

Press Releases: U.S. Assistance to Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iraq

Fact Sheet
Office of the Spokesperson

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As part of the continued commitment by Vice President Pence, Secretary Pompeo, and USAID Administrator Green to support ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq as highlighted earlier this year at the first-ever Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, the United States is proud to announce over \$178 million in U.S. foreign assistance to support these vulnerable communities in Iraq. This brings total U.S. assistance for this population to nearly \$300 million since Fiscal Year 2017, implemented by both the State Department and USAID.

The preservation of Iraq's rich historical pluralism is critical to reintegrating persecuted ethnic and religious minority communities into a peaceful Iraq. U.S. efforts to meet this objective span government agencies and are being implemented urgently, in close partnership with local faith and community leaders. Our efforts focus on the following areas:

Genocide Recovery and Persecution Response (GRPR)

- Over \$133 million in recently launched activities supporting the four pillars of USAID's GRPR Program, bringing total funding for GRPR to \$239 million.
 - Meeting Immediate Needs: Over \$51 million in life-saving humanitarian assistance to populations from the Ninewa Plain and western Ninewa, includes safe drinking water, food, shelter materials and household items, medical care, and psychosocial support.
 - Helping Restore Communities: \$9 million in funding to support early recovery needs and restore access to services like health and education.
 - Promoting Economic Recovery: \$68 million in funding to improve access to jobs and markets, support local businesses, and revive the local economy.
 - Preventing Future Atrocities: \$5 million to address systemic issues

affecting minority populations and prevent future atrocities.

Clearing the Explosive Remnants of War

- Approximately \$37 million in funding to support explosive remnants of war (ERW) survey, clearance, and risk education in and around minority communities. This support has enabled the Department to significantly expand the number of U.S.-funded ERW survey, clearance, and risk education teams across Ninewa and fulfills the Secretary's pledge to expand ERW clearance efforts in Iraqi minority communities made at the July 2018 Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom.

Social, Economic, and Political Empowerment

- \$8.5 million in additional assistance to projects that provide psychosocial services, legal support, and initiatives to help collect evidence of human rights abuses; increase minority representation in local and provincial government; increase access to justice for children; strengthen rule of law; and provide livelihoods support and access to economic opportunities for vulnerable groups bringing the FY 2017 total to \$18.5 million.

Preservation of Historic and Cultural Heritage Sites

- \$2 million in ongoing programming to support the preservation of cultural heritage sites in Northern Iraq that were targeted for destruction by ISIS and other terrorist groups, safeguarding, preserving, and restoring access to significant cultural heritage sites of minority communities.

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