

Subject: Reminder: KRG-US December 2021 newsletter

From: Kurdistan Regional Government - USA <delovan.barwari@us.gov.krd>

To: farakrg@gmail.com

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**Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States
Washington D.C.**

Welcome to our December 2021 Newsletter



As we come to the end of 2021, it's worth looking back at the year. We cannot think of this past year without reflecting on the visit of Pope Francis in March and his message of peace, tolerance, and reconciliation. His visit not only raised the profile of Christians but also gave heart to all ethnic and religious components and to those who promote peaceful coexistence. His Holiness's visits to Baghdad, Mosul, Najaf, Ur, and Qaraqosh were crowned with a mass for thousands of followers at Franso Hariri Stadium in Erbil. The Kurdistan Region Presidency published a book this year celebrating Kurdistan's multi-ethnic, multi-faith heritage – [A Kurdistan For All: Embracing Faith and Diversity](#).

Commemorating Operation Provide Comfort

A month later, in April, we marked the 30th anniversary of [Operation Provide Comfort](#), the US-led military-humanitarian

The KRG remains committed to the enduring defeat of ISIS and appreciates the continued support that the Coalition, especially the United States, is providing.

Elections in October

Early elections to the Iraqi parliament were held in October and the results were ratified this week. The elections saw a low turnout across the country, including Kurdistan, which should be a cause for reflection for every political party and player. Now that the results have been finalized, the process of the new parliament electing the president, prime minister and speaker of parliament begins.

High level visits

Despite limitations imposed by the pandemic, Kurdistan Region's leaders had high level meetings overseas this year and broadened Kurdistan's bilateral ties. President Nechirvan Barzani travelled to Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Qatar, France, and the United Kingdom where he met with the heads of state and prime ministers of those countries.

Likewise, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani was received by the prime ministers of Belgium, Greece, and Bahrain. While participating in the Manama Dialogue in Bahrain, Prime Minister Barzani held meetings with US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Brett McGurk, the White House Coordinator for the Middle East,

mission that saved hundreds of thousands of lives. The KRG Representation in the United States was honored to host a virtual conference on the anniversary with H.E. President Masoud Barzani, former US Secretary of State James Baker, former Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, retired American military leaders who implemented the operation, and American officials from the White House and Department of Defense. All participants noted the success and legacy of this remarkable mission. General James Jones reflects on his role in the operation in our [Kurdistan in America podcast](#) this month.

Support in Congress

In the same week, the conference was supplemented with the introduction of the joint House Congressional Resolution ([H.Con.Res.32](#)), Commemorating the anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort. The KRG Representation has worked with members in the Senate and the House over the past year to explain the necessity of maintaining the US Kurdistan strategic partnership and continuing to support the peshmerga forces.

US Iraq Strategic Dialogue

In July, the second round of the US Iraq Strategic Dialogue took place in Washington where several areas of cooperation were discussed. It was agreed that US combat forces would leave Iraq by the end of the year as the mission moves to stabilization, advising and assisting Iraqi forces and the peshmerga to fight ISIS.

and North Africa.

The Kurdistan Region also hosted high level officials and dignitaries from neighboring countries and across the globe. Most notably, we were honored to welcome French President Emmanuel Macron to Erbil in August.

Tragedies

We also saw great sadness, tragedies, and calamities in 2021. The Covid-19 pandemic impacted families across Kurdistan and Iraq, some of whom lost loved ones. In June, thousands of Yazidis, who already faced trauma and loss, were left homeless after fire broke out in the Sharya displacement camp. This month, several peshmerga and civilians were killed after coming under attack by ISIS terrorists. In Erbil, we faced severe flooding which killed 12 people and wrecked about 3,000 homes and businesses. During this time, the bodies of 16 Kurds who were among the migrants that drowned in the English Channel, were returned to Kurdistan. These events have left the people of Kurdistan and the diaspora shocked and saddened. Our condolences to the families of all who were affected by these tragedies.

Happy and healthy new year

We hope that the new year will bring peace and comfort to anyone who has lost a loved one in 2021 and that it will bring joy, prosperity, and good health to all. We look forward to growing the US Kurdistan partnership in 2022.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman

Representative to the United States
Kurdistan Regional Government



KRG envoy and USCIRF Chair discuss religious freedom in Kurdistan and the



Representative Abdul Rahman discusses trade and investment with

region

KRG Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman and Nadine Maenza, Chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, met last week to discuss...

