



Iraq Office

United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# newsletter

January - June 2015, Volume III, Issue 1



“ UNESCO’s work with Iraq, notably in education and safeguarding cultural heritage, is our response to extremism ”

Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO



### Director General visits Baghdad

28 March 2015 - The protection of cultural heritage was at the centre of the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova’s visit to Baghdad where she launched the global #Unite4Heritage campaign. [Continued on page 2](#)



### Kurdish singer Parwaz Hussen supports #Unite4Heritage

11 May 2015 - Hundreds of people made their way to Shar Park, a public space located in front of the World Heritage Site of Erbil Citadel, to watch Parwaz Hussen sign in support of the protection of cultural heritage in Iraq and around the world. [Continued on page 10](#)



### UNESCO opens five new schools for IDPs

As part of UNESCO’s efforts to ensure that refugees and IDPs continue to receive quality education, UNESCO Office for Iraq has successfully built and opened five new schools for children of Internally Displaced communities, since January 2015. [Continued on page 3](#)



### UNESCO and IJS sign agreement to foster press freedom and freedom of expression

3 May 2015 - UNESCO and IJS agreed to strengthen their cooperation to foster freedom of expression and develop the media sector. [Continued on page 11](#)



### Experts from Iraq’s Ministry of Water Resources return from UNESCO sponsored study tour to Germany

9 May 2015 - Staff of the Ministry of Water Resources return from a scientific study tour to water sector authorities in Southern Germany, the participants visited German water sector institutions that significantly engaged with hydro-administrative tasks. [Continued on page 8](#)

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## Editorial

### Dear friends,

Much has happened in Iraq since the beginning of 2015. The conflict brought to the forefront a major security challenge, a massive humanitarian crisis, systematic violations of human rights and immeasurable damage and destruction to Iraq's historical heritage.

In this situation, UNESCO's main goal was to help respond to the crisis in mainly two areas: education and culture. We focused on providing access to education for the growing numbers of IDPs and Syrian refugees. And we helped protect heritage and diversity.

More than 3 million Iraqi-school aged children are denied their right to a quality education; this number is expected to increase to 3.6 million by the end of the year. Education has the power to heal and to give hope. This is why UNESCO continues its efforts in providing quality education opportunities for refugees and displaced children.

With the escalation of violence against cultural and historical sites in Iraq, we are working with Iraqi experts and authorities in charge of the protection and safeguarding of archaeological sites and museum collection, to build their capacities to handle emergency situations.

In the area of natural sciences, UNESCO continues to support Iraq's fight against desertification and drought through the implementation of the European Union funded project 'Advanced Survey of Hydrogeological Resources in Iraq.'

For years, Iraq has been one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists to work in. In that regard, UNESCO has launched an assessment of journalists' safety in Iraq using UNESCO's Journalists Safety Indicators.

In the words of UNESCO DG Irina Bokova "UNESCO's work in Iraq is our response to extremism". This is what has guided the UNESCO Office for Iraq in the last six months.

**Axel Plathe**  
Director, UNESCO Office for Iraq

## UNESCO signs Global Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of State for Governorates Affairs

16 April 2015 - UNESCO and the Ministry of State for Governorate Affairs signed a global Cooperation Agreement providing an umbrella for the planning and implementation of joint programmes in Iraq's governorates in the areas of education, the sciences, culture and communication and information.

The agreement is a result of a series of discussions between UNESCO and the Ministry focused on enhancing their partnership to achieve the goals of the National Development Plan of Iraq and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Iraq.

The agreement will see increased cooperation in fields including but not limited to teacher training and literacy; safeguarding and conserving Iraq's cultural and natural heritage; the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural property, and developing the communication and information sector through training for media professionals.

The Ministry of State for Governorates Affairs will facilitate the planning and identification of programme priorities and approval processes of UNESCO assistance to the governorates of Iraq, while requests for assistance from governorates will be reviewed and prioritized by a pre-selection committee.

## Director General Irina Bokova visits Baghdad



28 March 2015 - The protection of cultural heritage was at the centre of the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova's visit to Baghdad where she launched the global #Unite4Heritage campaign on 28 March 2015.

The official visit to Baghdad included the launch of two new initiatives and meetings with the H.E. the Prime Minister, Dr. Haider Al Abadi.

