

Iraq



International Medical Corps was among the first international NGOs to establish lifesaving humanitarian programs in Iraq in the wake of the 2003 US-led invasion. We have been there ever since and have assisted those in need in all 18 of the country's governorates.

Since 2014, our efforts have focused on meeting the needs of Syrian refugees and conflict-affected Iraqis in northern and central Iraq as we respond to ongoing violence and insecurity, incorporating primary health care and community health outreach, gender-based violence prevention and response, and mental health and psychosocial services into our relief programs.



Our record of supporting the people of Iraq for more than a decade and a half without interruption has enabled us to build trusted, valuable relationships with local government authorities, as well as UN agencies and local and international nongovernmental organizations.

International Medical Corps' approach to integrate services allows our primary health care providers to work hand in hand with our mental health and gender-based violence (GBV) teams when needed. At the same time, we also provide these services directly through mobile medical units and static clinics. To support this integrated approach, International Medical Corps has established two multi-service centers, one in Anbar, the other in Salahaddin governorate. Each center provides a range of essential services and outreach to respond to the varied and complex needs of those displaced internally within Iraq as well as those returning from outside the country. We also serve residents of the hard-pressed communities that host these displaced groups. Our teams provide quality health care and related services designed to meet the protection needs of vulnerable populations - most notably GBV survivors and conflict-affected children and youth.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

International Medical Corps is widely recognized as a preeminent first responder with a global reach, delivering humanitarian relief to those in need for more than three decades. Although many years have passed since the war ended, Iraq continues to experience a large-scale humanitarian crisis spread over a vast area as government authorities struggle to restore basic amenities after years of armed conflict. To support those caught up in the violence, International Medical Corps has the capacity to respond quickly to emergencies anywhere in the country using pre-positioned stocks of essential supplies and an active roster of technical staff that can be rapidly mobilized.



International Medical Corps is making health care and other vital services available to a population of more than 2.1 m people across eight governorates.



We prioritize the training of health providers, managers and community representatives to strengthen their abilities to manage and monitor their local health services.

HEALTH CARE

Our teams provide direct assistance to those who need it most, while bolstering local health systems and their capacity to deliver services in camp and non-camp settings - all within the framework of the United Nations Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan.

In the Kurdish Region of Iraq, we offer primary health care and basic reproductive health services in refugee camps and camps for internally displaced Iraqis in Erbil, Dohuk, and Sulimaniyah governorates. We also support displaced individuals and families living in hard-to-reach or underserved areas through our mobile medical units.

Elsewhere in Iraq, we support local primary health care clinics in and around Mosul with medicines, physical repairs, staff training and other inputs that enable them to once again provide care to residents after three years of Islamic State control. In other parts of Ninewa governorate we operate primary health care clinics in camps that are home to tens of thousands of people who were forced from their homes in the battle for control of Mosul and the surrounding area. At the same time, we support mobile and static health facilities in Baghdad, Anbar, Kirkuk and Salahaddin governorates while retaining the flexibility to expand services to new areas should crises arise.

Our extensive networks of staff and partners allow for the rapid assessment, implementation and scale-up of our health care capacity as required. For example, in 2017 we deployed mobile medical teams to provide health care services following flare-ups of violence in Kirkuk and an earthquake on the Iran-Iraq border.



COMMUNITY HEALTH

Our Community Health Workers (CHWs) provide the essential link between patients and primary health care service providers – generating the outreach to those who otherwise might be unable to access the services we support. Our staff also conducts disease surveillance and promotes both health awareness and good health habits in at-risk communities.

Our CHWs undergo comprehensive training to boost their understanding of common disease education messages and simple case definitions. With this knowledge, they go tent-to-tent in camps, and door-to-door in other areas as part of our integrated primary health care program. At least half of our CHWs are women, with those locally recruited helping us gain greater acceptance within their communities—an acceptance that makes residents more receptive to our messaging on such issues as the importance of education and the need for cultural sensitivities.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

International Medical Corps is a principal implementer of gender-based violence prevention and response programs in Iraq. Our experience has shown that community-led initiatives are vital. They help develop meaningful messaging for the local population and are key to engaging the government and community leaders required to achieve lasting impact. We mentor those interested in actively supporting GBV prevention and response and raising awareness of available services and the consequences of GBV. In partnership with local organizations, we provide psychosocial activities in community centers and safe spaces, as well as GBV case management support. International Medical Corps' GBV referral system is linked to our primary health care network ensuring integrated care. In hard-to-reach areas, GBV services are included into mobile medical units, enabling the GBV teams to work closely with the community health teams. GBV outreach workers run community-based prevention and response campaigns, identify vulnerable women and girls, inform them of available services and make referrals if needed.



MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

International Medical Corps places a particular priority on the availability of integrated MHPSS services for internally displaced Iraqis. This emphasis is due to the shortage of many of these services within Iraq and the gap in availability that separates basic and community-centered mental health care from important related support services.

To fill this gap, International Medical Corps provides integrated mental health services that include case management, outreach through outreach and community health workers, as well as psychiatric consultations. We use both clinic and community-based entry points through house-to-house outreach as well as direct linkages with primary health care service points. In addition, we provide training for our staff, Department of Health personnel and other service-providers in mhGAP as well as a technique used in crisis settings known as Psychological First Aid (PFA). At the national level, International Medical Corps also supports the Ministry of Health in developing and implementing a national MHPSS strategy.



During emergencies, the percentage of common mental disorders can double, while those with pre-existing mental illnesses often lose access to care.



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A preeminent First Responder for more than 30 years, International Medical Corps has provided emergency relief to those struck by disaster, no matter where they are, no matter what the conditions, working with them to recover, rebuild and, through training, gain the skills and tools required to achieve self-reliance.

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