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KRG envoy discusses latest developments in Kurdistan, Iraq with members of Congress

Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman met with several members of Congress before the Christmas recess to discuss the political landscape...

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KRG Representative meets with DAS Dana Stroul

Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman had a virtual meeting with Ms. Dana Stroul, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the...

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business organizations

KRG Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman met with leading American business organizations last week to discuss trade and investment...

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Kurds and Americans remember Dr. Najmaldin Karim at memorial ceremony

The Kurdish-American community and American friends attended a memorial ceremony on December 9 in honor of the late Dr. Najmaldin Karim, who...

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KRG Representation welcomes USIP Middle East team

The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation welcomed the United States Institute of Peace's Middle East team to its office earlier this month...

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Kurdistan in America Podcast



Podcast Interview

With General James Jones

The Kurdistan in America podcast is honored to have General James Jones as our guest in this special edition.

General Jones was the 32nd Commandant of the US Marine Corps, the Supreme Allied Commander for the European Command, and National Security Advisor to President Barrack Obama. He was also one of the original commanders of Operation Provide Comfort, the military-humanitarian operation that saved countless lives in Kurdistan in 1991.

General Jones shares with us his experience and insights into Operation Provide Comfort and explains why it was geo-strategically vital for the United States and not just for the people of Kurdistan. He gives his views on the US military partnership with the Peshmerga forces and lends his support for the concurrent resolution in the US Congress ([H.Con.Res.32](#)) commemorating the 30th anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort. He also speaks about his decades of service in the US military, explaining how it ultimately led him to become President Obama's National Security Adviser.

The KRG Representation calls on the Kurdish-American community to reach out to their members of Congress to ask them to support the resolution in both the House and the Senate.

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President Nechirvan Barzani's Christmas message

On the occasion of Christmas and the birth of Jesus Christ, I extend my congratulations to all our Christian sisters and brothers in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq and around the world. I hope this occasion...

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United States will continue to support Iraq and Kurdistan

During his meeting with the Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani, the US National Security Council Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, Mr. Brett McGurk reiterated that the United...

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President Barzani and PM Kadhimi stress need for cooperation

During a phone conversation today, Iraq's Prime Minister, Mr. Mustafa Kadhimi and Kurdistan Region President, Mr. Nechirvan Barzani discussed the recent security threats and transgressions by the ISIS...

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Barzani and Al-Halbousi discuss Iraq's political process

Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani and Head of the Taqadum Alliance, Mr. Mohamed Al-Halbousi held a meeting in Erbil on Tuesday. Discussions covered a wide range of topics, including the latest...

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President Barzani receives Coordination Framework delegation

Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani received a delegation from the Shiite Coordination Framework headed by Mr. Nouri al-Maliki, in Erbil on Wednesday. Discussions covered a wide range of...

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President Barzani issues orders to support peshmerga forces

Kurdistan Region President and the Commander in Chief of the Peshmarga Forces Nechirvan Barzani chaired a military meeting at the office of the Kurdistan Region Presidency today Monday, in which the Vice...

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Christmas statement from PM Barzani

On Christmas Eve I congratulate all the Christians in Kurdistan Region, Iraq, and the world. I wish them a peaceful and calm Christmas. On this day, the Kurdistan Regional Government...

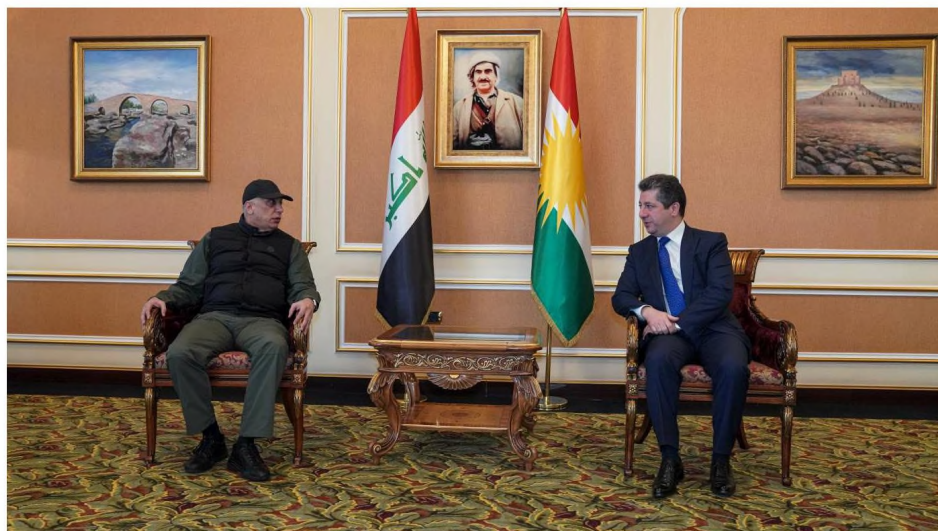
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PM Masrour Barzani's statement on Yazidi Holy Fasting Day