The #Unite4Heritage campaign was officially launched at the University of Baghdad in the presence of the high level government officials and 200 students and professors from the College of Arts who had weeks before stood up against the attacks against Iraq's heritage with an initiative of their own titled "Our Heritage...Our Responsibility".

The #Unite4Heritage campaign is a global UNESCO initiative that aims to mobilise support for the protection and safeguarding of heritage under threat, in Iraq and elsewhere. It is meant to counter propaganda of hatred, intolerance and violence, which is being propagated by extremist groups, with messages of unity and solidarity.

"In Iraq and across the region, violent extremists are orchestrating an appalling campaign of cultural cleansing. We must respond by showing that exchange and dialogue between cultures are driving force of all history, that diversity has always been and remains today a strength for all societies," said the Director-General as she addressed the launching of the campaign.

The Director-General's visit also included an address at the opening of the Conference of the Secretaries General of UNESCO National Commissions in ISESCO member states entitled "Baghdad, Dar al Salam and Religions", where she underlined the important partnership between UNESCO and ISESCO, one based on the commitment of both organizations to stand with the people of Iraq, for national unity and peace.

The Director-General's visit also included a visit to the National Museum where she announced the start of the project 'Preventive Conservation of Iraq's Museum Collections and Cultural Heritage Sites at Imminent Risk', a project funded by the Japanese Government.



## Education

### UNESCO opens five new schools for IDPs



As part of UNESCO's efforts to ensure that refugees and IDPs continue to receive quality education, UNESCO Office for Iraq has built and opened five new schools for adolescents of Internally Displaced communities, since January 2015.

The openings of the schools are major milestones as more than 1300 students will be brought back to school. Four secondary schools were established in three cities; one in Erbil, two in Dohuk, one in Sulaimaniyah and one intermediate school was opened in Souq Al Asry Camp in Basrah.

The construction of the schools fall within the framework of the project 'Providing access to quality education to adolescents and young adults in conflict-affected areas in Iraq', funded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

As Iraq currently contends with one of the largest number of IDPs in the world, UNESCO continues to focus its efforts on providing quality secondary education to adolescents and youth of IDP communities within Iraq, including in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The five schools opened cater to both girls and boys as UNESCO attempts to ensure equal opportunities for both genders.

### Launch of UNESCO Chair on Development of Interreligious Dialogue Studies in the Islamic World at Kufa University in Najaf

14 March 2015 - Kufa University became the first Iraqi university to participate in the UNESCO Chair programme with the UNESCO Chair on Development of Interreligious Dialogue Studies in the Islamic World, which was inaugurated on 14 March during a ceremony held at the University, in Najaf.

The Chair will address the many pressing challenges faced by Islamic societies today whilst providing insights on the importance of producing alternative knowledge and narratives as bases for mutual understanding, dialogue and cohesion within multicultural societies.

The Chair will also engage in the production of multidisciplinary academic knowledge on aspects of Sunni-Shia relations and will contribute to original research in the study of non- Muslims in Muslim-majority societies.

The Chair also aims to establish educational initiatives and engage with political and religious actors to foster closer understanding and reconciliation between different religious communities to aid in the rebuilding of social cohesion as well as developing a platform where professors, civil society actors and students from Iraq, the region and beyond can meet and work together.

The creation of the Chair follows up on the wider efforts by UNESCO and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research since 2012 to implement the ongoing project 'Rehabilitation of Iraq's Higher Education System', funded by the Education Above All Foundation.

## Project to reform Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Iraq launched



29 April 2015 - An ambitious project to reform the technical and vocational education and training sector in Iraq was launched with a ceremony in Baghdad. The project is funded by the European Union with a total amount of €12,300,000.

The three year project, which will be implemented in partnership with the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, aims to achieve four main objectives. First, improve the quality of TVET by creating a governance framework based on administrative decentralization. Second, develop general curricula framework, based on a thorough analysis of current and future needs of the labour market. Third, build the capacity of TVET teachers, instructors and supervisors and fourth, to create a smooth school-to-work transition for graduates and provide them with better access to job opportunities.

During the first phase of the project, UNESCO Office for Iraq organized a 2 day workshop in Erbil with representatives from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Kurdistan Regional Government and the three Polytechnic Universities of Erbil, Sulaimaniyah and Dohuk. The representatives of the higher education sector participating in the workshop agreed to work on an action plan for implementing a pilot activity that will see the roll out of the cumulative and transferable credit system, known as “Bologna Process”, in all technical universities starting from the academic year 2016-17.

