



WHO and partners join WHO RO Mission to the Iraqi National TB institute in Baghdad. WHO larq24 March 2024, Baghdad, Iraq – Today, Iraq celebrates its remarkable success in tuberculosis (TB) control, which reflects the transformative impact of international collaboration and innovation.

Iraq has made significant steps in the fight against TB through its partnerships with the National TB Program (NTP), WHO, International Organization for Migration, Iraqi Anti-TB Association and others.

From 2013 to 2023, Iraq saw a dramatic decline in TB incidence, falling from 45 to 23 cases per 100 000 people. This achievement has propelled Iraq into the ranks of low-burden countries for TB, reflecting the effectiveness of its TB control strategies.

One fundamental advance has been the shift in the treatment approach for drug-resistant TB since 2020, from a series of injections to an all-oral regimen. This move has improved treatment

outcomes and lessened the burden on patients, marking a significant milestone in Iraq's TB control efforts.

Another breakthrough has been the adoption of BPAL/M, a second-line treatment regimen which lasts only 6 months rather than 2 years. This innovative approach has been progressively implemented in both community and detention areas, offering renewed hope for more effective and accessible TB treatment in Iraq.

Central to Iraq's success has been the implementation of a real-time, web-based and case-based platform on DHIS2. This serves as a tool for surveillance, electronic patient file archiving, and programme performance monitoring. This technology has revolutionized TB service delivery and monitoring, ensuring that patients receive timely and appropriate care.

Since Iraq has a low rate of HIV infection, it is not common to encounter this state of coinfection, but NTP Iraq recommends that its facilities screen all those with TB for HIV (testing coverage was 84% in 2023).

A TB survivor's journey from diagnosis to treatment highlights the human side of this success story: "I was hopeless and never thought I would overcome my disease, but with the support of the health care providers and the effective treatment provided, I am now TB-free and living a healthy life, fearless of affecting my family or friends."

Marking World TB Day 2024, Dr Georges Ki-Zerbo, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Iraq, hailed Iraq's achievements in TB control: "Iraq's success in combating TB exemplifies the power of collaboration and innovation. By working together, we can end TB and create a healthier future for all."

Iraq's success in combating TB demonstrates the profound impact of collaboration, innovation and the commitment of health actors to improve public health in Iraq.

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