I congratulate my Yazidi brothers and sisters on the occasion of the holy fasting day. The KRG will continue serving all different peoples living in the Kurdistan Region. On this...

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PM Masrour Barzani meets Iraqi Prime Minister

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani on Wednesday met Mustafá al-Kadhimi, the Iraqi Prime Minister. Prime Minister Barzani welcomed the Iraqi Prime Minister to

the Kurdistan Region and they...

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Op-ed in Le Monde by Prime Minister Masrour Barzani

Throughout the ages, the Kurds have been a migrant people. From every point of our lands, our sons and daughters have fled...

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Statement from PM Masrour Barzani on latest ISIS attack

With immense pain I can confirm that last night, as a result of a cowardly ISIS attack on a Qarachogh village, a number of civilians and Peshmerga were martyred and wounded. I am...

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Council of Ministers discusses how to better equip Peshmerga

Council of Ministers on Wednesday held its weekly meeting chaired by Prime Minister Masrour Barzani. The council discussed the recent spike in ISIS attacks on disputed territories that ...

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DPM Talabani meets with Head of Canadian Embassy Office

Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani today met with the Erbil Head of Office for the Embassy of Canada in Iraq, Yves Duval, to discuss bilateral relations between Canada and the...

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Statement by KRG's DPM on recent ISIS attacks

"We are saddened by the news that another ISIS terrorist attack has claimed the lives of ten people in the Kurdistan Region.

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Parliament's Presidency wishes Christians a Merry Christmas

On the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, we give our best wishes to Christians in Kurdistan Region, Iraq and around the world. We hope that this occasion brings peace to our region.

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Speaker Faiq meets with Head of Human Rights Commission

Kurdistan Parliament Speaker Dr. Rewaz Faiq on 19 December 2021 welcomed Dr. Muna Yukhna Yaqu, the Head of the Kurdistan Region Independent Human Rights Commission. At their meeting attended by the Commission's general...

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Kurdistan in the Media



Former US Ambassador to Iraq talks to Rudaw about Iraq and Syria

In an interview with Rudaw, James Franklin Jeffrey, former US ambassador to Iraq, reaffirmed America's support to the country. He states that the United States has interests in helping Iraq to defend its sovereignty and security against enemies, starting with the Islamic State. He also discusses Iraqi government formation following the ratification of the October 10 election results. Ambassador Jeffrey also discusses the situation in Rojava and US-Iran rapprochement on the JCPOA.



Water levels plummet in dams across the Kurdistan Region

This documentary sheds light on the water crisis in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Dams across the Kurdistan Region are operating significantly below their capacity, directors of two of the largest dams told Rudaw on Tuesday, as a combination of this summer's lack of rain and water blockages from neighboring countries contribute to plummeting water levels.

Board: Kurdistan Region investment projects for 2021 topped \$8 billion

The head of the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Board of Investment announced on Wednesday that the total amount representing investment...

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The Kurds could be kingmakers in Iraq's new government

On November 30, Iraq's Electoral Commission finally announced the results of the October 10 legislative elections. It confirmed that Shia cleric Muqtada...

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KDP, PUK to send joint negotiation team to Baghdad

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) will send a joint team to Baghdad to negotiate the formation of Iraq's...

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Kurdistan Region plans to renovate 11 dams

Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani agreed to a plan on Wednesday that aims to renovate 11 dams throughout the autonomous region of Iraq.

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The New ‘Lioness’ of Iraqi Kurdistan

“The Lioness” is the title Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani gave to a woman who lost her three sons while defending their village of Khidir Jija last week against...