## Education in focus of new initiatives by UNESCO and Japan to help students in Iraq face current crisis

13 May 2015 - Japan and UNESCO have joined hands to address the grave consequences of Iraq's present emergency situation on education. The government of Japan has pledged \$3,000,000 in funding to help UNESCO implement two education projects that will benefit IDPs and Syrian refugees in Iraq including the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The implementation of the projects started in June.

The newly funded projects are crucial emergency responses that will provide assistance and renewed education opportunities to 4,500 Syrian refugees and 14,500 IDPs in Iraq, who have been previously deprived of this basic human right as the current conflict in Iraq continues to affect children and young adults.

The project “Expanding secondary education for Syrian refugees in Iraq” aims at expanding access to quality secondary education for Syrian boys and girls living within and outside camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the project, “Bridging urgently the gaps in secondary schooling for girls of IDP communities in Iraq” aims at bringing internally displaced girls back into schools and protect them from abuse and violence.



## Bringing 37,353 out of school children back into school



31 March 2015 - With the conclusion of the project 'Educate a Child Initiative in Iraq' (EACI) on March 2015, we look back at the main achievements of this very successful project that aimed at bringing 30,000 out of school children from rural areas (50 per cent girls and 50 per cent boys) into schools through the application of the accelerated learning programme.

The project, implemented from March 2013 to March 2015, provided a sustainable model for the Iraqi government to speed up progress towards achieving the Education for All goals and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 "Achieve Universal Primary Education" in government schools and providing OOSC access to ALP centers in four governorates, namely Baghdad, Basra, Erbil and Ninewa.

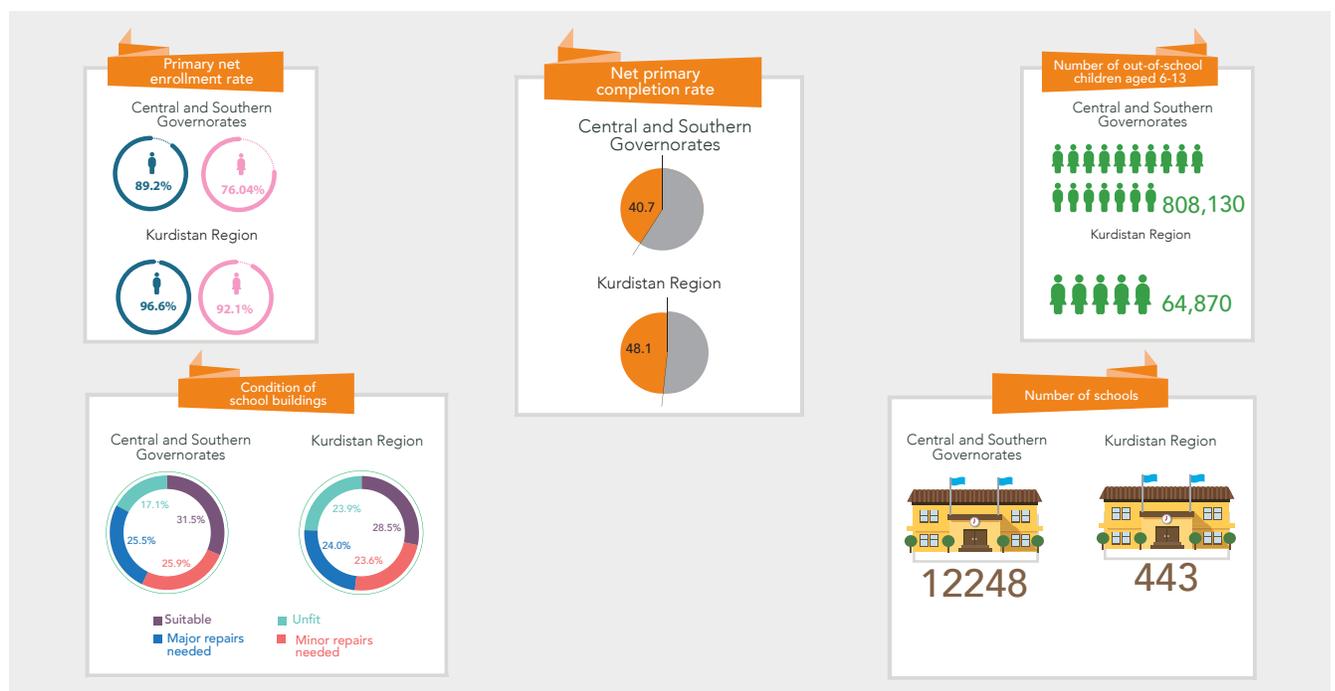
The project over-achieved its key targets in getting 37,353 out of school children back to school (initial target: 30,000), constructing,

renovating or establishing 110 schools including 34 caravan schools (initial target: 100) and designing a scale up strategy in preparation for phase II of the project.

