



Erbil, Iraq, 18 November 2020 – The World Health Organization (WHO), in partnership with the Ministry of Health of the Kurdistan region of Iraq, concluded in Duhok today a 2-week COVID-19 prevention and awareness campaign, which started in Erbil on 7 November.

The campaign targeted a population of approximately 4 million people, including refugees and internally displaced people (IDP), and more than 300 volunteers were mobilized to engage communities in 20 sites in the governorates of Erbil and Duhok.

“The recent resurgence of the virus worldwide has increased the challenge for WHO and health authorities in Iraq, and until a treatment or a vaccine is introduced, we need to continue to collaborate to control the spread of the virus and raise community awareness on the importance

of wearing a mask, maintaining physical distancing and practising good hand hygiene,” said Dr Adham Ismail, WHO Representative in Iraq.

“We urge everyone in the Kurdistan region and the entire country to follow these basic public health measures to protect themselves and their families against this disease in order to resume the normal activities of our daily lives,” Dr Ismail added.



Campaign activities in Duhok were mapped out in close coordination with Duhok's Directorate of Health. Ten sites were selected to disseminate COVID-19 awareness and prevention messages, including the 4 IDP camps of Koberto 1 and 2, Khanki and Shariya, in which over 56 000 vulnerable people still reside with limited access to health care services.

“Duhok Directorate of Health extends its thanks to WHO for their efforts in conducting this campaign,” said Dr Nezar Ismet, Director-General of Duhok's Directorate of Health. “The health directorate has issued a series of recommendations to limit transmission of COVID-19 in the governorate but we look forward to further collaboration with health partners like WHO to contain the spread of the virus and increase people’s awareness of, and commitment to, health recommendations,” he added.

The campaign successfully managed to engage the community as the mobilized volunteers went tent to tent in IDP camps and visited public places, markets, family parks, and heavily populated areas to educate people on important public health measures such as wearing masks at all times, maintaining physical distancing whenever possible, and keeping hands clean by washing them with soap and water for no less than 30 seconds or sanitizing hands.

WHO expresses its appreciation to the people and Government of Germany for supporting the campaign which was supported by WHO's implementing partner the United Iraqi Medical Society (UIMS).

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