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New Year’s Eve in Kurdistan

The New Year is almost here, and it came so fast. Does it feel that way? After all, 2021 passed by so quickly with its many sad and happy events...

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Young diplomats of Iraqi Kurdistan take training in Armenia

The graduation ceremony of young diplomats from Iraqi Kurdistan was held at the Diplomatic School of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia. The...

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Female athletes from Erbil win Arab Weightlifting Championship

Two Kurdish female athletes won nine gold medals after coming first in their categories in the Arab Weightlifting Championship.

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US defense bill includes major support for Kurdish forces fighting ISIS

Last week, just before the US Congress broke for the Christmas holidays, the Senate approved the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), sending the...

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KRG publishes latest independent report on oil production, exports

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) publicized an independent audit report it had commissioned that includes detailed statistics of its activity...

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University lecturer calls for renaming terebinth coffee ‘Kurdish coffee’

A university lecturer in the Kurdistan Region’s Erbil province has argued that the original name of terebinth coffee was “Kurdish coffee” until it was renamed...

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Flash floods in northern Iraq kill 12 people

At least 12 people have died in flash floods caused by heavy rains overnight in northern and northeastern Iraq, Erbil mayor Nabz Abdulhamid told...

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Kurdish entrepreneurs showcase local products in Sulaimani

Sulaimani on Friday hosted a bazaar for small businesses highlighting local handmade products, aiming to boost brand recognition among the...

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Biden signs defense bill: funds Kurdish forces fighting ISIS

US President Joe Biden on Monday signed into law the bill authorizing defense spending for the next fiscal year. The legislation, formally known as...

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Largest steel factory in Iraq, Kurdistan Region is 75 percent complete: CEO

About 75 percent of Van Steel, the largest steel factory in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, has been completed. The mega project was approved by the Kurdistan...

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Over four million tourists visited Kurdistan Region in 2021

Over four million tourists visited the Kurdistan Region's provinces this year, with the capital city of Erbil receiving the lion's share, the Region's tourism...

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Welcome to our Quarterly Humanitarian Bulletin: Looking back on developments in Q4 2021



VIYAN Organization, an NGO for medical relief and development, with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO), is providing healthcare services to the vulnerable displaced people in the Baharka IDP camp in Erbil.

Steps to counter COVID-19

The total number of [COVID-19 cases](#) since the pandemic began in the Kurdistan Region has reached 382,452, of which 373,033 have recovered and 7,138 have died. Consequently, to curb the spread of the pandemic, the [Kurdistan Region's High Committee for Combating COVID-19](#) issued the following directives:

- The vaccination deadline for public service employees will be extended

to January 20, 2022. According to general health laws, employees who fail to adhere to the directives will face disciplinary measures.

- Only travelers with a negative result from a valid PCR test taken within 48 hours of arrival can enter the Kurdistan Region. Otherwise, COVID-19 tests will be administered at border crossings to people entering the Kurdistan Region, including those with COVID-19 vaccination cards.
- In coordination with relevant administrations, the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs will issue special regulations regarding funerals in the Kurdistan Region.
- Citizens must wear masks when indoors at any public space and adhere to social-distancing regulations regardless of their vaccination status.
- Beginning February 1, entrance to public spaces will be denied to people who can't show a COVID-19 vaccination card or a negative result from a valid COVID-19 test taken within the previous 48 hours.

Kurdistan hosts 926,000 refugees and IDPs

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), some 1.2 million people remain internally displaced throughout Iraq. About 4.1 million people need some form of humanitarian assistance, and nearly 2.4 million are in acute need of help, an increase since 2020, primarily attributed to the negative socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq continues to host the largest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in Iraq. According to the Kurdistan Regional Government [Joint Crisis Coordination Center's](#) (KRG-JCC) latest data, 926,018 displaced people are registered with the KRG, of whom 664,237 are IDPs and 261,781 are refugees. Out of the refugees, 241,937 are from Syrian Kurdistan, 8,479 from Kurdistan of Turkey, 10,548 from Kurdistan of Iran, 736 are Palestinian, and 81 are from elsewhere. Only 30% of refugees and IDPs live within the 36 camps, and the remaining 70% live outside camps. Forty-one percent of the displaced population lives in Erbil, 40% in Duhok, and 19% in Slemani.