98 percent of students enrolled at schools through ALP, intended to continue their education. 60 percent indicated that their attitude towards education was influenced by the project because they liked their schools and teachers, and 76 percent of children were satisfied by the support that EACI provided.

Above all, the project was also able to provide timely education opportunities for the hundreds of children displaced by the on-going conflict in Iraq, greatly reducing the percentage of OOSC and ensuring the continuation of their education.

Talks have already taken place to set the scale up strategy for phase 2 of the project which initially aims at bringing a further 150,000 children back to schools in five additional governorates.



## Towards new mathematics and science curricula

As part of its effort to develop new curricula, the Ministry of Education with support from UNESCO finalized and piloted mathematics and science instructional material throughout the academic year 2014-2015.

The material consisting of student books, teacher guides and activity books for students in grades 1 to 3 was prepared by the General Department of Curriculum with intensive technical support from the UNESCO Office for Iraq

The new curricula were prepared in the framework of the project 'Developing New Iraqi Curricula' funded by Education Above All, a global initiative by Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser of Qatar, UNESCO special envoy for basic and higher education.

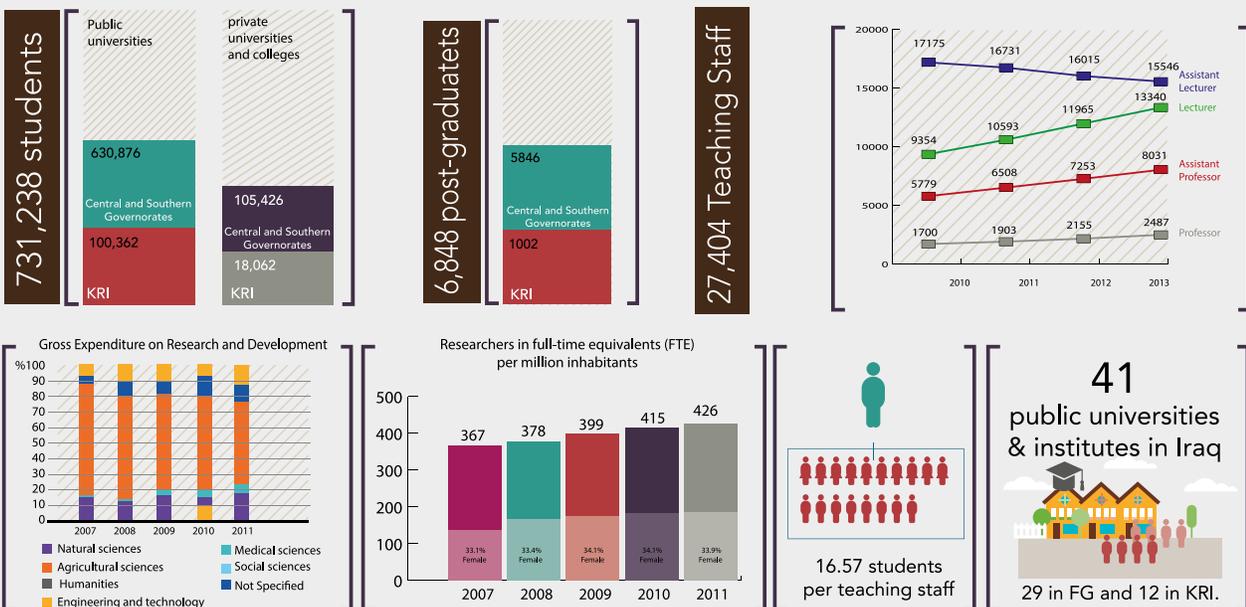
The piloting of the newly developed science instructional material took place in all federal government schools, while the new mathematics curricula were tested in a selection of schools. Following up, monitoring and collecting data on the piloting process will continue until the end of this academic year.

Another component of the curricula development project was the work on the first draft of mathematics and science instructional material for 4th grade students. The draft was prepared by a team of Iraqi curriculum specialists who used a methodology established by the Ministry of Education and UNESCO.

