do the same for Al-Shajera, which will provide clean drinking water for an estimated 35,000 people and prevent the spread of waterborne diseases. MSF also opened a primary health care clinic in Hawija city, which will soon offer NCD treatment, mental health services and sexual reproductive healthcare. As more people return to Hawija city, MSF will provide emergency room services in Hawija hospital.



*Saleha and Hamad visiting MSF's clinic in Al-Abassi..*

## Patient story

### Second operating theatre opens at MSF's hospital in Qayyarah

A second operating theatre was opened in the MSF-supported hospital in Qayyarah in March 2018. MSF originally set up the hospital in Qayyarah at the start of December 2016, providing emergency surgery for war-wounded patients. Since then, the services at the hospital have expanded to include paediatric care, treatment for burns and mental healthcare. The second operating theatre was established to increase the surgical capacity and quality of care for the population of Qayyarah sub-district and beyond.

### MSF opens primary healthcare centre in Qayyarah

In Airstrip camp in Qayyarah, MSF opened a new primary healthcare clinic (PHCC) in March 2018. The clinic offers basic healthcare services, treatment for non-communicable diseases, mental health services, vaccinations and care for malnourished children in an Ambulatory Feeding Centre. The PHCC is open six days a week and provides an average of 150 consultations a day. MSF will open a maternity unit at the PHCC in mid-June.

### Mental health seminars in Erbil and Baghdad

In collaboration with the University of Baghdad and Hawler Medical University, MSF held panel discussions in Erbil and Baghdad about mental health in Iraq. Guest speakers included MSF psychiatrists and psychologists, Professor Dr Sirwan Kamil from Hawler Medical University, Dr Imad Abdulrazzaq, Iraq's National Consultant for Mental Health and Dr Nassif Jassem al-Hemyari, the Head of the Scientific Council for Psychiatry at the Iraqi Medical Board.



Nawar\* lives in a camp for internally displaced people near the city of Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq. Her face lights up when she describes the beauty of her home, but the light soon fades as she remembers what happened to her family. Nawar has been living in the camp for four years.

She received support from a MSF psychologist to recover from depression. This is her story:



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“My name is Nawar and I'm 54 years old. My son, his wife and three children live here (in the camp), as well as my other son and his wife and their five children. And my third son is here as well. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

There was conflict near our home between the Iraqi army and IS (Islamic State group) and we were afraid. IS didn't allow us to sleep because they were shooting all night.

In the conflict, we lost everything. Our houses, everything. Before IS, we lived in heaven; we had a wonderful life. We never even got sick. Then we became displaced people and left our home. It was humiliating for us. We left in boats and some children fell in the water and drowned. The journey took us five days, and we didn't have any food. It's been four years since we left. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

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All the organisations visit us and help us in the camp, and we have never been hungry. But we became depressed here because we lost everything. We received a warm welcome in the camp and we are comfortable. But no one can say we are happy because we're not living amongst the trees we planted and the bees we raised.

I was depressed and sad because I missed my relatives, especially my cousins. Three of my cousins were killed, one of them was a judge. He lived in Erbil and later he decided to come back home with his family. An armed group caught him and they killed all three of them. That's why I was depressed and sad.

I asked people about MSF and they told me where I could find them. I visited MSF and they gave me an appointment. I visited several times a week and I explained to the psychologist how I have been suffering.

I said I was depressed here and found it difficult to breathe. They recommended that I visit my neighbours and to get out of the house. I recovered from my breathing problems. I also suffered from bad dreams and the psychologist gave me activities to help.”



*\*Name changed to protect her identity.*

- Maternity services, including complicated and non-complicated deliveries
- Mental health services

## **Ninewa Governorate**

### **Hospital in West Mosul:**

- Emergency room (ER)
- Paediatric in-patient department with a new-born unit

### **Post-operative care facility in East Mosul**

- Surgery for violent or accidental trauma
- Post-operative care



- Rehabilitation including physiotherapy
- Mental health services
- Support for the Al Shifa and Al'Salaam hospital (building a new ER at Al'Salaam, staff training, infection control, rehabilitation of water storage and donation of medication and equipment)

### **Maternity clinic in Zummar:**

- Normal deliveries
- Consultations for expectant and new mothers
- Basic emergency obstetric cases
- Paediatric unit

### **Field hospital in Qayyarah**

- Operating theatre
- ER
- Paediatric, nutrition and in-patient departments
- Mental health services

### **Health services in Jeda'ah Camps 5 and 6 and Airstrip Camp:**

- Ambulatory feeding centre for malnourished children
- Primary healthcare services
- Mental health services
- Health education sessions **Erbil**

## **Governorate**

**Health services for displaced people in Hasansham (U2 U3), Khazer M1 and Debaga 1 and 2 Camps, and the host community in Kalak**

- Mental health activities, including psychological and psychiatric consultations, group therapy, psychosocial counselling and child therapy.
- Non-communicable diseases (NCD) consultations

## **Kirkuk Governorate**

### **Health services for displaced people in Daquq camp •**

Basic healthcare

- NCD treatment
- Mental health services
- Health education sessions
- Sexual reproductive health services

### **Health services for returnees in Hawija**

- Rehabilitation of the water stations of Al-Abassi and Al Shajera
- Mental health services in Al-Abassi
- NCD services in Al-Abassi
- Mobile clinic in Hawija city offering basic healthcare consultations

## **Diyala Governorate**



**Jalawla and Sadiya primary healthcare •** NCD treatment

- Mental health services
- Sexual reproductive healthcare
- Health education sessions

### **Health services for Alwand Camps 1 and 2:**

- NCD treatment
- Mental health services
- Sexual reproductive healthcare
- Health education sessions **Anbar**

## **Governorate**

### **Health services in Amriyat AlFallujah and Habbaniya Tourist City camps**

- Primary health care
- NCD treatment
- Mental health services

### **Mental health at Ramadi Teaching Hospital**

- Specialised mental healthcare for patients with moderate and severe mental health disorders, including psychiatric care.

## **Baghdad Governorate**

### **Baghdad Medical Rehabilitation Centre for civilian war victims**

- Physiotherapy
- Nursing care
- Pain management
- Psychological support

### **Support for Imam Ali hospital in Sadr City**

- Rehabilitation of the ER
- Technical support
- Donation of medication

## **Salaheddin Governorate**

### **Health services for returnees and displaced in Tikrit (finishing in June)**

- Mobile clinics offering outpatient and mental health consultations
- Primary healthcare centre in Al Allam camp

## Staff profile

This is Ali. He's one of MSF's wonderful community health workers in Qayyarah.

During MSF's recent measles vaccination campaign in Qayyarah, he was responsible for informing the community about the campaign and encouraging them to participate.

"As community health workers, we work in close proximity to the families living in the camps and we understand their needs," Ali says. "Beyond vaccination, they are in need of health education. There are also needs in terms of mental health care. Almost everyone inside the camp needs mental health support because they have been through a terrible time, and camp life itself is full of hardships and struggle."





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