Erbil Flooding

Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Region, has experienced two severe floods since October. Heavy rain and thunderstorms caused horrific damage and trauma to families, homes, and businesses. According to the KRG's Department of Media and Information, 12 people were killed, 402 homes were completely submerged, 2,509 homes and 867 cars were damaged, and 153 commercial properties were wrecked in the floods in December alone. Overall, more than \$14 million are needed to compensate for these losses.

Developments in the Yazidi community

A [Munich court](#) on October 25 convicted Jennifer Wenisch, a German citizen, married to an Islamic State terrorist, for crimes against humanity and attempted war crimes for helping and encouraging the murder of a five-year-old Yazidi girl. The couple had purchased the girl and her mother as slaves and then chained up in the hot sun to die after the child became ill and wet her mattress.

The court sentenced Wenisch to 10 years in prison for not intervening to stop the Yazidi child's dying of thirst in the desert heat. The conviction is believed to be the first related to the Islamic State's persecution of the Yazidi community.

On November 30, the [Frankfurt regional court](#) convicted Wenisch's husband, Taha Al-J., an Iraqi citizen, of genocide and committing a war crime over the death of the same Yazidi girl. Two other trials concerning the enslavement of Yazidi women and children are ongoing in Hamburg and Düsseldorf.

On another front, the Iraqi Government and the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by ISIS (UNITAD) returned the remains of [41 Yazidi victims](#) recovered from mass grave sites in Kojo.

A burial ceremony was held on December 9 and attended by the Yazidi community, including victims' families, religious leaders, and community representatives, many of whom traveled from abroad to give their loved ones a proper burial according to their religious beliefs and cultural tradition. Officials from the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Iraqi federal government, local authorities and the Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Christian Ritscher, also attended the ceremony.

Developments in the Christian community

The Chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), [Nadine Maenza](#), recently praised the KRG for its decision to designate the Christian-majority suburb of Ankawa a new district in Erbil province. This new designation will allow residents to 'nominate civic leaders, appoint officials, manage their own security and directly shape their destinies,' said Ms. Maenza. Nearly 90% of the residents of Ankawa are Chaldean, Assyrian, and Syriac Christian, with nearly 40 churches of different sects throughout the district.

As for the situation of the displaced Christians, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Iraq's 2021 annual [Integrated Location Assessment](#) report, about 90 percent of IDPs from the predominately Christian districts of Al Hamdaniya and Tilkaif have returned to their homes, compared

to about 40 percent in the largely Yazidi district of Sinjar. Moreover, on [October 9](#), a Nineveh police spokesperson said 50 Christian households have returned to their home districts in Mosul City after spending more than five years as IDPs.

Overview of IDP return in Iraq

According to the IOM report, which was published in Oct/Nov/Dec, as of July 2021, 4,884,612 individuals have returned to their location of origin, which corresponds to 81 percent of the population displaced since January 2014.

Ten districts account for nearly three quarters of all returns: Ramadi (12%), Falluja (11%) and Heet (4%) in Anbar Governorate, Al Hawiga (3%) and Kirkuk (3%) in Kirkuk

Governorate, Mosul (22%), Telafar (7%) and Al Hamdaniya (3%) in Ninewa Governorate, and Tikrit (4%) and Al Shirqat (3%) in Salah al-Din Governorate.

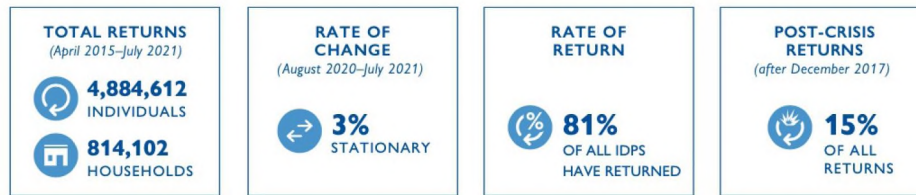
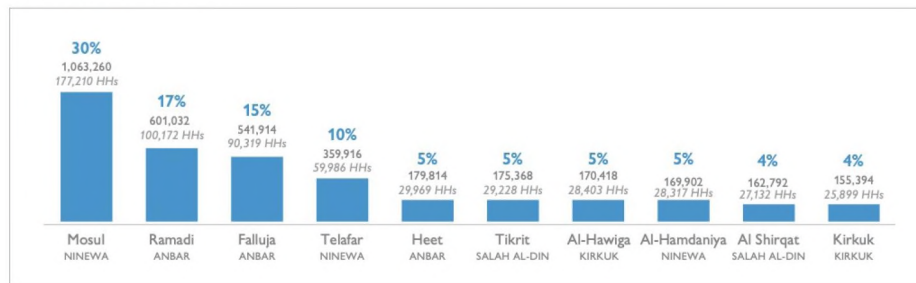