The 4th grade instructional material is expected to be ready at the beginning of the academic year 2015-2016.



## Higher Education in Iraq



# Natural Sciences

## Experts from Ministry of Water Resources return from UNESCO sponsored study tour to Germany

9 May 2015 - Between 1 and 9 May 2015, staff of the Ministry of Water Resources of the Federal Government of Iraq went on a scientific study tour to water sector authorities in Southern Germany. The participants of the UNESCO sponsored tour visited German water sector institutions that significantly engaged with hydro-administrative tasks.

The study tour aimed at introducing water experts from Iraq to internationally applied best practices in hydro-administrative data and information management and standard operation procedures in ground- and surface water monitoring and flood control.

The participants were introduced to institutionalized mandates, roles, functions and responsibilities in integrated water resources management at a local, regional and state level.

As well as visiting a supplier specialized in automated monitoring networks, the delegation also met with institutions in the field of groundwater management, water supply and waste water treatment



and also paid a visit to the State Environmental Agency of Baden-Wuerttemberg.

The study tour was organized under the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), an intergovernmental programme devoted to water research, water resources management, and education and capacity building.

## Combating drought and desertification

17 June 2015 - As the global community observed World Day to Combat Desertification on 17 June, Iraq continued to suffer from aridity and severe desertification. UNESCO helps combat this dramatic development that affects up to 90 percent of the country, through a variety of initiatives including the improvement of drought risk management and the development of a better understanding of the hydrogeological conditions.

With ground water being an important source of water in Iraq especially in remote areas, UNESCO, with funding from the European Union continued to carry out a hydro-geological survey of ground water in partnership with the Ministry of Water Resources through the project "ASHRI-II (Advanced Survey of Hydrogeological Resources in Iraq)". This very substantial project explores the ground water basins in the country and will ultimately contribute to the emergence of more green areas thus combating desertification.

One of the milestones of the project is a scientific meeting that will bring together experts from Iraq, geoscientific consultants from UNESCO and advisors from the US Geological Survey to discuss the first findings of the project on newly discovered groundwater potentials in Iraq.

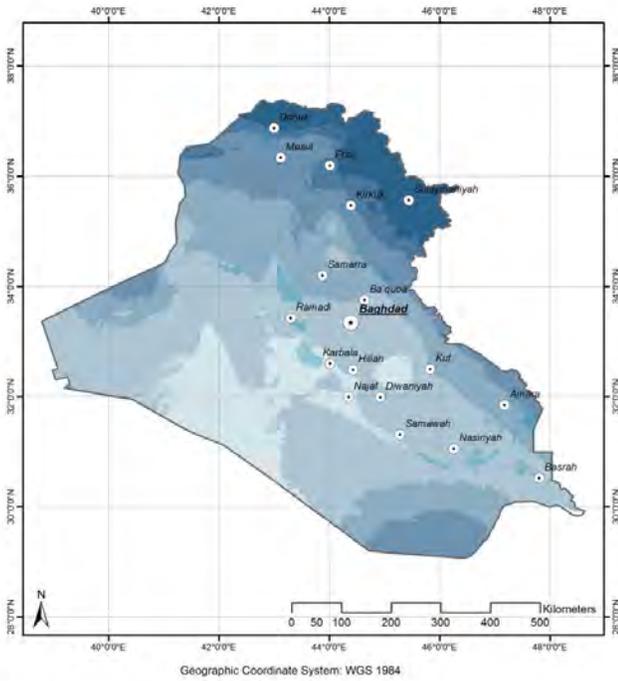
Another important step will be the creation of a national aquifer

–recharge and soil sampling team. Technical staff of the relevant ministries will be trained on how to use ground penetrating radar technology a geophysical method that uses radar pulses to image the subsurface.

The state of desertification in Iraq has worsened after 1990. Areas of lands affected by salinity, water logging and deterioration of the vegetation cover increased. Areas covered by moving sand dunes increased owing to wind erosion. Beside these entire factors the population increase, migration and urban creep are all becoming an added adverse factors leading to desertification.

The government of Iraq has taken several measures including establishing a large land reclamation programme, improving its water resources management and increasing the green belts and sand dunes fixation throughout the affected areas.



