Crises like conflict and COVID-19 have exacerbated inequities in Iraq. Essential health services and infrastructure have deteriorated, and not everyone has had equal access to the health care they need.

Across the country, WHO, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) work together with the Government of Iraq, the Government of the Kurdistan region, international partners, other United Nations agencies and civil society to bring reliable, accessible health care to Iraqis, including the most vulnerable, ensuring that no one is left behind.

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The WHO Representative and the Minister of Health receive a supply of COVID-19 vaccines at Baghdad International Airport

WHO and partners, Gavi - the Vaccine Alliance, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and UNICEF worked with the Government to procure and deliver 336 000 vaccines to the country, many of which will be delivered to the most vulnerable.

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A gynaecologist offers a medical consultation to a pregnant woman at Bersive camp, Duhok.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, women have still been in dire need of health services,

particularly reproductive health services. Despite the COVID-19 lockdown, UNFPA continued to deliver these services while implementing recommended safety and preventative measures. UNFPA delivered 5 shipments of personal protective equipment (PPE) to hospitals across the Kurdistan region through the Ministry of Health in Kurdistan.

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A construction worker at Al Shifa Hospital Complex in Mosul has his temperature checked on site.

This hospital -once ISIL's headquarters - suffered extensive damage in the conflict and is being rehabilitated under UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization. After a brief halt in implementation in April 2020 due to coronavirus lockdowns, UNDP quickly resumed work to ensure critical health care facilities were on their way to completion, with additional safety measures, like onsite temperature checks and hand sanitizing stations.

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A community member in Baghdad reads information on COVID-19 produced by WHO. The materials were developed to educate and sensitize communities on measures to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

In 2020, WHO reached more than 10 million people nationwide in mass communication and community engagement campaigns targeting areas that had reported high numbers of COVID-19 cases, ensuring the most vulnerable were not left behind.

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A doctor examines a patient’s chest x-ray in King Hussein Hospital, Karbala.

The hospital is one of 16 locations where UNDP is supporting the Government and the Kurdistan region to manage the COVID-19 outbreak building fully-equipped isolation wards and providing PPE to health care workers, complimenting efforts by WHO, UNFPA and other United Nations agencies to combat COVID-19.

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A doctor writes a prescription for a child in Wahbia Shabkun primary health care centre in Mosul which has been rehabilitated by UNDP.

Women, children and internally displaced persons (IDPS) are the most vulnerable to shocks like conflict and COVID-19. To support these communities, UNDP has rehabilitated more than 130 health facilities across Iraq that were damaged in the conflict. Repairing infrastructure is critical to allow partners like UNFPA and WHO to roll out much needed health and social services to the most vulnerable.

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A hospital worker takes information on the health and challenges faced by women with physical disabilities at the UNFPA-supported disability-friendly facility in Erbil.

Iraq can only become healthier when all its residents are treated fairly and have equal access to services. In the Kurdistan region, UNFPA opened 7 reproductive health facilities equipped with disability-friendly furniture and equipment.

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A midwife from the UNFPA-supported clinic in Khazir camp is photographed in an ambulance after delivering a healthy baby.

In 2020, UNFPA supported 90 health facilities, of which 25 provided emergency obstetric and newborn care services, 15 in camp settings.

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Medical supplies bound for Iraq's Ministry of Health are loaded onto a truck at a WHO warehouse in Baghdad.

To ensure equal access to COVID-19 medical assistance for all Iraqis, WHO supported the Federal and Kurdistan Ministry of Health to rapidly mobilize, procure and deliver critical medical supplies, including medicines, medical devices like intensive care beds, PPE, laboratory reagents and test kits to rapidly detect, isolate and treat COVID-19 patients. These were distributed to all health facilities managing COVID-19 cases and public health laboratories nationwide.

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A WHO Technical Officer conducts a support supervision visit and provides guidance on the management of COVID-19 patients to the medical team in Halabja Hospital.

To maintain essential supplies for frontline workers responding to COVID-19 cases, WHO

supplied more than 2 million PPE and hundreds of other hospital and medical supplies. In Kirkuk, WHO procured and delivered 10 caravans to the Department of Health to strengthen the COVID-19 response. WHO also procured and provided ambulances to support patient transportation to treatment sites. On this year's World Health Day, WHO, UNFPA and UNDP reiterate their commitment to helping communities across the country access quality services for a healthier and fairer Iraq.

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