

Iraq

International Medical Corps was among the first international NGOs to establish lifesaving humanitarian programs in Iraq in the wake of the 2003 war. We have remained ever since, assisting 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. We incorporate primary healthcare and community health outreach, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response, and mental health and psychosocial services (MHPSS) into our relief programs in Iraq.

International Medical Corps' long history supporting the people of Iraq has enabled us to build trusted, valuable relationships with local government authorities, as well as with United Nations agencies and with local and international nongovernmental organizations. Our approach to integrated services in Iraq allows our primary healthcare providers to work hand in hand with our MHPSS and GBV teams when needed. 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—as well as 25 community centers serving women and girls in Ninewa, Erbil, Dohuk, Salahaldeen, Baghdad and Anbar. Each center provides a range of essential services and outreach to respond to the complex needs of those displaced internally within Iraq, as well as those returning from outside the country. Our teams provide quality healthcare and related services to vulnerable populations, such as GBV survivors and conflict-affected children and youth. We also serve residents of the communities that host displaced populations.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

International Medical Corps is widely recognized as a preeminent first responder with a global reach, delivering humanitarian relief to those in need since 1984. Although many years have passed since the 2003 war ended, Iraq continues to experience a large-scale humanitarian crisis spread over a vast area, as government authorities struggle to restore basic amenities. To support those caught up in ongoing violence, International Medical Corps is able to respond quickly to emergencies anywhere in the country, using prepositioned stocks of essential supplies and an active roster of technical staff who can be rapidly mobilized.



International Medical Corps is making healthcare and other vital services available to more than 2.1 million people across eight governorates in Iraq.



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



International Medical Corps has trained staff on emergency response and prepositioned mobile teams focusing on gender-based violence, in case of emergency.

HEALTH CARE

International Medical Corps 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 healthcare and basic reproductive health services in refugee camps and camps for internally displaced Iraqis in Erbil and Dohuk governorates. Through our mobile medical units, we also support displaced individuals and families living in hard-to-reach or underserved areas.

We support local primary healthcare clinics in and around Mosul with medicine, physical repairs, staff training and other resources that enable them to once again provide care to residents after years of Islamic State control. In other parts of Ninewa governorate, we operate primary healthcare 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. 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 enable rapid assessment, implementation and scale-up of healthcare capacity as required.

In 2018, International Medical Corps deployed 21 mobile medical units and supported 28 primary healthcare centers and one hospital. Through this support, we provided 586,407 consultations, including 116,837 consultations for children under 5 years old.



COMMUNITY HEALTH

Our Community Health Workers (CHWs) provide the essential link between patients and primary healthcare service providers, reaching those who might otherwise be unable to access critical services. Our staff also conducts disease surveillance and promotes health awareness and good health habits in at-risk communities.

Our CHWs undergo comprehensive training to boost their understanding of common diseases and simple cases. With this knowledge, they go tent-to-tent in camps, and door-to-door in other areas, as part of our integrated primary healthcare 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 gender-sensitive messaging. During 2018, we reached approximately 150,000 individuals with health education through CHWs.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

International Medical Corps is a leader in implementing GBV prevention and response programs in Iraq. In partnership with local organizations, we provide psychosocial services in community centers and safe spaces, as well as GBV case management. International Medical Corps' GBV referral system is linked to our primary healthcare and MHPSS network, ensuring integrated care. In hard-to-reach areas, we incorporate GBV services into mobile medical units, enabling GBV teams to work closely with community health teams.

Our experience has shown that community-led initiatives are vital. They help develop meaningful messaging for the local population and are key to engaging with and building support from the government and community leaders required to achieve lasting impact. We mentor those interested in actively supporting GBV prevention and response, and in raising awareness of the consequences of GBV and available services. Our 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.

Additionally, International Medical Corps targets the most vulnerable girls from the ages of 11-18 through the adolescent girl's initiative. In 2018, we reached 288,797 females with GBV messaging and ran 25 women's centers in six governorates of Iraq, where we provided a range of services and activities. International Medical Corps also co-chairs the national GBV sub-cluster and GBV working group for southcentral Iraq, and chairs the national adolescent girls initiative.



MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

International Medical Corps places a particular priority on the availability of integrated MHPSS services for internally displaced Iraqis and host communities. To fill significant gaps in services, International Medical Corps provides integrated mental health services that include case management, community outreach and psychiatric consultations at both the community and clinic level. In addition, we provide training for our staff, Department of Health personnel and other service-providers in MHPSS, 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, which in 2018 included supporting 27 psychosocial units across the country.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

International Medical Corps provides capacity development for partner organizations, including governmental and nongovernmental entities, as well as beneficiaries, such as community members and women's committees. We strengthen local partners to ensure the sustainability of our interventions, improve technical capacity and provide high-quality services.

Much of our training focuses on mental health, because of the lack of trained psychologists and psychiatrists in Iraq. We train case managers and other frontline health professionals to identify and manage simple cases, and refer more-severe cases to specialists. At the same time, International Medical Corps supports the Ministry of Health in building and implementing its strategy for integrating mental health services at the community level.



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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Since its inception 35 years ago, International Medical Corps' mission has been consistent: ease the suffering of those affected by war, natural disaster and disease by delivering vital healthcare services and focusing on training that provides the skills and tools required to foster self-reliance. This approach of helping people to help themselves is critical to returning devastated populations to self-reliance.

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COUNTRY CONTACT: **Natalia Valeeva, Country Director**
nvaleeva@InternationalMedicalCorps.org

HEADQUARTERS CONTACT: **Elsona Agolli, Program Manager**
eagolli@internationalmedicalcorps.org.uk

HEADQUARTERS: 12400 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1500 | Los Angeles, CA 90025
PHONE: 310-826-7800 | **Fax:** 310-442-6622

DC OFFICE: 1313 L St. NW, Suite 110 | Washington, DC 20005
PHONE: 202-828-5155 | **Fax:** 202-828-5156

UK OFFICE: Ground Floor 161 Marsh Wall | London E14 9SJ
PHONE: +44 (0) 207-253-0001