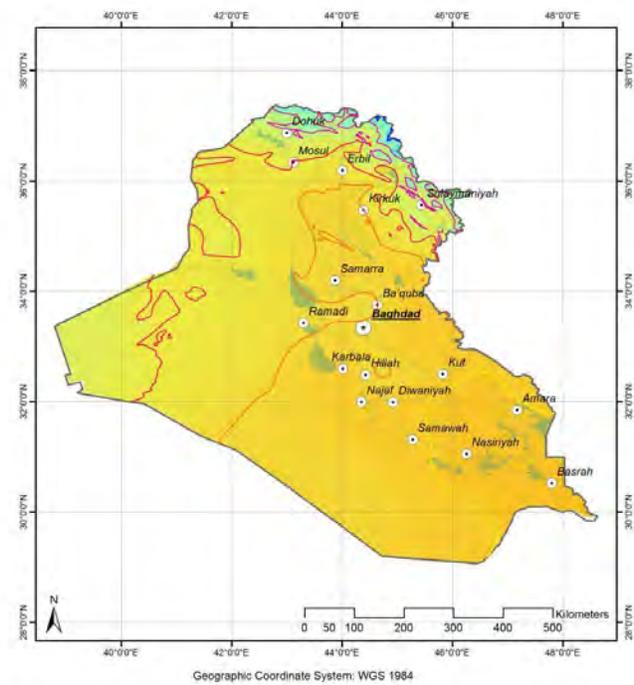


**Legend**

- River
  - Waterbody
  - Governorate Capital
  - Iraq National Boundary
- | Annual Rainfall |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 50 - 100 mm     | 100 - 150 mm  |
| 150 - 200 mm    | 200 - 350 mm  |
| 350 - 500 mm    | 500 - 1350 mm |

# Annual Mean Temperature

# Annual Precipitation Levels



**Legend**

- River
  - Waterbody
  - Governorate Capital
  - Iraq National Boundary
- | Annual Mean Temperature | Isotherms Tmean |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 40 °C                   | 5 °C            |
| 30 °C                   | 15 °C           |
| 20 °C                   | 20 °C           |
| 10 °C                   | 22.5 °C         |
| 0 °C                    | 25 °C           |
| -10 °C                  |                 |



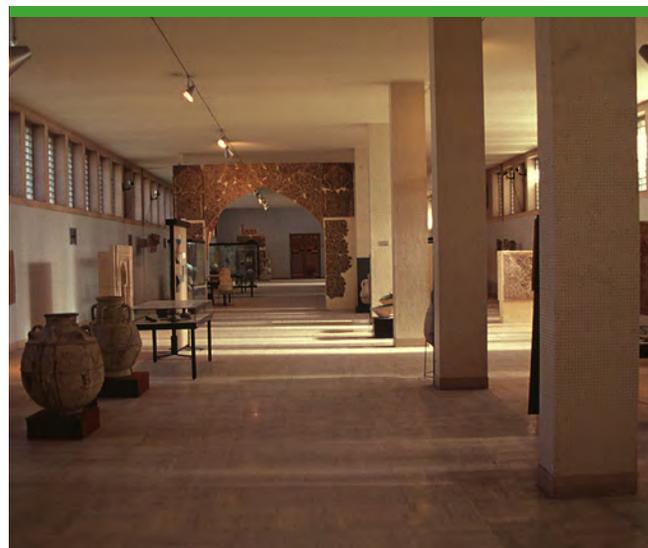
## Culture

### UNESCO welcomes the re-opening of National Museum after being closed for 12 years

28 February 2015 - Iraq's National Museum opened its doors to the public on 28 February after being closed for 12 years. The museum contains collections of objects dating back to 7,000 years ago, showcasing artefacts of Assyrian, Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian and Islamic times.

"The reopening of the Baghdad Museum is a powerful symbol. To fight violent extremism and attacks against cultural heritage, we need more than ever to nurture the power of culture, supporting its fundamental role for dialogue and for social cohesion in Iraq and around the world," said Director General, Irina Bokova welcoming the opening of the museum.

Since 2003, UNESCO, with funding from Japan was able to assist the National Museum through conducting staff trainings, laboratory restorations and inventory work. From 2004 -2006, staff were trained to use the Object ID system for the identification of cultural properties, and were also provided with the relevant equipment and software to assist them in doing so. Also, a customized database holding records for 200,000 artefacts was established.



### New project launched to protect Iraq's cultural heritage



28 March 2015 - During her visit to Baghdad, UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova launched the project 'Preventive Conservation of Iraq's Museum Collections and Cultural Heritage Sites at Risk', at the National Museum.

