

# UN concerned for safety of more than five million displaced in northern Iraq

9 October 2017 – As the Iraqi offensive in and near Hawija in Kirkuk Governorate is drawing to a close, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners expressed deep concern on Monday for the safety of civilian populations in the region.

“Protection remains our overriding concern,” said Lise Grande, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, [press release](#).

She said humanitarians are deeply worried about incidents of collective punishment, restrictions on free movement, evictions, forced returns and sexual exploitation and violence, including in emergency sites and camps.

Ms. Grande reported that more than 5.4 million civilians have been displaced since 2014, millions of which have been helped to safety and protected by the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Government.

Humanitarian partners working in Iraq characterize the humanitarian crisis as a protection crisis.

“There are heart-breaking cases of children, the elderly and disabled people being separated from their families. Hundreds of thousands of people, including tens of thousands of very young children, have been exposed to extreme danger, stress, and trauma and will require years of specialized support and care,” said Ms. Grande.