Figure 1: Top 10 districts of return



Source: IOM IRAQ's Integrated Location Assessment 2021 Report

Tragedy strikes Kurdish migrants

Tragedy has struck Kurdish and other migrants who have tried to reach European countries in recent months. Kurds and Arabs from Iraq were among the thousands of people who travelled to the Belarus-Poland border to try to reach Europe. They were stranded at the border while a dispute erupted between the Belarussian government and the European Union. Many have died on the border due to harsh winter conditions and dozens more en route to their intended destination.

On November 26, two flights returned about 600 migrants to Iraq from Belarus. The first group of about 400 people returned on a flight from Belarus to Erbil on November 18.

Over [30](#) Kurds have been reported missing or dead in the Aegean Sea after three boats carrying migrants capsized between December 21 and 24, according to the UNHCR. Also, the bodies of 16 Kurdish migrants who died trying to cross the English Channel were repatriated to Kurdistan on December

30.

The KRG spokesperson, Jotiar Adil, stated, 'Regional security issues and the effects of the global recession' are among the factors pushing youth from Kurdistan to emigrate. He stressed that the KRG is committed to addressing the underlying causes of outward migration.

Election results ratified

On December 27, Iraq's [Federal Court ratified](#) the October 10 parliamentary election results. The majority of the parties that participated in the election accepted the Court's decision, and on December 30, President Barham Salih signed a presidential decree requesting the new parliament to convene on January 9.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) have agreed to enter into government formation negotiations with other Iraqi parties as a unified bloc. In a joint press conference after meeting in Erbil on January 5, the KDP's Hoshyar Zebari stated, 'The PUK and KDP will work together in Baghdad, and we hope the other Kurdish political parties participate with us and support us so we can have one united voice.'

Humanitarian Funding

The cost of providing essential services to nearly 1 million IDPs and refugees in Kurdistan is about [\\$866 million per year or \\$72 million per month](#). The KRG continues to shoulder about 70% of these costs.

To learn more about the humanitarian situation or how you can help support vulnerable communities in Kurdistan, contact Delovan Barwari, Director of Public and Humanitarian Affairs at the KRG Representation in the United States: delovan.barwari@us.gov.krd

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Developments in the Christian community

The Chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), [Nadine Maenza](#), recently praised the KRG for its decision to designate the Christian-majority suburb of Ankawa a new district in Erbil province. This new designation will allow residents to 'nominate civic leaders, appoint officials, manage their own security and directly shape their destinies,' said Ms. Maenza. Nearly 90% of the residents of Ankawa are Chaldean, Assyrian, and Syriac Christian, with nearly 40 churches of different sects throughout the district.

As for the situation of the displaced Christians, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Iraq's 2021 annual [Integrated Location Assessment](#) report, about 90 percent of IDPs from the predominately Christian districts of Al Hamdaniya and Tilkaif have returned to their homes, compared

to about 40 percent in the largely Yazidi district of Sinjar. Moreover, on [October 9](#), a Nineveh police spokesperson said 50 Christian households have returned to their home districts in Mosul City after spending more than five years as IDPs.

Overview of IDP return in Iraq

According to the IOM report, which was published in Oct/Nov/Dec, as of July 2021, 4,884,612 individuals have returned to their location of origin, which corresponds to 81 percent of the population displaced since January 2014.

Ten districts account for nearly three quarters of all returns: Ramadi (12%), Falluja (11%) and Heet (4%) in Anbar Governorate, Al Hawiga (3%) and Kirkuk (3%) in Kirkuk Governorate, Mosul (22%), Telafar (7%) and Al Hamdaniya (3%) in Ninewa Governorate, and Tikrit (4%) and Al Shirqat (3%) in Salah al-Din Governorate.