The objective of the project, generously funded by the Government of Japan, is to help protect Iraqi archaeological treasures at risk as the result of the current crisis. The project focuses on developing and implementing emergency contingency plans for sites and museums, repositories of cultural objects, as well as museums.

This will be taken forward through capacity-building of Iraqi professionals to enhance protection measures, including inventories and the use of remote sensing and satellite imaging.

The project is part of the UNESCO Emergency Response Action Plan for the Safeguarding of Iraq's Heritage, launched in July 2014, by Iraqi and international experts. The Plan focuses on monitoring, communication, awareness-raising, and technical assistance.

## Famous Kurdish singer Parwaz Hussen supports #Unit4Heritage at concert in Erbil

11 May 2015 - Hundreds of people made their way to Shar Park, a public space located in front of the World Heritage Site of Erbil Citadel, to watch Parwaz Hussen sing in support of the protection of cultural heritage in Iraq and around the world.

The event was organized by UNESCO Office for Iraq and supported by the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Rotana Hotel.

Parwaz Hussen was a contestant on the widely viewed musical contest show, Arab Idol. Her prominence in the Arab world and in the Kurdish music sphere allowed her to garner the support of hundreds of her fans who took to social media to show their support for the cause.

Considering the current security situation in Iraq as well as the very harsh economic situation, all kinds of celebrations have been put on hold. Nevertheless, the proposal to conduct an event, with a central message being the call for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage and diversity, was very much welcomed by the Governor of Erbil.

After performing several traditional and contemporary songs, Parwaz Hussen called on the audience to join her in supporting the #Unite4Heritage campaign.

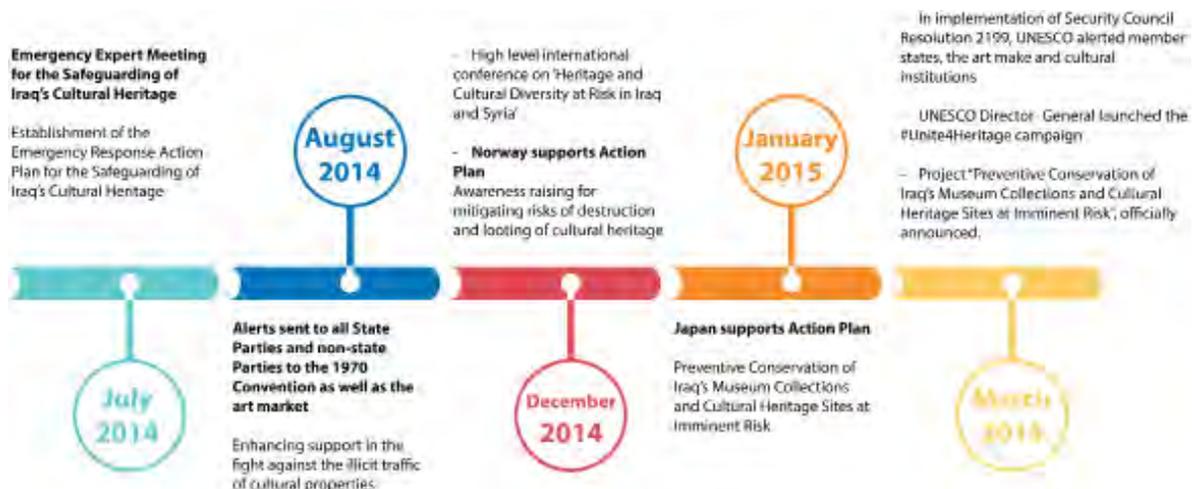
The singer sent out a tweet to her nearly 600,000 twitter followers urging them to support the protection and promotion of cultural heritage.

"Music and Heritage binds us together today #Unite4Heritage" tweeted Parwaz Hussen from the event.



## Actions undertaken by UNESCO since the onset of the conflict in 2014

UNESCO is coordinating efforts to combat illicit trafficking of cultural property, in collaboration with INTERPOL, ICOM, the World Customs organization and law enforcement agencies





## Communication and Information

### Celebrating World Press Freedom Day: UNESCO and IJS sign agreement to foster press freedom and safety of journalists

3 May 2015 - Celebrating World Press Freedom Day in Baghdad, UNESCO and the Iraqi Journalists Syndicate signed an agreement to strengthen their cooperation to foster freedom of expression, develop the media sector and provide universal access to information and knowledge in Iraq. The agreement comes in light of the worsening security situation in Iraq which has drastically limited the media's capacity to report safely and in a non-partisan manner.