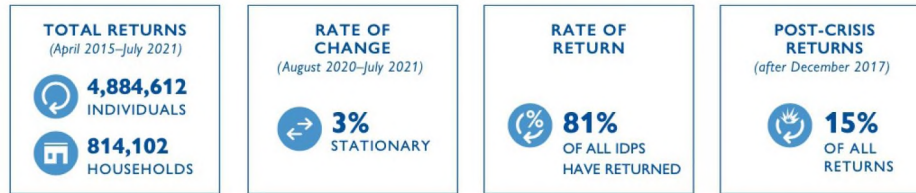
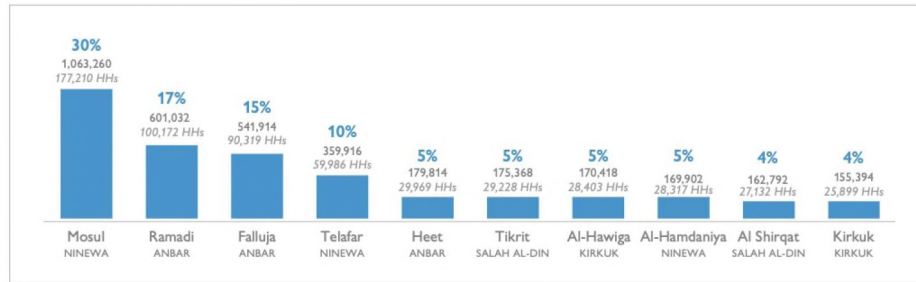


Figure 1: Top 10 districts of return



Source: IOM IRAQ's Integrated Location Assessment 2021 Report

Tragedy strikes Kurdish migrants

Tragedy has struck Kurdish and other migrants who have tried to reach European countries in recent months. Kurds and Arabs from Iraq were among the thousands of people who travelled to the Belarus-Poland border to try to reach Europe. They were stranded at the border while a dispute erupted between the Belarussian government and the European Union. Many have died on the border due to harsh winter conditions and dozens more en route to their intended destination.

On November 26, two flights returned about 600 migrants to Iraq from Belarus. The first group of about 400 people returned on a flight from Belarus to Erbil on November 18.

Over [30](#) Kurds have been reported missing or dead in the Aegean Sea after three boats carrying migrants capsized between December 21 and 24, according to the UNHCR. Also, the bodies of 16 Kurdish migrants who died trying to cross the English Channel were repatriated to Kurdistan on December

30.

The KRG spokesperson, Jotiar Adil, stated, 'Regional security issues and the effects of the global recession' are among the factors pushing youth from Kurdistan to emigrate. He stressed that the KRG is committed to addressing the underlying causes of outward migration.

Election results ratified

On December 27, Iraq's [Federal Court ratified](#) the October 10 parliamentary election results. The majority of the parties that participated in the election accepted the Court's decision, and on December 30, President Barham Salih signed a presidential decree requesting the new parliament to convene on January 9.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) have agreed to enter into government formation negotiations with other Iraqi parties as a unified bloc. In a joint press conference after meeting in Erbil on January 5, the KDP's Hoshyar Zebari stated, 'The PUK and KDP will work together in Baghdad, and we hope the other Kurdish political parties participate with us and support us so we can have one united voice.'

Humanitarian Funding

The cost of providing essential services to nearly 1 million IDPs and refugees in Kurdistan is about [\\$866 million per year or \\$72 million per month](#). The KRG continues to shoulder about 70% of these costs.

To learn more about the humanitarian situation or how you can help support vulnerable communities in Kurdistan, contact Delovan Barwari, Director of Public and Humanitarian Affairs at the KRG Representation in the United States: delovan.barwari@us.gov.krd

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SEASON THREE



The Kurdistan in America podcast is honored to have Mr. Sarhang Hamasaeed as our guest in the first episode of Season Three.

Mr. Hamasaeed is the director of Middle East Programs at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington, DC. He is also a regular lecturer at the Foreign Service Institute on ISIS and challenges to governance in Iraq.

The USIP is an American nonpartisan, independent institute founded by Congress and is tasked with promoting conflict resolution and prevention worldwide.

Mr. Hamasaeed shares his experience migrating from Kurdistan Region to the United States and sheds light on what he witnessed in his most recent visit to Kurdistan. He also provides an in-depth assessment of the political situation in the Kurdistan Region and the rest of Iraq, including the security situation in Nineveh Plains and the Sinjar region.

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