As a first concrete action, the agreement foresees the implementation of the project "Enhancing Iraqi journalists' capacities in conflict sensitive reporting" that will ensure that the standards of reporting are up to par with internationally recognized standards.

The project will aim, among other goals, to educate journalists on generally-recognized essential standards of practice for professional journalists, the parallels between reliable journalism and conflict mediation, the essential role of objectivity and truth-seeking in reporting on conflict, and the usage of correct language and framing important to conflict sensitive reporting.

Overall, initiatives under the agreement will address the safety of journalists and address the issue of impunity of acts of violence against them in the context of the 'UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity'. With their focus on enhancing the capacity of media professionals to provide conflict-sensitive, non-partisan information to the public, UNESCO and IJS believe that they will contribute to conflict resolution, peace and democracy in Iraq



### Analysis of Journalists Safety being conducted in Iraq



1 February 2015 - Iraq remains one of the most dangerous countries for journalists to work in. Earlier this year UNESCO launched a call for proposals to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the safety situation of Iraqi journalists on the basis of the UNESCO Journalists' Safety Indicators (JSI). The assessment aims at establishing an evidence-based baseline about the state of journalists' safety and the impunity of crimes against journalists in Iraq.

In 2013, Iraq was selected as one of five countries for implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. The UN Plan of Action aims to create a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers in conflict and conflict free areas, with a view to strengthen peace, democracy and development worldwide.

JSI's are a set of indicators mapping out key features that can help assess the extent to which journalists are or are not able to carry out their work under safe conditions, and determine whether adequate resources and follow-up are given to crimes committed against them.

The JSIs also serve as guidelines to which changes can be systematically registered over time. They will be used to help Iraq develop a national roadmap on media safety and combating impunity as well as guide interventions by stakeholders through identifying areas of priority.

## Connect

### Web

[www.unesco.org/iraq](http://www.unesco.org/iraq)



### Facebook

[facebook.com/UNESCOIraq](https://facebook.com/UNESCOIraq)



### Twitter

[@UNESCOIraq](https://twitter.com/UNESCOIraq)



### Baghdad

UN Compound  
International Zone  
Baghdad  
Iraq

### Erbil

106 Minar Street  
Alley 71  
Erbil  
Kurdistan Region of Iraq

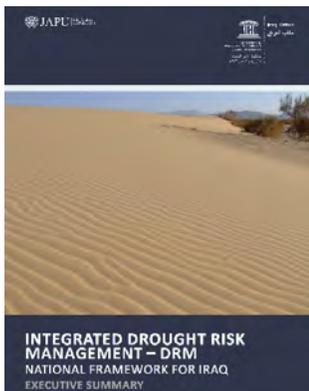
### Amman

9 Ya'acoub Ammari Street  
Abdoun  
P.O. Box 2270  
Amman, 11181  
Jordan

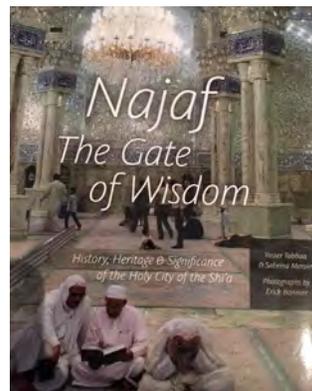
## Participate

July	August	September	October	November	December
<b>29 - 30</b> Human Right and Education	<b>28 - 31</b> Training course on architectural conversation	<b>8</b> International Literacy Day	<b>5</b> World Teachers' Day <b>7 - 14</b> Training course on manuscript conservation <b>27</b> Word Day for Audiovisual Heritage	<b>2</b> International Day to end Impunity for Crimes against Journalists <b>10</b> World Science Day for Peace and Development <b>19</b> World Philosophy Day	<b>18</b> World Arabic Language Day

## Read



**Integrated Drought Risk Management**  
Baghdad: UNESCO, 2014



**Najaf: The Gate of Wisdom**  
Paris: UNESCO, 2015



**World Heritage Magazine**  
Special Issue 'Iraq's Heritage, A treasure under threat'  
Paris: UNESCO, 2015



**World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development**  
Paris: UNESCO, 2014